**RABBIT**
Nov. 22 – Feb. 28  
Daily limit 5; No possession or season limits  
Box-Trapping Season:  
Nov. 22 – Feb. 28

**QUAIL**
Nov. 22 – Feb. 28  
Daily limit 6; Possession 12; Season, no limit

**GROUSE**
Oct. 13 – Feb. 28  
Daily limit 3; Possession 6; Season 30

**BOBCAT**
Oct. 13 – Feb. 28  
No limits

**GROUNDHOG, NUTRIA, COYOTE, SKUNK (STRIPED), ARMADILLO AND FERAL SWINE (HOGS)**

- There is no closed season or bag limit, except in Hyde, Beaufort, Washington, Dare and Tyrrell counties. In those five counties, coyote hunting, day and night, is prohibited. Hunters may use electronic calls for coyotes.
- Feral swine and coyotes may be hunted at night with lights.

**PHEASANT**
Nov. 15 – Feb. 1 (male pheasant only)  
Daily limit 3; Possession 6; Season 30

**FOX**
Year Round (including Sundays)  
- Must be taken with dogs only; no limits.
- Local laws may restrict hunting foxes with dogs. See the “Fox Season Hunting and Trapping Laws” publication at ncwildlife.org or call 919-707-0050 to request a copy.

Nov. 15 – Jan. 1  
Daily limit 2; Season 10  
This season applies as follows:
- In those counties and parts of counties east of I-77 where local laws do not prohibit the taking of foxes or that do not have established fox seasons and Mitchell and Caldwell counties.
- Foxes taken during this hunting season shall not be bought or sold.
- In Caldwell County, foxes may be taken by firearms only.

Daily limit 2; Season 10  
- Foxes may be taken in the counties listed below by legal weapons and may be sold after being properly tagged (refer to page 9 for more information on fox tags):
  - Caswell
  - Henderson
  - Clay
  - Macon
  - Graham
  - Tyrrell
- Hunters must possess fox tags prior to harvesting foxes during this season.

There is no open weapons hunting season in any other county except where provided by local laws. To see if your county has a hunting season on foxes, see the hunting page on ncbirds.org/Hunting/LawsSafety.aspx and click on Fox harvest Season dates, or call 919-707-0050 to request a copy.

**EXTENDED SEASON FOR TAKE BY FALCONRY**
Oct. 13 – Feb. 28 (Applies only to rabbits)  
Outside of Regular Season Dates:  
Rabbits: Daily limit 3; Possession limit 6  
Regular species bag limits apply during regular seasons.

**BEAVER**
There is an open season for taking beaver with firearms or bow and arrow during any open season for the taking of wild animals, provided that permission has been obtained from the owner or lessee of the land on which the beaver is being taken.

**CONTROLLED HUNTING PRESERVES**
Oct. 1 – Mar. 31  
No limits.
This applies to domestically raised birds (mallard ducks and upland game birds) only.
No wild turkey may be taken.

**MIGRATORY BIRDS**

- **Migratory Birds Protected** Federal laws protecting migratory birds (songbirds, woodpeckers, raptors or waterfowl) take precedence over state laws. Before any migratory birds may be taken or killed during the closed season, a federal permit must be obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Substantial penalties for violations apply. Call the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Migratory Bird Permits Section in Atlanta, Ga. at 404-679-7070 for information. During the May 1–Aug. 31 time period, depredation permits issued directly from the Wildlife Resources Commission are available when Canada geese are depredating in commercial agriculture situations. Contact the Commission at 919-707-0050 for more information. Federal seasons and bag limits on migratory game birds are adopted as state regulations.

- **Colonial Water Bird Nesting Areas** Coastal islands and beach areas posted as “Colonial Water Bird Nesting” areas are being managed for our nesting populations of pelicans, terns, gulls, herons and egrets. Special regulations apply. Access is prohibited on these areas from April 1–Aug. 31, except by special permit. Dogs are not allowed on these areas during this time period. Access on these areas from Sept. 1–March 30 will be allowed as authorized by the landowner.

**MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS – HUNTING STAMPS AND PRIVILEGES**

- **Harvest Information Program (HIP)** All licensed hunters hunting migratory game birds (dove, rails, woodcock, snipe or waterfowl) in North Carolina are required to have certification of participation in the federal Harvest Information Program (HIP). Certification can be obtained free of charge by going online at ncwildlife.org, calling 888-248-6834, or visiting a wildlife service agent.

- **Migratory Bird Hunting And Conservation Stamp (Federal Duck Stamp)** The law requires that each waterfowl hunter 16 years of age and older, must carry on his person a valid Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, or federal duck stamp, signed in ink across the face. (Hunters under age 16 may voluntarily purchase a duck stamp and help preserve wetlands for waterfowl.) Refer to page 9 for more information.

- **North Carolina Waterfowl Privilege** Each waterfowl hunter 16 years of age and older must carry on his person a license having the North Carolina Waterfowl Privilege. The North Carolina Waterfowl Privilege is required in addition to the federal duck stamp.
Refer to the “License Types” section on page 5 of this digest for information on which licenses include this privilege license.

**North Carolina Duck Stamp** Hunters are no longer required to carry the North Carolina duck stamp while hunting for waterfowl; however, the current year’s duck stamp will be available for collecting purposes; call 888-248-6834 for more information.

**MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS – SEASONS**

**Nongame Migratory**

**CROW SEASONS**

<table>
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<th>Season</th>
<th>Bag Limits</th>
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**Waterfowl and Webless Migratory** Dates, bag limits and shooting hours for doves, other webless migratory game birds and resident Canada geese will be available by Aug. 1. Dates, bag limits and shooting hours for waterfowl will be available by Sept. 1. To obtain information on these dates, bag limits and shooting hours, call the following toll-free number: 800-675-0263, or see our website at ncwildlife.org. Wildlife service agents will receive posters containing this information, and the information also will be distributed through local news media.

**Youth Waterfowl Day** Waterfowl hunting outside of the regular season is allowed on the day officially designated as “Youth Waterfowl Day.” Youths must be 15 years of age or younger and accompanied by a properly licensed adult at least 18 years of age. Legal species include ducks, geese, tundra swans, mergansers, moorhens, gallinules and coots. The accompanying adult may not hunt but may participate in other seasons open on Youth Waterfowl Day. Call 800-675-0263 after Sept. 1 for the date. Canada goose bag limits and any additional restrictions on Youth Waterfowl Day vary by the applicable hunt zone. See the Canada Goose Hunt Zone section for information about the Northeast Goose Hunt Zone. Any youth harvesting a tundra swan must have a valid swan permit.

**TUNDRA SWAN**

A limited number of permits will be issued to hunt tundra swans. Permits will be issued by a random drawing authorizing each permitholder to harvest one tundra swan. The following regulations apply:

- The permit and tag are not transferable and are valid only for the person whose name appears on the permit. It is unlawful to possess a swan permit or tag while hunting that was assigned to another person, or to alter the permit or tag in any way other than cutting out the proper month and day of kill.
- The permit must be canceled by cutting out both the month and day of the kill immediately at the time and place of the kill.
- The permit must be affixed to the harvested swan in accordance with instructions provided with the permit.
- The permit must be carried on one’s person while hunting or, if in possession of a swan, the permit must be affixed to the swan. Every hunter receiving a swan permit will also receive a questionnaire. If the hunter does not return that completed questionnaire to the Wildlife Resources Commission by April 1, that hunter will be ineligible for a tundra swan permit the following season.

**GADDY GOOSE REFUGE**

It is unlawful to harass or take any Canada goose during established goose hunting seasons that occur after Oct. 1 each year in the Gaddy Goose Refuge in Anson County. The Gaddy Goose Refuge is that area in Anson County starting at the N.C. 109 bridge over the Pee Dee River and following N.C. 109 south to SR 1650; west on S.R. 1650 to S.R. 1649; west on S.R. 1649 to U.S. 52; south on U.S. 52 to S.R. 1652; west on S.R. 1652 to S.R. 1641; west on S.R. 1641 to N.C. 742; northwest on N.C. 742 to Lanes Creek; north along Lanes Creek to the Rocky River; downstream on the Rocky River to the Pee Dee River; and downstream along the Pee Dee River to the beginning of the N.C. 109 bridge.

