



State of Illinois
Department of Natural Resources



Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping **REGULATIONS 2026-2027**



Use through July 31, 2027 or until the 2027-2028 digest is printed.

Photo of a Bufflehead courtesy of Matt Williams



www.instagram.com/illinoisdnr/



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Message From the Director



Greetings from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Thank you for taking time to review the annual Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations. This informative guide includes a detailed review of Illinois' hunting and trapping season dates, possession limits, hunting zone boundaries, statewide hunting regulations, license and permit details, and other helpful information.

New or amended regulations for 2026-2027 are noted in yellow shading, so please be sure to familiarize yourself with all the updated guidelines before heading to the field.

This digest also contains helpful information about Illinois' public hunting sites, property laws, harvest reporting requirements, and efforts to maintain healthy wildlife populations.

Hunter heritage runs deep in Illinois. Introducing new generations of friends and family members to hunting is an important part of the experience. With that in mind, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources continues to work on improving hunting opportunities, recruit new hunters and trappers, and expand public access throughout Illinois.

Hunters and trappers are essential partners in conservation and management of Illinois' wildlife, and we appreciate the input we receive from you on ways to improve outdoor opportunities throughout the state. Thank you for taking part in these activities and for buying the licenses and permits that fund habitat enhancement and wildlife management programs.

It's my pleasure to welcome you to a new hunting and trapping season in Illinois. Best wishes for a safe and successful season.

Renee Snow, Interim Director

Illinois Department of Natural Resources



Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations



Federal Aid Project
Funded by your purchase of
hunting equipment

Digest Purpose

This publication is a summary of Illinois hunting and trapping regulations prepared for your convenience. It is designed as a [guide](#) to the laws and regulations for hunting and trapping in Illinois. It also provides information such as seasons, harvest limits, and required permits for these opportunities in Illinois. It is [not a legal document](#) and is not intended to cover all hunting and trapping laws and regulations. This document does not contain the exact wording of the Illinois' Adopted Administrative Rules available at dnr.illinois.gov/adrules or the Wildlife Code of the Illinois Compiled Statutes available at www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs2.asp?ChapterID=43.

Table of Contents

2026-2027 Illinois Hunting Information

New Regulations for 2026-2027 – New laws and new programs are indicated by [yellow shading](#). Prior to undertaking activities subject to change, review information published at dnr.illinois.gov, your local newspaper's outdoor writer's column or check with your local IDNR office for more information. Any conflict arising between this digest and the statutes or administrative code of the State of Illinois, the statutes or administrative code of the State of Illinois shall control.

Message from the Director	Inside Front Cover
Digest Purpose	Inside Front Cover
New Regulations/Information	Inside Front Cover
IDNR Contact Information	1
Hunting Licenses	3
Definitions	5
Statewide Regulations	6
Conservation Police	9
Deer Hunting	12
Turkey Hunting	22
Waterfowl Hunting	27
Upland and Small Game Hunting	36
Furbearer Trapping and Hunting	42
Road-killed Deer and Nuisance Wildlife Information	48
Season Dates - Rules of Thumb	49
Public Hunting Sites	49

New Regulations/Information for 2026-2027

Deer Hunting Credentials	13
Special CWD Deer Hunting Seasons	18
County-specific Deer Archery Change	18
Deer CWD Map and Additional Information	19
Youth Deer Hunting	21
Waterfowl Season Dates and Limits	27
Public Hunting Sites	52, 54

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Illinois Department of Natural Resources

IDNR Regional Offices

Headquarters

One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702
(217) 782-6302

Region 1 Office

Blackhawk State Historic Site
1510 46th Avenue
Rock Island, IL 61201
(309) 788-0418

Region 2 Office

James Pate Philip State Park
2050 West Stearns Road
Bartlett, IL 60103
(847) 608-3100

Region 3 Office

None

Region 4 Office

None

Region 5 Office

11731 State Highway 37
Benton, IL 62812
(618) 435-8138

For Further Information Contact

Target Illinois Poachers (877) 2DNRLAW (236-7529)

Springfield Offices:

Permits Office (Lottery/Landowner) (217) 782-7305

License Office (217) 782-2965

Wildlife Resources (217) 782-6384

Law Enforcement (217) 782-6431

Telecommunications Device for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired
(TTY) (217) 782-9175

IDNR Website Index

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

dnr.illinois.gov

Hunting/Trapping Information

huntillinois.org

Hunting/Trapping Licenses

dnr.illinois.gov/lpr/licenseandpermitfees

Public Hunting Sites

huntillinois.org/directory

Hunter Safety Certification

dnr.illinois.gov/safety/huntersafety

Trapper Education Certification

dnr.illinois.gov/safety/trapping

Conservation Police

dnr.illinois.gov/lawenforcement

Office of the Director

dnr.illinois.gov/director



It's ALL HERE for on the go hunters!

You'll Find:

Public Hunting Site Info
Seasons & Events Calendars
Hunt Map
Permit Lottery Info
And More!



huntillinois.org

@livingwithwildlifeillinois

/livingwithwildlifeillinois

Hunt Illinois is a collaborative effort led by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration, and the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center. Funding for Hunt Illinois was made available through Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project W-147-T.



2026-2027 Hunting Timeline

Animal	26-Aug	26-Sept	26-Oct	26-Nov	26-Dec	27-Jan	27-Feb	27-Mar	27-Apr	27-May	27-Jun	27-Jul
Coyote/Striped Skunk				Closed 20-22	Closed 3-6							
Woodchuck				Closed 20-22	Closed 3-6			Ends 31			Opens 1	
Squirrels	Opens 1			Closed 20-22	Closed 3-6		Ends 15					
Doves		See pg. 36 for specific dates										
Canada Goose		See pg. 28 for specific dates										
Snipe (Wilson's Snipe)		Opens 5			Ends 20							
Rails		Opens 5		Ends 13								
Teal		5-13										
Deer			See pg. 12 for specific dates									
Turkey			See pg. 22 for specific dates					See pg. 22 for specific dates				
Ducks/Mergansers/Coots			See pg. 27 for specific dates									
Light Geese/Brant			See pg. 28 for specific dates									
White-fronted Goose			See pg. 28 for specific dates									
Crow			Opens 28				Ends 28					
Woodcock			Opens 17	Ends 30								
Rabbits				Opens 7			Ends 15					
Upland Birds				Opens 7		Ends 8 (N) Ends 15 (S)						
Bobcat/Red Fox*/Opossum/ Raccoon				Opens 10 Closed 20-22	Closed 3-6		Ends 15					
Conservation Order Light Goose						See pg. 28 for specific dates						

2026-2027 Trapping Timeline

Woodchuck		Ends 30									Opens 1	
Badger/Bobcat/Coyote/Red Fox*/ Mink/Muskrat/Opossum/ Raccoon/ Striped Skunk/Weasels				Opens 10			Ends 15					
Beaver/River Otter				Opens 10				Ends 31				

*Gray fox hunting and trapping seasons are closed. See pg. 43 for more information.

2026-2027 Permit Lotteries Timeline

(Dates are inclusive, see species sections for full details)

Species	Lottery	Jul-26	Aug-26	Sept-26	Oct-26	Nov-26	Dec-26	Jan-27	Feb-27	Mar-27	Apr-27	May-27	Jun-27	Jul-27
Deer	Youth lotteries									See pg. 17 and 21 for specific dates				
	1st lottery									Opens 2	Closes 30			
	2nd lottery											Opens 11	Closes 30	
	3rd lottery	Opens 13	Closes 21											
	OTC				Opens 20 until gone									
	Late Winter SHA				Opens 27	Closes 23								
Turkey	Fall Gun-1st lottery	Closes 6										Opens 5		Closes 6
	Fall Gun-2nd lottery	Opens 17	Closes 24											
	Fall Gun-OTC			Opens 21 until gone										
	Spring-1st lottery				Opens 6		Closes 1							
	Spring-2nd lottery						Opens 11	Closes 11						
	Spring-3rd lottery							Opens 22	Closes 9					
	Spring-OTC									Opens 9 until gone				
	Spring-Youth OTC									Opens 2	Closes 4			
	Spring Youth SHA							Opens 19	Closes 15					
Waterfowl	1st lottery		16-31											
	2nd lottery			1-15										
	3rd lottery			16-28										
	As available				Opens 1 until gone									
	Youth			Opens 1	Closes 1									
Upland	One-time lottery		1-31											
Doves	1st lottery												1-30	
	2nd lottery	6-20												6-20
	As available	Opens 27	Closes 25											
Bobcat	One-time lottery			1-30										

HUNTING LICENSE INFORMATION

- Anyone born on or after January 1, 1980 is required to complete a hunter safety education course (certificate of competency) or provide evidence of holding a hunting license issued by Illinois or another state in a prior year before purchasing a hunting license. Exemptions apply, see Wildlife Code (520 ILCS 5/3.2).
- All residents and nonresidents will need an applicable base hunting license. For exemptions see Wildlife Code (520 ILCS 5/3.1).
- Additional licenses, permits and stamps required to hunt or trap particular species are listed in sections covering those species in this digest.

- Annual hunting licenses and state stamps go on sale 1 March and are valid through 31 March of the following year.
- For online license sales, please visit www.exploremoreil.com
- For Residency restrictions see definition on pg. 5.
- Every person holding a hunting license shall have it, including all appropriate stamps, in his/her possession for immediate presentation for inspection to any authorized law enforcement officer while hunting.

Base Hunting Licenses (does not include vendor or transaction fees)

License Type	Fee	3-year Option*	Online	Vendors	Specifications
Resident	\$12.00	X	X	X	
Resident Senior	\$6.00	X	X	X	Only available to hunters age 65 to 74 (inclusive).
Resident Super Senior	\$1.00	X	X	X	Only available to hunters age 75 or older.
Illinois Veteran	\$6.00	X	X	X	Illinois veterans who served overseas or were mobilized by the President of the United States and have a form DD214 can submit their form to IDNR's Springfield office at DNR.License@illinois.gov and ask to be certified as qualifying for half priced licenses. Please redact your SSN before emailing your DD214.
Apprentice	\$7.00		X	X	Apprentice hunters must be supervised by a validly licensed Illinois resident or nonresident hunter who is 21 years of age or older. A hunter safety course is not required to purchase this license.
Youth Hunt/Trap	\$7.00		X	X	Any hunter/trapper under 18 years of age may purchase this license. Hunters/trappers with this license must be supervised by an adult who is 21 years of age or older and has the appropriate Illinois hunting or trapping license. The youth hunter shall not hunt or trap or carry a hunting device, unless the youth is accompanied by and under close personal supervision of that adult. See Wildlife Code (520 ILCS 5/3.1-9) for supervisory requirement exemptions.
Resident Lifetime	\$360.00		X		
Resident Sportsman Combo Hunt/Fish	\$25.50	X	X	X	
Illinois Veteran Sportsman Combo Hunt/Fish	\$12.75	X	X	X	See specification on veteran license above.
Resident Senior Sportsman Combo Hunt/Fish	\$12.75	X	X	X	Only available to hunters age 65 to 74 (inclusive).
Resident Super Senior Sportsman Combo Hunt/Fish	\$2.00	X	X	X	Only available to hunters age 75+.
Resident Lifetime Sportsman Combo Hunt/Fish	\$765.00		X	X	
Nonresident	\$57.00		X	X	
Nonresident (5 day)	\$35.00		X	X	
Disabled	Illinois residents with a disability may hunt without a license if they have an Illinois Driver's License or Illinois Disability Identification Card indicating that they have a Type 1 or Type 4, Class 2 disability. Veterans with a disability (both resident and nonresident) may hunt without a license if they possess an Affidavit of Disability Card (resident) from the IL Department of Veteran's Affairs or documentation (nonresident) that they are at least 10% disabled with service-related disabilities. Certain stamps are still required.				
Active Duty - Armed Forces	A person on active duty in the Armed Forces may, while on ordinary or emergency leave, hunt without a license. Active duty military, guard, or reserve members who served overseas within the last 2 years may be eligible for the Armed Forces Special Pass, which waives fees for fishing, hunting and camping. See details at dnr.illinois.gov or call (217) 782-2965.				

*3-year License Option - Illinois residents may obtain three-year hunting, sportsmen and trapping licenses for three times the cost of an annual one.

Resident License/Stamps Guidelines (X = Applicable)

License/Stamp	Under 16	16-17	18-64	65-74	75+	Disabled	Disabled Veteran	Former POW	Active Duty - Armed Forces	Landowner
Resident*	X	X	X						See pg. 3	
Senior*				X					See pg. 3	
Super Senior*					X					
Apprentice	X	X	X	X	X				X	
Sportsman Combo*		X	X						X	
Senior Sportsman Combo*				X					X	
Super Senior Sportsman Combo*					X					
Lifetime	X	X	X	X	X					
Youth Hunting & Trapping	X	X								
Trapping*	X	X	X	X	X					
Federal Migratory Waterfowl Stamp		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
State Migratory Waterfowl Stamp			X	X	X				See pg. 3	
State Habitat Stamp			X	X	X	X			X	X
HIP Certification	X	X	X	X	X				See pg. 3	

*3-year License Option - Illinois residents may obtain three-year hunting, fishing, sportsmen and trapping licenses for three times the cost of an annual one.

Nonresident License/Stamps Guidelines (X = Applicable)

License/Stamp	Under 16	16-17	18-64	65+	Disabled	Disabled Veteran	Former POW	Landowner
Nonresident	X	X	X	X	X			X
Nonresident 5-Day	X	X	X	X	X			X
Apprentice	X	X	X	X	X			X
Youth Hunting & Trapping	X	X			X			
Trapping	X	X	X	X	X			X
Federal Waterfowl Stamp		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
State Migratory Waterfowl Stamp			X	X	X			X
State Habitat Stamp			X	X	X			X
HIP Certification	X	X	X	X	X			X

Hunting Times Table

Use government sources such as www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/grad/solcalc/ or www.weather.gov/dvn/sunrise-sunset for accurate sunrise/sunset times.

Windshield Cards

Windshield Cards For Public Land Hunting/Trapping

Free "Windshield Cards" are required to hunt certain species and record hunting effort/harvest at many Illinois Public Hunting Sites. Cards are available at: dnr2.illinois.gov/Windshieldcard/. Print a card for each site you intend to hunt and place on the dashboard of your vehicle when hunting the site. Each hunter will need to display a windshield card. For information or assistance, contact the site where you intend to hunt. **Hunters are required to return to this website prior to Feb. 15 each year to record harvest information.**

Firearm Owner's I.D. Card

For legal possession of firearms and ammunition, see Public Safety Code (430 ILCS 65/ and 66/).

