

# Migratory Bird Hunting - Frequently Asked Questions

Source: Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) of Environment Canada

## 1. I have misplaced my Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit. Do I have to purchase a new permit before I go out hunting migratory game birds?

**Answer:** Yes. If you misplace your current Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit, you must purchase a new permit at your expense.

## 2. Can I give my Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit to a hunting partner if, for some reason, I cannot go hunting?

**Answer:** No, your Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit is not transferable and it must be completed and signed by the person it was issued to.

## 3. Why must all hunters leave one fully feathered wing attached to each migratory game bird? When can this feathered wing be removed?

**Answer:** In many areas of Canada, daily bag limits and possession limits are species specific. For example, one province may only allow a daily bag limit of two (2) Canvasback ducks, while the total daily bag limit in that area may be six (6) ducks. If the fully feathered wing, which readily identifies the species of waterfowl, were not left on the bird, it would be difficult for enforcement officers to accurately inspect and identify the hunter's daily bag or possession limits. The wing may be removed once the bird is prepared for immediate cooking or after the bird is taken to the owner's residence for preservation.

## 4. I enjoy waterfowl hunting but I am not fond of the taste of some ducks. Can I trade some of my legally harvested ducks for goods such as shot gun shells?

**Answer:** No. It is illegal to sell, trade, barter or buy migratory birds, or the carcasses of them. If you enjoy a specific type of duck, focus on hunting that particular duck.

## 5. Is it legal to hunt in areas where bait, such as grain or corn, has been deposited in order to attract waterfowl?

**Answer:** No. In Ontario, it is illegal to hunt migratory birds within 400 metres (437 yards) of a place where bait has been deposited, unless that place has been free of bait for at least seven (7) days. Also, the depositing of bait must cease 14 days before the first day of the open season for that place

## 6. I like to hunt ducks with a .12 gauge shotgun and geese with a .10 gauge shotgun. Is it okay to have both shotguns in a hunting blind while hunting ducks and geese?

**Answer:** Yes. However, the extra shotgun you have with you must be unloaded and disassembled or unloaded and cased.

## 7. When hunting migratory game birds, what is the maximum number of shells that can be loaded into my firearm?

**Answer:** The capacity of the firearm must be modified so that the maximum number of shells it is capable of holding does not exceed three (3) in the magazine and chamber combined.

**8. While hunting out of a boat, can I start shooting at waterfowl as soon as the engine has been turned off?**

**Answer:** No. Hunting may only commence once the motor has been turned off and the boat has stopped its forward progress.

**9. Is it permissible to use recorded bird calls to attract birds?**

**Answer:** Check the current Migratory Birds Regulations for information on permissible hunting equipment and mechanical devices.

**10. Bird retrieval is sometimes difficult when hunting in a marshy area. I do not own a boat or a dog to assist in retrieving the birds I shoot down. What are the regulations around retrieving birds?**

**Answer:** You must have adequate means for retrieving any bird you may kill, cripple, or injure. Once the bird has been shot, you must immediately make every reasonable effort to retrieve the bird and, if it is still alive, immediately kill it and include it in your daily limit.

**11. What are the legal hours for hunting waterfowl in Ontario?**

**Answer:** Legal hunting hours for migratory game birds are as follows:

- South of the 60th parallel, you may hunt from half (½) hour before sunrise to half (½) hour after sunset.
- North of the 60th parallel, you may hunt from one (1) hour before sunrise to one (1) hour after sunset.

**12. Is it true that I must use non-toxic shot when hunting migratory game birds?**

**Answer:** Yes. Effective September 1, 1999, the possession or use of lead shot for hunting most migratory game birds was banned. Lead shot is still permitted for hunting Woodcock, except when hunting within National Wildlife Areas.

Non-toxic shot types that have been tested and approved for use in Canada include:

- steel shot
- tin shot
- tungsten-iron shot
- bismuth-tin shot
- tungsten-polymer shot
- tungsten-matrix shot

Visit this Web site for more information on non-toxic shot: <http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca>

**13. Does the non-toxic shot regulation apply to everyone?**

**Answer:** Yes, it applies to everyone including international visitors.

**14. What will happen to me if I break any of the hunting laws?**

**Answer:** There are various enforcement actions that can be taken against an individual who does not comply with the law. Depending on the offence, enforcement actions may include but are not limited to: fines, suspension of Migratory Game Bird hunting privileges, forfeiture of equipment, and imprisonment.

**15. Do the harvest limits apply to professional outfitters and guides?**

**Answer:** Yes, the harvest limits apply to everyone and as a hunter, even one visiting from another province or country, you must know the harvest limits for each species you choose to hunt. Professional outfitters and guides should be familiar with the limits, but it is always advisable to be familiar with regulations yourself. If you are in violation of the law, it will be you, not the guide, who is held responsible.

**For more information, contact:**

Wildlife Enforcement Division  
Canadian Wildlife Service  
Environment Canada (Ontario Region)  
867 Lakeshore Road  
Burlington, ON L7R 4A6

Enforcement inquiries: (905) 336-6410  
Permit inquiries: (905) 336-4464  
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