

# **2023 Migratory Game Bird Season Recommendations**

to the  
Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board



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## **2023 MIGRATORY GAME BIRD SEASON PREVIEW**

### **Summary of Issues for Consideration:**

The majority of Vermont's waterfowl season is driven by the federal framework for the Atlantic Flyway. Below are a few issues that must be decided for the 2023 hunting season. The Department would like the Board to consider the following:

- Hold the liberal season allowed under the federal framework related to season lengths and daily bag limits.
- For the 2023 Duck Season.
  - Open the 2023 duck season on a Saturday, October 14.
  - Interior Zone: October 14 and run through December 12.
  - Lake Champlain Zone: October 14 – Oct. 18 and Oct. 28 - Dec. 21.
  - Increase the two-bird daily bag limit on Mallards to four-birds daily of which only two can be hens.
- For the 2023 Goose Seasons
  - Open the resident Canada goose season September 1<sup>st</sup> and continue through September 25.
  - Open the migratory Canada goose season on October 14 and run through November 27. Increasing the season to 45-days and the daily bag to three.
  - Open the late resident Canada goose on December 1, 2023. End the season on January 6, 2024. Allow a five-bird daily bag limit. Within the Lake Champlain and Interior zones.
  - Open the Snow goose season on October 1.
- Hold youth hunting weekend – September 23-24.
- Reduce the Atlantic Brant season from 50 to 30 days and reduce the daily bag from two to one.
- Hold woodcock/snipe season: September 23- November 6.

### **2023 Waterfowl and Migratory Game Bird Season Proposals:**

The Department makes these 2023 recommendations based on findings from the Fall 2015 Waterfowl Hunter Survey, comments received from waterfowl hunters the past seven years, data collected on availability of various waterfowl species in Vermont, include eBird, internal discussions among Vermont Wildlife Biologists and State Game Wardens, and frameworks provided by the USFWS. **Survey responses from the 2015 scientific survey came from waterfowl hunters with a broad background that varied greatly by age, hunting experience, educational and economic background. The Department is confident that this survey represents the variation in the entire waterfowl hunting user group in Vermont.**

Table 1.

**2023-2024 WATERFOWL SEASON RECOMMENDATION****LAKE CHAMPLAIN ZONE**

	<u>SEASON TYPE</u>	<u>SEASON LENGTH</u>	<u>INCLUSIVE DATES</u>	<u>DAILY LIMIT</u>	<u>POSSESSION LIMIT</u>
DUCKS *	Split	60 Days	<u>Oct. 14 – Oct. 18 &amp; Oct. 28 - Dec. 21</u>	6	18
SCAUP*	Split	20 Days	<u>Oct. 14 – Oct. 18 / Oct. 28 – Nov. 11</u>	2	6
	Hybrid	40 Days	<u>Nov. 12 – Dec. 21</u>	1	3
MERGANSERS *	Split	60 Days	<u>Oct. 14 - Oct. 18 &amp; Oct. 28 - Dec. 21</u>	6	18
COOTS	Split	60 Days	<u>Oct. 14 - Oct. 18 &amp; Oct. 28 - Dec. 21</u>	15	45
GEESE					
Canada Geese	Straight	25 Days	<u>Sept. 1 - Sept. 25</u>	8	24
	Straight	45 Days	<u>Oct. 14 – Nov. 27</u>	3	9
	Straight	37 Days	<u>Dec. 1 – Jan. 6</u>	5	15
Snow Geese *	Split	107 Days	<u>Oct. 1 - Dec. 31, 2023 Feb. 24 – Mar. 10, 2024</u>	25	NONE
	Straight (CO)		<u>Mar. 11 – Apr. 26, 2024</u>	15	NONE
Brant	Straight	30 Days	<u>Oct. 14 – Nov. 12</u>	1	3

SHOOTING HOURS - All Waterfowl - All Days - ½ hour before sunrise to sunset

CO: Conservation Order

\* Includes blue geese also.

Table 2.

**2023-2024 WATERFOWL SEASON RECOMMENDATION****VERMONT INTERIOR ZONE**

	<u>SEASON TYPE</u>	<u>SEASON LENGTH</u>	<u>INCLUSIVE DATES</u>	<u>DAILY LIMIT</u>	<u>POSSESSION LIMIT</u>
DUCKS *	Straight	60 Days	<u>Oct. 14 - Dec. 12</u>	6	18
SCAUP*	Straight	20 Days	Oct. 14 – Nov. 2	2	6
		40 Days	Nov. 3 – Dec. 12	1	3
MERGANSERS *	Straight	60 Days	<u>Oct. 14 - Dec. 12</u>	6	18
COOTS	Split	60 Days	<u>Oct. 14 - Dec. 12</u>	15	45
GEESE					
Canada Geese	Straight	25 Days	<u>Sept. 1 - Sept. 25</u>	8	24
	Straight	45 Days	<u>Oct. 14 – Nov. 27</u>	3	9
	Straight	37 Days	Dec. 1 – Jan. 6	5	15
Snow Geese *	Straight	107 Days	<u>Oct. 1 - Dec.31, 2023</u>	25	NONE
			<u>Feb. 24 – Mar. 10, 2024</u>		
	Straight (CO)		<u>Mar. 11 – Apr. 26, 2024</u>	15	NONE
Brant	Straight	50 Days	<u>Oct. 14 – Nov. 12</u>	1	3

SHOOTING HOURS - All Waterfowl - All Days - ½ hour before sunrise to sunset

CO: Conservation Order

\* Includes blue geese also.