IDNR does not issue F.O.I.D. cards. To obtain a F.O.I.D. card call the Illinois State Police at (217) 782-7980 or visit www.ispsfb.com/Public/FOID.aspx.

Definitions

Bow and Arrow: Means a longbow, recurve bow, compound bow, or crossbow.

Case: Any case, firearm carrying box, shipping box, or container acceptable under Article 24 of the Criminal Code of 2012. www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/documents/072000050k24-1.htm

Daily Limit: The maximum number or amount of species that can be lawfully taken by one person in one calendar day.

Floating Blind: Any watercraft or floating structure that is capable of carrying a person and which is camouflaged, disguised or altered in appearance to offer a place of concealment. Such floating blind may be mechanically powered as long as such power is used only for movement to and from the place of hunting and no attempt is made to hunt during such movement.

Freshly Killed: Any carcass, remains or parts of the body of any dead mammal or bird that has not been prepared for immediate consumption or storage for later consumption.

Furbearing Mammals: Mink, muskrat, raccoon, striped skunk, weasel, opossum, beaver, red fox, gray fox*, badger, bobcat, river otter and coyote. *Gray fox hunting and trapping seasons are closed. See pg. 43 for more information.

Game Birds: Bobwhite quail, Hungarian partridge, chukar partridge, ring-necked pheasant and wild turkey.

Game Mammals: Eastern cottontail and swamp rabbits, white-tailed deer, fox squirrel, gray squirrel and woodchuck (groundhog).

Green Hide: Any hide or pelt which has not been tanned.

Gun: Shotgun, rifle, handgun or airgun.

Hunt: Act of a person possessing a weapon or being accompanied by a dog or a bird of prey for the purpose of taking species protected by this Act in any location such species may inhabit.

Hunting: The lawful pursuit, trapping, shooting, capture, collection, or killing of wildlife or the attempt to pursue, trap, shoot, capture, collect, or kill wildlife.

Hunting License: An electronic or physical license authorizing the person to take a certain type of animal during a specified period of time.

IDNR: Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Lead Ammunition: A projectile containing one or more percent lead by weight.

Migratory Game Birds: Mourning dove, white-winged dove, sora rail, Virginia rail, American woodcock, snipe (Wilson's snipe), American coot, ducks, geese, swans and American crow.

Possession Limit: Maximum number or amount of species which can be lawfully held or possessed by one person at any time.

Definitions

Protected Species: Wild birds and wild mammals, including parts, which shall include their nests, eggs and green hides, in the State of Illinois, or which may be brought into the state. See Wildlife Code (520 ILCS 5/2.2) for details.

Resident: "Resident" means a person who in good faith makes application for any license or permit and verifies by statement that he or she has maintained his or her permanent abode in this state for a period of at least 30 consecutive days immediately preceding the person's application, and who does not maintain permanent abode or claim residency in another state for the purposes of obtaining any of the same or similar licenses or permits covered by Wildlife Code (520 ILCS/5). A person's permanent abode is his or her fixed and permanent dwelling place, as distinguished from a temporary or transient place of residence. Domiciliary intent is required to establish that the person is maintaining his or her permanent abode in this State. Evidence of domiciliary intent includes, but is not limited to, the location where the person votes, pays personal income tax or obtains a drivers license. Except for the purposes of obtaining a Lifetime License, any person on active duty in the Armed Forces shall be considered a resident of Illinois during his or her period of military duty.

Sale: To sell, barter or otherwise offer goods to another for consideration. The term sale includes serving the same as a part of a meal by any restaurant, hotel or other commercial establishment.

Skill boat: A boat propelled by means of an oar fixed in a notch in the transom of a boat and worked in a turning or sculling motion.

Take: To hunt, shoot, pursue, lure, kill, destroy, capture, gig or spear, trap or ensnare, or harass or attempt to do so.

Transport or Ship: To convey by means of parcel post, express, freight baggage or shipment by common carrier of any description; or by automobile, motorcycle or other vehicle of any kind; or by water or aircraft of any kind or by any other means of transportation.

Trap: To capture, or attempt to capture, by setting or placing a leg-hold trap, cushion-hold trap, body-gripping trap, cage or box trap, snare or other similar device permitted by Wildlife Code (520 ILCS/5) to capture, hold or kill any protected wildlife.

Vehicle: Any device capable of transporting a person on land, on ice, on water, in water or in the air.

Wildlife: Any bird or mammal living in a state of nature without the care of man, including all protected wildlife.



Shooting Safety and Skills Clinics

The IDNR and partners offer "wingshooting" clinics that teach shooting safety, fundamentals and hunting skills using shotguns and moving clay targets. Clinics are held for novice to advanced shooters on weekends throughout Illinois during spring through early fall of each year. Visit the following website for more information, including a calendar of clinics:

dnr.illinois.gov/recreation/wingshooting

Statewide Regulations

Hunting Hours Restrictions

Hunting shall only occur during times specified for those game species in reference to official sunrise-sunset times for the location. Some IDNR sites may have more restricted hunting times. Please refer to the Hunting Site Information (Hunter Fact Sheet) on huntillinois.org for site specific regulations.

Possession and Daily Limits

You cannot legally possess wild game birds, wild game mammals or wild fur-bearing mammals or any parts thereof in excess of the legally established daily limit or possession limit, whichever applies.

Maintaining Separate Bag

You cannot legally possess wildlife for which there is a daily or possession limit unless each hunter maintains his/her "bag" of such species separately and distinctly from those of all other hunters.

Possessing Another's Wildlife

You cannot legally receive or have in custody any protected game belonging to another person, except in the personal abodes of the donor or recipient, unless such protected species are tagged with the hunter's or trapper's name and address, the total number of individuals by species and the date such species were harvested. See "Possession and Tagging" in the Waterfowl Hunting section of this digest.

Retrieving Killed/Crippled Wildlife (Wanton Waste of Game)

You cannot legally kill or cripple any species protected by Wildlife Code (520 ILCS/5) for which there is a harvest limit without making a reasonable effort to retrieve such species and include it in the harvest limit. It is also unlawful for any person having control over harvested game mammals, game birds, or migratory game birds for which there is a harvest limit to wantonly waste or destroy the usable meat of the game, except this shall not apply to wildlife harvested by means of a nuisance wildlife removal permit or wildlife harvested by means of a scientific collection permit. "Usable meat" means the breast meat of a game bird or migratory game bird and the hind ham and front shoulders of a game mammal. It shall be unlawful for any person to place, leave, dump, or abandon a wildlife carcass or parts of it along or upon a public right-of-way or highway or on public or private property, including a waterway or stream, without the permission of the owner or tenant. It is lawful to properly discard game meat that is determined to be unfit for human consumption.

Possession of Illegally Harvested Wildlife

You cannot legally possess any species of wildlife or wildlife parts harvested unlawfully in Illinois or any other state or country, whether or not the wildlife or wildlife parts is indigenous to Illinois.

Possession of Freshly Killed Game Out of Season

You cannot legally possess any freshly killed game when the season is closed for taking (see Wildlife Conflicts section for Deer Accidentally Killed).

Selling Wildlife, Feathers etc.

You cannot legally buy, sell, or offer to sell or barter game birds or migratory game birds, or parts thereof, including feathers, nests or eggs (including wild turkey parts) or the edible parts of game mammals except as provided by specific permits.

Hunting Near Inhabited Dwellings

You cannot legally hunt or allow a dog to hunt within 300 yards of an inhabited dwelling without first obtaining permission of the owner or tenant of the dwelling. *Except:* A 100-yard restriction shall apply while trapping, hunting with bow and arrow, or hunting with shotgun using shotshells only, or on licensed game breeding and hunting preserve areas, on federally owned and managed lands, on IDNR-owned, -managed, -leased or -controlled lands.

Hunter Interference

You cannot legally:

- interfere with or disturb another person engaged in the lawful taking of a wild animal with intent to prevent the taking, or disturb or engage in an activity that will disturb wild animals, with intent to prevent their lawful taking.
- use a drone in a way that interferes with another person's lawful taking of wildlife or aquatic life. "Drone" means any aerial vehicle that does not carry a human operator.

Hunting Devices and Ammunition Restrictions

You cannot legally:

- hunt or trap any protected species except with a gun, bow and arrow, or trap that is authorized for a specific species and season. See the specific species sections for additional information.
- use any shotgun larger than 10 gauge while taking or attempting to harvest any protected species. Barrel length shall not be less than 18 inches, and the overall length shall not be less than 26 inches.
- hunt with, or have in your possession while hunting, a shotgun shell with shot larger than lead shot size BB, steel shot size T or number BBB of any other non-toxic shot. **Except:** Shot size is unrestricted for furbearer hunting and deer may be harvested with a shotgun no larger than 10 gauge or smaller than 20 gauge loaded with slugs.
- harvest any species of wild game except deer and furbearers with a shotgun loaded with slugs.
- use a shotgun capable of holding more than three shells in the magazine and chamber combined. Any shotgun having a capacity of more than three shells must be fitted with a one-piece plug that is irremovable without dismantling the shotgun or otherwise altered to render it incapable of holding more than three shells in the magazine and chamber combined. **Except:** This does not apply on licensed hunting preserves unless hunting wild migratory game birds and does not apply during Conservation Order light goose (snow, blue and Ross' geese) seasons.
- use a rifle, handgun or airgun to harvest game birds or migratory game birds.
- discharge a rifle, handgun or airgun on, over or into water or ice.
- use a gun equipped with a silencer.
- use or possess any other firearm or ammunition in the field while hunting white-tailed deer except as listed in the "Firearm and Muzzleloader Deer Hunting" section on pg. 17 or as provided in the Firearm Concealed Carry Act. **Note:** The lawful possession of rifles to harvest furbearing mammals and game mammals other than white-tailed deer shall not be prohibited during the youth deer season, muzzleloading rifle deer season, special CWD season and the late winter antlerless-only deer season.



What are you developing?

Residential

- Plant Management
- Pollinators
- Wildlife Habitat
- Aquatics & Water Resources

Commercial

- Endangered Species & Construction
- Sustainable Development
- Outdoor Lighting
- Soil Erosion Control

cicada-idnr.org



CICADA is a collaborative effort led by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Office of Realty & Capital Planning, and the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center. The CICADA website was developed with funding from the Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund. Those funds are to be used for preserving, protecting, perpetuating, and enhancing non-game wildlife in the state.

THANK YOU!

To all of you who have completed and returned surveys about your harvest and hunting and trapping activities in Illinois, we thank you. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has partnered with the Illinois Natural History Survey for 30 years to gather important input on hunting and wildlife management in Illinois. Information from you and your fellow hunters and trappers helps guide the management of Illinois' wildlife resources and evaluate changes to hunting and trapping regulations.



Michael Wefer

Chief, Wildlife Resources Division
Illinois Department of Natural Resources

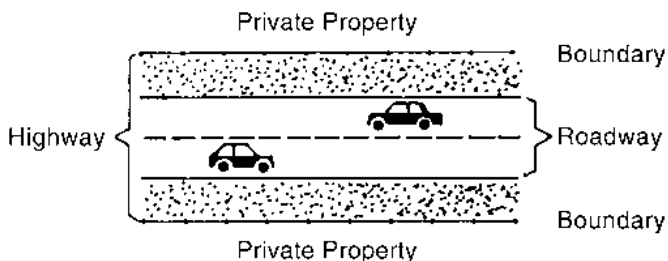
Hunting From Vehicles, Boats, and Use of Drones

It is unlawful to take, pursue or intentionally harass or disturb in any manner any wild birds or mammals by use or aid of any vehicle, conveyance, or unmanned aircraft [drone] except as permitted by the Code of Federal Regulations for the taking of waterfowl.

Exception: Paraplegics or other disabled persons, with a permit from the Office of Law Enforcement, may hunt from any stationary motor vehicle or stationary motor-driven land conveyance. **Note:** It is legal to hunt game birds and game mammals (**except** deer and furbearing mammals) from a boat not camouflaged or disguised to alter its identity or further provide a place of concealment and not propelled by sail or mechanical power. A boat merely painted in a camouflage pattern is not considered camouflaged and may be used to hunt under conditions specified above. See exceptions to boat use in the Waterfowl Hunting section of this digest.

Hunting from Roads

You cannot legally hunt, trap or discharge a gun or bow and arrow device along, upon, across or from a public roadway, highway or right-of-way. Highway (right-of-way) means the entire width between the boundary lines of every public road. Roadway means the portion of the public road that is improved or ordinarily used for vehicle travel, excluding the berm or shoulder.



Hunting Near Fires

You cannot legally hunt adjacent to or near any peat, grass, brush or other flammable substance when it is burning.

Transporting Shotguns on Boats

You cannot legally place, carry, possess or transport a shotgun on a boat of any type in an area under the jurisdiction of IDNR from 1 Feb to 31 May inclusive, except a person having a valid, unfilled turkey permit and licensed or authorized hunters legally hunting wildlife in season.

Transporting Firearms and Bow and Arrow Devices in Vehicles

You cannot legally:

- have or carry a shotgun, rifle, handgun or airgun in or on any vehicle, conveyance or aircraft unless the firearm or airgun is unloaded and completely enclosed in a case **except** as noted in the Blinds section of Waterfowl Hunting in this digest. Also see Hunting From Vehicles and Boats and "FAQs" hereafter.
- carry a bow or bow and arrow device in or on a vehicle, conveyance or aircraft unless it is unstrung or enclosed in a case, or otherwise made inoperable.

Concealed Carry

For questions involving Concealed Carry, please reference Public Safety Code (430 ILCS 66/ Firearm Concealed Carry Act).

Night Hunting with Lights, Shining Wildlife

It is unlawful to take, pursue or intentionally harass or disturb in any manner any mammals or wild birds by use or aid of any vehicle, or conveyance, or unmanned aircraft [drone]. It is unlawful to use the lights of any vehicle or conveyance, any light connected to any vehicle or conveyance, or any other lighting device or mechanism from inside or on a vehicle or conveyance in any area where wildlife may be found. This does not prohibit normal use of headlamps for driving upon a roadway. Other lighting device or mechanism shall include, but not be limited to, any device that uses infrared or other light not visible to the naked eye, electronic image intensification, active illumination, thermal imaging, or night vision **except** skunk, opossum, red fox, coyote and raccoon may be harvested during the open season using a small hand-operated light by a person who is on foot and not in any vehicle.

Property Laws

Purple Paint Law

Landowners or lessees can mark trees or posts on private land with purple paint as a "no trespassing" notice. See Criminal Code (720 ILCS 5/21-3) for further information.

