



Virginia Hunting, Trapping, and Migratory Game Bird Seasons

JULY 2026 - JUNE 2027



Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources

www.virginiawildlife.gov

www.gooutdoorsvirginia.gov

Virginia Hunting, Trapping, and
Migratory Game Bird Seasons



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DON'T SHOOT THE LINES



Power lines keep our communities connected.
Let's keep them safe.

IMAGE CREATED BY ADOBE FIREFLY

Power lines and fiber networks keep our communities connected. Damage can disrupt electricity, internet access, and critical emergency communications.



IT'S DANGEROUS

You could hit a power line, cause an outage — or even be killed.



IT'S ILLEGAL

Damaging power lines is a federal offense with serious penalties.



IT AFFECTS EVERYONE

Outages can disrupt homes, businesses, schools and more.



BE AWARE

Know your target and what's beyond it. Look up and live.



ENJOY THE OUTDOORS. RESPECT THE POWER LINES.



Virginia, Maryland & Delaware
Association of Electric Cooperatives



The Rural Fiber Association

POWERING STRONG COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

Virginia Hunting, Trapping, and Migratory Game Bird Seasons

JULY 2026 - JUNE 2027

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DWR Mission Statement

Conserve and manage wildlife populations and habitat for the benefit of present and future generations.

Connect people to Virginia's outdoors through boating, education, fishing, hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing, and other wildlife-related activities.

Protect people and property by promoting safe outdoor experiences and managing human-wildlife conflicts.

The Department of Wildlife Resources shall afford to all persons an equal access to Department programs and facilities without regard to race, color, religion, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, political affiliation, or veteran's status. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, please write to: Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, Attn: Executive Director's Office, 7870 Villa Park Dr, Suite 400, P.O. Box 90778, Henrico, VA 23228.

Cover Photography:

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Stay Connected!

Share your hunting story with social@dwr.virginia.gov and follow us on:



@VirginiaDWR



@virginiawildlife

Contact Information

Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources

Headquarters

7870 Villa Park Drive, Suite 400
Henrico, VA 23228
(804) 367-1000
(804) 367-1278 V/TDD

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 90778
Henrico, VA 23228-0778

Boating Registration/License Fees

(804) 367-1000

Note: The Headquarters Office is the only Department location where visitors may title/register a boat. These services are not available at the Regional Offices.

Regional Offices

Region 1

3801 John Tyler Memorial Hwy.
Charles City, VA 23030
(804) 829-6580

Region 2

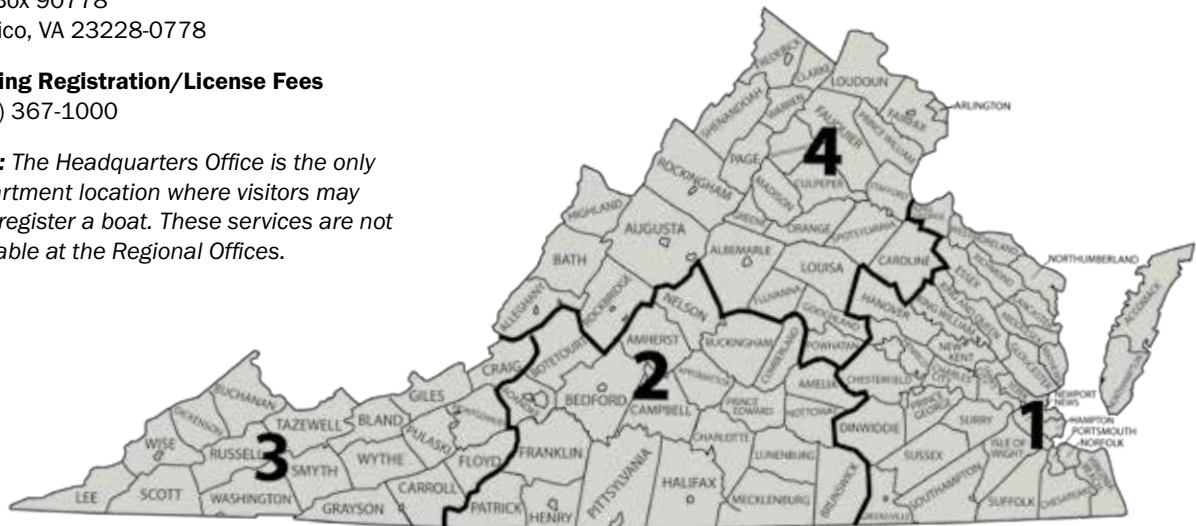
1132 Thomas Jefferson Road
Forest, VA 24551
(434) 525-7522

Region 3

1796 Highway Sixteen
Marion, VA 24354
(276) 783-4860

Region 4

P.O. Box 996, 517 Lee Highway
Verona, VA 24482
(540) 248-9360



Additional Contacts

Report Wildlife Violations Only

(800) 237-5712
wildcrime@dwr.virginia.gov
Text DWRTIP plus your tip to 847411

Boating Registration/License Fees

(804) 367-1000

Harvest Reporting

(866) GOT-GAME (866-468-4263)

Quota Hunts

www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com

Virginia Department of Forestry

Headquarters: (434) 977-6555
State Forest: (804) 492-4121
www.dof.virginia.gov/education-and-recreation/
state-forests/recreation-and-hunting/

Department of Conservation and Recreation Reservation Center

www.dcr.virginia.gov
(800) 933-7275

USDA Wildlife Services

(804) 739-7739

U.S. Forest Service Supervisor George Washington and Jefferson National Forest

www.fs.usda.gov/r08/gwj
(540) 265-5100

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

(Federal wildlife inquiries only)
(804) 771-2883



What's New?

A New Look

- This Hunting and Trapping Seasons book has a new layout and a simplified approach to the hunting and trapping regulations and seasons information. In the interest of reducing printing costs and simplifying how the information is presented, the printed version will focus on season dates, giving hunters easy access to be able to know what's in season when. We've also combined the hunting, trapping, and migratory game bird hunting seasons information into one book.

The complete regulations are available on the DWR website and will look the same as they have for many years and contain the full text of the regulations. **It is the responsibility of hunters and trappers to know and abide by all rules stated in the full text of regulations online.**

Turkey

- The fall bag limit has been changed, enabling a hunter to take three (3) turkeys per year in any combination across the fall and spring seasons.
- Only one (1) beardless turkey can be taken within the annual three-bird bag limit during fall seasons.

CWD

- Mandatory CWD testing will take place in Bland, Grayson, Patrick, Shenandoah, Smyth, Tazewell, and Wythe counties on Saturday, November 14, 2026.

License & Camping Fees

- The Board of Wildlife Resources has recommended a proposal to amend license and camping fees. Following evaluation of public input on this proposal, final action regarding license fee changes will occur at the Board's August 20, 2026 meeting, with any approved fee adjustments becoming effective no sooner than October 1, 2026. Please monitor DWR's website for current license fees, opportunities for public comment, and information on potential fee adjustments.

This Publication is Intended as a Guide Only.

Full text of hunting and trapping regulations is available at dwr.virginia.gov.
It is the responsibility of hunters and trappers to know and abide by all rules stated in the full text of regulations.

Statutes: law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title29.1/chapter5

Regulations: dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/regulations



Scan here to see the
full list of rules and
regulations.

Hunting License Information



Every person who is required to have a license must carry such license and shall show the license immediately upon request of any officer whose duty it is to enforce the game and inland fish laws, or upon the demand of any owner or lessee, or any employee or representative of such owner or lessee, upon whose land or water such person may be hunting, trapping, or fishing. Any person who is required to carry certain hunting, trapping, or fishing licenses or a hunter education certificate on their person can meet the requirement by carrying an electronic copy of the relevant license or certificate. We recommend the electronic carrying of licenses through the use of our GoOutdoors app. Electronic carry does not require a signature.

**Scan here or visit
[dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/
regulations/licenses](https://dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/regulations/licenses)**

for more information about hunting and trapping licenses, including residency qualifications, fees, license exemptions, and where to get a license

Which Licenses Do I Need?

To hunt in Virginia, a resident or nonresident hunting license is required, unless you are license-exempt. Other licenses, permits, or stamps may also be required depending on species hunted and location of hunt. Before purchasing a hunting license or permit, make sure you understand what qualifies as a Virginia residency, that you really need a license or permit based on the exemptions, and you have met the hunter safety requirements.

TO HUNT SMALL GAME

A hunting license is required. A National Forest Permit or State Forest Use Permit may also be required.

TO HUNT DOVE, WOODCOCK, SNIPE, GALLINULES, OR RAILS

A hunting license and HIP authorization are required. Register for HIP online at www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com or call 844-802-4193. A National Forest Permit or State Forest Use Permit may also be required.

TO HUNT BEAR, DEER, OR TURKEY

A bear license and/or a deer/turkey license is required in addition to a hunting license. (These licenses are valid from July 1–June 30 only.) A National Forest Permit, State Forest Use Permit, or Bonus Deer Permits may also be required.

TO HUNT WITH ARCHERY TACKLE

An archery license is required in addition to a hunting license when using archery tackle during a designated archery season for bear, deer, turkey and bobcat. A bear license, deer/turkey license, National Forest Permit, State Forest Use Permit, or Bonus Deer Permits may also be required.

TO HUNT WITH A MUZZLELOADER

A muzzleloading license is required in addition to the hunting license if hunting with a muzzleloading firearm during a designated muzzleloader deer or bear season. A bear license, deer/turkey license, National Forest Permit, State Forest Use Permit, or Bonus Deer Permits may also be required.

If hunting with archery tackle or muzzleloading rifle during any firearms deer season, you do not need an archery or muzzleloading license.