**Table 3.**

**2023-2024 VERMONT MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING SEASONS**  
(regulations in effect September 1, 2023 through April 26, 2024)

Species	<u>Lake Champlain Zone</u>	Interior Vermont Zone	Connecticut River Zone
Ducks, Coots and Mergansers	Oct. 14 – Oct. 18 Oct. 28 – Dec. 21	Oct. 14 – Dec. 12	Oct. ? – Nov. ? Nov. ? – Dec. ?
Canada Geese	Sept. 1 – Sept. 25 Oct. 14 – Nov. 27 Dec. 1 – Jan. 6	Sept. 1 – Sept. 25 Oct. 14 – Nov. 27 Dec. 1 – Jan. 6	Sept. ? – Sept. ? Oct. ? – Nov. ? Nov. ? – Dec. ?
Snow Geese (includes blue geese)	Oct. 1 - Dec. 31, 2023 Feb. 24 - Mar. 10, 2024 Mar. 11 – Apr 26, 2024	Oct. 1 - Dec. 31, 2023 Feb. 24 - Mar. 10, 2024 Mar. 11 – Apr 26, 2024	Oct. ? – Dec. ?
Brant	Oct. 14 – Nov. 12	Oct. 14 – Nov. 12	Oct. ? – Oct. ?
Woodcock	Statewide	Sept. 23 – Nov. 6	
Snipe	Statewide	Sept. 23 – Nov. 6	

Youth Waterfowl Hunting Weekend – September 23 & 24

**BAG LIMITS**

The daily bag limit is the maximum number of birds of each species that any person may take (or possess in the field) during any one day. The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit for all waterfowl species except snow geese.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Daily Limit</u>	<u>Possession Limit</u>
Ducks *	6	18
Mergansers	6	18
Coot	15	45
Canada Geese		
September season		
Lake Champlain Zone	8	24
Interior Vermont Zone	8	24
Connecticut River Zone	5	15
Oct. - Nov. season		
Lake Champlain Zone	3	9
Interior Vermont Zone	3	9
Connecticut River Zone	2	6
Dec. – Jan. season		
Lake Champlain Zone	5	15
Interior Vermont Zone	5	15
Snow Geese	25	No limit
Mar. 11 – Apr. 26, 2024	15	No limit
Brant	1	3
Woodcock	3	9
Snipe	8	24

\* The daily limit of 6 ducks may include no harlequin, and no more than 4 mallards (only 2 of which may be hens), 2 black ducks, 3 wood ducks, 1 pintail, 2 canvasbacks, 2 redheads, 2 or 1 scaup depending on dates, 3 scoters, 3 eiders, and 3 long-tailed duck.

### *Background On Waterfowl Season Setting and Management:*

Migratory game bird managers currently base the migratory bird population estimates and recommendations on predictions derived from long-term biological information and harvest strategies instead of current year surveys. In 2018 the Atlantic Flyway region implemented a Multi-Stock Adaptive Harvest Management Strategy based on a suite of four duck species that represent the population dynamics and various habitat types used by waterfowl throughout the flyway, in lieu of relying solely upon the status of eastern mallards. The four species include green-winged teal, common goldeneye, ring-necked duck, and wood ducks. These species compose more than 40% of the harvest within the flyway and supply a sufficient time series of estimates of annual abundance, harvest rates and harvest to monitor population trends. This was necessary because one species, the mallard, was driving all the seasons, which had an effect on multiple species. Within this system, species of concern such as mallard and black duck are evaluated separately with an assessment under the adaptive harvest management strategies developed for the target species. The objectives are to sustain duck populations for all and to allow harvest where appropriate. The estimates allow for a liberal season of 60 days with a 6-bird bag limit. Species specific bag limits follow their respective harvest strategies, with the majority of species bag limits being the same as last year.

Tables 4 and 5 provide background information on past migratory game bird hunting seasons. Table 4 shows the hunting seasons approved during 2022 and is provided as a reference while considering bag limits and the seasons frameworks for 2023. Appendix B provides the history, 1942-2022, of Vermont's waterfowl seasons broken down into season type, season length, dates, and bag limits. This may help one's understanding of how Vermont arrived at our current zones and season types.

Table 5 provides a historic look at waterfowl hunter participation and estimated harvest levels, Vermont waterfowl stamps sold, and the number of individuals that registered with the Harvest Information Program (HIP). HIP is a method used to generate more reliable estimates of hunting activity and number of all migratory birds harvested. The HIP program numbers include youth and adult waterfowl hunters, woodcock, and snipe hunters. Only adult waterfowl hunters, 16 years of age and older, are required to purchase the state waterfowl stamp. The Department will populate the remaining portions of the table this summer after the USFWS examines wings collected randomly from last season's hunters and harvest estimates are completed.

Vermont currently has three waterfowl zones (Figure 1):

- Lake Champlain Zone that we share with New York. Vermont sets the dates for this zone.
- Interior Zone that is entirely within Vermont.
- Connecticut River Zone that we share with New Hampshire. New Hampshire sets the dates for this zone as an extension of their inland zone.

Under Vermont's current three zones, Vermont can split any zone once to create two hunting segments. Vermont currently has sixty days to divide between the two segments in an effort to accommodate the diverse desires of the variety of Vermont waterfowl hunters. The zones were also set up to take into consideration the differences in the physiographic regions of the state and

the climatic differences each has. Federal regulations allow for zone and split changes every five years. Vermont's next opportunity to adjust zone boundaries and splits is in 2025. Any changes will take effect in the 2026-2031 season and be in effect for 5-years.

### 2023 Migratory Game Bird Seasons:

Tables 6 and 7 provide the expected USFWS season frameworks for the 2023 duck and goose seasons, respectively, the latter including other migratory game birds as well. Potential changes from 2022 hunting seasons shown on Table 4 includes increasing the daily bag limit on mallard from two to four with a two hen restriction, increasing the regular goose season from 30 to 45 days and the daily bag limit from one to three birds, and decreasing the brant season from 50 to 30 days and the bag limit from two to one daily.

*2023 Duck Season:* The 2023 duck season options allow the opportunity to utilize a 60-day season within the dates of September 23, 2023 to January 31, 2024. The allowed daily bag limit is six birds, with species specific limits listed on Table 6. Vermont may allow a possession limit of 18 ducks total. The Board may be more restrictive on the length of the season and bag limits if desired, but the Board cannot set regulations more liberal. The Department recommends taking the liberal hunting option allowed under the federal framework.

The Board has also traditionally held the youth waterfowl weekend the last weekend in September. The Department has withheld any fishing tournament permits for that weekend to reduce conflicts between anglers and youth waterfowlers. The youth weekend must be within 14 days of either end of the federal framework dates.

*2023 Goose, Brant, Mergansers, Coots, Snipe, and Woodcock Seasons:* Table 7 lays out the season options for geese, brant, mergansers, coots, snipe, and woodcock. The available season lengths, outside dates for the seasons, daily bag limits and possession limits are broken down by species.