Damaging Property while Hunting

You cannot legally damage or destroy another person's property while hunting or trapping on his/her land.

Private Land Permission and Access

It is unlawful for any person to take (see definition of "take") or attempt to take any species of wildlife or parts thereof or allow a dog to hunt, within or upon the land of another, or upon waters flowing over or standing on the land of another, or to knowingly shoot a gun or bow and arrow device at any wildlife physically on or flying over the property of another without first obtaining permission from the owner or the owner's designee. For the purposes of this law, the owner's designee means anyone whom the owner designates in a written authorization and the authorization must contain (i) the legal or common description of property, (ii) the extent that the owner's designee is authorized to make decisions regarding who is allowed to take or attempt to take any species of wildlife or parts thereof, and (iii) the owner's notarized signature.

Illinois law does not grant the right of trespass for the purpose of retrieving wounded or crippled wildlife or hunting dogs. Secure permission from the landowner or tenant before entering any property. Your conduct while hunting and trapping can influence the landowner's decision to allow future hunting or trapping. **Note:** Railroad rights-of-way are private property and permission from the owner is needed before hunting or trapping.

Possession of Captive-Reared Game Mammals and Birds

You cannot legally hold, possess or engage in the raising of game mammals, game birds or migratory game birds without obtaining a Class A Noncommercial or Class B Commercial Game and Game Bird Breeders Permit. Permit holders must keep detailed records of the acquisition and disposal of each species. Class B permit holders must keep records of sales. Records must be available for inspection by IDNR and peace officers. See Wildlife Code (520 ILCS 5/3.23) for complete regulations.

Taxidermy Laws

Any person who engages in the business of taxidermy must obtain an IDNR permit. Persons taking animals to a taxidermist must be able to prove that the animal was legally harvested. Taxidermists are required to keep written records of all animals received. All animals in their possession must be properly tagged or labeled. For further information contact an IDNR office.

Outfitter Regulation Information

The development of outfitter regulations was initiated by concerned hunters and outfitters. Their interests were to ensure hunters utilizing outfitters were provided the proper services and treatment, to strengthen the reputation of the outfitting industry in Illinois, and to ensure the proper management of the state's deer herd, wild turkey flock, and waterfowl resource. To apply for an Outfitter Permit or obtain a complete copy of the regulations contained in 17 Ill. Admin. Code. 640 go to dnr.illinois.gov or contact the Office of Law Enforcement (217) 782-6431.

Falconry

State falconry permits, issued in accordance with federal regulations 50 CFR 21.29, are required to take, possess and transport hawks, falcons and great horned owls for falconry purposes. Call the Office of Law Enforcement for details at (217) 782-6431 or email [DNR.lawreception@illinois.gov](mailto:lawreception@illinois.gov).

Dogs - Deer and Turkey

You cannot legally allow your dog to chase, harass or kill deer or turkey. Dogs may be used for hunting, except for deer and turkey. See section "Hunting Deer with Dogs, Horses, Vehicles, Boats and Aircraft."

Field Trial and Dog Training

If using live birds in training area, the operator must obtain a wild game breeder's permit (217-785-3423) and dog training area permit (217-785-8129) from IDNR. Complete information about field trials and dog training is available at dnr.illinois.gov.

You cannot legally:

- hold a field trial, organized night hunt, water race or other competitive event involving sporting dogs without first obtaining a IDNR permit. Applications must be submitted 4 weeks prior to the event.
- possess any firearm or ammunition other than a pistol loaded with blank cartridges while training dogs when hunting seasons are closed, except on an authorized field trial or dog training area. When training dogs from sunset to sunrise, no person in, along with, or accompanying the dog training party shall be in possession of a firearm or live ammunition, except pistols capable of firing only blank cartridges, unless in accordance with the Firearm Concealed Carry Act.

Feeding Wildlife

You cannot legally make available food, salt, mineral blocks or other products for ingestion by wild deer or other wildlife. An area is considered as baited during the presence of and for 10 consecutive days following the removal of the bait.

Except:

- elevated bird/squirrel feeders providing seed, grain, fruit, worms or suet for birds or squirrels located within 100 feet of a dwelling devoted to human occupancy.
- incidental feeding of wildlife within active livestock operations.
- feeding of wild animals, other than wild deer, by hand as long as a reasonable attempt is made to clean up unconsumed food.
- feeders for wildlife other than deer so long as deer are excluded from the feed in and around the feeder by fencing or other barriers.
- grain or other feed scattered or distributed solely as a result of normal agricultural, gardening or soil stabilization practices.
- standing, flooded or manipulated natural vegetation or food/seed deposited by natural vegetation.
- grain or other feed distributed or scattered solely as the result of manipulation of an agricultural crop or other feed on the land where grown, for purposes of dove hunting.
- food material placed for capturing or killing wildlife pursuant to Wildlife Code (520 ILCS 5/1.3, 2.30, and 2.37).
- scientific permits issued pursuant to 17 Ill. Adm. Code 520 that allow food to attract wildlife.
- any other special permits issued by IDNR that require the attraction of wildlife for purposes of management, research or control.



Photo: Melissa Jarman

Releasing Wildlife and Possessing Live Wildlife

You cannot legally:

- release from captivity any wildlife **except** as authorized by IDNR or as authorized by permits for a field trial, dog training area, game breeding and hunting preserve area, or wild game and bird breeder permits.
- carry into this state alive or possess alive any species of protected wildlife taken outside of this state without first obtaining IDNR permission, **except** licensed game breeders, as permitted by Wildlife Code (520 ILCS/5).
- take wildlife and retain it alive (**except** as provided in 17 Ill. Adm. Code 970).

Hawks, Eagles, and Owls Protected

You cannot legally harvest, or attempt to harvest, molest or disturb any hawk, eagle, or owl or parts thereof (including feather, nests, and eggs), at any time, **except** as provided by falconry regulations.

If You Find an Injured or Orphaned Animal

- Most wild birds and mammals in Illinois are considered a protected species and picking up or possessing the animal outside of a legal hunting season is unlawful.
- If you suspect an animal is injured or orphaned, do not attempt to rescue the animal, call a wildlife rehabilitator immediately.
- Go to: wildlifeillinois.org/list-of-licensed-wildlife-rehabilitators/ for a rehabilitator in your area.
- Stay calm and quiet when you are around the animal and leave it alone to minimize stress.
- Do not feed or provide fluids to the animal.

Protection and Care of Wildlife

- All wild birds (**except** the house sparrow, European starling, domestic pigeon, Eurasian-collared dove and ringed turtle dove) and parts thereof (their nests and eggs) are protected. Wild turkey, purple swamphen, muscovy duck and game birds listed in this digest are legal to harvest.
- Wild mammals and parts thereof, including their green hides, are protected **except** as authorized by a hunting or trapping season, and include: woodchuck, gray squirrel, fox squirrel, eastern cottontail rabbit, swamp rabbit, white-tailed deer, muskrat, beaver, raccoon, opossum, least weasel, long-tailed weasel, mink, striped skunk, red fox, river otter, bobcat, badger and coyote.
- All white white-tailed deer, grey/timber wolves, flying squirrel, red squirrel, white squirrel, eastern woodrat, golden mouse, rice rat, bats, mountain lion and black bear and parts thereof, including their green hides, are protected throughout the year and cannot legally be harvested. **Note:** piebald deer are legal to harvest.
- **You cannot legally** take, possess, sell or offer for sale any such wild birds (dead or alive) and parts thereof (including their nests and eggs), or such wild mammals (dead or alive) and parts thereof, including their green hides, contrary to the provisions of the Wildlife Code (520 ILCS/5).
- **You cannot legally** bring into Illinois for the purpose of holding, releasing, propagating or selling any other living wild animal not listed as a protected species in Wildlife Code (520 ILCS/5) without first obtaining an IDNR permit. Contact the Division of Wildlife Resources at (217) 782-6384 for more information.

Duty to Report Hunting and Trapping Accidents

Every hunting or trapping accident involving serious personal injury including falls from elevated tree stands or a gunshot or archery wound must be reported to IDNR within 5 days. Persons involved in a hunting or trapping accident must render assistance to persons affected by the accident provided they can do so without serious danger to themselves and others. Accidents must be reported on forms obtained from the Safety Education Section at 1-800-832-2599 or dnr.illinois.gov/safety/incidentreportsummaries



All Conservation Police Officers are empowered, pursuant to law, to enter all lands and waters to enforce the provisions of the Illinois Wildlife Code and Administrative Rules.

Serving Since 1885 Illinois Conservation Police

To be a vigilant guardian of the natural resources, public safety and homeland security of Illinois.

The Illinois Conservation Police would like to thank **YOU**, the sportsmen and women of Illinois, for your continued support over the last 141 years. It's your passion for conservation that has enabled us to protect the natural resources of this great state while providing a safe place to enjoy the outdoors. Our unique partnership will continue to provide future generations with lifelong outdoor recreational opportunities.

Contacting a Conservation Police Officer

The Department of Natural Resources' Office of Law Enforcement developed the Target Illinois Poachers program to encourage any concerned citizen who witnesses a poaching offense to report the violation, such as poaching or polluting.

Good law enforcement is everybody's responsibility. If you see a violation, report it. Let's Target Illinois' Poachers and Polluters!

Internet:

dnr.illinois.gov/lawenforcement/target-poachers

REPORT VIOLATIONS TO:
1-877-2DNRLAW (236-7529)

Operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Contact a CPO at: dnr.illinois.gov/lawenforcement/contact-cpo.html or Ameritech Relay 1-800-526-0644 for the deaf and hearing impaired. For all other requests for an Illinois Conservation Police Officer after regular business hours, contact your Illinois State Police district HQ dispatch center.

Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact

Illinois is a participating member of the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact.

How the IWVC works:

- Compact membership applies to aquatic life and wildlife violations.
- Anyone that receives an aquatic life or wildlife privilege suspension in a compact state will also be suspended in Illinois for the duration of the out of state suspension.
- A violator who fails to comply with the terms of a citation issued in a participating state faces the possibility of the suspension of his/her privileges in his/her home state until the terms of the citation are met.
- The Compact provides for the reciprocal recognition of the suspension of license privileges by participating states. (Illinois has recognized suspensions imposed by other states for several years. Membership in the Compact allows other states to recognize Illinois' suspensions.)
- The Compact provides that information on convictions in participating states may be forwarded to the home state of the violator.
- IWVC not only assures equal treatment of residents and nonresidents of participating states, but also enhances the law enforcement services and deterrent value of time spent patrolling by uniformed officers. The reciprocal recognition of suspensions between states is intended to address the problems associated with the mobility of many violators.

Wildlife Illinois



- Get Help with Wildlife Identification
- Control & Prevent Damage
- Find Wildlife Control Operators & Wildlife Rehabilitators
- Learn About Seasonal Behaviors
- Report Sightings
- Request Permits

wildlifeillinois.org

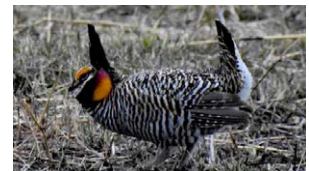
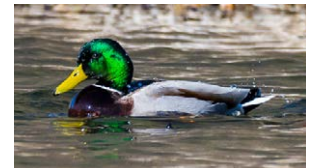


livingwithwildlifeillinois

Wildlife Illinois is a collaborative effort of people and institutions led by the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center in Illinois. Other organizations include the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), Division of Wildlife Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration. Funding for Wildlife Illinois was made available through Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project W-147-T.



Outdoor Illinois Journal



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- People in Conservation
- Aquatic Organisms
- How & Where to Recreate
- Hot Topics
- Wildlife
- Habitat Management
- Research
- En Español & Po Poluski

outdoor.wildlifeillinois.org



livingwithwildlifeillinois

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Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Program

Discover the outdoors with Illinois' Becoming An Outdoors-Woman (BOW)! This welcoming, hands-on program helps women build confidence and learn new outdoor skills. Choose from classes in hunting, trapping, shooting sports, and fishing, as well as camping, canoeing, and other outdoor adventures.

Whether you're a beginner or looking to expand your skills, BOW provides expert instruction, practical experience, and resources to keep your outdoor journey going.



Workshops are open to female participants 18 years and older. Meals, lodging, transportation during workshops, and use of class equipment & supplies are all included in the workshop registration fees.

For further information regarding the Becoming An Outdoors-Woman (BOW) program, contact:

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Becoming An Outdoors-Woman Program
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702-1271

DNR.OutdoorsWoman@illinois.gov

or scan the QR code below, to go to the BOW program's webpage

dnr.illinois.gov/recreation/bow.html



ILLINOIS SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAMS



For further information concerning the Safety Education Programs, contact:

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Safety Education Program
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702-1271

or scan the QR code below, connected to Safety Education's webpage
dnr.illinois.gov/safety



JOIN THE SAFETY EDUCATION TEAM TODAY!

The four Mandatory Safety Education Programs, boater, hunter, trapper, and snowmobiler are primarily designed to train young people between the ages of 12 and 18. However, persons of all ages are encouraged to participate in the programs.

The Department of Natural Resources relies on certified volunteer instructors, who spend hours teaching safety education classes throughout the state, to provide these classes! All four of the Mandatory Safety Education classes require minimum number of hours under supervised instruction.

Are you interested in helping to preserve your recreational passtime? If so... become a Certified Volunteer Safety Education Instructor today!





Photo: Learn to Hunt

DEER SEASON DATES AND LIMITS

SEASON	DATES (inclusive)	HOURS	LIMITS	ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS
Archery (Counties with a firearm season and west of Route 47 in Kane County)	1 Oct–19 Nov and 23 Nov–2 Dec 2026 and 7 Dec 2026–17 Jan 2027	½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset	One deer per archery permit	**See footnote below
Archery (Cook, DuPage, Lake and Kane [east of route 47] Counties)	1 Oct 2026–17 Jan 2027		One deer per archery permit	**See footnote below
Firearm (Shotgun, Muzzleloader, Handgun and Single Shot Centerfire Rifle)	20–22 Nov and 3–6 Dec 2026		One deer per firearm permit	**See footnote below
Muzzleloader	11–13 Dec 2026		One deer per muzzleloader permit	**See footnote below
Special CWD	31 Dec 2026–3 Jan 2027 and 15–17 Jan 2027		One deer per valid permit	Antlered deer limit in footnote below does not apply to this season. See Special CWD Deer Hunting section for open counties.
Late Winter Antlerless (Shotgun, Muzzleloader, Handgun and Single Shot Centerfire Rifle)	31 Dec 2026–3 Jan 2027 and 15–17 Jan 2027		One antlerless deer per valid permit	Counties open during this season will be posted online in October.
Youth Firearm	10–12 Oct 2026		One deer per youth permit	**See footnote below

**No hunter, regardless of the quantity or type of permits in his/her possession, may harvest more than two antlered deer during a year, including the youth, archery, muzzleloader and firearm seasons except as allowed during the special CWD season. For this harvest limit, deer seasons are in the same year if their opening dates are within the same 12-month period that begins July 1.

