MALLARD STUDY

Since the 1970s, mallards have been the most harvested ducks in the Atlantic Flyway, but a 36 percent reduction in mallards breeding in the northeastern United States over the last 20 years has prompted wildlife managers to implement regulatory changes. During the 2019-2020 season, a bag restriction was implemented and the Atlantic Flyway Council and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service developed a multi-stock model to set Flyway duck hunting regulations. Previously, regulations were only based on the number of mallards breeding in the northeast United States and Canada for the Atlantic Flyway.

To help determine the reasons behind the mallard decline, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources is participating in a large-scale, three-year study investigating hen mallards. This study involves estimating seasonal survival rates, tracking nesting attempts and success rates, analyzing the impact of weather, developing activity budgets and quantifying and comparing female mallard movements and habitat use throughout their annual life cycle. As part of this study, wildlife managers are attaching either a GPS transmitter or geolocator to hen mallards. GPS transmitters and habitat use throughout their annual life cycle. As part

Left, bird being fitted with a geolocator.

Below, bird being fitted with solar-powered GPS transmitters.
Since the 1970s, mallards have been the most harvested ducks in the Atlantic Flyway, but a 36 percent reduction in mallards breeding in the northeastern United States over the last 20 years has prompted wildlife managers to implement regulatory changes. During the 2019-2020 season, a bag restriction was implemented and the regular duck and goose seasons, except two (2) scaup may be included in the duck daily bag limit. As part of this study, wildlife managers are attaching either a GPS transmitter with solar powered GPS technology or a geolocator.

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Left, bird being fitted with a geolocator.

Below: bird being fitted with solar powered GPS transmitters.

**District Offices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Main Office</th>
<th>Operations Center</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District 1</td>
<td>324 Fourth Avenue, S. Charleston, WV 25303</td>
<td>1 Depot Street, Romney, WV 26757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 2</td>
<td>110 Railroad Street, Farmington, WV 26717</td>
<td>738 Ward Road, Elkton, WV 26441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 3</td>
<td>163 Wildlife Road, French Creek, WV 26218</td>
<td>304-457-9245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 4</td>
<td>200 Robert C. Byrd Drive, Beckley, WV 25801</td>
<td>304-356-2758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 5</td>
<td>480 Forks of Catal Way, Alton Creek, WV 25003</td>
<td>304-756-1023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 6</td>
<td>76 Conservation Way, Parkersburg, WV 26104</td>
<td>304-420-4550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**State Regulations**

**Mallard Study**

**Summary**

**Sandy Hunting**

**South Branch Wildlife Management Area**

**Hunting and Fishing License Unit**

For questions regarding license requirements, call 304-558-2758 or email wvdnrcustomerservice@wv.gov.

It is the policy of the Division of Natural Resources to provide its facilities, services and programs to all persons without regard to sex, race, age, religion, national origin or ancestry, disability or other protected group status.

**Cover: American woodcock**

Almost Heaven

**west virginia DNr**
STATE REGULATIONS

1. All licensed hunters (including lifetime and senior citizens) must possess a valid Harvest Information Program (HIP) registration card to hunt any migratory game birds.

2. Youth waterfowl hunting season is open to youth ages 15 and younger for taking ducks, geese, coots, gallinules and mergansers. Youth hunters must be accompanied by a licensed adult age 18 or older. The accompanying adult may not hunt or possess a firearm.

3. It is lawful to hunt waterfowl on major waterways, lakes and reservoirs of the state during the gun season for deer, should the waterfowl season be open.

4. Only non-toxic shot size T or smaller approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may be used or be in the hunter's possession while hunting waterfowl.

5. McClintic Wildlife Management Area
   a. Hunting hours for waterfowl within the controlled waterfowl hunting area will be from legal shooting time until noon (prevailing time) Oct. 1-23, 2023.
   b. Waterfowl hunting in the controlled hunt area will be by permit only Oct. 14-23, 2023. Go to www.wvhunt.com to apply. This area is designated by signs, and includes Ponds 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 20, 23, 30, 36, 39 and 40.
   d. Waterfowl hunting in the controlled waterfowl hunting area is permitted during the remainder of the waterfowl season without a permit.

6. Green Bottom Wildlife Management Area
   a. Hunting hours for waterfowl will be from legal shooting time until noon Oct. 1-3, 2023.
   c. Pleasant Creek Wildlife Management Area
      b. Waterfowl hunting is not restricted for the remainder of the waterfowl season.