We often receive requests to open the migratory Canada goose season in early October. We are not allowed to open the season on migratory Canada geese until October 10<sup>th</sup> to reduce hunting pressure on the Atlantic population that is flying through the state. Prior to 2010 we were unable to open the season until October 20<sup>th</sup>. This change came about because of efforts pursued by Vermont and some other New England states. Surveys on breeding grounds were reinstituted during the spring of 2022. The Atlantic population of Canada geese were last surveyed in 2019 prior to the COVID pandemic. Breeding pairs in 2022 totaled 164,000 increasing from 2019's total of 119,500. The integrated population model predicts that breeding pairs will increase to 180,500 in 2023. The increase in breeding pair numbers in 2022 allowed for the liberalization of the migrant Canada goose season.

The Brant Hunt Plan and Harvest Strategy were revised in 2020. The revised plan uses an Integrated Population Model (IPM) to generate a prediction of the brant population. This model prediction will be used in place of the mid-winter survey estimate to determine the annual hunting season recommendation. Advantages of the IPM are that the population estimate is available in the summer, prior to the regulatory flyway meeting and federal register framework

publication. In addition, estimates provided by the IPM are less variable than the MWS and will likely result in fewer changes to hunting packages over time. The model prediction for 2023 is 107,000 brant, and the harvest strategy recommends a 30-day season with a 1-bird daily bag limit, which is changed from last year.

*2023 Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days:* The Department and Board may select two days per duck-hunting zone, designated as “Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days,” in addition to the regular duck seasons. The days must be held outside any regular duck season on a weekend, holiday, or other non-school days when youth hunters would have the maximum opportunity to participate. The days may be held up to 14 days before or after any regular duck-season frameworks or within any split of a regular duck season, or within any other open season on migratory birds. The daily bag limits may include ducks, geese, mergansers, and coots, and would be the same as those allowed in the regular season. Flyway species and area restrictions would remain in effect.

States are allowed to use their established definition of age for youth hunters. However, youth hunters may not be 18 years of age or older. In addition, an adult at least 18 years of age must accompany the youth hunter into the field. This adult may not duck hunt but may participate in other seasons that are open on the special youth day. Youth hunters 16 years of age and older must possess a Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (also known as Federal Duck Stamp). In 2016 Vermont changed the youth waterfowl hunters age to 17 and younger. Vermont also requires all hunters 16 years of age and older to have a state duck stamp. In some years, the end of the resident Canada goose season overlaps the youth waterfowl hunting weekend. This will occur in our proposal for 2023 Youth Hunting Weekend, Saturday and Sunday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.

*Special Falconry Regulations:* Falconry is a permitted means of taking migratory game birds in any State meeting Federal falconry standards in 50 CFR 21.29. These States may select an extended season for taking migratory game birds in accordance with the following:

*Extended Seasons:* For all hunting methods combined, the combined length of the extended season, regular season, and any special or experimental seasons must not exceed 107 days for any species or group of species in a geographical area. Each extended season may be divided into a maximum of 3 segments. *Framework Dates:* Seasons must fall between September 1 and March 10.

*Daily Bag Limits:* Falconry daily bag limits for all permitted migratory game birds must not exceed 3 birds, singly or in the aggregate, during extended falconry seasons, any special or experimental seasons, and regular hunting seasons in all States, including those that do not select an extended falconry season.

*Regular Seasons:* General hunting regulations, including seasons and hunting hours, apply to falconry in each State listed in 50 CFR 21.29. Regular season bag limits do not apply to falconry. The falconry bag limit is not in addition to gun limits.

Vermont has traditionally run the falconry season during any open migratory game bird season. Last year falconers had the opportunity to begin on September 1<sup>st</sup> with the resident Canada goose season and hunt through January 21<sup>st</sup>. A three-bird daily bag limit was in effect.



In summary, the proposed 2023 waterfowl and migratory bird hunting regulations were made based on the following information:

- Decide when to place the majority of duck hunting days by month. Most hunters prefer October to have the most waterfowl hunting opportunity.
- Determine what day of the week to open the season. Regardless of hunting zone, few (< 12%) hunters do most of their hunting on weekdays. Hunters either hunt weekends or split their time equally between weekdays and weekend hunting.
- Determine what week to recommend opening the season. Vermont hunters chose the second week in October as their preferred opening week for ducks and geese.
- Decide which zones to propose for splits and in which seasons. “Goose hunters in the Lake Champlain zone, regardless of residency, chose straight season more than split seasons. For the Interior Vermont zone, Vermont residents chose straight seasons most commonly for duck and goose seasons”.
- Decide on the length of the Lake Champlain Zone split. Vermont hunters preferred a two-week season split length if one is to be used.

### Legal Framework for Hunting Season Decision

Beginning in 2015 the Board was given authority by Legislature to set the migratory bird hunting regulations by procedure instead of rule. Part of Title 10 § 4082 reads:

(b)(1) Except as provided for under subdivision (2) of this subsection, the Board annually may adopt rules relating to the management of migratory game birds and shall follow the procedures for rulemaking contained in 3 V.S.A. chapter 25. For each such rule, the Board shall conduct a hearing but, when necessary, may schedule the hearing for a day before the terms of the rule are expected to be determined.

(2) Beginning with the 2015 hunting season, the Board may set by procedure the daily bag and possession limits of migratory game birds that may be harvested in each Waterfowl Hunting Zone annually without following the procedures for rulemaking contained in 3 V.S.A. chapter 25. The annual daily bag and possession limits of migratory game birds shall be consistent with federal requirements. Prior to setting the migratory game bird daily bag and possession limits, the Board shall provide a period of not less than 30 days of public notice and shall conduct at least two public informational hearings. The final migratory game bird daily bag and possession limits shall be enforceable by the Department under its enforcement authority in part 4 of this title.

For your information, included below is the segment of the federal register that pertains to establishing zones and splits. The information below only applies to the regular duck season.