TO TRAP

A trapping license is required. A National Forest Permit or State Forest Use Permit may also be required.

TO HUNT WATERFOWL

A hunting license, Federal Duck Stamp, Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamp and HIP authorization are required. Register for HIP online at www.gooutdoorsvirginia.com or call 844-802-4193. A National Forest Permit or State Forest Use Permit may also be required.

PLEASE REFER TO THE DWR WEBSITE FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION ABOUT:

Mandatory Hunter Education

Hunter Education courses provide instruction in hunter safety, principles of conservation, and sportsmanship. There are two options for completing Hunter Education—Classroom with self-study and Full Online Courses.

You must complete an approved hunter education course and carry your card while hunting if either of the following apply:

- You are 12–15 years of age. (You must complete hunter education but you do not have to carry your card if accompanied and properly supervised by a licensed adult.)
- You are at least 16 years of age and you are hunting with your first hunting license.

Virginia accepts and recognizes all states' and countries' hunting licenses and official hunter education credentials for the purpose of complying with mandatory hunter education requirements. These may be in the form of an identification card or certificate.

Find out more about Hunter Education options:
dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/education



Legal Use of Firearms & Archery Tackle

Including legal use of firearms and archery tackle, other weapons usage, and concealed and open carry of weapons.

**[dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/regulations/
legal-use-of-firearms-and-archery-tackle](http://dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/regulations/legal-use-of-firearms-and-archery-tackle)**



General Hunting Regulations

Including hunting hours, Sunday hunting, blaze color requirements, definitions, hunting with dogs, training dogs, hunting on private property, landowner liability, sale and purchase of legally harvested game, unlawful methods, unlawful feeding of certain wildlife, and all terrain vehicle (ATV) laws.

dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/regulations/general



Tag Validation & Harvest Reporting

Including general information, tagging at harvest location, species reporting, internet/telephone reporting, bear tooth submission, elk data collection, license-exempt hunters, and personal check card.

**[dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/
regulations/validation/](http://dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/regulations/validation/)**



Local Firearm Ordinances

The localities listed below have enacted ordinances concerning the use and transport of firearms that hunters must follow. This list is not complete, as some localities may have ordinances not directly related to hunting, primarily pertaining to possession of firearms near parks or schools, hunting or discharging firearms near populated areas, residences, or buildings, and age limitations for possession of loaded firearms on public roads.

Before hunting in a county or city, hunters should become familiar with all ordinances particular to that county or city by contacting the county or city directly. Our local ordinance webpage (see right) contains links to information hunters must follow regarding firearm use in select localities. If a locality is not listed, state firearms restrictions apply.



Scan here or visit
[dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/
regulations/local-ordinances](https://dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/regulations/local-ordinances)
to view local ordinances

Local firearms ordinances are established by individual counties/cities. Please contact the appropriate locality for more information.

Accomack	Dinwiddie	Hanover	Nelson	Roanoke (city)
Albemarle	Emporia (city)	Harrisonburg (city)	New Kent	Rocky Mount (city)
Alexandria	Essex	Henrico	Newport News (city)	Salem (city)
Amherst	Fairfax	Hopewell (city)	Norfolk (city)	Southampton
Arlington	Fairfax (city)	Isle of Wight	Norton (city)	Spotsylvania
Ashland (city)	Falls Church (city)	James City	Northampton	Stafford
Bristol (city)	Fauquier	King and Queen	Northumberland	Staunton (city)
Buchanan	Floyd	King George	Orange	Suffolk
Buckingham	Fluvanna	King William	Patrick	Surry
Buena Vista (city)	Franklin	Lancaster	Petersburg	Sussex
Caroline	Franklin (city)	Loudoun	Pittsylvania	Virginia Beach
Campbell	Fredericksburg (city)	Louisa	Poquoson (city)	Warren
Charles City	Galax (city)	Lunenburg	Portsmouth (city)	Waynesboro (city)
Charlottesville (city)	Gate City	Lynchburg (city)	Prince George	Westmoreland
Chesapeake	Gloucester	Madison	Prince William	Williamsburg
Chesterfield	Goochland	Manassas (city)	Radford (city)	Winchester (city)
Clarke	Greene	Manassas Park (city)	Rappahannock	York
Culpeper	Greensville	Martinsville (city)	Richmond	
Cumberland	Halifax (county)	Mecklenburg	Richmond (city)	
Danville	Hampton (city)	Middlesex	Roanoke	

Permanently disabled hunters possessing a valid hunting license, hunters holding a lifetime disabled hunting license, and hunters holding a lifetime disabled veterans hunting license are exempt from any local ordinance requiring hunting from an elevated platform or tree stand.

Hunters and Trappers Fund Conservation

Hunters and trappers directly fund wildlife management and outdoor recreational opportunities through their purchases of hunting and trapping licenses and permits. In addition, every time you purchase a firearm, ammunition or archery equipment, a portion of the federal excise tax levied on the manufacturer goes to the Federal Assistance in Wildlife Restoration Program (WRP), which is managed by the Office of Conservation Investment under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

USFWS distributes WRP funds to states based on the number of resident licensed hunters, which must be certified each year, and the land area of the state. Under the WRP, the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources receives funding used to benefit wildlife resources and enhance hunting and trapping opportunities across the state along with hunter education and outreach efforts, Wildlife Management Area habitat work, and recreational shooting opportunities. For a state fish and wildlife agency to receive these grant funds, it must be able to cover a 25 percent matching contribution to projects and activities eligible for WRP funding.



For more information about how the Wildlife Restoration Program works, see partnerwithapayer.org

Bear Hunting

Bear hunting seasons include:

Archery, Muzzleloader, and Firearms seasons (details on p. 9) along with Bear Hound Training/Chase seasons (details on p. 10)

Complete bear hunting information and regulations can be found online, including:

- Harvest reporting and tooth submission
- Unlawful methods
- Bag limits
- Legal methods and restrictions



Scan here or visit
dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/regulations/bear
for up-to-date info and regulations

BEAR HUNTING SEASONS

DAILY BAG LIMIT: One per license year, at least 100 pounds live weight or 75 pounds dressed weight (all internal organs removed). Females with cubs may not be harvested. Cubs may be 30-50 lbs by fall. Please observe and be patient before shooting as cubs often lag behind the female.

SEASON	SEASON DATES	NOTABLE RESTRICTIONS (see online regulations for all applicable restrictions)
Youth & Apprentice	Oct. 10-11	Statewide. Resident and nonresident youth hunters 15 years of age and under or holders of a valid apprentice hunting license, when in compliance with all applicable laws and licenses, may hunt when accompanied and directly supervised by an adult over the age of 18 who has a valid Virginia hunting license or is exempt from purchasing a hunting license.
Early Firearms	Sep. 28-30	In the counties of Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Washington, and Wise.
	Closed	In all other counties.
Archery	Oct. 3 - Nov. 13	In the counties of Accomack, Amelia, Arlington, Bland, Brunswick, Buchanan, Campbell, Caroline, Carroll, Charles City, Charlotte, Chesterfield, Craig, Cumberland, Dickenson, Dinwiddie, Essex, Fairfax, Floyd, Fluvanna, Franklin, Giles, Gloucester, Goochland, Grayson, Greenville, Halifax, Hanover, Henrico, Henry, Isle of Wight, James City, King & Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Lee, Louisa, Lunenburg, Mathews, Mecklenburg, Middlesex, Montgomery, New Kent, Northampton, Northumberland, Nottoway, Orange, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Powhatan, Prince Edward, Prince George, Prince William, Pulaski, Richmond, Roanoke, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Southampton, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Surry, Sussex, Tazewell, Washington, Westmoreland, Wise, Wythe, and York. In the cities of Chesapeake, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach.
	Oct. 17 - Nov. 13	In the counties of Albemarle, Alleghany, Amherst, Appomattox, Augusta, Bath, Bedford, Botetourt, Buckingham, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Frederick, Greene, Highland, Loudoun, Madison, Nelson, Page, Rappahannock, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Warren.
Muzzle loader	Nov. 7-13	In the counties of Accomack, Amelia, Arlington, Bland, Brunswick, Buchanan, Campbell, Caroline, Carroll, Charles City, Charlotte, Chesterfield, Craig, Cumberland, Dickenson, Dinwiddie, Essex, Fairfax, Floyd, Fluvanna, Franklin, Giles, Gloucester, Goochland, Grayson, Greenville, Halifax, Hanover, Henrico, Henry, Isle of Wight, James City, King & Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Lee, Louisa, Lunenburg, Mathews, Mecklenburg, Middlesex, Montgomery, New Kent, Northampton, Northumberland, Nottoway, Orange, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Powhatan, Prince Edward, Prince George, Prince William, Pulaski, Richmond, Roanoke, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Southampton, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Surry, Sussex, Tazewell, Washington, Westmoreland, Wise, Wythe, and York.
	Nov. 10-13	In the counties of Albemarle, Alleghany, Amherst, Appomattox, Augusta, Bath, Bedford, Botetourt, Buckingham, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Frederick, Greene, Highland, Loudoun, Madison, Nelson, Page, Rappahannock, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Warren.
	Closed	In the cities of Chesapeake, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach.
Firearms	Nov. 23 - Jan. 2	In the counties of Arlington, Bland, Buchanan, Caroline, Charlotte, Chesterfield, Craig, Dickenson, Fairfax, Fluvanna, Giles, Goochland, Halifax, Hanover, Henrico, Lee, Louisa, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Orange, Powhatan, Prince Edward, Prince William, Pulaski, Roanoke, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe.
	Nov. 27-29 Dec. 21-Jan. 2	In the counties of Albemarle, Alleghany, Amherst, Appomattox, Augusta, Bath, Bedford, Botetourt, Buckingham, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Frederick, Greene, Highland, Loudoun, Madison, Nelson, Page, Rappahannock, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Warren.
	Nov. 30 - Jan. 2	In the counties of Amelia, Brunswick, Campbell, Carroll, Charles City, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Essex, Floyd, Franklin, Gloucester, Grayson, Greenville, Henry, Isle of Wight, James City, King & Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Lunenburg, Mathews, Middlesex, New Kent, Northumberland, Nottoway, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Prince George, Richmond, Southampton, Surry, Sussex, Westmoreland, and York.
	Oct. 1 - Jan. 2	In the cities of Chesapeake, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach.
	Closed	In the counties of Accomack and Northampton.