8. Deed restrictions prohibit all hunting, including waterfowl, at Warden Lake Wildlife Management Area.


district offices

September 2023 - January 2024 Migratory Game Bird Seasons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIES</th>
<th>OPEN SEASONS (All Dates)</th>
<th>DAILY BAG LIMIT (x)</th>
<th>POSSESSION LIMITS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mounting Dove Family Split Season</td>
<td>Sept. 1-Oct. 8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game and Virginia Rails</td>
<td>Sept. 1-Nov. 12</td>
<td>10(6)</td>
<td>30(36)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mallard's Snipe</td>
<td>Sept. 10-Dec. 30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodcock</td>
<td>Oct. 14-Nov. 18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Waterfowl Family Split Season</td>
<td>Sept. 6</td>
<td>(B)</td>
<td>(B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ducks</td>
<td>Sept. 1-Oct. 16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scap</td>
<td>Nov. 6-Nov. 30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterfowl Hunting Area 1</td>
<td>Nov. 10-Dec. 24</td>
<td>10(6)</td>
<td>30(36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coots</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Geese</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snow Goose Family Split Season</td>
<td>Oct. 1-Oct. 10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue and Green Goose Family Split Season</td>
<td>Nov. 10-Dec. 30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Snow Goose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Converse</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHAT'S NEW FOR 2023-2024

1. The mallard daily bag limit increased to four with no more than two hen.
2. The beant season is 30 days with a one bird daily bag limit.

Shooting Hours

Shooting hours for dove are from noon to sunset on opening day of the first segment and from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset during the remainder of the season. Shooting hours for rails, woodcock and waterfowl are from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

South Branch Wildlife Management Area

Hunting in the controlled mourning dove hunting area is restricted to dove hunting from state-controlled hunting posts, by permit only, during the period of Sept. 1-2, 2023, even if other hunting seasons run concurrently. Permits are non-transferable. Go to WDNR.gov to apply. Applications are due by July 31, 2023. The controlled dove hunting area is marked by signs and includes marked hunting posts. Hunting must occur within 5 yards of assigned post.

Sunday Hunting

Waterfowl hunting is permitted on private and public lands (state or federal lands owned, leased, licensed to or under the control of the West Virginia DNR for wildlife management purposes, including all waterways) on Sundays.

National Wildlife Refuges

Rules and Regulations for hunting on National Wildlife Refuges may be obtained from:
- Ohio River Islands NWR
  3942 Waverly Road, Williamsport, WV 26178, 304-375-2929
- Canaan Valley NWR
  6263 Appalachian Highway, Davis, WV 26260, 304-866-3858
Manipulation means the alteration of natural vegetation or agricultural crops by activities that include but are not limited to mowing, shredding, discing, rolling, chopping, transplanting, burning or herbicidal 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 of production.

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 subsequent years after the year of planting is considered natural vegetation.

What hunting methods are illegal?

No persons shall take migratory game birds:

• With a trap, snare, hunting dog, shot gun larger than 10 gauge, punt gun, battery gun, machine gun, fish hook, poison, drug, explosive or stupefying substance;

• With a shotgun of any description capable of holding more than three shells unless it is plugged with a one-piece filler, incapable of removing without disassembling the gun, so its total capacity does not exceed three shells;

• From or by means, aid or use of a motorboat or any other type of propulsion, whether in the air, on land or water, or whether propelled by hand, animal, electricity, water power or other motive power, 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, aid or use 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 thereto has ceased;

• By the use or aid of live decoys as doves, although not limited to, shall it be a violation of this paragraph for any person to take migratory waterfowl on an area where tame or captive live ducks or mallards are kept or released 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 ability of the birds to fly or; unless such ducks or mallards are released from the sight of wild migratory waterfowl;

• By the use or aid of or electrical or mechanically amplified bird calls or sounds, or recorded or electrically amplified imitations of bird calls or sounds;

• 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);

  • Flooded or manipulated natural vegetation;

  • From or by means, aid or use of any motorboat or other craft having a motor attached, or any sailboat; or (d) a post office; or (e) a common carrier facility.

GIFT OF MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS

No person may receive, possess, or give to another, any freshly killed migratory game birds as a gift, except the personal inhabit of the donor, unless such birds have been transported in accordance with the provisions of this part, if delivered to a post office, common carrier facility; or (d) a post office; or (e) a common carrier facility. Any person other than the hunter.

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Species Identification Requirement

No person shall transport within the United States any migratory game birds, unless such birds are in the possession of the donor and the result of the donor's hunting, or unless such birds have been transported in accordance with the provisions of this part, if delivered to a post office, common carrier facility; or (d) a post office; or (e) a common carrier facility.

Transportation of Birds of Another State

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

Transportation of Migratory Game Birds

The law requires 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.
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