***Federal Register*** /Vol. 84, No. 199 /Tuesday, October 15, 2019 / Proposed Rules **55126-27**

***Guidelines for Duck Zones and Split Seasons***

***The following zone and split-season guidelines apply only for the regular duck season:***

***(1) A zone is a geographic area or portion of a State, with a contiguous boundary, for which independent dates may be selected for the regular duck season.***

*(2) Consideration of changes for management-unit boundaries is not subject to the guidelines and provisions governing the use of zones and split seasons for ducks.*

*(3) Only minor (less than a county in size) boundary changes will be allowed for any grandfathered arrangement and changes are limited to the open season.*

*(4) Once a zone and split option is selected during an open season, it must remain in place for the following 5 years.*

*Any State may continue the configuration used in the previous 5-year period. If changes are made, the zone and split-season configuration must conform to one of the following options:*

*(1) No more than four zones with no splits,*

*(2) Split seasons (no more than 3 segments) with no zones, or*

*(3) No more than three zones with the option for 2-way (2-segment) split seasons in one, two, or all zones.*

#### *Grandfathered Zone and Split Arrangements*

*When we first implemented the zone and split guidelines in 1991, several States had completed experiments with zone and split arrangements different from our original options. We offered those States a one-time opportunity to continue ('grandfather') those arrangements, with the stipulation that only minor changes could be made to zone boundaries. If any of those States now wish to change their zone and split arrangement:*

*(1) The new arrangement must conform to one of the 3 options identified above; and*

*(2) The State cannot go back to the grandfathered arrangement that it previously had in place.*

#### *Management Units*

*We will continue to utilize the specific limitations previously established regarding the use of zones and split seasons in special management units, including the High Plains Mallard Management Unit. We note that the original justification and objectives established for the High Plains Mallard Management Unit provided for additional days of hunting opportunity at the end of the regular duck season. In order to maintain the integrity of the management unit, current guidelines prohibit simultaneous zoning and/or 3-way split seasons within a management unit and the remainder of the State. Removal of this limitation would allow additional proliferation of zone and split configurations and compromise the original objectives of the management unit.*

#### *Eastern Mallard Collaborative Research Project:*

Atlantic Flyway states are conducting a regional study of the eastern mallard population. Vermont is participating and is deploying 12 GSM/GPS units and 15 geolocators in 2023, with the hopes to place out five a year over the remaining two-year period. The project aims to annually deploy 600 GSM/GPS units on female mallards in Eastern Canada and the Northeastern United States to answer several important questions about mallard movements, productivity, and biases within our banded sample. Specifically, the project proposes the following objectives:

- 1) Quantify and compare reproductive metrics such as reproductive attempts, full-term incubation, and brood-rearing between mallards in the Northeastern US and Eastern Canada, and the extent to which behavior and weather explains variation in reproductive metrics.
  - a. Use proportion of stationary behavior from ACC data and daily displacement from GPS data to infer nesting attempts and success

- b. Develop detailed time activity budgets of mallard behavior throughout the annual cycle at the sub-population scale
  - c. Explore the extent to which behavior and weather patterns (precipitation, temperature, winter severity) influence reproductive success both directly and through cross-seasonal effects
- 2) Estimate seasonal survival rates of female mallards in Eastern Canada vs. Northeastern US
- 3) Quantify and compare female mallard movements and habitat use and selection throughout the annual cycle in the Northeastern US and Eastern Canada
  - a. Understand mallard movements during the pre-season banding window to better inform implications for pre-season banding data analyses.
- 4) Characterize habitat-use and selection of mallards and black ducks throughout the annual cycle.

New York and Pennsylvania have secured internal funding to support much of the project but solicited in-kind and financial support from other flyway states, federal and Canadian partners to reach marking sampling goals/distribution and fully fund the project. The project has begun deployments of GSM and geolocator units during the winter of 2022-2023, coinciding with the American black duck joint venture project.

During the 2021-2022 capture period Vermont placed out eight GSM/GPS units at three locations within the Champlain Valley from January 13<sup>th</sup> to February 15<sup>th</sup>. Three of the birds died during the winter months and tracking units were recovered for redeployment. Only two of the three units were redeployed prior to the migration and nesting period. During the nesting period seven of the eight units were functional.

### Public Input and Outreach:

The Department, in conjunction with the Board, is currently planning to hold two public hearings in 2023. Meetings are tentatively planned for the evenings of March 14<sup>th</sup> (Ticonderoga, NY, in person only) and 16<sup>th</sup> (Essex Junction District office conference room, in person and recorded for posting on the Department website), beginning at 6:30pm. During the hearings, the Department will review the season options, recommendations, current biological information, answer questions, and record public comments for the Board. The public will be encouraged to submit comments through email or a recorded phone line. Hearing times and website posting locations will be advertised on the Department website and through news releases.

After the Board approves final season dates and bag limits (scheduled for April 5, 2023 Board meeting), the Department will submit selections to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by April 30<sup>th</sup> and the information will be sent to a printer for production of the 2023 syllabus of state and federal hunting regulations. The early decision deadlines allow the Department to have the syllabus available to the public in print version by August 1<sup>st</sup>, a full month prior to any migratory bird hunting season. Approved seasons will be placed on the Department's website within days after the Board's vote.

**Table 4. 2022 Migratory Bird Hunting Seasons**

**2022-2023 VERMONT MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING SEASONS**  
(regulations in effect September 1, 2022 through April 23, 2023)

Species	Lake Champlain Zone	Interior Vermont Zone	Connecticut River Zone
Ducks, Coots and Mergansers	Oct. 15 – Oct. 23 Oct. 29 – Dec. 18	Oct. 15 – Dec. 13	Oct. 4 – Nov. 6 Nov. 23 – Dec. 18
Canada Geese	Sept. 1 – Sept. 25 Oct. 15 – Nov. 13 Dec. 1 – Jan. 21	Sept. 1 – Sept. 25 Oct. 15 – Nov. 13 Dec. 1 – Jan. 21	Sept. 1 – Sept. 25 Oct. 4 – Nov. 6 Nov. 23 – Dec. 18 Dec. 19 – Jan. 21
Snow Geese (includes blue geese)	Oct. 1 - Dec. 31, 2022 Feb. 26 - Mar. 10, 2023 Mar.11 – Apr 23, 2023	Oct. 1 - Dec. 31, 2022 Feb. 26 - Mar. 10, 2023 Mar.11 – Apr 23, 2023	Oct. 4 – Dec. 18 Mar.11 – Apr 23, 2023 (applies to land, not CT River waters)
Brant	Oct. 15 – Dec. 3	Oct. 15 – Dec. 3	Oct. 4 – Nov. 6 Nov. 23 – Dec. 8
Woodcock	Statewide	Sept. 24 – Nov. 7	
Common Snipe	Statewide	Sept. 24 – Nov. 7	

Youth Waterfowl Hunting Weekend – September 24 & 25

**BAG LIMITS**

The daily bag limit is the maximum number of birds of each species that any person may take (or possess in the field) during any one day. The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit for all waterfowl species except snow geese.