**Nontoxic Shot Requirements** In North Carolina, no person shall take waterfowl while possessing shells loaded with any shot other than steel or other approved nontoxic materials. On posted waterfowl impoundments on game lands, it is unlawful to hunt with or have in possession any shotgun shell containing lead or toxic shot while hunting; except shotgun shells containing lead buck-shot may be used while deer hunting. Nontoxic shot is required for the taking of captive-reared mallards on shooting preserves, in field trials and during bona fide dog-training activities.

**SUMMARY OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS**

In addition to state regulations, the following federal rules apply to the taking, possession, shipping, transporting and storing of migratory game birds. **No persons shall take migratory game birds:**

- With a trap, snare, net, rifle, pistol, swivel gun, shotgun larger than 10 gauge, punt gun, battery gun, machinegun, fish hook, poison, drug, explosive, or stupifying substance; or
- With a shotgun of any description capable of holding more than three shells, unless it is plugged with a one-piece filler, incapable of removal without disassembling the gun, so its total capacity does not exceed three shells. This restriction does not apply during dates states have selected under the Conservation Order

See the Wildlife Resources Commission’s *Permit Hunting Opportunities* publication for instructions on obtaining a swan permit.

**SPECIAL SEA DUCK AREA**

The taking of sea ducks (scoter, eider and oldsquaw), except during the regular duck season, shall be limited to the waters of the Atlantic Ocean, and to those coastal waters south of U.S. 64 that are separated by a distance of at least 800 yards of open water from any shore, island or marsh. Special sea duck bag limits and seasons apply in these areas. During the regular season, this bag limit may be in addition to the limits applying to other ducks. In all other areas, sea ducks may be taken only during the regular open season for ducks, and they must be included in the regular duck season daily bag and possession limits.

**SEPTMBER TEAL ZONE**

That area located east of U.S. 17 is designated as the “September Teal Zone.” Teal seasons occurring prior to Oct. 1 apply to this area only.

**CANADA GOOSE HUNT ZONES**

The state is divided into Canada goose hunt zones. See the map on page 54 for zone descriptions. For the hunt dates, bag limits or other restrictions that may apply in each zone, please call 800-675-0263 after Sept. 1, or visit our website at ncwildlife.org.

As with other migratory game birds, it is unlawful to hunt or possess Canada geese without having HIP certification as well as other applicable state and federal licenses and stamps in your possession.
for light geese (i.e. greater and lesser snow and Ross's geese) or those selected for the control of resident Canada geese.

- From or by means, aid, or use of a sinkbox or any other type of low-floating device, having a depression affording the hunter a means of concealment beneath the surface of the water;
- From or by means, aid, or use of any motor vehicle, motor-driven land conveyance, or aircraft of any kind, except that paraplegics and persons missing one or both legs may take from any stationary motor vehicle or stationary motor-driven land conveyance;
- From or by means of any motorboat or other craft having a motor attached, or any sailboat, unless the motor has been completely shut off and/or the sails furled, and its progress there from has ceased;
- By the use or aid of live birds as decoys; although not limited to, it shall be a violation of this paragraph for any person to take migratory waterfowl on an area where tame or captive live ducks or geese are present unless such birds are and have been for a period of 10 consecutive days prior to such taking, confined within an enclosure which substantially reduces the audibility of their calls and totally conceals such birds from the sight of wild migratory waterfowl;
- By the use or aid of recorded or electrically amplified bird calls or sounds. This restriction does not apply during dates states have selected under the Conservation Order for light geese (i.e. greater and lesser snow and Ross's geese) or those selected for the control of resident Canada geese.
- By means or aid of any motor-driven land, water, or air conveyance, or any sailboat used for the purpose of or resulting in the concentrating, driving, rallying, or stirring up of any migratory bird;
- By the aid of baiting, or on or over any baited area, where a person knows or reasonably should know that the area is or has been baited.

