Waterfowl/Migratory Game Birds

Seasons and bag limits for ducks, geese, doves, woodcock and other migratory game birds must conform to frameworks established by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. These seasons will be set in the summer and will be announced through the news media in August, after this Digest was published.

To hunt waterfowl, persons 16 and older are required to have a federal duck stamp, and it must be signed across the face and carried by the hunter. In addition, all licensed hunters ages 12 and older must have a Pennsylvania Migratory Game Bird License to hunt ducks, geese, doves, woodcock, brant, coots, gallinules, moorhens, rails and snipe. This license may be obtained from any license issuing agent.

Pennsylvania's non-mandatory duck stamp, pictured here, which helps finance wetland acquisition and development, waterfowl education and waterfowl monitoring/research, is available from Commission offices and participating license issuing agents for $5.50.

Mourning dove season is tentatively set to open September 1 each year, unless the first falls on a Sunday. A split-season format has been in place for doves the last several years, with the first season running Sept.1 to about the 4th Saturday in the month, a second opening on the general small game season opener, and the third opening the day after Christmas (unless that day falls on a Sunday) for approximately a week. Hunting hours during the proposed September segment of dove season are noon to sunset.

Hunters should maintain a written record of hunting dates and birds harvested in the event that they receive a post-season survey through the Federal Harvest Information Program.

2012 Pennsylvania Duck Stamp
by Scott Calpino

Goose Blind Application

Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area
or
Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area

Permittees to hunt these areas during goose season only are selected by public drawings held prior to the hunting season. Only the application form on this page will be accepted.

An individual may apply to only one area per year and may submit only one application from the current Hunting & Trapping Digest.

Mailed applications for Middle Creek will be accepted through Sept. 11, and selected through a public drawing on Wed., Sept. 12, at 10 a.m.

Mailed applications for Pymatuning will be accepted through Sept. 8, and selected through a public drawing at 10 a.m. on Sat. Sept. 15.

The application must contain the applicant's 2012-13 hunting license Customer Identification Number (CID).

The PGC Executive Director will designate one shooting day at Middle Creek and Pymatuning as a youth-only day, and will establish, no later than 20 days prior to the drawing, the number of applications to be drawn. Adults who accompany a junior license hunter on this day may participate in the hunt by calling only. Applications received from junior hunters will be separated and drawn prior to the other applications on the established drawing date for the management area. Unsuccessful applicants for the youth shooting day will then be placed with all other applications and the drawing will proceed until all shooting days are filled.

A separate drawing is held for blinds that accommodate hunters with disabilities. Applicants must submit a copy of their current Disabled Person Permit (permit to hunt from a vehicle) issued by the PGC.

Blinds at Middle Creek and Pymatuning will not be operational during the September season or in the late season. Shooting days at **Middle Creek** are **Tuesdays, Thursdays** and **Saturdays**. Shooting days at **Pymatuning** are **Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays** and **Saturdays**.

Successful applicants will be mailed a hunting reservation entitling them to be accompanied by a maximum of three guests. Apply to:

PGC Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area
Post Office Box 110
Kleinfeltersville, PA 17039-0110
OR
PGC Pymatuning Wildlife Management Area
9552 Hartstown Rd.
Hartstown, PA 16131

Controlled Goose Hunting Area Application
(Please Print)

Check One: ☐ Middle Creek ☐ Pymatuning

☐ Youth Only Day (Check if you are a Junior License Holder and are interested in being included in this special drawing.)

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

License CID N0. ___-___-___-___-___-___-___-___-___-___-___

Phone Number (_____) _____
Area Code

Signature _____ Date _____

List Two Preferred Dates

1. _____ 2. _____

☐ Check here if you will accept any other date if your selected dates are full.

Do Not Write Below This Line

Assignment Date _____ Blind _____

Report Banded Birds

Hunters can report bird bands online at www.reportband.gov or on a toll-free number: 1-800-327-BAND. Operators are on duty 7 a.m.- 4:30 p.m., Mon.- Fri. At other times a voice mail system will ask hunters to leave a telephone number. In addition to band numbers, information requested will include when, where and what species of waterfowl were killed. The age and sex of the bird and where it was banded will be provided to the hunter by mail.

Waterfowl/Migratory Game Birds

Special Snow Goose Conservation Season

Waterfowl hunters again will have a special opportunity to harvest snow geese in Pennsylvania in the spring. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has approved a Conservation Order for snow geese, which is a special management action authorized by the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act to control certain wildlife populations when traditional management programs are unsuccessful in reducing overabundant wildlife populations. Federal and state regulations have been amended to allow this additional harvest of snow geese in response to concerns about their growing numbers across North America.

From mid-February to late March, more than 100,000 snow geese may spend time in Pennsylvania, fueling up for their return to the arctic breeding grounds. Peak numbers occur in early March, with major concentration areas located in Lancaster and Lebanon counties, with fewer numbers in Berks, Lehigh and Montour counties.