Species	Daily Limit	Possession Limit
Ducks *	6	18
Mergansers	5	15
Coot	15	45
Canada Geese		
September season		
Lake Champlain Zone	8	24
Interior Vermont Zone	8	24
Connecticut River Zone	5	15
Oct. - Nov. season		
Lake Champlain Zone	1	3
Interior Vermont Zone	1	3
Connecticut River Zone	2	6
Dec. – Jan. season		
Lake Champlain Zone	5	15
Interior Vermont Zone	5	15
Connecticut River Zone	5	15 (Vermont land portions only)
Snow Geese	25	No limit
Mar. 11 – Apr. 23, 2023	15	No limit
Brant	2	6
Scaup*		
Lake Champlain Zone		
Oct. 15 - Oct. 23 &		
Oct. 29 - Nov. 8	2	6
Nov. 9 - Dec. 18	1	3
Interior Vermont Zone		
Oct. 15 – Nov. 3	2	6
Nov. 4 - Dec. 13	1	3
Connecticut River Zone		
Oct. 4 - Nov. 6	1	3
Nov. 23 - Dec. 18	1	3
Woodcock	3	9
Common Snipe	8	24

\* The daily limit of 6 ducks may include no harlequin, and no more than 2 mallards (only 1 of which may be hens), 2 black ducks, 3 wood ducks, 1 pintail, 2 canvasbacks, 2 redheads, 2 or 1 scaup depending on dates, 3 scoters, 3 eiders, and 3 long-tailed duck.

**Table 5. Vermont Waterfowl Hunting and Harvest Data Comparisons (Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont Zones Combined)**

	<b>Federal Duck Stamp Sales</b>	<b>Vermont Duck Stamp Sales</b>	<b>Vermont HIP Registration</b>	<b>No. of Active Adult Duck Hunters</b>	<b>Average Seasonal Duck Bagged Per Hunter</b>	<b>Total Season Estimated Duck Harvest</b>	<b>Total Season Estimated Canada Goose Harvest</b>	<b>Total Season Estimated Snow Goose Harvest</b>
<b>1998</b>	4,345	6,725		3,132	5.78	24,000	2,700	3,300
<b>1999</b>	4,542	6,320		1,600	11.9	25,000	4,100	1,700
<b>2000</b>	4,741	5,418		1,700	10.4	17,700	3,600	4,200
<b>2001</b>	4,824	5,685		1,700	10.4	17,600	4,300	2,200
<b>2002</b>	5,201	5,722		2,600	9.6	26,800	7,100	1,300
<b>2003</b>	5,242	6,012		1,300	12.6	16,300	3,600	3,400
<b>2004</b>	4,723	6,242		2,600	9.3	24,300	7,100	1,700
<b>2005</b>	4,956	5,682		2,400	10.6	25,400	9,300	400
<b>2006</b>	3,391	5,581		2,000	9.9	19,600	7,800	100
<b>2007</b>	3,193	6,137		2,300	9.2	16,700	6,300	500
<b>2008</b>	3,391	5,746	↑ \$5-\$7.50	2,900	11.9	34,800	12,300	2,100
<b>2009</b>	not available	6,051		2,400	10.7	25,500	11,500	90
<b>2010</b>	not available	6,065 Last Stamp	5,404***	2,700	8.5	22,900	9,600	0
<b>2011</b>	not available	4,872 First Tag	4,949***	2,600	9.0	23,000	8,300	134
<b>2012</b>	not available	5,882	6,283***	2,100	10.0	20,500	8,600	34
<b>2013</b>	not available	6,436	8,719***	4,000	8.0	31,900	9,600	0
<b>2014</b>	not available	6,635	9,913***	2,600	6.8	17,800	12,300	46
<b>2015</b>	not available	6,244	11,122***	2,600	5.8	14,700	6,733	0
<b>2016</b>	not available	6,016	18,598***	3,400	5.2	17,600	8,800	0
<b>2017</b>	not available	5,954	7,006***	2,500	7.9	19,900	15,900	0
<b>2018</b>	not available	5,725	10,541***	2,100	7.8	16,200	7,400	0
<b>2019</b>	not available	5,620	10,359***	3,000	6.1	18,100	5,600	0
<b>2020</b>	not available	6,089	10,123***	2,200	9.0	19,900	11,800	116
<b>2021</b>	not available	6,111	10,236***	2,000	6.4	11,500	5,600	0
<b>2022</b>	not available	5,956	9,772***	To date not available	To date not available	To date not available	To date not available	To date not available