Deer Hunting Credentials (does not include vendor or transaction fees)

	Price		How to apply for or purchase				
License/Permit/Stamp	Resident	Nonresident	Lottery	Online	Vendors	Paper App	Specifications
Hunting License	Variable	Variable		X	X		See Statewide Regulations section for license types.
State Habitat Stamp	\$5.00	\$5.00		X	X		Purchasers of a lifetime hunting license prior to Jan 1, 1993 and legally disabled veterans and former prisoners of war are exempt from this stamp.
Super Senior Habitat Stamp	Free	n/a		X	X		Must be 75 or older and pay vendor fees.
Deer Firearm Permits							
Either-Sex (ES) Permit	\$25.00	\$300.00	X	X	X	X	
Antlerless-Only (AO) Permit	\$17.50	\$25.00 or \$100.00	X	X	X	X	Nonresident applicants must possess an ES permit to be eligible for a discounted (\$25) AO permit. The nonresident \$100 permit is only available at license vendors.
Deer Muzzleloader Permits							
Either-Sex Permit	\$25.00	\$300.00	X	X	X	X	
Antlerless-Only Permit	\$17.50	\$25.00 or \$100.00	X	X	X	X	Nonresident applicants must possess an ES permit to be eligible for a discounted (\$25) AO permit. The nonresident \$100 permit is only available at license vendors.
Deer Archery Permits							
Combination Archery Permit (1 either-sex & 1 antlerless permit)	\$25.00	\$410.00		X	X		Nonresidents may obtain permits online from 6/1 until 6/30, after which permits are only available over-the-counter at vendors. Nonresident youth (<18 yrs.) may purchase a resident Combination Archery Permit for \$25.
Single Either-Sex Permit	\$15.00	n/a				X	Illinois residents only.
Single Antlerless-Only Permit	\$17.50	\$25.00 or \$100.00			X		Nonresident applicants must possess an archery ES permit to be eligible for a discounted (\$25) single AO permit.
Deer Landowner Permits							
Combination Firearm Permit (1 either-sex & 1 antlerless permit)	Free	\$175.00				X	Landowners and resident tenants (of commercial agricultural leases) must have at least 39.5 acres of land, or 20 acres in specific CWD-identified counties, to qualify for deer landowner permits. Permits are only valid on the owned/ leased land. See 17 IL Adm. Rule 528 at dnr.illinois.gov/adrules .
Combination Archery Permit (1 either-sex & 1 antlerless permit)	Free	\$210.00				X	
Deer Youth Firearm Permits							
Combination Firearm Permit (1 either-sex and 1 antlerless permit)	\$10.00	\$10.00			X		
Deer Late Winter Firearm Permits							
County-specific Antlerless-only	\$17.50	n/a					Open counties to be publicly announced; see our website at dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/deerhunting .
Special Hunt Area Antlerless-only	\$17.50	n/a	X	X			
Special Chronic Wasting Disease Season Deer Permits							
County-specific Antlerless-only	\$5.00	\$5.00			X		See SPECIAL CWD DEER HUNTING section for open counties.
Special Hunt Area Antlerless-only	\$17.50	n/a	X	X			

HUNTING CREDENTIALS AND REQUIREMENTS

- To hunt deer, residents and nonresidents will need a hunting license, a habitat stamp, and at least one pertinent deer permit listed in the Deer Hunting Credentials table. Exemptions to these requirements are specified in the table. For residency qualification, see Resident definition in Statewide Regulations.
- ES = deer of either sex; AO = antlerless-only deer.

You cannot legally:

- hunt deer without an IDNR permit.
- hunt deer unless the permit is properly signed and in the hunter's possession while hunting.
- transfer, loan, use, possess or falsify any license, permit, tag, or harvest record issued to another person.
- harvest an antlered deer with an antlerless-only permit. An antlered deer is defined as a deer having at least one antler of a length of 3 inches or more. An antlerless deer is defined as a deer without antlers or a deer having antlers less than 3 inches long.
- hunt deer in a county or area other than specified on the permit.
- move, transport or field dress a deer upon kill before properly attaching the temporary harvest tag as instructed on the permit. Deer must be tagged immediately upon kill.

Take It • Tag It • Report It • Enjoy It

General Tagging and Harvest Reporting Guidelines:

- Deer permits must be signed and in the hunter's possession while hunting to be valid.
- Immediately upon harvest and before moving, transporting, or field dressing your harvest, you must attach the appropriate tag portion of your permit to the animal (see depictions below).
 - For Antlerless deer: attach leg tag
 - For Antlered deer: attach both tags if head/antlers are to be separated from the body for delivery to a taxidermist or meat processor. Tags must remain with the deer parts until they make it to the hunter's legal residence.
- Report your harvest by calling 1-866-452-4325 or online at www.exploremoreil.com/wildlife/harvest by 10 p.m. on the day of harvest or immediately the next day, if harvest is not retrieved by 10 p.m.

IL DNR DEER ARCHERY EITHER-SEX HEAD TAG

TAG NUMBER: 233092484585
CID #: 555-555-555
JOHN A DOE
SEASON DATES: 10/01/2026 – 01/17/2027
(EXCEPT FIREARM SEASON)
COUNTY HUNT AREA: Statewide

26

- If the head or antlers are delivered to a taxidermist, remove this tag and attach it to the head or antlers using your own fastener through the holes provided.
- You must also write your confirmation number below if the head or antlers are delivered to a taxidermist.

CONFIRMATION NUMBER WRITE YOUR CONFIRMATION NUMBER HERE
TAG NOT VALID FOR HUNTING IF DETACHED

ATTACH HEAD TAG HERE



MUZZLELOADER ONLY EITHER SEX
SANGAMON COUNTY

99119007

PERMIT NUMBER → 232412975555

Confirmation Number:

You must also write your confirmation number below if the head or antlers are delivered to a taxidermist.

WRITE YOUR CONFIRMATION NUMBER HERE

HEAD TAG

Over-the-counter (OTC) permits from a vendor are plastic-like and require a zip tie or piece of cord to attach.

Lottery permits issued through the lottery system are sticker-like with adhesive backing for easy attaching.

IL DNR DEER ARCHERY EITHER-SEX LEG TAG

TAG NUMBER: 233092484585
CID #: 555-555-555
JOHN A DOE
SEASON DATES: 10/01/2026 – 01/17/2027
(EXCEPT FIREARM SEASON)
COUNTY HUNT AREA: Statewide

26

- Immediately upon kill, remove this tag and attach to the leg using your own fastener through the holes provided.
- You MUST report deer harvest by 10pm on the day of the kill via the internet at www.exploremoreil.com or by telephone at 1-866-452-4325.
- When reporting, you will be asked a series of questions including some measurements of your deer. Refer to the back of this permit for a list of questions and a millimeter ruler. If you lose the ruler, one inch is equal to 25.4mm. After completing the process, you will be given a 10-digit confirmation number which you must write in the space provided below.

CONFIRMATION NUMBER WRITE YOUR CONFIRMATION NUMBER HERE
TAG NOT VALID FOR HUNTING IF DETACHED

ATTACH LEG TAG HERE



Illinois Deer Permit

PERMIT NUMBER → 232412975555

Confirmation Number:

When you check in your deer (via internet or telephone), you will be given a 10-digit confirmation number. You must write that number in the box below.

WRITE YOUR CONFIRMATION NUMBER HERE

NOTCH HERE IMMEDIATELY UPON HARVEST

NOTCH HERE IMMEDIATELY UPON HARVEST

LEG TAG

Deer Tagging and Harvest Reporting in CWD Counties:

For 1st and 2nd Deer Firearm Seasons Only:

- Immediately upon harvest and before moving your deer, attach the "Leg/Antler Tag" to either the leg of an antlerless deer, or the antler of an antlered deer.
- Retain the "Check Station Tag" portion of your permit to give to check station staff. For over-the-counter permits, retain either the head or leg tag to give to check station staff.
- Deer hunters must physically take their deer either whole or field-dressed to a designated firearm check station (the same day it was killed) between 8 a.m.-8 p.m.
- If a hunter is not able to locate a harvested deer in sufficient time to check it in by 8 p.m., the hunter must take their deer to the check station upon its opening at 8 a.m. or immediately upon retrieving it the following day.
- At the check station, IDNR staff will attach an orange plastic tag to the leg of your deer, which serves as your harvest confirmation. **Do not attempt to call or check in a deer online during the 1st or 2nd Deer Firearm seasons in a CWD County.**
- For a list of counties with check stations and their locations, visit huntillinois.org/cwdmap/.

For deer seasons outside of the 1st and 2nd Deer Firearm seasons in CWD counties, harvest registration should be completed by following the general guidelines listed above.

Deer Harvest Limit

- No hunter, regardless of the quantity or type of permits in his/her possession, may harvest more than two antlered deer during a year, including the youth, archery, firearm and muzzleloader seasons.
- No hunter may harvest more than one deer per permit during any deer hunting season.
- For the purpose of this harvest limit, deer seasons are considered to be in the same year if their opening dates are within the same 12-month period that begins July 1.
- Deer harvested during the special CWD deer season (select counties only) do not count toward the antlered buck limit.
- No hunter may harvest any all-white white-tailed deer at any time. Piebald deer are legal to harvest.

Deer Hunting Regulations (in addition to Statewide Regulations)

Firearm and Archery Equipment Regulations

You cannot legally:

- use or possess any other firearm or ammunition in the field, unless legal for that season, while hunting white-tailed deer **except** as provided in the Firearm Concealed Carry Act.
- carry a loaded gun or bow with a nocked arrow in the field **except** during legal hunting hours or in accordance with the Firearm Concealed Carry Act.

Tree Stand Requirements

You cannot legally:

- use more than one tree stand or ground blind at an IDNR owned or managed site.
- construct or use any tree stand using nails, screws or any device which pierces or cuts the bark of the tree on which it is installed on an IDNR owned or managed site. Tree stands must be portable and removed at the end of each day, unless otherwise specified in site-specific regulations.

Clothing Requirements

A solid blaze orange or blaze pink cap/hat and an upper outer garment displaying at least 400 square inches of solid blaze orange or blaze pink material must be worn:

- to hunt deer during all firearm deer seasons in counties open for firearm deer seasons.
- to track wounded deer with a dog during all firearm deer seasons.
- by individuals accompanying youth during youth firearm deer hunts.



Photo: Bryan Eubanks

You cannot legally:

- use or occupy a ground blind during any firearm deer season on IDNR-owned or -managed land unless at least 400 square inches of solid, vivid blaze orange or blaze pink material is securely attached to the uppermost portion of the blind and a substantial amount of orange or pink is visible for 360 degrees. Camouflage blaze orange or camouflage blaze pink does not meet clothing or ground blind requirements.

Deer Hunting with a Single Shot Centerfire Rifle

- "Centerfire" means a gun that will only fire a round that contains the primer in the center of the cartridge and not in the rim of the cartridge.
- "Single shot" means a gun that is either manufactured or modified to only be capable of holding a total of one round in the magazine and chamber combined. "Single shot" does not include: (a) a rifle in the possession of a person who is also in possession of or in close proximity to a magazine that would allow the rifle to be capable of holding more than one round or (b) a revolver. A gun shall be considered single shot if there is no magazine in the possession of or in close proximity to a hunter in the field and the gun can only hold a total of one round.
- **You cannot legally** take deer **except** with a shotgun, handgun, single shot centerfire rifle, muzzleloading rifle, or bow and arrow as authorized for the season that is being hunted.
- The only legal ammunition for a centerfire handgun or rifle is a bottleneck centerfire cartridge of .30 caliber or larger with a case length not exceeding one and two-fifths inches, or a straight-walled centerfire cartridge of .30 caliber or larger, both of which must be available as a factory load with the published ballistic tables of the manufacturer showing a capability of at least 500 foot pounds of energy at the muzzle. Full metal jacket bullets may not be used to harvest deer.
- Further information visit: dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/law-change-that-affects-hunting-season



Photo: Joe Holtschlag

Tracking Deer with Dogs

You cannot legally use a dog, horse, automobile, aircraft, boat or other vehicle to harvest deer with a firearm or bow and arrow. Dogs may, however, be used to track wounded deer if the following conditions are met:

- Any person using a dog for tracking wounded deer must maintain physical control of the dog at all times by means of a maximum 50 foot lead attached to the dog's collar or harness.
- Tracking wounded deer is permissible at night, but at no time outside of legal deer hunting hours or seasons shall any person handling or accompanying a dog being used for tracking wounded deer be in possession of any firearm or archery device.
- Persons tracking wounded deer with a dog during the firearm seasons shall wear blaze orange or blaze pink as required.
- Dog handlers tracking wounded deer with a dog are exempt from hunting license and deer permit requirements so long as they are accompanied by the licensed deer hunter who wounded the deer.

You cannot legally track deer with dogs on any IDNR-owned or -managed site during hours when deer hunting is open on the site.

Hunting Deer Over Salt, Mineral or Bait

- **You cannot legally** feed deer at any time and/or take deer by the use or aid of bait or baiting of any kind. Despite their widespread availability, deer baits and attractants commonly sold in stores are also illegal to use at any time **except** for use by properly licensed owners of captive cervids while feeding captive animals. For the purpose of this section, "bait" means any material, whether liquid or solid, including food, salt, minerals and other products that can be ingested, placed or scattered in such a manner as to attract or lure white-tailed deer. "Baiting" means the placement or scattering of bait to attract deer. An area is considered as baited during the presence of and for 10 consecutive days following the removal of the bait.
- For the purposes of taking white-tailed deer, nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the manipulation, including mowing or cutting, of standing crops as a normal agricultural or soil stabilization practice, food plots or normal agricultural practices, including planting, harvesting and maintenance, such as cultivating, or the use of products designed for scent only and not capable of ingestion, solid or liquid, placed or scattered, in such a manner as to attract or lure deer.

Driving Deer on IDNR-Controlled Properties

You cannot legally "drive deer", or participate in a deer drive, on IDNR-owned or IDNR-managed properties during all deer seasons. A deer drive is defined as a deliberate action by one or more persons (whether armed or unarmed) whose intent is to cause deer to move within firearm range of one or more participating hunters.

