

2026 – 2027 Federal Hunting Season Frameworks for Webless Species

Species	Total days allowed	Number of segments allowed	Earliest opening date	Latest closing date	Daily Bag limit/ possession limit
Dove ¹	90 ²	3	September 1 st	January 31 st	15/45
Woodcock	45 ²	2	September 13 th	January 31 st	3/9
Snipe	107 ²	2	September 1 st	February 28 th	8/24
King & Clapper rails ³	70 ²	2	September 1 st	January 31 st	15/45
Sora and Virginia rails ³	70 ²	2	September 1 st	January 31 st	25/75
Gallinules and Moorhens ³	70 ²	2	September 1 st	January 31 st	15/45

¹ Includes mourning doves and white-winged doves. Does not include Eurasian collared dove which has no closed season or bag limits.

² Compensatory days for Sundays are allowed for webless species. Therefore, Sundays are not counted towards the total days selected.

³ Daily bag limit is either singly or in the aggregate.

2026 – 2027 Federal Hunting Season Frameworks for Waterfowl

Species	Total days allowed	Number of segments allowed	Earliest opening date	Latest closing date	Daily Bag limit/ possession limit
September Teal ^{1,2}	9 ³	1	September 1 st	September 30 th	6/18
Ducks	60 ³	No more than 3 segments in either duck hunting zone	Saturday nearest September 24 th (September 26 th)	January 31 st	6/18 ⁴
Coots	Same as ducks	Same as ducks	Same as ducks	Same as ducks	15/45
Mergansers	Same as ducks	Same as ducks	Same as ducks	Same as ducks	5/15 ⁵
Canada goose (September season)	30 ³	1	September 1 st	September 30 th	15/45
Dark geese (Canada & White-fronted) - regular season (Resident Population Zone)	80 ³	3	October 1 st	March 10 th	5/15
Dark geese (Canada & White-fronted) - regular season (Northeast Hunt Zone)	30 ³	1	Saturday prior to December 25 th (December 19 th)	January 31 st	2/6

2026 – 2027 Federal Hunting Season Frameworks for Waterfowl (continued)

Species	Total days allowed	Number of segments allowed	Earliest opening date	Latest closing date	Daily Bag limit/ possession limit
Light geese (Snow geese and Ross' Geese)	107 ³	3	October 1 st	March 10 th	25/no possession limit
Brant	30 ³	2	Saturday nearest September 24 th (September 26 th)	January 31 st	1/3
Tundra Swan	90 ³	1	October 1 st	January 31 st	1 per season by special permit
Youth Waterfowl Day(s)⁶	States may select 2 days in each duck hunting zone as Youth Waterfowl Days in addition to their regular duck season. The day(s) must be held outside any regular duck season on a weekend, holiday, or other non-school day when youth hunters would have the maximum opportunity to participate. The day(s) may be held up to 14 days before or after any regular duck-season frameworks or within the closed portion between season segments, or within any other open season on migratory birds. Youth hunters may not be over the age of 16. 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. The daily bag limits may include ducks, geese, tundra swans, mergansers, coots, moorhens, and gallinules and would be the same as those allowed in the regular season. Tundra swans may only be taken by participants possessing the applicable permit.				
Veterans/Military Waterfowl Day(s)⁶	States may select 2 days in each duck hunting zone as Veteran/Military Waterfowl Days in addition to their regular duck season. This includes veterans and members of the Armed Forces on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves on active duty (other than for training). The day(s) may be held up to 14 days before or after any regular duck-season frameworks or within the closed portion between season segments, or within any other open season on migratory birds. The days can be held concurrently with Youth Waterfowl Days. Participants must possess a Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (also known as Federal Duck Stamp). The daily bag limits may include ducks, geese, tundra swans, mergansers, coots, moorhens, and gallinules and would be the same as those allowed in the regular season. Tundra swans may only be taken by participants possessing the applicable permit.				

- ¹ Includes blue-winged, green-winged and cinnamon teal.
- ² The teal season can occur only in that area east of U.S. Highway 17.
- ³ Compensatory days for Sundays are allowed for waterfowl. Therefore, Sundays are not counted towards the total days selected.
- ⁴ Includes a total of 6 ducks with no more than 4 total sea ducks [including no more than 3 scoters, 3 eiders (1 hen eider), or 3 long-tailed ducks], 4 mallards with no more than 2 hen mallards, 3 wood ducks, 3 pintails, 2 black ducks, 2 redheads, 2 canvasbacks, 1 mottled duck, and 1 fulvous whistling duck. In the Atlantic Flyway, states may choose to hold all of their 60 scaup hunting days with a 1-bird daily bag limit, or states may choose to have a “hybrid” scaup hunting season. Under a hybrid season, states may choose 40 consecutive days of scaup hunting with a 1-bird daily bag limit and 20 consecutive days of scaup hunting with a 2-bird daily bag limit (60 total days). The season on harlequin ducks is closed.
- ⁵ The daily bag limit for mergansers can include no more than 2 hooded mergansers.
- ⁶ There can be no more than 2 Youth Waterfowl Days and no more than 2 Veteran/Military Waterfowl Days per duck hunting zone.

Notes on Shooting hours and bag limits:

Federal guidelines allow for shooting hours to be ½ hour before sunrise to sunset for all species. However, federal guidelines do allow for shooting hours for Canada geese only during the month of September to extend to ½ hour after sunset. In addition to extended shooting hours, federal guidelines also allow the use of unplugged guns and electronic calls for Canada geese only during the month of September. The extended shooting hours, unplugged guns and electronic calls for Canada geese can occur only in areas that are closed to all other waterfowl hunting. Federal guidelines also allow the use of unplugged guns and electronic calls for Light geese only when all other waterfowl hunting seasons are closed.

The North Carolina Wildlife Commission may choose to restrict shooting hours, unplugged guns and electronic calls if desired.

Federal guidelines allow for the maximum daily bag limits as listed above. The North Carolina Wildlife Commission has the ability to choose a smaller bag limit if desired.

At this time, federal season frameworks listed herein are subject to change pending final approval by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.