\*\*\* Includes youth hunters and woodcock/snipe hunters



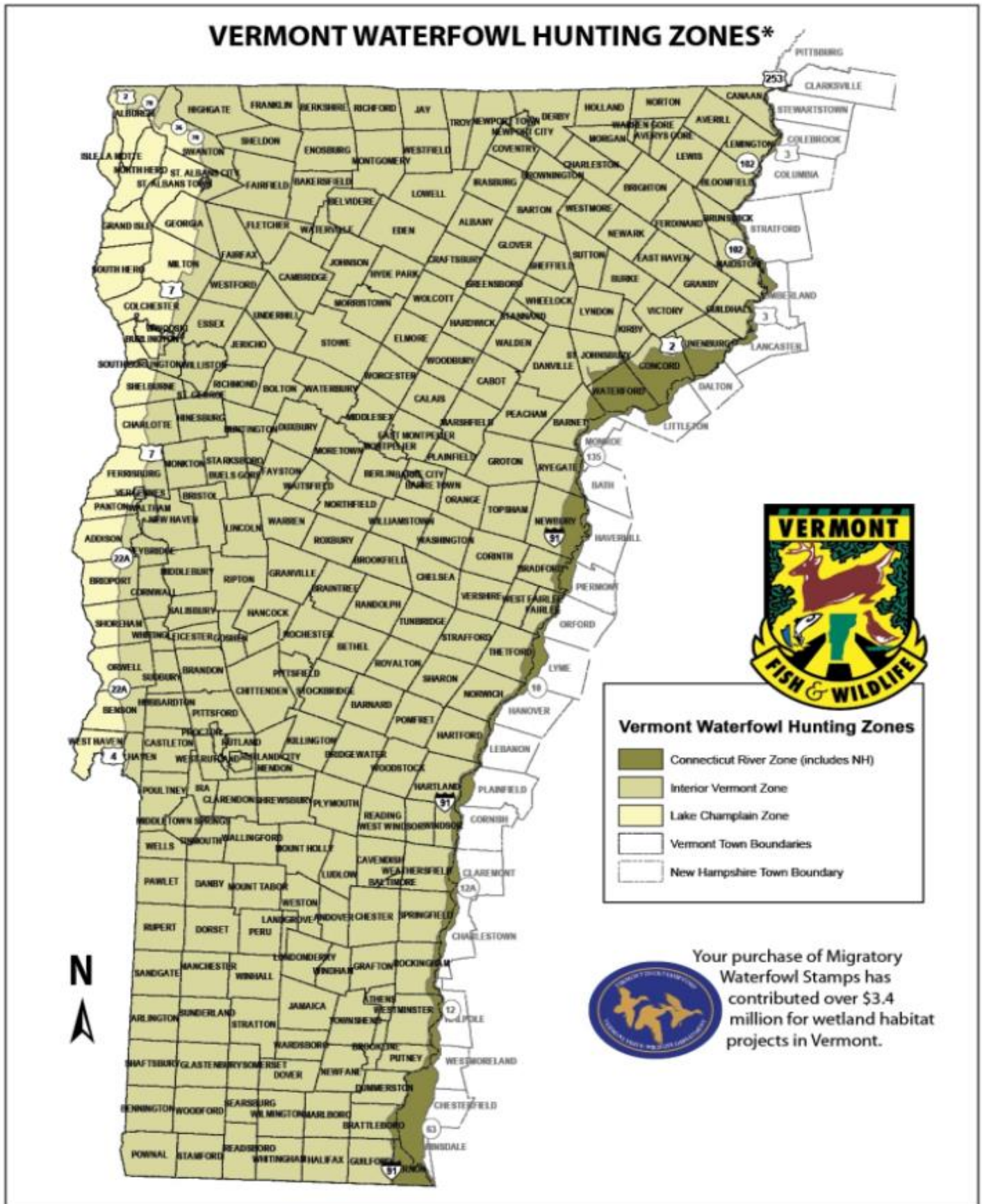


Figure 1. Vermont waterfowl hunting zones

**Table 6. USFWS Framework for 2023 Duck Seasons\***

<b><u>LENGTH</u></b>	<b><u>OUTSIDE DATES</u></b>	<b><u>DAILY BAG</u></b>	<b><u>POSSESSION LIMIT**</u></b>
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60 Days	Sept. 23 – Jan. 31	6	18
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<b><u>SPECIES RESTRICTIONS -</u></b>	<b><u>Daily Bag</u></b>
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MALLARD	4 (only 2 hens)
WOOD DUCK	3
BLACK DUCK	2
PINTAIL	1
REDHEAD	2
SCAUP	2/day for 20-days 1/day for 40-days
SCOTER	3
EIDERS	3
LONG-TAILED DUCK	3
CANVASBACK	2
HARLEQUIN	CLOSED
MOTTLED DUCK	1
FULVOUS WHISTLING DUCK	1
HOODED MERGANSER	6

\* Apply to Lake Champlain, Interior Vermont, and Connecticut River Zones.

\*\* Possession limit is equal to three times the daily bag limit for these species.

\*\*\* Four total sea ducks in aggregate, with species specific limits, (no more than 3-scoters, 3-eiders (1hen), or 3-long tailed ducks)

SHOOTING HOURS - ½ HOUR BEFORE SUNRISE TO SUNSET (all days – all species)

**Table 7. USFWS Framework for 2023 Geese, Brant, Merganser, Coot, Snipe, and Woodcock Seasons**

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>SEASON LENGTH</u>	<u>OUTSIDE DATES</u>	<u>DAILY POSSESSION BAG      LIMIT**</u>	
Canada Geese (No more than 107 days combined)				
Resident	25 days	Sept. 1 – Sept. 25	15	45
Regular	45 days	Oct. 10 – Feb. 5	3	9
Resident	77 days	Dec. 1 – Feb. 15	5	15
Snow & Blue Geese	107 days	Oct. 1 – Mar. 10	25	NONE
Brant	30 days	Sept. 23 – Jan. 31	1	3
Mergansers*	60 days	Sept. 23 – Jan. 31	6	18
(Hooded Mergansers)			(6)	(18)
Coots**	60 days	Sept. 23 – Jan. 31	15	45
Snipe	107 days	Sept. 1 – Jan. 31	8	24
Woodcock	45 days	Sept. 13 – Jan. 31	3	9

\* Season length for mergansers equals season option chosen for ducks. Mergansers may be included as part of the daily duck bag, in which case the limit would be 6 mergansers/day.

\*\* Season length for coots equals season option chosen for ducks.

SHOOTING HOURS - ½ HOUR BEFORE SUNRISE TO SUNSET (all days – all species)



## APPENDIX A

### 2023 FALL CALENDAR

	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
SEPTEMBER						1	2
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
OCTOBER							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	29	30	31				
NOVEMBER				1	2	3	4
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	26	27	28	29	30		
DECEMBER						1	2
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	31						