Dogs May Not Be Used To Hunt Bears In The Following Instances:

- It is unlawful to hunt or kill a bear on Sunday (i) within 200 yards of a place of worship, or any accessory structure thereof, or (ii) with a gun, firearm, or other weapon with the aid or assistance of dogs.
- November 23 - 29 in the counties west of the Blue Ridge and in the counties of Amherst (west of Rt. 29), Bedford, and Nelson (west of Rt. 151).
- November 23 - 27 in Madison and Greene counties.
- When hunting during the archery or muzzleloading bear seasons, except in certain counties during the youth/apprentice bear hunting weekend (see website for details).
- On Cavalier WMA except during the Bear Hound Training Season from August 8 - 22. Dogs may not be used to hunt bears at any other time.
- During the firearms bear season in the counties of Campbell (west of Norfolk Southern Railroad), Carroll (east of the New River), Fairfax, Floyd, Franklin, Grayson (east of the New River), Henry, Loudoun, Montgomery (south of I-81), Patrick, Pittsylvania (west of Norfolk Southern Railroad), Pulaski (south of I-81), Roanoke (south of I-81), and Wythe (southeast of the New River or that part bounded by Rt. 21 on the west, I-81 on the north, the county line on the east, the New River on the southeast and Cripple Creek on the south), and in the city of Lynchburg.
- On the Amelia, C. F. Phelps, Doe Creek, Featherfin, G. Richard Thompson, Mattaponi, Mattaponi Bluffs, Merrimac Farm, Oakley Forest, Flippo-Gentry, Pettigrew, Robert W. Duncan, Tye River, and Ware Creek Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and other areas posted on WMAs.

BEAR HOUND TRAINING/CHASE SEASONS

NO BLACK BEAR MAY BE TAKEN DURING THIS SEASON

Hours: 4:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., including Sundays (except as noted below).

SEASON	SEASON DATES	NOTABLE RESTRICTIONS (see online regulations for all applicable restrictions)
Bear Hound Training/ Chase	Aug. 1–Sep. 26 (including Sundays) Nov. 30–Dec. 19 (excluding Sundays)	In the counties of Albemarle, Alleghany, Amherst, Augusta, Bath, Bedford, Botetourt, Culpeper, Greene, Highland, Madison, Nelson, Page, Rappahannock, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Warren.
	Aug. 1–Sep. 26 Nov. 14–28 (all including Sundays)	In the counties of Brunswick, Greensville, and Lunenburg.
	Aug. 1–Sep. 26, Nov. 14–22 (all including Sundays)	In the counties of Charlotte and Mecklenburg.
	Nov. 14–22 (including Sundays)	In the counties of Halifax and Prince Edward.
	Aug. 1–Sep. 26 (including Sundays)	In the counties of Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Craig, Dickenson, Franklin, Floyd, Giles, Grayson (East of State Rt. 16), Lee, Montgomery, Pulaski, Roanoke (North of I-81), Russell, Scott, Smyth (East of State Rt. 16 and north of I-81), Tazewell, Washington (North of I-81), Wise, and Wythe and the Cities of Chesapeake (except on Cavalier WMA), Suffolk, and Virginia Beach.
	Aug. 8–22 (including Sundays)	On Cavalier WMA.
	Nov. 14–28 (including Sundays)	In the counties of Amelia, Campbell (East of Norfolk Southern Railroad), Charles City, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Essex, Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City, King & Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, New Kent, Northumberland, Nottoway, Pittsylvania (East of Norfolk Southern Railroad), Prince George, Richmond, Southampton, Surry, Sussex, Westmoreland, and York.
	Nov. 14–Nov. 26 (including Sundays) Nov. 30–Dec. 19 (excluding Sundays)	In the counties of Appomattox and Buckingham.
	Nov. 30–Dec. 19 (excluding Sundays)	In the counties of Clarke, Fauquier, and Frederick.
	Closed	In the counties of Accomack, Campbell (West of Norfolk Southern Railroad), Caroline, Chesterfield, Fairfax, Fluvanna, Goochland, Grayson (West of State Rt. 16), Hanover, Henrico, Henry, Loudoun, Louisa, Northampton, Orange, Patrick, Pittsylvania (West of Norfolk Southern Railroad), Powhatan, Prince William, Roanoke (South of I-81), Smyth (West of State Rt. 16 and south of I-81), Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Washington (South of I-81).



Information for Hunters About Black Bears with Mange

Sarcoptic mange is a highly contagious skin disease caused by microscopic mites affecting many wild and domestic mammals. DWR is actively involved in multiple studies to better understand the disease dynamics and impacts to bears in Virginia.

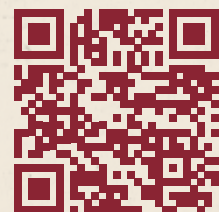
Hunters can help DWR monitor mange in black bears by reporting bears with symptoms of mange. Please see the DWR website for more information about:

*What if I harvest
a mange-infested
bear?*

*How to report
a mange-infested
bear.*

*Best practices for
possible exposure
to a mange-infested
bear.*

Scan the QR code or visit dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/bear



Deer Hunting



Deer hunting seasons include:

Archery (see p.14), Muzzleloader (see p.14), and Firearms seasons (see p.16 – 17)

Complete deer hunting information and regulations can be found online, including:

- General information
- Bag limits and exceptions
- Unlawful methods
- Legal methods and restrictions
- Antlered vs. antlerless identification
- Bonus deer permits
- Earn-a-Buck
- Antler point restrictions
- Tree-stand safety guidelines
- Youth and apprentice regulations
- Hunting with dogs information



Scan here or visit

dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/regulations/deer
for up-to-date info and regulations

FOR ALL DEER HUNTING SEASONS

Bag Limit

Daily and seasonal bag limits (which vary according to location and are available online) apply across all deer seasons (archery, muzzleloader, and firearms).

Earn-A-Buck (EAB):

The Earn-A-Buck regulation requires hunters in certain areas to harvest at least one antlerless deer before harvesting a second antlered buck (and two before their third buck) in an effort to increase the antlerless harvest total.

EAB on private lands West of the Blue Ridge in the counties of: Augusta, Botetourt, Carroll, Clarke, Craig, Floyd, Frederick, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Page, Pulaski, Roanoke, Rockingham (east of Rts. 613 and 731), Shenandoah, Warren, and Wythe. Within a license year and within each individual county listed above, hunters must harvest at least one antlerless deer before taking a second antlered deer on private lands in that county (e.g., before taking a second buck on private land in Wythe, you must take at least one antlerless deer on private land in Wythe).

EAB on private lands East of the Blue Ridge in the counties of: Accomack, Albemarle, Amherst (west of Rt. 29), Bedford, Chesterfield, Culpeper, Fauquier, Franklin, Greene, Hanover, Henrico, James City, Madison, Orange, Prince George, Rappahannock, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and York. Within a license year and within each individual county listed above, hunters must harvest at least one antlerless deer before taking a second antlered deer on private lands in that county. Furthermore, where it is legal to harvest a third antlered deer on private lands, a hunter must take at least 2 antlerless deer before taking a third antlered deer on private lands in that county (e.g., before taking a second buck on private land in Bedford, you must take at least

1 antlerless deer on private land in Bedford; before taking a third buck on private land in Bedford, you must take at least 2 antlerless deer on private land in Bedford).

In Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William (except on Department of Defense lands) counties, EAB applies to both private and public lands and follows East of the Blue Ridge requirement: must take one antlerless deer before harvesting a second antlered buck (and two before third buck).

EAB in cities and towns: Within a license year and within any city or town except Chesapeake, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach, hunters must take at least one antlerless deer before taking a second antlered deer in that city or town. Furthermore, in those cities and towns east of the Blue Ridge Mountains where it is legal to harvest a third antlered deer, hunters must take at least two antlerless deer before taking a third antlered deer in that city or town.

For FAQs about EAB, see
[dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/
regulations/general/#eab](http://dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/regulations/general/#eab)



Antler Point Restrictions

In Alleghany, Bath, Highland, or Rockbridge counties, if a deer hunter kills two antlered bucks in a license year, at least one of the deer must have at least four antler points, one inch or longer, on one side of the antlers.

Subscribe to **Notes
from the Field** today!

Get the latest outdoor news delivered straight to your inbox! Our digital newsletter covers topics such as hunting news, fishing reports, boating safety, wildlife updates, and conservation police notebooks.