Transportation

- **To taxidermist** – if the head/antlers are delivered to a taxidermist for processing, the confirmation number/temporary harvest tag must be recorded on the 'head tag' portion of the permit and both must remain with the deer at the taxidermist.
- **To meat processor** – if the carcass is taken to a meat processor, the permanent tag or temporary harvest tag (leg tag) with confirmation number must remain with the deer while it is processed, and until it is at the legal residence of the person who legally took or possessed the deer.
- **To tanner** – persons delivering deer/parts of a deer to a tanner for processing must supply the tanner with their deer permit number to verify lawful acquisition. In the absence of a permit number, the tanner may rely on the written certification of the person from whom the deer was received that the specimen was legally harvested or obtained.

Exportation of Deer by Nonresidents

Nonresident hunters who harvest a wild deer in Illinois should contact the state wildlife agency in states they will be traveling through, including their home state, to inquire about regulations related to possession/transportation of deer carcasses and/or parts of carcasses through the state in question as regulations vary from state to state.

Importation of Animal Carcasses and Parts

Importation of hunter-harvested deer and elk carcasses into Illinois is prohibited **except**:

- deboned meat, antlers, antlers attached to skull caps, hides, upper canine teeth (also known as "buglers," "whistlers," or "ivories"). Skull caps shall be cleaned of all brain and muscle tissue;
- finished taxidermy mounts;
- carcasses or parts of carcasses with the spinal column or head attached may be transported in the state only if they are submitted to a licensed meat processor or a licensed taxidermist for processing within 72 hours after entry; licensed meat processors and taxidermists shall dispose of all inedible tissue not listed in the first dot point in a properly permitted landfill or with a renderer; tissues can be imported into the state for use by a diagnostic or research laboratory.

Nothing in this Part shall prevent renderers regulated under the Illinois Dead Animal Disposal Act (225 ILCS 610) with Class A or B licenses from transporting cervid carcasses or parts into the state for the purpose of rendering.

Mandatory Deer Harvest Registration

- All deer harvested during muzzleloader, youth, archery, late winter antlerless-only, special CWD season and during firearm season in counties without CWD surveillance must be registered by 10 p.m. on the same calendar day the deer was harvested by calling the toll-free telephone check-in system at **1-866-452-4325 (1-866-ILCHECK)** or by accessing the online check-in system at www.exploremoreil.com/wildlife/harvest
- In non-CWD surveillance counties the harvest confirmation number must be written by the hunter onto the temporary harvest tag (leg tag). If the condition of the tag precludes writing on the tag in the appropriate space (i.e., bloody, etc.), the confirmation number shall be written elsewhere on the tag, or onto a piece of paper and attached to the deer along with the temporary harvest tag. See the tagging guidelines on pg. 14 for more details.
- The deer must remain whole (or field dressed) until it has been checked in. In instances where deer are checked in while the hunter is still afield, the deer may not be dismembered while afield beyond quartering the animal. If quartered, all parts of the carcass (**except** the entrails removed during field dressing) must be transported together and evidence of sex must remain naturally attached to one quarter. Evidence of sex is:
 - For a buck: head with antlers attached to carcass, or attached testicle, scrotum or penis.
 - For a doe: head attached to carcass or attached udder (mammary) or vulva.
- The temporary harvest tag (leg tag) and confirmation number or permanent leg tag must remain attached to the deer until it is at the legal residence of the person who legally took or possessed the deer, the deer has been checked in, and final processing is complete.
- Deer harvested in CWD surveillance counties (Boone, Bureau, Carroll, DeKalb, Ford, Grundy, Jo Daviess, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, LaSalle, Lee, Livingston, McHenry, Ogle, Stephenson, Will, and Winnebago) during firearm deer seasons must be physically registered at any designated check station and receive a permanent leg tag, see pg. 18 for more details.



Photo: Victoria Arterberry

Firearm and Muzzleloader Deer Hunting

Counties Open

- All counties **except** Cook, DuPage, Lake and that portion of Kane County east of State Route 47, are open to firearm/muzzleloader deer hunting.

Legal Hunting Equipment

- Shotguns, loaded with slugs only, of not larger than 10 nor smaller than 20 gauge, not capable of firing more than three consecutive slugs; or
- Single or double barreled muzzleloading rifles of at least .45 caliber shooting a single projectile through a barrel of at least 16 inches in length; or
- Single shot centerfire rifle (see pg. 15 for more details); or
- Centerfire revolvers or centerfire single-shot handguns of .30 caliber or larger with a minimum barrel length of 4 inches.
- A muzzleloading rifle is defined as a rifle into which the projectile is incapable of being inserted from the breech end.
- Only blackpowder or a "blackpowder substitute" such as Pyrodex may be used. Modern smokeless powders (nitrocellulose-based) are an approved blackpowder substitute only in muzzleloading firearms specifically designed for their use.
- Percussion caps (shotgun primers are legal percussion caps), wheellock, matchlock or flint type ignition only may be used, **except** a muzzleloader with an electronic ignition is legal to use.
- A muzzleloading firearm is considered unloaded when: removal of percussion cap or removal of prime powder from frizzen pan with frizzen open and hammer all the way down or removal of prime powder from flashpan and wheel unwound or removal of prime powder and match with match not lit, or removal of the battery from the electronic ignition.
- During firearm deer season hunters with a valid, unfilled Firearm Deer Permit may, on private land only, use archery equipment meeting all legal requirements as outlined in the Archery Deer Hunting section hereafter.
- Use of a suppressor/silencer of any type is not permitted.
- Scopes may be used on any legal firearm for hunting deer.

Legal Ammunition

- For shotguns and muzzleloading firearms, the minimum size of the projectile shall be .44 caliber. A wad or sleeve is not considered a projectile or a part of the projectile.
- For handguns and single shot centerfire rifles, a bottleneck centerfire cartridge of .30 caliber or larger with a case length not exceeding 1.4 inches, or a straight-walled centerfire cartridge of .30 caliber or larger, both of which must be available as a factory load with the published ballistic tables of the manufacturer showing a capability of at least 500 foot pounds of energy at the muzzle. There is no case length limit for straight-walled cartridges.
- Non-expanding, military-style full metal jacket bullets cannot be used to harvest white-tailed deer; only soft point or expanding bullets (including copper/copper-alloy rounds designed for hunting) are legal ammunition.

Permit Requirements

- Firearm deer hunters must have a current, valid Firearm Deer Permit or unfilled Property-Only Landowner/Tenant Firearm Deer Permit, even if hunting with archery equipment during the firearm season.
- Muzzleloading rifle deer hunters must have a current, valid Muzzleloading Rifle Deer Permit, or an unused Property-Only Landowner/Tenant Deer Permit valid for that year's firearm deer season.
- A hunter with a Muzzleloading Rifle Deer Permit may also hunt during the second firearm deer season providing the hunter must use only a legal muzzleloading rifle.
- Unfilled Property-Only Landowner/Tenant Deer Permits used during the muzzleloader season are valid only on lands owned/ leased by the permit holder, and the holder must use a muzzleloading rifle.

Deer Permit Application Process

- Apply for a deer permit: dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/deerhunting
- To receive hardcopy application forms for a firearm or muzzleloader deer hunting permit, contact the permit office at (217) 782-7305.
- Applicants please allow approximately 4 weeks after the respective application deadline dates for Lottery Drawing results.

Deer Permit Applications

Application Period/Location	Methods	Hunt Period	Lottery Opens	Lottery Closes	Notes
Firearm and Muzzleloader Season					
First lottery (residents only)	Internet/Hardcopy	20–22 Nov and 3–6 Dec 2026	3 Mar 2026	30 Apr 2026	
Second lottery	Internet/Hardcopy		11 May 2026	30 Jun 2026	
Third lottery	Internet/Hardcopy		13 Jul 2026	21 Aug 2026	
Over-the-counter	Vendors		20 Oct 2026	As available	County-specific permits
Late Winter/CWD Special Hunt Area Lottery	Internet	31 Dec 2026–3 Jan 2027 and 15–17 Jan 2027	27 Oct 2026	23 Nov 2026	Limit 1 Special Hunt Area application
Site-specific Youth Opportunities (Hunters age 17 or younger)					
Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge	Internet/Hardcopy	20–22 Nov 2026	Same as lotteries above		Site-specific permit required
Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Park	Internet/Hardcopy	20–22 Nov 2026	Same as lotteries above		Site-specific permit required
Lost Mound Unit FL	Internet/Hardcopy	Contact Site	Contact Site		Call (815) 273-2732

Unfilled Youth Deer Permits may be used on public sites that do not require regular site-specific lottery permits. See lottery webpage for list of sites.

Disabled Hunter Opportunities

Visit dnr.illinois.gov/DOO for disabled opportunities. Additional hunts may be available, for more information contact jay.d.williams@illinois.gov.

- First Lottery:** Only resident hunters may apply for firearm season permits and special muzzleloader season permits during the first lottery. Permits are issued using a computerized lottery. Applicants wanting to determine whether they were successful before the second lottery deadline can check online at dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/deer/onlinedeerpermitinquiryssystem
- Second Lottery:** Resident hunters who were rejected for a deer permit during the first lottery, who are applying for their first permit, or who are nonresidents may apply for firearm and muzzleloader deer permits during this lottery. Applicants may apply for one either-sex deer permit and one bonus antlerless-only deer permit to be allocated from permits remaining after the first lottery. Illinois residents have preference over nonresidents in this lottery.
- Third Lottery:** Residents and nonresidents may apply for additional firearm or muzzleloader permits left over from the county/Special Hunt Areas quotas. Anyone (regardless of other deer permits they may have) may apply for one or more permits in this lottery.
- Over-the-Counter Sales Period:** Permits remaining after the Third Lottery Drawing will be available to residents and nonresidents over-the-counter from license vendors throughout the state on a first-come, first-served basis. Permits will be sold until quotas are exhausted, or until the close of the firearm deer season, whichever occurs first.
- Permit Limit:** Prior to the Third Lottery Drawing in August, no hunter may receive, or attempt to receive, more than one either-sex permit and one antlerless-only permit for the firearm or muzzleloader deer season.

County-specific Deer Archery Change

To grow deer populations to their appropriate county goals, certain counties are placed in the Restricted Archery Zone (RAZ) during the month of October. The Illinois Restricted Archery Zone consists of Champaign, Douglas, Macon and Piatt Counties (except Allerton Park located in Piatt County). During the period October 1-October 31, only antlered deer may be harvested in the Restricted Archery Zone, regardless of permits in possession. An antlered deer is defined as a deer having at least one antler of a length of 3 or more inches. After October 31, archery regulations are the same as the rest of the state. Firearm deer permits have already been decreased considerably in these counties and archery harvest, which accounts for half or more of deer harvest, must be managed to allow deer to increase.

Archery Deer Hunting

Legal Archery Equipment

- A long, recurve or compound bow with a minimum pull of 30 pounds at some point within a 28-inch draw. Minimum arrow length is 20 inches.
- A crossbow with minimum draw weight of 125 pounds; minimum overall length of 24 inches; a working safety; and used with fletched bolts or arrows of not less than 14 inches.
- Broadheads must be used and may have fixed (must be metal or flint, chert- or obsidian-knapped) or expandable (must be metal) cutting surfaces, but they must have a minimum 7/8 inch diameter when fully opened.
- Electronic tracking systems utilizing radio-telemetry are illegal.
- Archery equipment use is legal on private land ONLY during firearm deer season, provided the hunter has a valid county Firearm Deer Permit. Archery hunting is not allowed using an Archery Deer Permit during the firearm deer season in counties open to firearm deer hunting.
- **You cannot legally** have any firearm in possession while hunting deer with a bow and arrow or crossbow (but see Statewide Regulations on concealed carry handguns).

Resident Archery Permits and Limits

Resident antlerless-only and combination archery deer permits can be purchased without limit from your local hunting license vendor beginning **3 August**.

Nonresident Archery Permits and Limits

- Nonresidents may apply for and receive only one archery combination permit per license year. A nonresident landowner who has obtained landowner archery permits is also eligible for one combination nonresident archery permit.
- Applications are accepted **1-30 June** at www.exploremoreil.com
- The number of permits is limited to 25,000, with clients of outfitters licensed by IDNR given preference in the drawing for the first 7,500. Clients of licensed outfitters should contact the outfitter prior to applying to receive a certification number to be used in the application process to verify their outfitter client status. Permits will be allocated using a computerized, random lottery drawing conducted after **June 30**. If the number of eligible outfitter clients in the drawing is less than 7,500, all remaining permits will be allocated to the remaining applicants until the quota is reached. If the number of eligible outfitter clients in the drawing exceeds 7,500, those outfitter clients unsuccessful in obtaining one of the first 7,500 permits will compete against non-client applicants for the remaining 17,500 permits.
- Nonresident archery deer permits issued to outfitter clients who received a permit based on the preference given to outfitter clients are valid only on property controlled by the outfitter used to gain preference; all other archery permits are valid statewide.
- Any permits remaining after the drawing will be sold over-the-counter on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- Nonresidents who have previously obtained either a Nonresident Combination Archery Deer Permit or a Nonresident Landowner Archery Deer Permit may purchase single antlerless-only archery deer permits for a fee of \$25. Nonresidents without one of those permits will be charged a fee of \$100. There is no limit for single antlerless-only permits.
- Nonresidents may not purchase a combination archery deer permit after **30 September** if they have previously purchased any single antlerless-only archery deer permit.