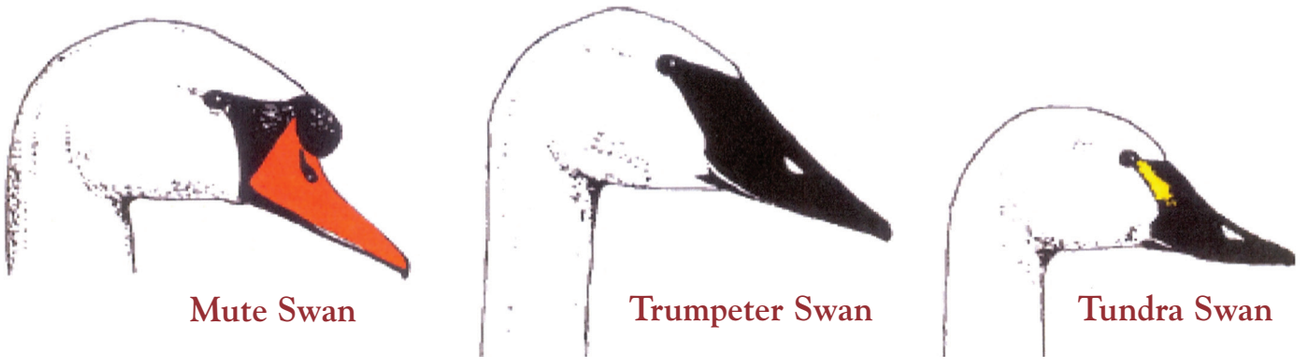
Under the new regulations, hunters who have a general hunting license, Federal Duck Stamp (required for persons 16 and older), a Pennsylvania Migratory Bird License and a PA snow goose conservation permit, may take snow geese and Ross' geese (a smaller but nearly identical species) statewide during the conservation hunt (check the website and news releases for exact dates). All migratory game bird hunting regulations and requirements apply to the taking of snow geese, except that use of recorded or electrically amplified calls or sounds is allowed. The use of decoys powered or operated by batteries or electricity is permitted. Hunting hours during the conservation season are from one half hour before sunrise to one half hour after sunset. Hunters must also report their harvest by early May to be eligible for future conservation hunts.

Hunters interested in participating in this season must obtain a free permit and harvest report card, which can be obtained by submitting an online application on the Game Commission's website (www.pgc.state.pa.us). Click on the snow goose icon on the homepage. Permits and the required report card can also be obtained by calling the Game Commission at the Harrisburg Headquarters (717-787-4250) and asking for the Bureau of Wildlife Management. Allow at least one week for processing and mail delivery to obtain a permit by the call-in method.

Mute Swans:

Mute swans are non-native and not protected under state or federal law. Hunters may harvest mute swans and they do not count as part of the daily bag. Mute swans have an **orange bill with a black fleshy knob on top at the feather line. Mute swans do not feed in fields and are only encountered in wetlands.**

Note: Native tundra and trumpeter swans are protected, have a black bill and are commonly found in fields and wetlands. Sandhill Cranes are likely to be present in certain areas and are protected.



Woodcock Habitat Regional Initiatives

In an effort to halt the population decline of American woodcock, restoration projects have been undertaken across much of the woodcock's range. The population decline, which has been going on for more than 50 years, is because the brushy habitat this popular game bird requires has been lost to development or has grown to become mature forest.

The Wildlife Management Institute is leading the initiative, which includes federal and state conservation agencies, timber companies, organizations such as the Ruffed Grouse Society and Woodcock Limited of Pennsylvania, and private landowners.

A website, www.timberdoodle.org, covers the restoration plan in detail, along with information on the woodcock's natural history and habitat requirements. Private landowners interested in helping woodcock can learn about demonstration areas where they can view shrubland habitat and learn how to create, restore and maintain it.

Waterfowl/Migratory Game Birds

Arms & Ammunition: 1) Manual and semi-automatic shotguns no larger than 10-gauge with a capacity limited to no more than three shells in the chamber and magazine combined; 2) Long, recurve and compound bows and arrows; and crossbows. Only non-toxic fine shot up to and including size T (.20 inches) is lawful. It is unlawful to hunt waterfowl with lead shot.

Restrictions: No person shall take migratory game birds:

- With a shotgun capable of holding more than three shells, unless it is plugged with a one-piece filler that is incapable of removal without disassembling the gun.
- From a sink box (a low floating device, having a depression affording the hunter a means of concealment beneath the surface of the water).
- From or with the aid or use of a car or other motor-driven land conveyance, or any aircraft.
- From or by means of any motor boat or sail boat unless the motor has been completely shut off and/or the sail furled, and its progress therefrom has ceased.
- By the use or aid of live decoys, or decoys powered or operated by batteries or any other source of electricity.
- By using records or tapes of migratory bird calls or sounds, or electrically amplified imitations of bird calls.
- By driving, rallying or chasing birds with any motorized conveyance or any sailboat to put them in range of hunters.
- By the aid of baiting (placing feed such as corn, wheat, salt or other feed to constitute a lure or enticement), or on or over any baited area. Hunters should be aware that a baited area is considered to be baited for 30 days after the removal of the bait.