It is legal to take migratory game birds including waterfowl, coots, and cranes, on or over the following lands or areas that are not otherwise baited areas:

- Standing crops or flooded standing crops (including aquatics);
- Standing, flooded, or manipulated natural vegetation; flooded harvested croplands; or lands or areas where seeds or grains have been scattered solely as the result of a normal agricultural planting, harvesting, post-harvest manipulation or normal soil stabilization practice;
- From a blind or other place of concealment camouflaged with natural vegetation;
- From a blind or other place of concealment camouflaged with vegetation from agricultural crops, as long as such camouflage does not result in the exposing, depositing, distributing or scattering of grain or other feed; or
- Standing or flooded standing agricultural crops where grain is inadvertently scattered solely as a result of a hunter entering or exiting a hunting area, placing decoys, or retrieving downed birds.

It is legal to take migratory game birds, except waterfowl, coots and cranes, on or over lands or areas that are not otherwise baited areas, and where grain or other feed has been distributed or scattered solely as the result of manipulation of an agricultural crop or other feed on the land where grown, or solely as the result of a normal agricultural operation.

Wanton Waste of Migratory Game Birds No person shall kill or cripple any migratory game bird without making a reasonable effort to retrieve the bird, and retain it in his actual custody, at the place where taken or between that place and either (a) his automobile or principal means of land transportation; or (b) his personal abode or temporary or transient place of lodging; or (c) a migratory bird preservation facility; or (d) a post office; or (e) a common carrier facility.

Non-toxic Shot No person may take ducks, geese (including brant), swans or coots while possessing shot (either in shotshells or as loose shot for blackpowder) other than approved non-toxic shot. For a list of approved non-toxic shot, see (http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/issues/nontoxic_shot/nontoxic.htm)

Opening Day of a Season No person on the opening day of the season shall possess any freshly killed migratory game birds in excess of the daily bag limit, or aggregate daily bag limit, whichever applies.

Field Possession Limit No person shall possess, have in custody, or transport more than the daily bag limit or aggregate daily bag limit, whichever applies, of migratory game birds, tagged or not tagged, at or between the place where taken and either (a) his automobile or principal means of land transportation; or (b) his personal abode or temporary or transient place of lodging; or (c) a migratory bird preservation facility; or (d) a post office; or (e) a common carrier facility.

Tagging Requirement No person shall put or leave any migratory game birds at any place (other than at his personal abode), or in the custody of another person for picking, cleaning, processing, shipping, transportation, or storage (including temporary storage), or for the purpose of having taxidermy services performed, unless such birds have a tag attached, signed by the hunter, stating his address, the total number and species of birds, and the date such birds were killed. Migratory game birds being transported in any vehicle as the personal baggage of the possessor shall not be considered as being in storage or temporary storage.

Custody of Birds of Another No person shall receive or have in custody any migratory game birds belonging to another person unless such birds are properly tagged.

Termination of Possession Subject to all other requirements of this part, the possession of birds taken by any hunter shall be deemed to have ceased when such birds have been delivered by him to another person as a gift; or have been delivered by him to a post office, a common carrier, or a migratory bird preservation facility and consigned for transport by the Postal Service or a common carrier to some person other than the hunter.

Gift of Migratory Game Birds No person may receive, possess, or give to another, any freshly killed migratory game birds as a gift, except at the personal abodes of the donor or donee, unless such birds have a tag attached, signed by the hunter who took the birds, stating such hunter's address, the total number and species of birds and the date such birds were taken.

Transportation of Birds of Another No person shall transport migratory game birds belonging to another person unless such birds are properly tagged.

Species Identification Requirement No person shall transport within the United States any migratory game birds, except doves and band-tailed pigeons, unless the head or one fully feathered wing remains attached to each such bird at all times while being transported from the place where taken until they have arrived at the personal abode of the possessor or a migratory bird preservation facility.

Marking Package or Container No person shall transport by the Postal Service or a common carrier migratory game birds unless the package or container in which such birds are transported has the name and address of the shipper and the consignee and an accurate statement of the numbers of each species of birds therein contained clearly and conspicuously marked on the outside thereof.
**Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp**  The law requires that each waterfowl hunter 16 years of age and older must carry on his person a Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (Federal Duck Stamp) that is validated by the hunter signing the stamp in ink across the face of the stamp.