Mandatory Firearm Harvest Reporting and Transportation in Counties with CWD Surveillance

Boone, Bureau, Carroll, DeKalb, Ford, Grundy, Jo Daviess, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, LaSalle, Lee, Livingston, McHenry, Ogle, Stephenson, Will and Winnebago

- Successful firearm season hunters must take their deer either whole or field-dressed to a designated firearm deer check station on the same day it was killed. Daily check station hours are **8 a.m. - 8 p.m.** Find your nearest check station location at: huntillinois.org/cwdmap/
- A permanent harvest tag will be attached to the leg of the deer upon registration at the check station.
- If not able to locate a harvested deer in sufficient time to enable checking it in by 8 p.m., the hunter must take the deer to the appropriate check station upon its opening at 8 a.m. the following morning, or immediately upon retrieving it if that occurs later than the opening of the check station. If this situation occurs on a Sunday, the hunter must contact the appropriate regional IDNR Law Enforcement office by 10 a.m. Monday morning for instructions on checking the deer.
- Successful hunters using their muzzleloader deer permits during the second weekend of the firearm season may, at their option, register their harvest either electronically (via phone or online registration) or at a designated firearm deer check station by 8 p.m. on the day the deer was killed.
- Aside from deer harvested with a muzzleloader permit during the second firearm season, all deer harvested during the firearm seasons in counties with CWD surveillance must take their deer to a designated firearm deer check station. Check station locations and other information can be found at: huntillinois.org/cwd-sampling/

Special CWD Deer Hunting Seasons

Counties Open to Hunting (all harvest reported electronically via phone or online registration)

- Adams, Boone, Bureau, Carroll, DeKalb, Effingham, Ford, Grundy, Jo Daviess, Kankakee, Kendall, LaSalle, Lee, Livingston, Marshall, McHenry, Ogle, Peoria, Putnam, Scott, Stark, Stephenson, Will, Winnebago counties, and the portion of Kane County west of State Route 47. Information and a map of the CWD hunting zone counties for 2026/2027 will be available around **1 Oct** at: huntillinois.org/deer

CWD Permit Requirements

- Hunters must have an unfilled deer permit valid for the previous firearm, youth or muzzleloader deer season and valid for one of the open counties; or a valid Special CWD Deer Permit (issued for one county and valid only in the county stated on the permit).
- Unfilled Firearm or Muzzleloader Deer Permits are valid only for the county for which they were originally issued, **except** that unfilled Property-Only Landowner/Tenant Deer Permits are valid only for the lands which the person to whom it was issued owns, leases or rents within the open counties/portion of counties. Unfilled firearm, youth or muzzleloader deer permits originally issued for special hunt areas are not valid during the CWD season unless the hunter is redrawn to hunt at the same site at a special site lottery, or if the special hunt area is open to persons with a county permit without conducting a lottery.
- Special CWD Deer Permits are available over-the-counter from participating license vendors beginning **8 Dec 2026**. These permits are antlerless-only.
- Unfilled youth deer hunting permits will be valid in any open county.

Special Harvest Regulations

- Persons using unfilled permits from the previous firearm, youth or muzzleloader deer season may harvest only the type of deer specified on that permit (either-sex or antlerless-only).
- The harvest limit is one deer per legally authorized either-sex or antlerless-only permit. Deer harvested during the special CWD season are not subject to the antlered deer harvest limit restrictions imposed during the firearm, muzzleloader, youth and archery deer hunting seasons.

Legal Firearms

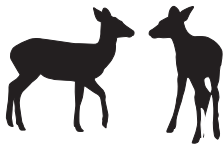
- Hunters with valid, unused permits from the firearm, youth or muzzleloader seasons may use only the weapons allowed by that permit in those respective seasons.
- Hunters with a valid Special CWD Deer Permit may use any of the weapons allowed during the late winter antlerless-only season.

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE (CWD) IN ILLINOIS

Did You Know...

CWD is a neurological disease in deer that is caused by a misfolded protein known as a prion. All deer are susceptible. It is always fatal and there is no treatment or cure.

CWD is transmitted by:



1.) Direct contact with an infected deer



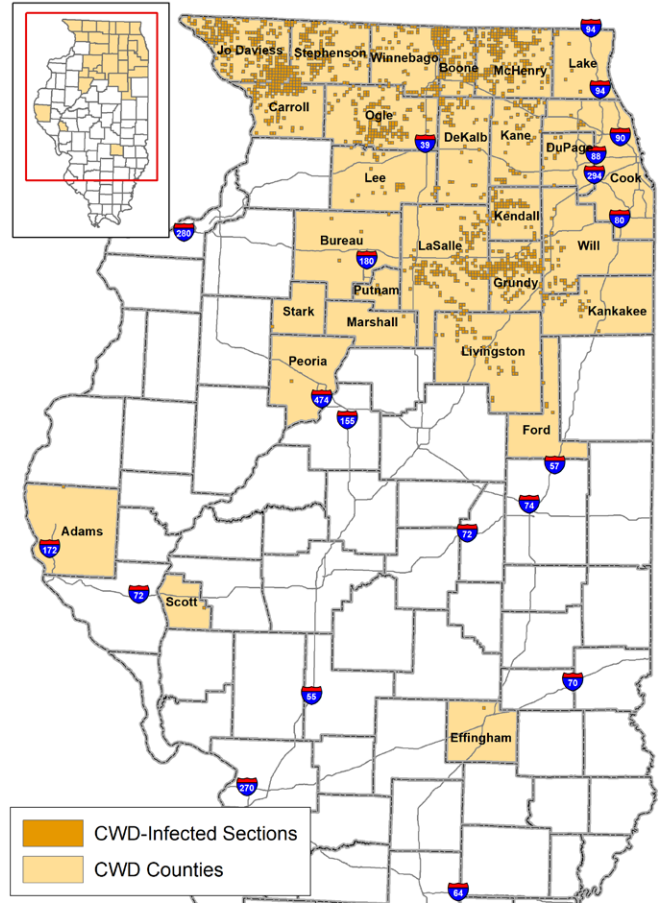
2.) Ingestion of residual body fluids from a sick deer shed into the environment



Lower
Deer
Density
=
Less
CWD
Risk



Reducing deer populations within 2 miles of where CWD has been found has kept infection levels low and minimized spread.



Illinois CWD Infected Sections

Additional Deer Seasons

Additional deer seasons were established with low cost permits in CWD counties.

Hunters are encouraged to harvest as many deer as possible in CWD areas and have them tested. Samples provided by hunters contribute toward disease management goals.

CWD Testing Opportunities

Mandatory check stations in CWD counties during firearm deer season (see pg. 18). Locations can be found at: huntillinois.org/cwdmap/.

Select processors, taxidermists and drop-off stations statewide and during all seasons. List is available at: huntillinois.org/cwd-sampling/.

CWD test results can be found at: dnr.illinois.gov/programs/cwd/testresults.

Minimize Spread Through Proper Carcass Disposal

Carcass parts (especially the head and spinal column) can carry CWD agents

- Carcass parts should be buried under 6" of soil or landfill.
- This is critical for deer harvested in CWD areas and moved to other parts of the state.

Health Concerns

CWD is not known to be a threat to human health, livestock or pets, but recent research is raising the level of concern.

Health authorities recommend that:

- Deer should be tested, especially when harvested from known CWD areas.
- Deer should be handled and processed in a way to minimize exposure to CWD causing agents.
- No part of any CWD positive animal should be consumed by humans or other animals.

Additional Information

IDNR is responsible for proper management and conservation of deer, with an eye toward long term benefit and sustainability. One active CWD management strategy included the targeted removal of deer in affected areas. This program, in conjunction with increased hunter harvest, successfully kept CWD prevalence at or below 5% from initial detection in 2002 until 2023.

In recent years, increasing spatial distribution and prevalence along with limited resources have forced a paradigm shift in how IDNR manages CWD. With reduced active management, CWD surveillance and increased opportunities for hunter harvest will continue to be a focus of the CWD program (see pg. 17-18). Additional information about CWD in Illinois is available at: huntillinois.org/cwd-sampling/.

Late Winter Antlerless Deer Hunting

Counties Open to Hunting (all harvest reported electronically via phone or online registration): Information and a map of counties composing the late winter antlerless-only deer hunting zone for 2026/2027 will be available around 1 Oct at: dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/deerhunting

During the 2025/2026 hunting season, 27 counties were open for the late winter antlerless-only deer season and 21 Illinois counties were open to CWD deer season. Even though the seasons are held concurrently, and all harvest in each is reported via phone or online registration, different regulations may apply for the two seasons. See FAQs hereafter regarding both seasons.

Permit and Application Information

- Resident late winter deer permits will be available for sale over-the-counter from license vendors beginning **8 Dec 2026** through the last day of the late winter antlerless-only deer season.
- Illinois resident hunters must have a current, valid late winter deer permit, or an unfilled firearm, youth, muzzleloader or property-only landowner/tenant firearm deer permit valid for the previous firearm, youth or muzzleloader deer season and valid for one of the open counties.
- Nonresident hunters must have an unfilled firearm or muzzleloader deer permit valid for the previous youth, firearm or muzzleloader deer season and valid for one of the open counties.
- Unfilled youth deer hunting permits are valid in any open county.
- Unfilled firearm, youth or muzzleloader deer permits that were originally issued for special hunt areas are not valid during the late winter antlerless-only deer season unless the hunter is redrawn to hunt at the same site at a special site lottery, or if the special hunt area is open to persons with a county permit without conducting a lottery.
- Persons using an unfilled firearm, youth or muzzleloader deer permit valid for the previous firearm, youth or muzzleloader deer season (including landowner permits) may harvest only antlerless deer even when using an either-sex permit.

Legal Firearms

Hunters using:

- unfilled firearm deer or late winter deer permits may use all firearms described in the "Firearm and Muzzleloader Deer Hunting" section on pg. 17, as well as single-shot muzzleloading handguns (blackpowder handguns incapable of being loaded from the breech end) of .50 caliber or larger capable of producing at least 500 foot pounds of energy at the muzzle according to published ballistic tables of the manufacturer. Single-shot muzzleloading handguns must use a projectile of .44 caliber or larger with sufficient blackpowder or "blackpowder substitute" (such as Pyrodex) to produce at least 500 foot pounds of energy at the muzzle. A wad or sleeve is not considered a projectile or part of a projectile.
- unfilled muzzleloader deer permits may use only muzzleloading rifles.
- unfilled youth deer permits may use all firearms described in the "Youth Deer Hunting" section on pg. 21.



Photo: Jim Scherer



BEWARE OF TICKS!

Hunter Safety & Tick-borne Disease Prevention

BE PREPARED

Tick ranges are spreading rapidly in Illinois & prevention is important for you, your family, & your pets.

TREAT EVERYTHING

Treat all gear & clothes with permethrin.

- Permethrin is for clothes & gear only—not skin. It lasts for several washes and is odorless.
- Spray in a well-ventilated area & hang to dry.
- Watch a "How To" video: www.illymeassociation.org/info-for-hunters

CHECK FOR TICKS WHEN COMING INSIDE

- Use a masking tape lint roller over your clothes.
- Put your clothes in the dryer on the hottest setting for 20 minutes to kill ticks.
- Take a shower & continue to check using a mirror for folds, creases, & between toes.

CHECK YOUR HARVESTS FOR TICKS

Lay a sheet pre-treated with permethrin beneath harvest. As ticks fall & land on the sheet, collect them (wearing gloves!) & send for identification/testing (<https://tinyurl.com/inhs-tick-identification>).

Youth Deer Hunting

- Only young hunters (resident or nonresident) who have not reached their 18th birthday before the first day of the hunt may participate in the Youth Deer Hunt. Unfilled Youth Permits are also valid for other firearm seasons, see dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/deerhunting for more details.
- Participants must have a current, valid Youth Deer Hunt Permit.
- Each hunter participating in the youth deer hunting season while using an Apprentice Hunter License or Youth Hunting and Trapping License must be accompanied by a non-hunting, validly-licensed (Illinois hunting license) adult who is 21 years of age or older. All other hunters (using other types of hunting licenses or license-exempt) participating in the youth deer hunting season must each be accompanied by a non-hunting supervisor (parent, guardian or responsible adult). A nonresident supervisor must have a valid Illinois hunting license.
- Permits will be available for sale over-the-counter from license vendors beginning **4 August** through the last day of the youth deer season in October.
- Hunters may purchase combination either-sex and antlerless-only permits that are valid **statewide**.
- All counties **except** Cook, DuPage and Lake counties, and that portion of Kane County east of State Route 47, are open to youth deer hunting.
- Legal firearms are limited to shotguns, single shot centerfire rifles and muzzleloading rifles as described in the "Firearm and Muzzleloader Deer Hunting" section on pg. 17.

Integrated Hunting Opportunities

Site-specific Youth Deer Hunts: (hunters age 17 or younger)

- **Crab Orchard NWR:** Hunting occurs **20-22 Nov 2026**. Apply via paper lottery or online lottery application.
- **Lake Le-Aqua-Na SP:** Hunting occurs **20-22 Nov 2026**. Apply via paper lottery or online lottery application.
- **Lost Mound Unit FL:** Please contact site at **(815) 273-3184** for hunt information.
- Unfilled Youth Deer Permits are not valid for hunting during the first firearm deer season on public land sites that limit the number of hunters during the firearm season using the site-specific lottery permit system. But, public sites that allow unrestricted access with no lottery permits may be hunted.

Disabled Hunter Deer Firearm Hunts: (qualified disabled persons only)

- Clinton Lake SRA; Crab Orchard NWR; Johnson-Sauk; Jubilee College SP; Lost Mound Unit FL; Rend Lake WMA (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers); Rock Cut SP; Spoon River; Starved Rock SP, Wayne Fitzgerald; Wolf Creek SP/ Shelbyville FL (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers).
- Additional deer hunt locations for disabled individuals, including Physically Challenged Archery Deer Hunts may be available. See dnr.illinois.gov/doo or contact jay.d.williams@illinois.gov for further details.



Photo: Victoria Arterberry

Deer Hunting FAQs

Can I use mechanical deer decoys or electronic calls for deer hunting?

A: Yes. (**Note:** Electronic turkey decoys and electronic calls are illegal for turkey hunting).

Which counties are open for hunting during the late winter antlerless-only and the CWD deer seasons?

A: IDNR will announce in October the counties open to the late winter antlerless-only deer season. Hunters should watch for news releases or check dnr.illinois.gov. Counties open to the special CWD deer season are Adams, Boone, Bureau, Carroll, DeKalb, Effingham, Ford, Grundy, Jo Daviess, Kankakee, Kendall, LaSalle, Lee, Livingston, Marshall, McHenry, Ogle, Peoria, Putnam, Scott, Stark, Stephenson, Will, Winnebago counties, and the portion of Kane County west of State Route 47.

Can I kill an antlered deer during the late winter antlerless-only or the special CWD deer seasons?

A: Hunters hunting in counties open for the late winter antlerless-only deer season are limited to shooting "antlerless deer only," regardless of the type of firearm permit held by the hunter. Hunters hunting in counties open to the special CWD deer season may harvest an antlered deer if they have a leftover unused Either-sex Permit from the current year firearm, muzzleloader or youth deer seasons; but hunters may only harvest an antlerless deer when utilizing the Special CWD Deer Permit.

How many deer can I harvest during the late winter antlerless-only or the special CWD deer seasons?

A: Hunters hunting during the late winter antlerless-only season may harvest one "antlerless" deer per Late Winter Deer Permit. Hunters also may fill any unused leftover current year Firearm, Muzzleloader, Property-Only Landowner/Tenant Firearm or Resident Youth Firearm Deer Permits provided they were issued for an open county. Leftover permits may be used to harvest "antlerless deer only," regardless of whether the permit is stamped "antlerless" or "either-sex." Late winter antlerless deer hunters must use the weapon specified on the permit.