**APPENDIX B**

<b>Vermont Waterfowl Seasons</b>				
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>SEASON TYPE</b>	<b>SEASON LENGTH</b>	<b>SEASON DATES</b>	<b>GENERAL BAG LIMIT</b>
1942	Straight	70	Sept. 26 – Dec. 4	10-20
1943	Straight	70	Sept. 25 – Dec. 3	10-20
1944	Straight	80	Sept. 20 – Dec. 8	10-20
1945	Straight	80	Sept. 20 – Dec. 8	7-14
1946	Straight	45	Oct. 5 – Nov. 18	7-14
1947	Straight	30	Oct. 21 – Nov. 19	3-6
1948	Straight	30	Oct. 15 – Nov. 13	3-6
1949	Straight	40	Oct. 21 – Nov. 29	3-6
1950	Straight	40	Oct. 20 – Nov. 28	3-6
1951	Straight	45	Oct. 12 – Nov. 25	3-6
1952	Straight	55	Oct. 7 – Nov. 11	3-6
1953	Straight	60	Oct. 5 – Dec. 3	3-6
1954	Straight	60	Oct. 10 – Dec. 8	3-6
1955	Straight	70	Oct. 5 – Dec. 13	3-6
1956	Straight	70	Oct. 5 – Dec. 13	3-6
1957	Straight	70	Oct. 10 – Dec. 18	3-6
1958	Straight	60	Oct. 10 – Dec. 8	3-6
1959	Straight	50	Oct. 10 – Nov. 28	3-6
1960	Straight	50	Oct. 7 – Nov. 25	3-6
1961	Straight	40	Oct. 14 – Nov. 22	3-6
1962	Straight	40	Oct. 12 – Nov. 20	3-6
1963	Split	45	Oct. 11 – Oct. 27 / Nov. 11 – Dec. 8	3-6
1964	Straight	50	Oct. 10 – Nov. 28	3-6
1965	Straight	50	Oct. 16 – Dec. 4	3-6
1966	Straight	55	Oct. 8 – Dec. 1	3-6
1967	Split	45	Oct. 7 – Nov. 4 / Nov. 25 – Dec. 10	3-6
1968	Straight	50	Oct. 12 – Nov. 30	3-6
1969	Straight	50	Oct. 11 – Nov. 29	3-6
1970	Straight	50	Oct. 10 – Nov. 28	4-8
1971	Straight	50	Oct. 9 – Nov. 27	4-8
1972	Split	50	Oct. 7 – Oct. 15 / Oct. 28 – Dec. 7	4-8
1973	Split	45	Oct. 6 – Oct. 21 / Nov. 3 – Dec. 1	4-8
1974	Straight	50	Oct. 9 – Nov. 27*	4-8
1975	Straight	50	Oct. 8 – Nov. 26*	4-8
1976	Straight	50	Oct. 6 – Nov. 24*	4-8
1977	Straight	50	Oct. 5 – Nov. 23*	4-8
1978	Straight	50	Oct. 4 – Nov. 22*	4-8
1979	Split	50	Oct. 3 – Oct. 14 / Oct. 27 – Dec. 3*	4-8
1980	Straight	50	Oct. 8 – Nov. 26*	4-8
1981	Straight	50	Oct. 10 – Nov. 28*	4-8

## Vermont Waterfowl Seasons – Page 2

YEAR	SEASON TYPE	SEASON LENGTH	SEASON DATES	GENERAL BAG LIMIT
1982	Split	50	Oct. 2 – Oct. 10 / Oct. 16 – Nov. 25*	5-10
1983	Split	50	Oct. 8 – Oct. 16 / Oct. 22 – Dec. 1*	5-10
1984	Straight	50	Oct. 10 – Nov. 28*	5-10
1985	Zoned**	40	Oct. 9 – Oct. 13 / Oct. 26 – Nov. 29 (LCZ)* Oct. 9 – Nov. 17 (IVZ)	5-10 5-10
1986	Zoned**	40	Oct. 8 – Oct. 12 / Oct. 25 – Nov. 28 (LCZ)* Oct. 8 – Nov. 16 (IVZ)	5-10 5-10
1987	Zoned**	40	Oct. 7 – Oct. 11 / Oct. 24 – Nov. 27 (LCZ)* Oct. 7 – Nov. 15 (IVZ)	4-8 4-8
1988	Zoned/Split	30	Oct. 8 – Oct. 23 / Nov. 24 – Dec. 7 (LCZ)* Oct. 8 – Oct. 30 / Nov. 24 – Nov. 30 (IVZ)	3-6 3-6
1989	Zoned/Split	30	Oct. 11 – Oct. 29 / Nov. 23 – Dec. 3 (LCZ) Oct. 11 – Nov. 5 / Nov. 23 – Nov. 26 (IVZ)	3-6 3-6
1990	Zoned/Split	30	Oct. 10 – Oct. 21 / Nov. 15 – Dec. 2 (LCZ) Oct. 10 – Nov. 4 / Nov. 22 – Nov. 25 (IVZ)	3-6 3-6
1991	Zoned/Split	30	Oct. 12 – Oct. 27 / Nov. 23 – Dec. 6 (LCZ) Oct. 12 – Nov. 3 / Nov. 25 – Dec. 1 (IVZ)	3-6 3-6
1992	Zoned/Split	30	Oct. 7 – Oct. 11 / Nov. 7 – Dec. 1 (LCZ) Oct. 7 – Nov. 1 / Nov. 26 – Nov. 29 (IVZ)	3-6 3-6
1993	Zoned/Split	30	Oct. 20 – Nov. 7 / Nov. 25 – Dec. 5 (LCZ) Oct. 13 – Nov. 7 / Nov. 25 – Nov. 28 (IVZ)	3-6 3-6
1994	Zoned/Split	40	Oct. 15 – Nov. 6 / Nov. 19 – Dec. 5 (LCZ) Oct. 8 – Nov. 9 / Nov. 21 – Nov. 27 (IVZ)	3-6 3-6
1995	Zoned/Split	50	Oct. 11 – Oct. 22 / Nov. 4 – Dec. 11 (LCZ) Oct. 4 – Nov. 12 / Nov. 18 – Nov. 27 (IVZ)	4-8 4-8
1996	Zoned/Split	50	Oct. 9 – Oct. 20 / Nov. 2 – Dec. 9 (LCZ) Oct. 2 – Nov. 11 / Nov. 23 – Dec. 1 (IVZ)	5-10 5-10
1997	Zoned**	60	Oct. 4 – Oct. 19 / Oct. 25 – Dec. 7 (LCZ) Oct. 4 – Dec. 2 (IVZ)	4-8*** 4-8***
1998	Zoned**	60	Oct. 7 – Oct. 11 / Oct. 17 – Dec. 10 (LCZ) Oct. 7 – Dec. 5 (IVZ)	6-12 6-12
1999	Zoned**	60	Oct. 6 – Oct. 11 / Oct. 23 – Dec. 15 (LCZ) Oct. 6 – Dec. 4 (IVZ)	6-12 6-12
2000	Zoned/Split	60	Oct. 7 – Oct. 9 / Oct. 21 – Dec. 16 (LCZ) Oct. 7 – Nov. 12 / Nov. 18 – Dec. 10 (IVZ)	6-12 6-12
2001	Zoned/Split	60	Oct. 10 – Oct. 14 / Oct. 20 – Dec. 13 (LCZ) Oct. 10 – Dec. 8 (IVZ) Oct. 2 – Nov. 4 / Nov. 21 – Dec. 16 (CRZ)*****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2002	Zoned/Split	60	Oct. 9 – Oct. 13 / Oct. 22 – Dec. 15 (LCZ) Oct. 9 – Nov. 14 / Nov. 23 – Dec. 15 (IVZ) Oct. 2 – Nov. 5 / Nov. 27 – Dec. 21 (CRZ)*****	6-12 6-12 6-12