More restrictive regulations may apply to National Wildlife Refuges opened to public hunting. For additional information on refuge-specific regulations see http://www.fws.gov/refuges/

**DEFINITIONS**

**Migratory Birds** are birds protected by federal law as a result of treaties signed with other countries. Protected migratory birds are listed in Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 10.13. This list includes almost all birds found in the United States with the exception of the house sparrow, feral pigeon (commonly called rock dove), European starling, Eurasian collared-dove, mute swan, and upland game birds (which are protected by state laws).

All migratory birds are protected. However, a subset of migratory birds classified as migratory game birds may be hunted in accordance with State and Federal regulations. The list of migratory game birds includes species of ducks, geese (including brant), swans, doves and pigeons, cranes, rails, coots, gallinules and moorhens, woodcock and snipe, if there is an open season.

**Daily bag limit** means the maximum number of migratory game birds of a single species or combination (aggregate) of species permitted to be taken by one person in any one day during the open season in any one specified geographic area for which a daily bag limit is prescribed.

**Aggregate daily bag limit** means the maximum number of migratory game birds permitted to be taken by one person in any one day during the open season when such person hunts in more than one specified geographic area and/or for more than one species for which a combined daily bag limit is prescribed. The aggregate daily bag limit is equal to, but shall not exceed, the largest daily bag limit prescribed for any one species or for any one specified geographic area in which taking occurs.

**Possession limit** means the maximum number of migratory game birds of a single species or a combination of species permitted to be possessed by any one person when lawfully taken in the United States in any one specified geographic area for which a possession limit is prescribed.

**Aggregate possession limit** means the maximum number of migratory game birds of a single species or combination of species taken in the United States permitted to be possessed by any one person when taking and possession occurs in more than one specified geographic area for which a possession limit is prescribed. The aggregate possession limit is equal to, but shall not exceed, the largest possession limit prescribed for any one of the species or specified geographic areas in which taking and possession occurs.

**Personal abode** means one's principal or ordinary home or dwelling place, as distinguished from one's temporary or transient place of abode or dwelling such as a hunting club, or any club house, cabin, tent or trailer house used as a hunting club, or any hotel, motel or rooming house used during a hunting, pleasure or business trip.

**Migratory bird preservation facility** means:

1. Any person who, at their residence or place of business and for hire or other consideration;
2. Any taxidermist, cold-storage facility or locker plant which, for hire or other consideration;
3. Any hunting club which, in the normal course of operations; receives, possesses, or has in custody any migratory game birds belonging to another person for purposes of picking, cleaning, freezing, processing, storage or shipment.

**Normal agricultural planting, harvesting, or post-harvest manipulation** means a planting or harvesting undertaken for the purpose of producing and gathering a crop, or manipulation after such harvest and removal of grain, that is conducted in accordance with official recommendations of State Extension Specialists of the Cooperative Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

**Normal agricultural operation** means a normal agricultural planting, harvesting, post-harvest manipulation, or agricultural practice that is conducted in accordance with official recommendations of State Extension Specialists of the Cooperative Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

**Normal soil stabilization practice** means a planting for agricultural soil erosion control or post-mining land reclamation conducted in accordance with official recommendations of State Extension Specialists of the Cooperative Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture for agricultural soil erosion control.

**Baited area** means any area on which salt, grain, or other feed has been placed, exposed, deposited, distributed, or scattered, if that salt, grain, or other feed could serve as a lure or attraction for migratory game birds to, on, or over areas where hunters are attempting to take them. Any such area will remain a baited area for 10 days following the complete removal of all such salt, grain, or other feed.

**Baiting** means the direct or indirect placing, exposing, depositing, distributing, or scattering of salt, grain, or other feed that could serve as a lure or attraction for migratory game birds to, on, or over any areas where hunters are attempting to take them.

**Manipulation** means the alteration of natural vegetation or agricultural crops by activities that include but are not limited to mowing, shredding, discing, rolling, chopping, trampling, flattening, burning, or herbicide treatments. The term manipulation does not include the distributing or scattering of grain, seed, or other feed after removal from or storage on the field where grown.

**Natural vegetation** means any non-agricultural, native, or naturalized plant species that grows at a site in response to planting or from existing seeds or other propagules. The term natural vegetation does not include planted millet. However, planted millet that grows on its own in subsequent years after the year of planting is considered natural vegetation.