Hunters hunting in open counties of the special CWD deer season may only harvest one "antlerless" deer per Special CWD Deer Permit, and also can use any unused leftover current year firearm permits, as above. Hunters in the CWD counties also can harvest an antlered deer if they have an unfilled "either-sex" permit left over from the regular firearm, muzzleloader or the youth firearm deer seasons issued for an open CWD season county.

Can I archery deer hunt during the late winter antlerless-only and the special CWD deer seasons, and if so, do I have to wear orange clothing?

A: Yes. Even though archery season is closed during the regular firearm season, archery season is still open during the youth, muzzleloader, late winter antlerless-only and the special CWD deer seasons. If you are archery hunting in a county open to one of the firearm deer seasons, you must wear a solid blaze orange or solid blaze pink hat and a solid blaze orange or solid blaze pink outer upper garment of at least 400 square inches.

If I am archery deer hunting during the days when the late winter antlerless-only or the special CWD deer seasons are open, can I shoot an antlered deer?

A: Yes, archers are subject to the archery deer season regulations, so you may shoot an antlered deer with a bow regardless of overlap with the late winter antlerless-only or the special CWD deer seasons if you possess a valid Either-Sex Archery deer permit and if you have not previously reached the limit of two antlered deer.

Can I firearm deer hunt and archery hunt at the same time during the late winter antlerless-only or the special CWD deer seasons or use a bow to fill a Firearm Deer Permit?

A: Archery hunters cannot be in possession of a firearm while archery deer or turkey hunting. However, you can legally possess a bow and firearm at the same time while firearm deer hunting as long as you have a Firearm Deer Permit.



Photo: Victoria Arterberry

TURKEY SEASON DATES AND LIMITS

SEASON	DATES (inclusive)			HOURS	LIMIT	ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS
Spring (shotgun and archery)	Season 2027			½ hour before sunrise to 1 p.m.	One tom, jake or bearded hen per permit, maximum of 3 Spring permits	See map of turkey hunting zones for specific season segments in each zone
	Segment	North	South			
	1	12–16 Apr	5–9 Apr			
	2	17–22 Apr	10–15 Apr			
	3	23–28 Apr	16–21 Apr			
	4	29 Apr–5 May	22–28 Apr			
	5	6–13 May	29 Apr–6 May			
Youth Spring (1 permit per year)	27–28 Mar and 3–4 Apr 2027			½ hour before sunrise to 1 p.m.	One tom, jake or bearded hen per permit, counts toward maximum of 3 Spring permits	Permit is valid to hunt individual counties or IDNR sites during season dates
Fall (shotgun)	24 Oct–1 Nov 2026			½ hour before sunrise to sunset	One either-sex turkey per permit, maximum of 2 Fall Turkey Shotgun permits	See map of fall firearm turkey hunting
Fall (archery)	1 Oct 2026–17 Jan 2027			½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset	One either-sex turkey per permit, maximum of 2 Fall Turkey Archery permits	Season open in all counties, statewide. Closed during firearm deer season in counties open to firearm deer hunting

TURKEY HUNTING AREAS



Spring Turkey Zones:

North Zone includes that portion of Illinois north of Crawford, Jasper, Effingham, Fayette, Bond and Madison counties.
South Zone includes the remainder of the state.



Fall Firearm Turkey Zone:

Counties shaded in gray are those open to fall firearm turkey hunting.

HUNTING CREDENTIALS AND REQUIREMENTS

To hunt turkey, residents and nonresidents will need:

- a valid hunting license
- a state habitat stamp
- at least one valid turkey permit

Exemptions to these requirements are specified in the tables on pg. 3 and 4. For residency qualification, see resident definition on pg. 5. See above turkey hunting maps for associated spring and fall zones.

You cannot legally:

- hunt wild turkey without first obtaining an IDNR permit.
- hunt wild turkey unless the permit is signed and is in the hunter's possession while hunting.
- harvest in Illinois, or have in possession, more than one wild turkey per legally authorized permit.
- leave in the field or transport a wild turkey without first immediately attaching the leg tag securely around the leg as instructed on the permit. **Note:** Leg tag must be affixed to the wild turkey immediately upon kill. The leg tag must remain attached to the leg of the turkey until it is at the legal residence of the person who legally took or possessed the turkey and the turkey has been checked in.
- butcher a turkey until it has been checked in.
- possess, while in the field during wild turkey seasons, any wild turkey permit issued to another person.
- hunt wild turkey in a county or area other than specified on the permit.

Turkey Hunting Credentials (does not include vendor fees)

License/Permit/Stamp	Price		How to apply for or purchase				Specifications
	Resident	Nonresident	Lottery	Online	Vendors	Paper Application	
Hunting License	Variable	Variable		X	X		See Statewide Regulations section for license types.
State Habitat Stamp	\$5.00	\$5.00		X	X		Purchasers of a lifetime hunting license prior to 1993 and legally disabled veterans are exempt from this stamp. Exempt under 18.
Super Senior Habitat Stamp	Free	n/a		X	X		Must be 75 or older, and pay vendor fees.
Turkey Permits							
Spring	\$15.00	\$125.00	X	X	X	X	
Spring Youth Special Hunt Area	\$10.00		X	X			
Spring Youth OTC	\$10.00	\$10.00			X		OTC = over-the-counter at vendors
Landowner Spring	Free	\$37.50				X	Landowners and resident tenants (of commercial agricultural leases) must have at least 39.5 acres of land to qualify for turkey landowner permits. Permits are only valid on the owned/leased land.
Landowner Fall Gun	Free	\$37.50				X	
Landowner Fall Archery	Free	\$25.00				X	
Fall Archery OTC	\$5.00	\$75.00			X		OTC = over-the-counter at vendors
Fall Gun	\$15.00	\$125.00	X	X	X	X	

Firearm and Archery Equipment Regulations

Firearm Regulations

- .410s to 10 gauge are allowed, (pursuant to Public Act 103-0622).
- You may not possess any other type of firearm for the purpose of hunting wild turkeys unless in accordance with the Firearm Concealed Carry Act.
- No. 4 shot is the largest shot that may be used while hunting turkeys with a shotgun.

Archery Regulations

- Legal vertical bow types are long, recurved or compound bows with a minimum pull of 30 pounds at some point within a 28-inch draw. Minimum arrow length for all vertical bow types is 20 inches (not including point).
- To use a crossbow it must have a minimum draw weight of 125 pounds; minimum overall length of 24 inches; a working safety; and used with fletched bolts or arrows of not less than 14 inches (not including point).
- Broadheads must be used for archery turkey hunting. Broadheads may have fixed (must be metal or flint-, chert or obsidian-knapped) or expandable (must be metal) cutting surfaces, but they must have a minimum 7/8 inch diameter when fully opened.
- All other bows and arrows, including electronic arrow-tracking systems utilizing radio-telemetry, are illegal.
- Hunters can legally carry a shotgun and bow and arrow during spring season.
- Hunters cannot legally have any firearm in possession while hunting turkey with any type of bow and arrow during fall season (see pg. 7 on concealed carry handguns).

Mandatory Turkey Harvest Reporting

Successful hunters **must register their harvest by 10 p.m. on the same calendar day the turkey was harvested** by calling toll-free 1-866-452-4325 (1-866-ILCHECK) or by accessing the online check-in system at www.exploremoreil.com/wildlife/harvest. Hunters must provide all information requested by the telephone check-in system and will be provided with a confirmation number to verify that they checked in their harvest. The confirmation number must be written by the hunter onto the leg tag.

Turkey Permit Process

- Apply online at www.exploremoreil.com or with a hardcopy application. To receive hardcopy applications for a wild turkey hunting permit, contact the Springfield Permit Office at (217) 782-7305. See sections on the permit application process for spring and fall hereafter. Applicants please allow approximately 4 weeks after the respective application deadline dates for Lottery Drawing results.

Decoys and Other Attractants

You cannot legally:

- use live or electronic decoys, dogs or recorded calls.
- possess or use any net or trap for harvesting turkeys.
- harvest wild turkeys by the use or aid of bait or baiting of any kind. "Bait" means any material, whether liquid or solid, including food, salt, minerals and other products that can be ingested, placed or scattered in such a manner as to attract or lure wild turkeys. "Baiting" means the placement or scattering of bait to attract wild turkeys. An area is considered as baited during the presence of and for 10 consecutive days following the removal of the bait.

For the purposes of taking wild turkeys, nothing in this Section shall be construed to prevent the manipulation, including mowing or cutting, of standing crops as a normal agricultural or soil stabilization practice, food plots, or normal agricultural practices, including planting, harvesting, and maintenance such as cultivating.



Photo: Jason Ray

Turkey Permit Applications

Application Period/Location	Methods	Lottery Opens	Lottery Closes	Notes
Spring Season				
First lottery (residents only)	Internet/Hardcopy	6 Oct 2026	1 Dec 2026	dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/turkeyhunting
Second lottery	Internet/Hardcopy	11 Dec 2026	11 Jan 2027	
Third lottery	Internet/Hardcopy	22 Jan 2027	9 Feb 2027	
Over-the-counter	Vendors	9 Mar 2027	As available	
Spring Youth Season				
Special Hunt Area Lottery	Internet Only	19 Jan 2027	15 Feb 2027	dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/turkeyhunting
County-specific Permits (Over-the-Counter)	Vendors	2 Mar 2027	4 Apr 2027	
Fall Gun Season				
First lottery (residents only)	Internet/Hardcopy	5 May 2026	6 July 2026	dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/turkeyhunting
Second lottery	Internet/Hardcopy	17 July 2026	24 Aug 2026	
Over-the-counter	Vendors	21 Sep 2026	As available	
Disabled Hunter Opportunities				
See the following link for opportunities: dnr.illinois.gov/doo Additional hunts may be available, contact Jay Williams at jay.d.williams@illinois.gov				



Want To Help IDNR Monitor Wild Turkey Reproduction?

It's now easier than ever to help IDNR monitor reproductive success and population trends in Illinois' wild turkey population!

All that is required from you is to report all the turkeys you see during June, July, and August through an online survey form that can be accessed through your internet browser or the Survey123 app, which allows for offline use.

Navigate to arcg.is/05bSD0 (or scan the QR code above) to access the survey form. Detailed instructions on downloading and using the mobile Survey123 app can be found at huntillinois.org/turkey.

We hope the new format will make it more convenient to report turkey sightings while allowing a broader pool of volunteers to participate.

For more information or to request traditional paper postcards to record your sightings, email us at DNR.Turkey@illinois.gov.

Turkey Hunting Season Information (Additional to Statewide Regulations)

Spring Season Regulations

Turkeys Legal to Harvest

Only toms and jakes (males) or a hen with a visible beard are legal to harvest during the spring season.

Clothing Requirements

While not required, hunters are encouraged to wear at least a blaze orange or blaze pink hat or vest when not actively hunting to maximize visibility to other hunters.

Spring Permit Application Process

- **First Lottery:** Only resident hunters may apply for one turkey hunting permit. This excludes hunters who have received or will receive a landowner property-only hunting turkey permit for the spring season. Applications are accepted through **1 December**.
- **Second Lottery:** All hunters are eligible to apply for one turkey hunting permit, but hunters who have not already been awarded a permit will receive preference. Applications are accepted through **11 January**.
- **Third Lottery:** All hunters are eligible to apply. Hunters may apply for up to three permits during this period, **except** that no one may exceed the maximum number of three permits in total for spring turkey hunting. Applications are accepted through **9 February**.
- **Over-the-Counter Sales Period:** Permits remaining after the Third Lottery Drawing will be available over-the-counter from license vendors throughout the state on a first-come, first-served basis beginning the second Tuesday in March. Permits will be sold until quotas are exhausted, or until the close of the specific turkey season for which the permit is being requested. Hunters may purchase one or more permits during this period, subject to availability, **except** that no one may exceed the limit of three permits in total for spring turkey hunting.
- **Permit Limit:** Three wild turkey hunting permits may be obtained for the spring season, including regular, youth, and landowner permits, subject to availability.

Turkey Calling Prior to Season

You cannot legally use a turkey call that imitates sounds made by a turkey, or attempt to call a turkey by making these sounds, while in the field in the Southern Zone from **15 March** through the day before turkey season, and in the Northern Zone from **22 March** through the day before turkey season. This prohibition applies only in counties open to spring turkey hunting and does not apply to hunters while participating in the youth turkey season. **Note:** This does not prohibit the use of locator calls that imitate other species such as owls, crows, hawks, etc.

Shooting Turkeys in Trees

You cannot legally shoot a wild turkey while it is in a tree **before 7 a.m.**

Non-Hunting Activities During Spring Seasons

At IDNR sites offering spring wild turkey hunting, mushroom hunting and other non-hunting activities are prohibited during legal shooting hours for wild turkey hunting (1/2 hour before sunrise to 1 p.m.).

Youth Wild Turkey Hunting Season

- The spring youth turkey hunt is open only to young hunters (resident or nonresident) who have not reached their 18th birthday before the first day of the hunt.
- Participants must have a current valid Youth Turkey Hunt permit and a valid hunting license or apprentice hunting license.
- Each hunter participating in the Illinois Youth Turkey Hunt while using an Apprentice Hunter License or Youth Hunting License must be accompanied by a non-hunting, validly-licensed (Illinois hunting license) adult who is 21 years of age or older.
- All other hunters (using other types of hunting licenses or license-exempt) participating in the Youth Turkey Hunt must each be accompanied by a non-hunting supervisor (parent, guardian or responsible adult). If the youth is hunting with a firearm, a nonresident supervisor must have a valid Illinois hunting license.

Fall Gun and Archery Season Regulations

Clothing Requirements

While not required, hunters are encouraged to wear at least a blaze orange or blaze pink hat or vest when not actively hunting to maximize visibility to other hunters.

Turkeys Legal to Harvest

Turkeys of any sex are legal to harvest during the fall gun and fall archery seasons.

Fall Gun Permit Application Process

- **First Lottery:** Residents may apply for one turkey hunting permit from the date on which they became available through the first Monday in July. This excludes applicants who have received or will receive a landowner property-only hunting turkey permit for the fall gun season.
- **Second Lottery:** Residents who were rejected for a wild turkey permit during the first lottery, who are applying for their first permit, or nonresidents may apply for one permit. Applications for this drawing will be accepted through the seventh Monday after the initial First Lottery Drawing. Eligible Illinois residents have preference over nonresidents in this lottery. This excludes applicants who have received or will receive a landowner property-only hunting turkey permit for the fall gun season.
- **Over-the-Counter Sales Period:** Permits remaining after the Second Lottery Drawing will be available over-the-counter from license vendors throughout the state on a first-come, first-served basis beginning the **4th Monday after the 2nd Lottery deadline**. Permits will be sold until quotas are exhausted, or until the close of the Fall Gun turkey season. Hunters may purchase one or more permits during this period, subject to availability, **except** that **no one may exceed the limit of two permits** in total for fall gun turkey hunting, including landowner permits.