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ARCHERY DEER HUNTING SEASONS

SEASON	SEASON DATES	LOCALITIES	EITHER SEX DAYS
Early Archery	Oct. 3 – Nov. 13	Statewide. (Firearms season in Chesapeake, Suffolk [east of the Dismal Swamp line], and Virginia Beach overlaps early archery season.)	Oct. 3 - Nov. 13 (full season)
Late Archery	Dec. 13 – Jan. 2	In Henry and Patrick counties (including the cities and towns within), in all areas west of the Blue Ridge except in Clarke and Floyd counties and on private lands in Carroll, Frederick, Montgomery, Page, Pulaski, Roanoke, Rockingham (east of routes 613 and 731), Shenandoah, Warren, and Wythe counties.	Dec. 13 - Jan. 2 (full season)
	Nov. 29 – Jan. 2	In the counties (including the cities and towns within) of Alleghany, Bath, Bland, Buchanan, Dickenson, Highland, Lee, Rockingham (west of Rts 613 and 731), Russell, Scott, Tazewell, and Wise; On all National Forest and DWR-owned lands west of the Blue Ridge; On the C.F. Phelps WMA; On National Forest lands in Amherst, Bedford, and Nelson counties.	Nov. 29 - Jan. 2 (full season)
	Dec. 1 – Jan. 2	In the cities of Chesapeake, Suffolk (east of the Dismal Swamp line), and Virginia Beach	Dec. 1 - Jan. 2 (full season)
Urban Archery	Sep. 5 – Oct. 2 Jan. 3 – Mar. 28	Within the incorporated limits of the cities of Charlottesville, Chesapeake (except on DWR-owned lands), Colonial Heights, Danville, Emporia, Franklin, Fredericksburg, Galax, Harrisonburg, Hopewell, Lexington, Lynchburg, Martinsville, Newport News, Poquoson, Radford, Richmond, Salem, Staunton, Suffolk, and Winchester, and in the towns of Altavista, Amherst, Bedford, Blacksburg, Blackstone, Boones Mill, Buchanan, Cedar Bluff, Chatham, Christiansburg, Farmville, Front Royal, Halifax, Hillsville, Hurt, Independence, Irvington, Kenbridge, Lebanon, Pearisburg, Pulaski, Richlands, Rocky Mount, Saltville, Scottsville, Smithfield, Stuart, Tazewell, Victoria, West Point, and Wytheville, and in the counties of Chesterfield, Fairfax, James City, Prince William (except DOD land and DWR-owned land), Roanoke (except on National Forest and DWR-owned lands), Stafford, and York.	Antlerless only
NOVA Late Archery	Mar. 29 – Apr. 25	In the counties (including the cities and towns within) of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William (except on DWR-owned lands).	Antlerless only

MUZZLELOADER DEER HUNTING SEASONS

SEASON	SEASON DATES	LOCALITIES	EITHER SEX DAYS
Early Muzzleloader East of the Blue Ridge	Oct. 31 – Nov. 13	In all areas (including Merrimac Farm WMA and Occoneechee State Park), all cities and towns (except Chesapeake, Suffolk [east of the Dismal Swamp line], and Virginia Beach).	Oct. 31 - Nov. 13 (full season)
		On State Forest lands, State Park lands (except Occoneechee State Park), DWR-owned lands (except Merrimac Farm WMA), and Philpott Reservoir.	Nov. 7
		On National Forest lands in Amherst, Bedford, and Nelson counties, Special Youth and Apprentice Antlerless Deer Regulation applies.	None
Early Muzzleloader West of the Blue Ridge	Oct. 31 – Nov. 13	On private lands in Augusta, Botetourt, Carroll, Clarke, Craig, Floyd, Frederick, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Page, Pulaski, Roanoke, Rockingham (east of Rts. 613 and 731), Scott, Shenandoah, Smyth, Warren, and Wythe counties and all cities and towns within.	Oct. 31 - Nov. 13 (full season)
		On private lands in Alleghany, Bath, Bland, Buchanan, Dickenson, Highland, Lee, Rockbridge, Russell, Tazewell, Wise, and Washington counties and on the Highland WMA.	Nov. 7
		On all National Forest and DWR-owned lands (except the Highland WMA), in Rockingham County (west of Rts. 613 and 731), on Channels State Forest, Grayson Highlands State Park, Hungry Mother State Park, and Flannagan Reservoir. Special Youth and Apprentice Antlerless Deer Regulation applies.	None
Late Muzzleloader East of the Blue Ridge	Dec. 12 – Jan. 2	In the counties and all cities and town within of Henry and Patrick, and Federal- and DWR-owned lands in Franklin County.	Dec. 12 - Jan. 2 (full season)
		In the cities of Chesapeake, Suffolk (east of the Dismal Swamp line), and Virginia Beach.	Dec. 28 - Jan. 2
		On National Forest lands in Amherst, Bedford, and Nelson counties.	Jan. 2
Late Muzzleloader West of the Blue Ridge	Dec. 12 – Jan. 2	On private lands in Augusta, Botetourt, Craig, Giles, Grayson, Scott, and Smyth counties and all cities and towns within.	Dec. 12 - Jan. 2 (full season)
		On private lands in Bland, Dickenson, Rockbridge, and Washington counties.	Dec. 28 - Jan. 2
		In Alleghany, Bath, Buchanan, Highland, Lee, Rockingham (west of Rts. 613 and 731), Russell, Tazewell, and Wise counties, on all National Forest and DWR-owned lands west of the Blue Ridge Mountains, on Channels State Forest, Grayson Highlands State Park, Hungry Mother State Park, and Flannagan Reservoir.	Jan. 2

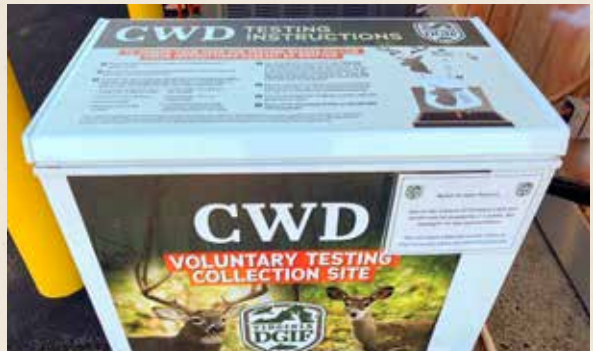
Hunters Can Help Control CWD

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is an infectious, fatal, neurological disease that affects members of the deer family. The disease is caused by an infectious protein called a prion and is transmitted to uninfected deer directly through saliva, feces, and urine shed by infected animals and indirectly as a result of environmental contamination. It typically takes 12-24 months before CWD-infected animals begin to show visible symptoms of the disease (staggering, lowered head carriage, poor hair coat, emaciation) however, they shed infectious prions throughout the entire incubation period.

The potential impacts of CWD to the white-tailed deer populations of Virginia are a serious concern. Although the disease has not been shown to pose a health risk to humans or domestic animals at this point, eating infected animals is not advised. DWR leads Virginia's CWD surveillance and management efforts and relies on assistance from hunters, taxidermists, processors, other agencies, and diverse constituent groups to implement surveillance and management strategies.

WAYS HUNTERS CAN HELP:

- Prevent artificially concentrating deer at point sources like feeding sites. As such, it is illegal to feed deer in Virginia for any reason year-round in all counties within 25 miles of a known CWD-positive deer.
- When hunting in a CWD Disease Management Area (DMA), consider having your deer tested for CWD. Testing helps DWR monitor the infection rate of the deer populations and map the geographic spread. This information is crucial to helping DWR slow the spread of this disease. Voluntary testing is also available free of charge outside of DMAs at select regional DWR offices.
- Do not transport deer carcass parts from high-risk CWD areas to lower-risk areas. It is illegal to move high-risk carcass parts outside of DMAs. A full description of current carcass transportation regulations can be found at the website below.
- Dispose of unwanted carcass parts in a lined landfill or leave at the site of harvest.



See DWR's website for more information about CWD, Disease Management Areas, instructions on submitting a deer for testing, testing locations, and deer carcass transport restrictions: www.dwr.virginia.gov/cwd