Fluorescent Orange Requirements: Waterfowl and dove hunters are not required to wear fluorescent orange clothing.

Hunting Parties: Waterfowl and dove hunters can hunt in a party of more than six persons as long as they are hunting from a blind or stationary position.

Youth Waterfowl Hunting Day: Licensed junior hunters ages 12-15. Ducks, mergansers, Canada geese, coots and moorhens. Regular season bag limits and other restrictions apply. Usually the fourth Saturday in September. Check the PGC website for the exact date.

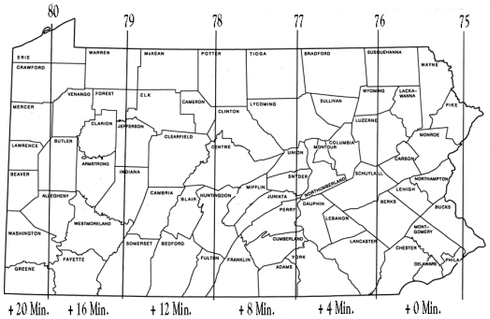
Migratory Game Bird Hunting Hours Table

Dates	Begin A.M.	End P.M.	Dates	Begin A.M.	End P.M.
Aug. 26 - Sept. 1	5:59	7:31	Dec. 23 - 29	6:52	4:40
Sept. 2 - 8	6:05	7:30	Dec. 30 - Jan. 5	6:53	4:39
Sept. 9 - 15	6:12	7:09	Jan. 6 - 12	6:52	4:51
Sept. 16 - 22	6:19	6:57	Jan. 13 - 19	6:51	4:58
Sept. 23 - 29	6:25	6:45	Jan. 20 - 26	6:48	5:06
Sept. 30- Oct. 6	6:32	6:34	Jan. 27 - Feb. 2	6:43	5:14
Oct. 7 - 13	6:39	6:23	Feb. 3 - 9	6:37	5:23
Oct. 14 - 20	6:47	6:13	Feb. 10 - 16	6:29	5:31
Oct. 21- 27	6:54	6:04	Feb. 17 - 23	6:21	5:39
Oct. 28 - Nov. 3	7:02	5:55	Feb. 24 - Mar. 2	6:11	5:47
Nov. 4 - 10 * Ends	6:10	4:48	Mar. 3 - 9	6:01	5:55
Nov. 11 - 17	6:18	4:42	Mar. 10 - 16 * Begins	6:50	7:02
Nov. 18 - 24	6:26	4:38	Mar. 17 - 23	6:39	7:10
Nov. 25 - Dec. 1	6:34	4:36	Mar. 24 - 30	6:27	7:17
Dec. 2 - 8	6:40	4:35	Mar. 31 - Apr. 6	6:16	7:24
Dec. 9 - 15	6:45	4:35	Apr. 7 - 13	6:05	7:31
Dec. 16 - 22	6:49	4:37	* Daylight Saving Time		

* Be sure to add the minutes from the Meridian Map to the right to the begin/end times on this table.

Pennsylvania Meridian Map

Hunting Hours Begin & End 4 Minutes Later for Each Meridian West of the 75th



Life Jacket Wear Required By Law Nov.1 To April 30

Beginning November 1, 2012, all boaters (including waterfowl hunters) must wear a life jacket on boats less than 16 feet in length or any canoe or kayak during the cold weather months from November 1 through April 30. Recreational boating fatalities that occur in Pennsylvania from November through April are primarily due to the effects of cold water immersion. When water temperatures are less than 70 degrees F, cold water shock is a major factor in boating fatalities. Victims who wear a life jacket when exposed to cold water have potentially life-saving advantages, such as insulation from the cold, buoyancy for victims who are unable to tread water and reduced risk of aspiration of water. In an effort to reduce the number of fatalities related to cold water immersion, the Fish & Boat Commission has amended regulations to require life jackets to be worn on small and unstable boats during the period most noted for cold water temperatures. For other times of the year and on other types and sizes of boats, all boaters are required to have properly fitted personal flotation devices readily accessible. For more information on boating laws and safety, visit www.fishandboat.com.

Annual Middle Creek Art Show and Wildfowl Show

Wildlife Art Show—Aug. 3 (1 - 6 p.m.), Aug. 4 (9 a.m. - 6 p.m.), & Aug. 5 (10 a.m. - 5 p.m.), 2012.
Wildfowl Show—Sept. 15 & 16, 2012 (9 a.m. - 5 p.m.)
Free admission (all donations benefit the Wildlands Preservation Fund to preserve wild lands).

- More than 60 wildfowl carvers, artists, dealers and carving suppliers
- Retriever demonstrations, decoy competitions and the PA State Duck and Goose Calling Championships.
- Food vendors

For more information or directions, call 717-733-1512 or visit www.pgc.state.pa.us