## Vermont Waterfowl Seasons – Page 3

YEAR	SEASON TYPE	SEASON LENGTH	SEASON DATES	GENERAL BAG LIMIT
2003	Zoned**	60	Oct. 11 - Oct. 13 / Oct. 25 - Dec. 20 (LCZ) Oct. 11 - Dec. 9 (IVZ) Oct. 7 - Nov. 9 / Nov. 26 - Dec. 21 (CRZ)****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2004	Zoned**	60	Oct. 6 - Oct. 10 / Oct. 23 - Dec. 16 (LCZ) Oct. 6 - Dec. 4 (IVZ) Oct. 5 - Nov. 14 / Nov. 24 - Dec. 12 (CRZ)****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2005	Zoned**	60	Oct. 5 - Oct. 10 / Oct. 26 - Dec. 18 (LCZ) Oct. 5 - Dec. 3 (IVZ) Oct. 4 - Nov. 13 / Nov. 23 - Dec. 11 (CRZ)****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2006	Zoned**	60	Oct. 7 - Oct. 15 / Oct. 25 - Dec. 14 (LCZ) Oct. 7 - Dec. 5 (IVZ) Oct. 3 - Nov. 5 / Nov. 22 - Dec. 17 (CRZ)****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2007	Zoned**	60	Oct. 10 - Oct. 14 / Oct. 27 - Dec. 20 (LCZ) Oct. 10 - Dec. 8 (IVZ) Oct. 3 - Nov. 4 / Nov. 21 - Dec. 17 (CRZ)****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2008	Zoned**	60	Oct. 8 - Oct. 12 / Oct. 25 - Dec. 18 (LCZ) Oct. 8 - Dec. 6 (IVZ) Oct. 2 - Nov. 2 / Nov. 23 - Dec. 20 (CRZ)****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2009	Zoned**	60	Oct. 10 - Oct. 13 / Oct. 24 - Dec. 18 (LCZ) Oct. 10 - Dec. 8 (IVZ) Oct. 6 - Nov. 8 / Nov. 25 - Dec. 20 (CRZ)****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2010	Zoned**	60	Oct. 6 - Oct. 10 / Oct. 23 - Dec. 16 (LCZ) Oct. 6 - Dec. 4 (IVZ) Oct. 5 - Nov. 7 / Nov. 24 - Dec. 19 (CRZ)	6-12 6-12 6-12
2011	Zoned**	60	Oct. 12 - Oct. 16 / Oct. 29 - Dec. 22 (LCZ) Oct. 12 - Dec. 10 (IVZ) Oct. 4 - Nov. 6 / Nov. 23 - Dec. 18 (CRZ)****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2012	Zoned**	60	Oct. 13 - Oct. 17 / Oct. 27 - Dec. 20 (LCZ) Oct. 13 - Dec. 11 (IVZ) Oct. 2 - Nov. 4 / Nov. 21 - Dec. 16 (CRZ)****	6-12 6-12 6-12
2013	Zoned**	60	Oct. 9 - Oct. 13 / Oct. 26 - Dec. 19 (LCZ) Oct. 9 - Dec. 7 (IVZ) Oct. 2 - Nov. 3 / Nov. 19 - Dec. 15 (CRZ)****	6-18 6-18 6-18
2014	Zoned**	60	Oct. 8 - Oct. 12 / Oct. 25 - Dec. 18 (LCZ) Oct. 8 - Dec. 6 (IVZ) Oct. 2 - Nov. 2 / Nov. 16 - Dec. 13 (CRZ)****	6-18 6-18 6-18
2015	Zoned**	60	Oct. 10 - Oct. 14 / Oct. 24 - Dec. 17 (LCZ) Oct. 10 - Dec. 8 (IVZ) Oct. 6 - Nov. 5 / Nov. 15 - Dec. 13 (CRZ)****	6-18 6-18 6-18
2016	Zoned**	60	Oct. 12 - Oct. 16 / Oct. 29 - Dec. 22 (LCZ) Oct. 12 - Dec. 10 (IVZ) Oct. 4 - Nov. 6 / Nov. 22 - Dec. 22 (CRZ)****	6-18 6-18 6-18
2017	Zoned**	60	Oct. 11 - Oct. 15 / Nov. 7 - Dec. 31 (LCZ) Oct. 11 - Dec. 9 (IVZ) Oct. 3 - Nov. 5 / Nov. 22 - Dec. 17 (CRZ)****	6-18 6-18 6-18

2018	Zoned**	60	Oct. 13-Oct. 21/Nov. 10 - Dec. 30 (LCZ) Oct. 13-Dec. 11 (IVZ) Oct. 2-Nov. 4/Nov. 21- Dec. 16 (CRZ)****	6-18 6-18 6-18
2019	Zoned**	60	Oct. 10-Nov. 1/Nov. 23 - Dec. 29 (LCZ) Oct. 10-Dec. 8 (IVZ) Oct. 2-Nov. 3/Nov. 20- Dec. 16 (CRZ)****	6-18 6-18 6-18
2020	Zoned**	60	Oct. 10-Nov. 1/Nov. 21 - Dec. 27 (LCZ) Oct. 10-Dec. 8 (IVZ) Oct. 6-Nov. 8/Nov. 17- Dec. 12 (CRZ)****	6-18 6-18 6-18
2021	Zoned**	60	Oct. 13-Oct. 17/Oct. 30 - Dec. 23 (LCZ) Oct. 13-Dec. 11 (IVZ) Oct. 5-Nov. 7/Nov. 24- Dec. 19 (CRZ)****	6-18 6-18 6-18
2022	Zoned**	60	Oct. 15-Oct. 23/Oct. 29 - Dec. 18 (LCZ) Oct. 15-Dec. 13 (IVZ) Oct. 4-Nov. 6/Nov. 23 - Dec. 8 (CRZ)****	6-18 6-18 6-18

\* Regular season was followed by a 16-day special goldeneye/scaup season – 3-bird bag

\*\* Lake Champlain Zone – Split Season

Interior Vermont Zone – Straight Season

\*\*\* Two teal (either blue-winged or green-winged) allowed in addition to regular bag limit

\*\*\*\* Connecticut River Zone set by New Hampshire Fish and Game Commission, same as NH Inland Zone