FIREARMS DEER HUNTING SEASONS ON PRIVATE LAND

SEASON	SEASON DATES	LOCALITIES	EITHER-SEX DAYS	NOTABLE RESTRICTIONS (see online regulations for all applicable restrictions)
Youth & Apprentice Weekend	Sep. 26 & 27	Statewide.	Sep. 26 & 27	Resident and nonresident youth hunters 15 years of age and under or holders of a valid apprentice hunting license, when in compliance with all applicable laws and licenses, may hunt when accompanied and directly supervised by an adult over the age of 18 who has a valid Virginia hunting license or is exempt from purchasing a hunting license. Deer hunting with dogs prohibited.
Early Antlerless	Sep. 5 – Oct. 2	County-wide in the counties (including the cities and towns within) of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William (except on DWR-owned lands), and on private lands only in Bedford, Carroll, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Floyd, Frederick, Greene, Hanover, Henrico, James City, Madison, Montgomery, Orange, Page, Pulaski, Rappahannock, Shenandoah, Warren, and York.		During these seasons only antlerless deer may be taken. Dogs may not be used to hunt deer during these seasons.
Private Lands & Public Lands that allow hunting and are not listed in public land table on p. 17.	Nov. 14 – Dec. 12	In Buchanan County.	Antlered deer only—no either-sex deer hunting days.	Special Youth and Apprentice Antlerless Deer regulation applies.
		In the counties of Dickenson and Wise.	Nov. 28	
		In the counties of Alleghany, Bath, Highland, Lee and Rockingham (west of Rts. 613 and 731).	Nov. 21, 27, & 28	
		In the counties of Henry and Patrick.	Nov. 21 & 28 Nov. 30 – Dec. 12	
		In the counties of Bland, Russell, Scott, and Tazewell.	Nov. 21 – 28	
		In the counties of Augusta, Botetourt, Craig, Giles, Grayson, Rockbridge, Smyth, and Washington.	Nov. 14 – Dec. 12 (full season)	
	Nov. 14 – Jan. 2	In the counties of Caroline, King & Queen, and King William.	Nov. 21 & 28 Dec. 21 – Jan. 2	
		In the counties of Amelia, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Nottoway.	Nov. 21 & 28 Dec. 5 – Jan. 2	
		In the counties of Appomattox, Brunswick, Buckingham, Charlotte, Dinwiddie, Essex, Lunenburg, Mathews, Mecklenburg, Middlesex, and Prince Edward.	Nov. 21 & 28 Dec. 28 – Jan. 2	
		In the counties of Accomack, Albemarle, Amherst, Arlington, Bedford, Campbell, Carroll, Charles City, Chesterfield, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, Floyd, Fluvanna, Franklin, Frederick, Goochland, Greene, Greensville, Halifax, Hanover, Henrico, Isle of Wight, James City, King George, Lancaster, Loudoun, Louisa, Madison, Montgomery, Nelson, New Kent, Northampton, Northumberland, Orange, Page, Pittsylvania, Powhatan, Prince George, Prince William, Pulaski, Rappahannock, Richmond, Roanoke, Rockingham (east of Rts. 613 and 731), Shenandoah, Southampton, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Suffolk (west of the Dismal Swamp line), Surry, Sussex, Warren, Westmoreland, Wythe, and York.	Nov. 14 – Jan. 2 (full season)	- In Arlington County, City of Hampton, and City of Richmond (in the City of Richmond: archery only, no special permit is required for archery deer hunting). Note: Local Ordinances prohibit the discharge of firearms in these three areas (see Local Firearms Ordinances, page 6). - In the City of Lynchburg (on private lands for which a special permit has been issued by the Chief of Police). - In the City of Newport News: archery only, no special permit is required for archery deer hunting. - In Fairfax County, firearms hunting is restricted by location and parcel size. Contact FCPD Wildlife Management Section, 8855 Lorton Rd, Lorton, VA 22079 for details. No parcel size restrictions exist for archery deer hunting.
		Within the incorporated limits of any city or town in Virginia that allows firearms deer hunting (except in the cities of Chesapeake, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach), but only with the specific weapons authorized by each individual city or town.	Nov. 14 – Jan. 2 (full season)	
	Oct. 1 – Nov. 30	In the cities of Chesapeake, Suffolk (east of the Dismal Swamp line), and Virginia Beach.	Oct. 1 – Nov. 30 (full season)	
Late Antlerless	Jan. 3 – Mar. 28	In the counties (including the cities and towns within) of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William (except on DWR-owned lands), and on private lands in Carroll, Culpeper, Clarke, Fauquier, Floyd, Frederick, Greene, Hanover, Henrico, James City, Madison, Montgomery, Orange, Page, Pulaski, Rappahannock, Shenandoah, Warren, and York counties.		During these seasons only antlerless deer may be taken. Dogs may not be used to hunt deer during these seasons.
	Jan. 3 – 31	On private lands in Bedford County.		

FIREARMS DEER HUNTING SEASONS ON PUBLIC LAND

NOTE: For public lands not included in this table (e.g., county lands that allow hunting), seasons follow those for private lands (page 16)

SEASON	SEASON DATES	LOCALITIES	EITHER-SEX DAYS
Youth & Apprentice	Sep. 26 & 27	All	Sep. 26 & 27
Firearms	DWR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS Restriction: Only one deer per day on DWR-owned lands and DWR-managed lands		
	Oct. 1 – Nov. 30	Cavalier	Oct. 10 & 17, Nov. 18–30
	Nov. 14 – 28	Big Survey and Highland	Nov. 21, 27 & 28
		Crooked Creek and Stewarts Creek	Nov. 21 & 28
		C.F. Phelps	Nov. 21
		Clinch Mountain, Gathright, Goshen, Havens, Hidden Valley, Little North Mountain, and Short Hills.	Nov. 28
	Nov. 14 – Dec. 12	Fairystone Farms	Nov. 21 & Dec. 7 – 12
		Turkeycock	Nov. 21 & 28, Dec. 7–12
	Nov. 14 – Jan. 2	Big Woods, Coastal Forest, Flippo-Gentry, Game Farm Marsh, Mockhorn Island, Saxis, Smith Mtn. Coop., Ware Creek	Nov. 14 – Jan. 2 (full season)
		Featherfin and Guinea Marsh	Nov. 21 & 28, Dec. 5 – Jan. 2
		Amelia, Hardware River, Oakley Forest, Powhatan, Rapidan, and Thompson	Nov. 21 & 28, Dec. 21 – Jan. 2
		Briery Creek, Dick Cross, Horsepen Lake, Mattaponi, Mattaponi Bluffs, Pettigrew, and Robert W. Duncan	Nov. 21 & 28, Dec. 28 – Jan. 2
		James River and Tye River	Nov. 21 & Dec. 28 – Jan. 2
		White Oak Mountain	Nov. 21 & 28, Dec. 31 – Jan. 2
		Chickahominy	Antlered deer only. Antlerless by quota
		Ragged Island	Antlered deer only
	Refer to quota and managed hunts	Hog Island, Merrimac Farm, Princess Anne	Refer to quota and managed hunts
	For hunting opportunities on other DWR properties, visit DWR's Explore the Wild app and refer to posted rules about season dates and either-sex opportunities at the specific DWR-controlled properties.		
	GEORGE WASHINGTON AND JEFFERSON NATIONAL FOREST Restriction: Only one deer per day on National Forest lands.		
	Nov. 14 – 28	In the counties of Alleghany, Amherst, Augusta, Bath, Bedford, Botetourt, Frederick, Grayson, Highland, Nelson, Page, Roanoke, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Smyth, Tazewell, Warren, and Washington.	Nov. 28
		In the counties of Carroll, Montgomery, and Pulaski	Nov. 21 & 28
		In the counties of Bland, Craig, Giles, and Wythe	Nov. 21, 27, & 28
		In the counties of Dickenson, Lee, Scott, and Wise	Antlered deer only
	STATE FORESTS, STATE PARKS, AND ARMY CORPS LANDS		
	Nov. 14 – Jan. 2	Big Woods State Forest	Nov. 14 – Jan. 2 (full season)
		Cumberland State Forest	Nov. 21 & 28, Dec. 5
		Appomattox-Buckingham State Forest, Prince Edward-Gallion State Forest	Nov. 21 & 28
	Nov. 14–28	Channels State Forest, Grayson Highlands State Park, Hungry Mother State Park	Nov. 28
		Flannagan Reservoir	Antlered deer only
	Nov. 14 – Dec. 12	Fairy Stone State Park and Philpott Reservoir	Nov. 21, Dec. 7–12

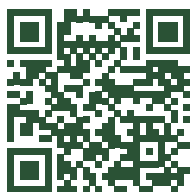
Elk Hunting



Elk hunting in Buchanan, Dickenson, and Wise counties is available through an elk hunt lottery. Interested individuals may apply for the lottery each February–March.

In all areas outside of Buchanan, Dickenson, and Wise counties, any elk (bull, cow, or calf) can be taken on any day of an open deer season (archery, muzzleloader, or firearms). See online regulations for more information about legal weapons and reporting requirements.

Complete elk hunting information and regulations can be found online.



Scan here or visit
dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/elk/hunting
for up-to-date info and regulations

WILDLIFE CRIME LINE

HELP PROTECT VIRGINIA'S WILDLIFE



If you see something, say something!

Anonymously report wildlife crimes to the Virginia Wildlife Crime Line via phone, text, email, or website. If you know of someone killing wildlife out of season or over the bag limit, or otherwise violating regulations, help the Virginia Conservation Police catch the individual and stop others from following that path.

What to Report:

- What happened
- Where it happened, being as specific as possible
- Who was involved, describing persons (names if known), vehicles (license numbers are crucial), names of other witnesses
- When did it happen (date and time are very important!)



How to Report:

CALL

800-237-5712

TEXT

Text DWRTIP plus your tip to 847411

EMAIL

WildCrime@dwr.virginia.gov

ONLINE

tip411.com/tips/
new?alert_group_id=22387



Reports may be eligible for a monetary reward. Reward payments are approved and funded by the Virginia Sportsman Reward Fund. If you would like to support this effort, consider making a tax-deductible donation to the fund:

Wildlife Crime Line, P.O. Box 90778, Henrico, VA 23228-0778.

Turkey Hunting



Turkey hunting seasons include:

Archery and Firearms seasons (see p. 21).

Complete turkey hunting information and regulations can be found online, including:

- General information
- Archery and fall firearms season
- Bag limits
- Spring turkey season
- Legal methods and restrictions
- Reporting fall and spring turkeys



Scan here or visit
dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/regulations/turkey
for up-to-date info and regulations

TURKEY HUNTING SEASONS

SEASON	SEASON DATES	DAILY BAG LIMIT	NOTABLE RESTRICTIONS (see online regulations for all applicable restrictions)
Archery	Oct. 3 – Nov. 13	1 per day - no more than 3 per year, only one of which may be beardless	Statewide except in areas where there is a closed firearm season on turkey.
Fall Youth & Apprentice Weekend	Oct. 10 – 11	1 either sex per youth/apprentice per weekend	Resident and nonresident youth hunters 15 years of age and under or holders of a valid apprentice hunting license, when in compliance with all applicable laws and licenses, may hunt when accompanied and directly supervised by an adult over the age of 18 who has a valid Virginia hunting license or is exempt from purchasing a hunting license. Nonresident youth of any age need to have the appropriate licenses (unless exempt from purchasing a license). Hunting hours are from half-hour before sunrise to half-hour after sunset.
Fall Firearms	Oct. 17 – 30 Nov. 26	1 per day - no more than 3 per year, only one of which may be beardless.	In the counties of Albemarle, Alleghany, Augusta, Bath, Greene, Highland, Madison, Page, and Rockingham.
	Oct. 17 – 30 Nov. 25 – 26 Nov. 30 – Dec. 26 Jan. 9 – 23	1 per day - no more than 3 per year, only one of which may be beardless	In the counties of Bedford, Bland, Botetourt, Caroline, Carroll, Clarke, Craig, Culpeper, Dickenson, Essex, Fairfax, Fauquier, Franklin, Giles, Grayson, King & Queen, King George, King William, Lancaster, Lee, Loudoun, Montgomery, Nelson, Northumberland, Prince William, Pulaski, Rappahannock, Richmond, Roanoke, Rockbridge, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Stafford, Washington, Westmoreland, Wise, and Wythe, and on Camp Peary, and the cities of Hampton and Newport News.
	Oct. 17 – 30 Nov. 25 – 26 Nov. 30 – Dec. 12	1 per day - no more than 3 per year, only one of which may be beardless	In the counties of Accomack, Amelia, Dinwiddie, Gloucester, Greensville, Isle of Wight, James City, Mathews, Middlesex, New Kent, Northampton, Powhatan, Prince George, Southampton, Surry, Sussex, York (except on Camp Peary), and the City of Suffolk.
	Oct. 17 – 30 Nov. 25 – 26 Nov. 30 – Dec. 12 Jan. 9 – 23	1 per day - no more than 3 per year, only one of which may be beardless	In the counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Brunswick, Buchanan, Buckingham, Campbell, Charles City, Charlotte, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Floyd, Fluvanna, Frederick, Goochland, Halifax, Hanover, Henrico, Henry, Louisa, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Orange, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Prince Edward, Shenandoah, Spotsylvania, Tazewell, and Warren.
	Closed		In the county of Arlington and the cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Virginia Beach.
Spring Youth & Apprentice Weekend	Apr. 3 – 4	1 bearded bird per youth/apprentice per weekend	Resident and nonresident youth hunters 15 years of age and under or holders of a valid apprentice hunting license, when in compliance with all applicable laws and licenses, may hunt when accompanied and directly supervised by an adult over the age of 18 who has a valid Virginia hunting license or is exempt from purchasing a hunting license. Nonresident youth of any age need to have the appropriate licenses (unless exempt from purchasing a license). Hunting hours are from half-hour before sunrise to sunset.
Spring	Apr. 10 – 25	1 bearded bird - no more than 3 per year	One-half hour before sunrise until 12 noon each day.
	Apr. 26 – May 15	1 bearded bird - no more than 3 per year	One half-hour before sunrise to sunset.



Small Game Hunting

Small game hunting includes seasons for:

- Crow
- Groundhog
- Grouse
- Quail & Pheasant
- Rabbit
- Gray, Red, & Fox Squirrel

Complete small game hunting information and regulations can be found online, including:

- General information
- Legal methods and restrictions
- Bag limits
- Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus 2 (RHDV2)
- Hunting preserves



Scan here or visit

dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/regulations/smallgame
for up-to-date info and regulations

SMALL GAME HUNTING SEASONS

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	DAILY BAG LIMIT	NOTABLE RESTRICTIONS (see online regulations for all applicable restrictions)
Crow	Aug. 15 – Mar. 19	no limit	Hunting only on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays
	Sep. 2 – Mar. 10		On National Forest Lands and DWR lands on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays only
Groundhog	Continuous Open Season	no limit	On private lands
	Sep. 1 – Mar. 10 Apr. 10 – May 15		On National Forest lands and DWR lands
	Jun. 5 – 19		On DWR lands open to spring squirrel hunting, not permitted on National Forest lands
Grouse	Oct. 24 – Feb. 13	3	West of I-95
	Closed	-	East of I-95
Quail	Nov. 7 – Jan. 31	6	Closed on all public lands west of the Blue Ridge Mountains and on Flippo-Gentry WMA in Sussex County.
Pheasant	Nov. 7 – Jan. 31	no limit	
Rabbit	Oct. 31 – Feb. 28	6	
Gray & Red Squirrels	Sep. 5 – Feb. 28	6 (all squirrels combined)	
Fox Squirrels	Sep. 5 – Jan. 31	6 (all squirrels combined)	Hunting in the following designated areas only: counties west of the Blue Ridge and in the counties of Albemarle, Bedford, Culpeper, Fauquier, Franklin, Greene, Henry, Loudoun, Madison, Orange, Patrick, Prince William, and Rappahannock.
Spring Squirrel	Jun. 5 – 19	6 (all squirrels combined)	Closed on National Forest lands. Gray and red squirrels may be harvested statewide, unless otherwise posted, and on the following WMAs: Amelia, Big Survey, Big Woods, Briery Creek, Cavalier, Chickahominy, Clinch Mountain, Coastal Forest, Crooked Creek, Dick Cross, Doe Creek, Fairystone (including Fairy Stone State Park and Philpott Reservoir), Featherfin, Flippo-Gentry, Gathright, Goshen, Hardware River, Havens, Hidden Valley, Highland, Hog Island (Carlisle Tract only), Horsepen, James River, Lake Robertson, Land's End (Salem Church tract only), Little North Mountain, Mattaponi, Mattaponi Bluffs, Merrimac Farm, Oakley Forest, Pettigrew, Phelps, Powhatan (including the Goochland Tract), Rapidan, Short Hills, Stewarts Creek, G. Richard Thompson, Robert W. Duncan, Turkeycock Mountain, Tye River, Ware Creek, and White Oak Mountain. Fox squirrels may be harvested on all lands, unless otherwise posted, in all counties with an open fall fox squirrel season and on the following WMAs: Big Survey, Clinch Mountain, Crooked Creek, Gathright, Goshen, Havens, Hidden Valley, Highland, Lake Robertson, Little North Mountain, Merrimac Farm, C. F. Phelps, Rapidan, Short Hills, Stewarts Creek, G. Richard Thompson, and Turkeycock Mountain.

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FOUNDATION OF VIRGINIA



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people connected
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About Hunting with Hounds in Virginia



To find out more about Best Practices surrounding hunting with hounds for both hunters and landowners, as well as the Virginia laws pertaining to hunting with hounds, please visit [dwr.virginia.gov/hunting with-hounds](https://dwr.virginia.gov/hunting-with-hounds) or scan the QR code.



VIRGINIA DWR

Archery Open 2027

WHEN:
January 9, 2027

WHERE:
Richmond Raceway

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) invites the archery and conservation community to participate in the 2027 DWR Archery Open. This competition will take place Saturday, January 9, 2027 in Richmond, VA and will feature opportunities for youth and adult level competitors. Event proceeds will contribute to connecting people to conservation.



TRUE *Wildlife* CRIME

Uncover the wild side of crime with real-life cases straight from the woods and waters of Virginia.



Scan the QR or visit
[dwr.virginia.gov/
true-wildlife-crime](https://dwr.virginia.gov/true-wildlife-crime)

Furbearer Hunting



Furbearer hunting includes seasons for:

- Bobcat
- Coyote
- Fox
- Opossum
- Raccoon
- Skunk

Complete furbearer hunting information and regulations can be found online, including:

- General information
- Legal methods and restrictions
- Bag limits
- CITES tagging requirement for bobcats
- Electronic reporting requirement for bobcats
- Coyote bounty law
- Fox and raccoon chase-only seasons
- Gray fox harvest reporting requirement



Scan here or visit

dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/regulations/furbearerhunting
for up-to-date info and regulations

FURBEARER HUNTING SEASONS

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	DAILY BAG LIMIT	NOTABLE RESTRICTIONS (see online regulations for all applicable restrictions)
Bobcat - Archery	Oct. 3–31	Two per hunting party taken between noon one day and noon the following day.	All hunted bobcats must be reported within 24 hours through DWR's electronic harvest reporting system. A CITES tag may also be required for some bobcats.
Bobcat - Firearms	Nov. 1 – Feb. 28	Two per hunting party taken between noon one day and noon the following day.	
Coyote	Continuous open season	no limit	Coyote hunting on National Forest and DWR-owned lands is permitted only between Sep. 1 - Mar. 10 and between Apr. 10 - May 15. Coyote may also be hunted on DWR lands Jun. 5 - 19 unless otherwise posted.
Fisher	Closed		Please report verifiable sightings dwr.virginia.gov/report-rare-animals .
Red Fox	Nov. 1 – Feb. 28	no limit	Closed in Albemarle, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier (except Quantico), Loudoun, Louisa, and Rappahannock counties.
Gray Fox	Jan. 1 – Feb. 28	One per hunting party taken between noon of one day and noon the following day.	Closed in Albemarle, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier (except Quantico), Loudoun, Louisa, and Rappahannock counties. All harvested gray foxes must be reported within 24 hours.
Fox Chase Only	Continuous open season except: - Closed Mar. 1 through Oct. 31 and during the firearms season for deer on the George Washington/Jefferson National Forests and on Gathright, Goshen, Highland, and Little North Mountain WMAs. - Closed Mar. 1 through Oct. 31 on G. Richard Thompson and Rapidan WMAs.	no limit	License requirements are the same as those for hunting foxes with firearms. However, a Fox Hunting License to hunt foxes on horseback with hounds without firearms may be purchased in lieu of a basic hunting license.
Opossum	Oct. 15 – Mar. 10	no limit	
Raccoon	Oct. 15 – Mar. 10	East of the Blue Ridge: 2 per hunter taken between noon one day and noon the following day West of the Blue Ridge: 2 per hunting party (individual or organized) taken between noon one day and noon the following day	Lights may be used as long as the light is not attached to or cast from a vehicle.
Raccoon Chase Only	Continuous open season except that raccoons may only be chased on DWR-controlled lands west of the Blue Ridge Mountains and on National Forest lands where bears can be chased on those lands from Aug. 1 through Sep. 26	no limit	License requirements are the same as those for hunting raccoons with firearms. It shall be unlawful to use for the purpose of chasing or taking a raccoon a firearm, bow, or crossbow, and have in possession an axe, saw, or any tree climbing device while hunting during this chase season. Possession shall include, but not be limited to, having these devices in or on one's person, vehicle, or conveyance while engaged in the act of chasing.
Striped Skunk	Continuous open season Sep. 1 – Mar. 10 Apr. 10 – May 15	no limit	Except on National Forest and DWR lands On National Forest lands and DWR lands. Striped skunks may also be hunted on DWR lands Jun. 5 – 19 unless otherwise posted.
Spotted Skunk	Closed		Pelts of spotted skunks may not be sold. Please report verifiable sightings at dwr.virginia.gov/report-rare-animals .

Furbearer Trapping



Furbearer trapping includes seasons for:

- Beaver • Bobcat • Coyote • Fox • Mink • Muskrat • Nutria
- Opossum • Otter • Rabbit • Raccoon • Skunk • Weasel

Complete furbearer trapping information and regulations can be found online, including:

- General trapping regulations
- Legal methods and restrictions
- Special requirements for snares set with loops higher than 12" above ground level
- Harvest reporting for gray foxes
- Electronic reporting requirement for bobcats
- CITES tagging requirement for bobcat and otter
- Permanent identification number for trap tags
- Best management practices



Scan here or visit

dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/regulations/furbearertrapping
for up-to-date info and regulations

FURBEARER TRAPPING SEASONS

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	DAILY BAG LIMIT	NOTABLE RESTRICTIONS (see online regulations for all applicable restrictions)
Beaver	Dec. 1 – Feb. 28	no limit	
Bobcat	Nov. 15 – Feb. 28	no limit	All trapped bobcats must be reported within 24 hours through the DWR's electronic harvest reporting system. A CITES tag may also be required for some bobcats. Please see regulations online for details regarding electronic bobcat reporting and CITES tagging procedures.
Coyote	Continuous open season	no limit	
Fisher	Closed		Please report verifiable sightings at dwr.virginia.gov/report-rare-animals .
Red Fox	Nov. 15 – Feb. 28	no limit	Fox (red and gray) trapping is prohibited in Clarke (except on G. R. Thompson WMA), Fauquier (except on C. F. Phelps WMA and G. R. Thompson WMA), Loudoun, and Rappahannock counties. All trapped gray foxes must be reported within 24 hours. Please see regulations online for harvest reporting details.
Gray Fox			
Mink	Dec. 1 – Feb. 28	no limit	
Muskrat	Dec 1 – Feb. 28	no limit	
Nutria	Continuous open season	no limit	Please report verifiable sightings at cmi.vt.edu/ReportNutria .
Opossum	Nov. 15 – Feb. 28	no limit	
Otter	Dec. 1 – Feb. 28	4 otters per trapper in all counties west of the Blue Ridge. There is no season bag limit in counties east of the Blue Ridge.	Raw otter pelts and unskinned carcasses that are bought, sold, bartered, traded, solicited for purchase, or transported out of state must have a CITES tag affixed to each animal. No CITES tag is needed to have an otter mounted by a Virginia taxidermist or ship an otter pelt out-of-state for tanning purposes (unless required by the state where the tannery is located). See DWR website for more information.
Rabbit	Oct. 15 – Jan. 31	no limit	Box traps only. No traps shall be set on another's land without written permission of the landowner. No license required to box trap rabbits. Live box-trapped rabbits may not be moved outside the county of capture. For rabbits box-trapped for human consumption, all parts not saved for consumption must be disposed of according to regulations.
Raccoon	Nov. 15 – Feb. 28	no limit	
Striped Skunk	Continuous open season	no limit	
Spotted Skunk	Continuous closed season		The pelts of spotted skunk may not be sold. Please report verifiable spotted skunk sightings.
Weasel	Dec. 1 – Feb. 28	no limit	

NOTE: Certain localities and private lands have continuous open seasons for several furbearer species — please see full regulations online at dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/regulations/furbearertrapping for details.

Migratory Game Bird Hunting

Migratory game bird hunting includes seasons for:

- Dove
- Rails (clapper, king, sora, and Virginia) and gallinules
- Common snipe
- Woodcock
- September teal
- Ducks
- Mergansers
- Coots
- Canada goose
- Light goose
- Atlantic brant
- Tundra swan

Complete migratory game bird hunting information and regulations can be found online, including:

- General information
- Legal methods and restrictions
- HIP registration
- Federal electronic or “E-Stamp” duck stamp program
- Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) guidelines for waterfowl hunters



Scan here or visit

dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/regulations/migratory-gamebirds
for up-to-date info and regulations

MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING SEASONS (1 of 2)

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	HOURS	DAILY BAG LIMIT	IN POSSESSION	NOTABLE RESTRICTIONS (see online regulations for all applicable restrictions)
Youth & Veterans Waterfowl Hunting Days	Oct. 24, 2026 Feb. 6, 2027	One half-hour before sunrise until sunset	Allowed limit per species		Open to Youth 15 years of age and under, Military Veterans (as defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code) and members of the Armed Forces on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves on active duty (other than for training).
Dove	Sep. 5 – Oct. 24 Nov. 21 – 29 Dec. 19 – Jan. 18	Sep. 5: Noon until sunset Sep. 6 – Oct. 24: One half-hour before sunrise until sunset One half-hour before sunrise until sunset	15	45	Bag limit composed of mourning doves and white-winged doves, singly or in combination. Dove hunting is permitted at all wildlife management areas (WMA) with the exceptions of Hog Island and Princess Anne. Additionally, several WMAs managed for waterfowl exclude dove hunting within impoundments only; see specific WMA webpages for information on zones of exclusion.
Rails & Gallinules	Sep. 5 – Oct. 24 Nov. 10 – 29	One half-hour before sunrise until sunset	Clapper Rails: 10 Sora/Virginia: 25 Gallinules: 15	Clapper Rails: 30 Sora/Virginia: 75 Gallinules: 45	Non-toxic shot is required for hunting rails, gallinules, and snipe, in addition to all waterfowl, mergansers, and coots. King rail bag limit is 1 per day and 3 in possession.
Woodcock	Nov. 11 – Dec. 1 Dec. 26 – Jan. 18	One half-hour before sunrise until sunset	3	9	
Snipe	Sep. 28 – Nov. 29 Dec. 19 – Jan. 31	One half-hour before sunrise until sunset	8	24	
September Teal	East of I-95: Sep. 19 – 27 West of I-95: Sep. 22 – 27	One half-hour before sunrise until sunset	6	18 (any combination of blue-winged and green-winged teal only)	A HIP registration, a federal migratory duck stamp, and a Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamp (unless license exempt) are required to hunt teal during this season.
Mergansers	Oct. 9 – 12 Nov. 18 – 29 Dec. 19 – Jan. 31	One half-hour before sunrise until sunset	5	15	Can include any combination of hooded, red-breasted, and common mergansers.
Ducks	Oct. 9 – 12 (black duck closed) Nov. 18 – 29 Dec. 19 – Jan. 31	One half-hour before sunrise until sunset	6 of any species*	Three times the daily bag limit	*Except for the following restrictions: can include no more than 4 mallards (only 2 hen mallards), 3 wood ducks, 2 black ducks (except closed Oct. 9–12), scaup: 1/day for 40 days (Oct. 9–12, Nov. 18–29, Dec. 19–Jan. 11), and 2/day for 20 days (Jan. 12–31), 2 redheads, 2 canvasbacks, 3 pintails, 1 mottled duck, 1 fulvous whistling duck, 4 total sea ducks (no more than 3 scoters, 3 eiders [only 1 hen], 3 long-tailed ducks). Closed season on harlequin ducks.
Coots	Oct. 9 – 12 Nov. 18 – 29 Dec. 19 – Jan. 31	One half-hour before sunrise until sunset	15	45	

Make Sure You Have Your HIP Registration and Duck Stamps



Paul Makuchal's painting of a hooded merganser is on the 2026 Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamp.

- All hunters (whether licensed or license-exempt) who plan to hunt migratory game birds including dove, waterfowl, rail, woodcock, snipe, coots, gallinules, or moorhens, must be registered with the Virginia Harvest Information Program (HIP). A new HIP registration is required on July 1 of each year.
- A Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp is required for all persons 16 years and older in order to hunt waterfowl.
- The Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamp is required of all persons 16 years of age and older hunting or taking migratory waterfowl in Virginia.

MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING SEASONS (2 of 2)

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	HOURS	DAILY BAG LIMIT	IN POSSESSION	NOTABLE RESTRICTIONS (see online regulations for all applicable restrictions)
Canada Goose Atlantic Population Zone	Nov. 24 – 29	One half-hour before sunrise until sunset	2	6	Includes white-fronted geese
	Dec. 24 – Jan. 31				
Canada Goose Resident Population Zone	Nov. 18 – 29	One half-hour before sunrise until sunset	5	15	Includes white-fronted geese
	Dec. 19 – Feb. 21				
September Canada Goose	Sep. 1 – 25	East of I-95, Sep. 1 - 18: One half-hour before sunrise until one half-hour after sunset	10	30	September Canada goose hunting is not permitted within the boundaries of the Amelia and Dick Cross Wildlife Management Areas. Unplugged shotguns permitted in areas and at time when other waterfowl seasons are closed.
		East of I-95, Sep. 19 - 25: One half-hour before sunrise to sunset			
		West of I-95, Sep. 1 - 21: One half-hour before sunrise until one half-hour after sunset			
		West of I-95, Sep. 22 - 25: One half-hour before sunrise to sunset			
Light Goose	Nov. 25 – Mar. 10	One half-hour before sunrise until sunset	25	no limit	Use of electronic calls and unplugged shotguns permitted in areas and at times when other waterfowl seasons are closed.
Light Goose Conservation Order	Will be determined in September 2026	One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.	no limit	no limit	Electronic calls, unplugged shotguns, and extended shooting hours are allowed. All hunters who plan to participate in the Light Goose Conservation Order must register either online, www.virginiawildlife.gov/lightgoose , or by phone, 866-721-6911, and obtain a Hunter Activity Report prior to hunting. See more details on DWR website. Registration will begin December 4, 2026.
Atlantic Brant	Dec. 19 – 31 Jan. 15 – 31	One half-hour before sunrise until sunset	1	3	
Tundra Swan	Nov. 15 – Jan. 31	One half-hour before sunrise until sunset	1 per permittee per season		Hunting will be permitted in all counties and portions of counties lying east of I-95 and south of the Prince William/Stafford County line in Chopawamsic Creek at Quantico Marine Corps Base. Before any person may hunt tundra swans in Virginia, he or she must first apply for and receive a tundra swan hunt permit. See more information on DWR website.

Waterfowl Hunting on Wildlife Management Areas: Waterfowl hunting is permitted at all Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), although some WMAs have special restrictions. Information on restrictions is available through individual WMA webpages. For information about quota or managed hunts for migratory game birds on DWR WMAs, see the DWR website.

SPORTSMEN: BOAT SMART, WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET

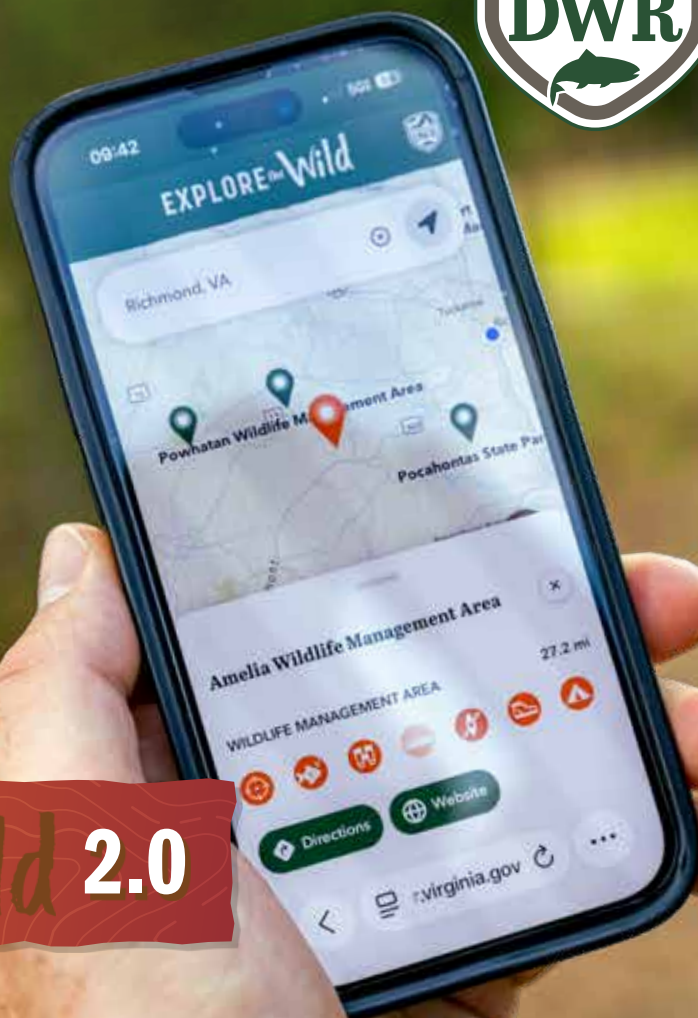
Wearing a life jacket may save your life. It is estimated that 80 percent of boating-related drownings could have been prevented had the victim been wearing a life jacket. The newest type of life jacket, the manual or automatic inflatable, is lightweight and comfortable. They are versatile enough to be worn at any time of the year and fit easily over a hunting coat or sweater.

SAFETY TIPS

- Check the weather before leaving.
- Anchor from the bow, never from the stern.
- Dress for the water temperature—guard against hypothermia.
- Wear a life jacket or float coat.
- Properly load your boat.
- Leave the alcohol at home.
- Remain seated and keep weight evenly distributed.
- Stay with your boat if it should capsize.



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Public Hunting Lands

Complete information about hunting on a wide variety of public lands can be found online, including:

- Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)
- National Forests
- National Parks
- State Forests
- State Parks
- Federal Refuges
- Military Areas
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Public Access Lands for Sportsmen (PALS)
- Public Opportunities for Wildlife-Related Recreation (POWRR)



For information about hunting on these lands, contact information for them, and regulations specific to National Forest and DWR lands, scan here or visit dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/regulations/publiclands

Quota Hunts

Quota hunts provide hunters opportunities to access public lands that otherwise may be closed to hunting. Hunters can participate in random drawings to hunt waterfowl, white-tailed deer, black bear, quail, rabbits, and turkeys. To participate, hunters must apply pre-season and submit a non-refundable application fee. Applicants should be aware there is no guarantee that you will be selected for the hunt or hunt dates.

For complete information on quota hunts, including:

- Application instructions and links
- Hunt descriptions

Scan the QR below or visit
dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/quota-hunts



Managed Hunts & Workshops

Managed hunts are generally by on-site random drawings or by application through the local Resource Office. Hunting opportunities are provided on various DWR Wildlife Management Areas and National Wildlife Refuges.

DWR has partnered with Loudoun County and Virginia State Parks to sponsor two novice deer hunter workshops and hunts. One will take place at Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve in Loudoun County and the other will be at Widewater State Park in Stafford County. These workshops, for novice hunters age 18 and over, are to educate novice hunters beyond the state required hunter education course and to prepare them for real field experiences.

For complete information on managed hunts and workshops, including:

- Application instructions and links
- Hunt descriptions

Scan the QR below or visit
dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/managed-hunts



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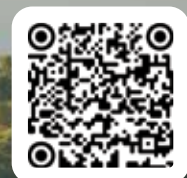
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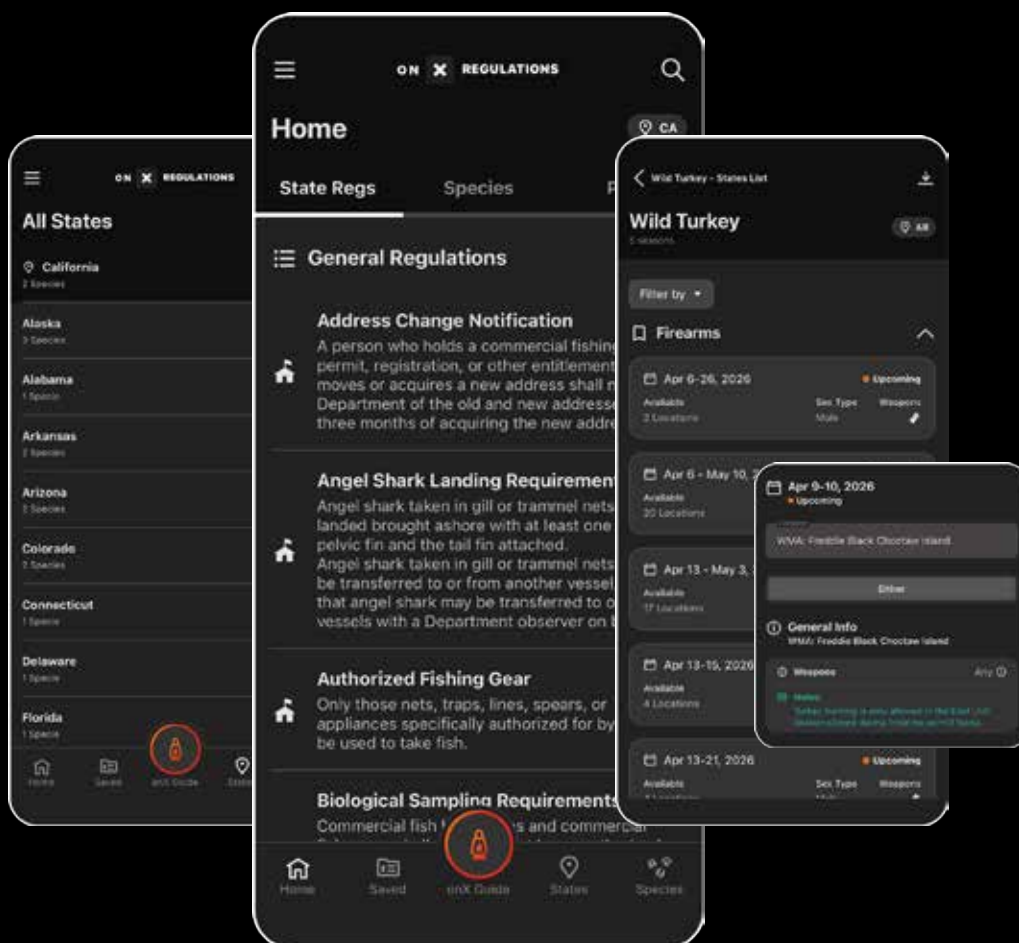


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