Fall Gun Permit

A limit of two wild turkey hunting permits may be obtained for the fall gun season, subject to availability. Permits are issued for a specific county or area and are valid only in the county or area designated on the permit.

Archery Permit Application Process and Limit

Fall archery permits do not require lottery drawing and are available over-the-counter from license vendors only. Two wild turkey hunting permits may be obtained for the fall archery season.

Shooting Turkeys in Trees

You cannot legally shoot a wild turkey while it is in a tree **before 7 a.m.**



Photo: Jesse Williams



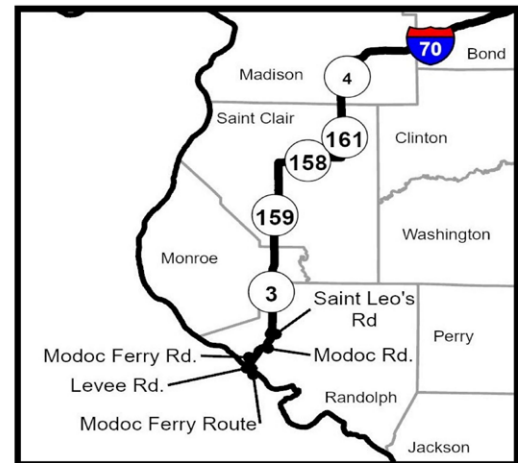
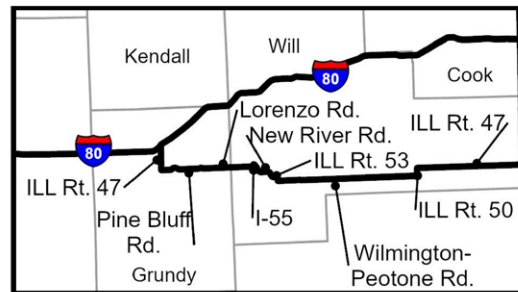
Photo: Matt Williams

WATERFOWL SEASON DATES AND LIMITS

SPECIES	ZONE	DATES (Inclusive)	HOURS	DAILY LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT	ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS
Teal (Early season)	Statewide	5—13 Sept 2026	Sunrise to Sunset	6	18	Blue-winged teal, green-winged teal and cinnamon teal are the only legal duck species during this season. Daily and possession limits are for all teal species combined (in the aggregate).
Rail (Sora and Virginia only)	Statewide	5 Sept—13 Nov 2026		25	75	Daily and possession limits are for both rail species combined (in the aggregate).
Snipe (Wilson's snipe)	Statewide	5 Sept—20 Dec 2026		8	24	
Ducks (But see Scaup below)	North	24—25 Oct 2026 and 31 Oct—27 Dec 2026	$\frac{1}{2}$ hour before sunrise to sunset	6	18	Basic daily limit is 6 ducks of any species. However, daily limit can consist of no more than the following: 4 mallards (of which no more than 2 can be hen mallards), 3 wood ducks, 1 scaup for the first 15 days in each zone, 2 scaup for the last 45 days in each zone, 2 redheads, 2 canvasback, 2 black ducks, 3 pintails and 1 mottled duck. Possession limit for ducks is three times the daily limit by species and sex.
	Central	31 Oct—13 Dec 2026 and 19 Dec 2026—3 Jan 2027				
	South	14 Nov—6 Dec 2026 and 19 Dec 2026—24 Jan 2027				
Mergansers	Same as ducks	Same as ducks		5	15	Mergansers do not count toward your duck bag limit, but only 2 can be hooded mergansers. Possession limit of hooded mergansers is 6.
Coots	Same as ducks	Same as ducks		15	45	
Scaup (Bluebills)	North	24—25 Oct 2026 and 31 Oct—12 Nov 2026		1	3	Federal regulations require 15 days with 1/day bag limit and 45 days with 2/day bag limit.
	Central	31 Oct—14 Nov 2026				
	South	14 Nov—28 Nov 2026				
Scaup (Bluebills)	North	13 Nov 2026—27 Dec 2026		2	6	
	Central	15 Nov 2026—13 Dec 2026 and 19 Dec 2026—3 Jan 2027				
	South	29 Nov 2026—6 Dec 2026 and 19 Dec 2026—24 Jan 2027				

WATERFOWL SEASON DATES AND LIMITS

SPECIES	ZONE	DATES (Inclusive)	HOURS	DAILY LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT	ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS	
Canada Geese (Early season)	North & Central	1–15 Sept 2026	$\frac{1}{2}$ hour before sunrise to sunset	5	15		
	South			2	6		
Canada Geese	North	24–25 Oct 2026 and 31 Oct 2026– 26 Jan 2027		3	9		
	Central	31 Oct–13 Dec 2026 and 19 Dec 2026– 31 Jan 2027					
	South	14 Nov 2026– 31 Jan 2027					
Light Geese (Snow/Ross’s Geese)	North	24–25 Oct 2026 and 31 Oct 2026–26 Jan 2027		20	Unlimited	Daily bag limit is for both species combined (in the aggregate).	
	Central	31 Oct–13 Dec 2026 and 19 Dec 2026– 31 Jan 2027					
	South	14 Nov 2026– 31 Jan 2027					
Brant	Same as light geese	Same as light geese		1	3		
White-fronted Geese (Specklebellies)	North	31 Oct 2026– 26 Jan 2027		2	6		
	Central	31 Oct–13 Dec 2026 and 19 Dec 2026– 31 Jan 2027					
	South	14 Nov 2026– 31 Jan 2027					
Conservation Order Light Geese (Snow/Ross’s Geese)	North	27 Jan–30 Apr 2027	$\frac{1}{2}$ hour before sunrise to $\frac{1}{2}$ hour after sunset	Unlimited	Unlimited	The following apply to the Conservation Order only: 1) unplugged shotguns may be used and there is no limit to the number of shells that may be placed in a shotgun, 2) electronic calling devices may be used, 3) federal duck stamp not required, 4) Illinois duck stamp and hunting license are required.	
	Central and South	1 Feb - 30 Apr 2027					
Youth Waterfowl (Ducks, Coots, Mergansers & Geese)	North	17-18 Oct 2026	$\frac{1}{2}$ hour before sunrise to sunset	Same as during regular seasons, except scaup limit is 2/day	Same as during regular seasons	The following apply to the Youth season only: 1) youth hunters must be 17 years of age or younger and have a hunting license and HIP registration/certification unless hunting on property they reside; 2) no stamps are required for youth under age 16; 3) federal waterfowl stamps are required for all hunters age 16 and older; 4) an adult at least 18 years of age must accompany the youth hunter into the field; 5) hunters aged 18 years and older may not hunt waterfowl and/or coots during Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days, even if hunting with a Youth License, unless those seasons are open.	
	Central	24–25 Oct 2026					
	South	7 Nov 2026 and 30 Jan 2027					



Waterfowl Hunting Zone Descriptions

North Duck Zone: That portion of the state north of a line extending west from the Indiana border along Peotone-Beecher Road to Illinois Route 50, south along Illinois Route 50 to Wilmington-Peotone Road, west along Wilmington-Peotone Road to Illinois Route 53, north along Illinois Route 53 to New River Road, northwest along New River Road to Interstate Highway 55, south along I-55 to Pine Bluff-Lorenzo Road, west along Pine Bluff-Lorenzo Road to Illinois Route 47, north along Illinois Route 47 to I-80, west along I-80 to I-39, south along I-39 to Illinois Route 18, west along Illinois Route 18 to Illinois Route 29, south along Illinois Route 29 to Illinois Route 17, west along Illinois Route 17 to the Mississippi River, and due south across the Mississippi River to the Iowa border.

Central Duck Zone: That portion of the state south of the North Duck Zone line to a line extending west from the Indiana border along I-70 to Illinois Route 4, south along Illinois Route 4 to Illinois Route 161, west along Illinois Route 161 to Illinois Route 158, south and west along Illinois Route 158 to Illinois Route 159, south along Illinois Route 159 to Illinois Route 3, south along Illinois Route 3 to St. Leo's Road, south along St. Leo's road to Modoc Road, west along Modoc Road to Modoc Ferry Road, southwest along Modoc Ferry Road to Levee Road, southeast along Levee Road to County Route 12 (Modoc Ferry entrance Road), south along County Route 12 to the Modoc Ferry route and southwest on the Modoc Ferry route across the Mississippi River to the Missouri border.

South Duck Zone: The remainder of the state.

Goose Zones

North Goose Zone: That portion of the state north of a line extending west from the Indiana border along Interstate 80 to I-39, south along I-39 to Illinois Route 18, west along Illinois Route 18 to Illinois Route 29, south along Illinois Route 29 to Illinois Route 17, west along Illinois Route 17 to the Mississippi River, and due south across the Mississippi River to the Iowa border.

Central Goose Zone: That portion of the state south of the North Goose Zone line to a line extending west from the Indiana border along I-70 to Illinois Route 4, south along Illinois Route 4 to Illinois Route 161, west along Illinois Route 161 to Illinois Route 158, south and west along Illinois Route 158 to Illinois Route 159, south along Illinois Route 159 to Illinois Route 3, south along Illinois Route 3 to St. Leo's Road, south along St. Leo's road to Modoc Road, west along Modoc Road to Modoc Ferry Road, southwest along Modoc Ferry Road to Levee Road, southeast along Levee Road to County Route 12 (Modoc Ferry entrance Road), south along County Route 12 to the Modoc Ferry route and southwest on the Modoc Ferry route across the Mississippi River to the Missouri border.

South Goose Zone: Same zone as for ducks.

Hunting Credential Requirements

To hunt migratory waterfowl, residents and nonresidents will need: a hunting license, State Waterfowl Stamp, Federal Waterfowl Stamp and HIP Certification. Exemptions to these requirements are specified in table. For residency qualification, see Resident definition in Statewide Regulations (pg. 5) hereafter. See waterfowl hunting maps for associated zones.



Photo: Matt Williams

Waterfowl Hunting Credentials (does not include vendor fees)

License/Permit/ Stamps	Price		How to apply for or purchase			Specifications
	Resident	Nonresident	Lottery	Online	Vendors	
Hunting License	Variable	Variable		X	X	See Statewide Regulations section for license types.
State Migratory Waterfowl Stamp	\$15.00	\$15.00		X	X	Required for any person 18 years of age or older, including lifetime license holders, to hunt migratory waterfowl except toe-clipped, hand-reared mallards on licensed Game Breeding and Hunting Preserve Areas. Disabled individuals, servicemen, and landowners may be exempt from this stamp. See table on pg. 4.
Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp	\$25.00	\$25.00		X	X	Required for any person 16 years of age or older, including lifetime license holders, to hunt migratory waterfowl except toe-clipped, hand-reared mallards on licensed Game Breeding and Hunting Preserve Areas. Physical stamp must be signed in ink across the face of the stamp. Electronic stamps are available from many states and are legal nationwide. E-stamps are valid for the entire hunting season at www.fws.gov/service/buy-duck-stamp-or-e-stamp
HIP Certification	Free	Free		X	X	To hunt migratory birds, all licensed hunters, including lifetime license holders, must register with HIP and have their proof of registration with them while migratory bird hunting, see HIP Registration description hereafter. Not required to hunt crows in Illinois.
Site-specific Duck and Goose Hunting Permits	Variable	Variable	X	X		See Permit Applications hereafter for details. Some Permits require in-person drawing. Fee may be charged at sites.



Photo: Bryan Eubanks

Federal Migratory Bird Hunting & Conservation Stamp

Each year waterfowl hunters purchase Migratory Waterfowl Stamps, or "duck stamps" as a requirement to hunt migratory waterfowl. Authorization for a federal duck stamp came in 1934 from passage of the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act, which was largely driven by waterfowl hunters' concern over habitat loss and declining waterfowl populations. Funds from the purchase of these stamps are directed towards the purchase of lands and conservation easements for inclusion in the National Wildlife Refuge System, providing critical breeding, migration and wintering habitat for waterfowl and a variety of other species, and recreation opportunity in many areas. With an initial cost of \$1 and current cost of \$25, Federal Duck Stamp funds to date have totaled over \$1.3 billion to protect more than 6 million acres of wildlife habitat nationwide.

State Migratory Waterfowl Stamp

Similar to the federal duck stamp, Illinois hunters initiated the Illinois Migratory Waterfowl Stamp Fund, which was established in 1975. The stamps originally cost \$5, increasing to \$15 in 2011. Over the life of the fund, stamp purchases have led to over \$29 million deposited in this fund, with current average sales of about 60,000 stamps annually, leading to nearly \$1 million annual revenue.

Physical paper Illinois stamps affixed to hunters' licenses were discontinued in 2011 and now only appear as a line item on printed licenses. Half of the funds generated annually are used within Illinois to manage, maintain and acquire waterfowl and wetland habitat and hunting areas. The remaining funds are used to conserve critical grassland and wetland habitat on the Canadian breeding grounds, where many of the ducks that visit Illinois and the Mississippi Flyway originate.

HIP Registration

Free registration with HIP (National Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program) is required by law every year to hunt migratory game birds. Any licensed hunter who plans to hunt any species of migratory game bird must register with HIP before hunting. Get your HIP certification when purchasing your hunting or sportsman license or register for HIP by calling **1-866-716-6550** (record the transaction number on your license). Lifetime license holders also need to register with HIP on an annual basis. HIP is a nationwide program and you must register separately in every state where you hunt waterfowl, coots, doves, rails, snipe, woodcock and other migratory game birds **except** American crow. These data are important to estimate the annual harvest of migratory game birds nationwide. Cooperation and support from hunters make these estimates accurate and ensure sound management of migratory game birds into the future. For more information see www.fws.gov/program/migratory-bird-harvest-surveys.

Waterfowl Bands

The U.S. Geological Survey Bird Banding Laboratory maintains a website for reporting all migratory bird bands, including waterfowl. If you harvest a banded bird, please visit www.reportband.gov and provide information about when and where you shot the bird. The 1-800 call-in number is no longer available for reporting bird bands. The phone number will direct you to the www.reportband.gov website. All federal bird bands, even those without a web address printed on them, can be reported online. Old bands with numbers worn off may still be reported by emailing: bandreports@usgs.gov for instructions. The band may need to be sent in, but the process does not destroy the band, and it will be returned to you. Band reporters will be emailed a Certificate of Appreciation with information about when and where the bird was banded. Your cooperation on reporting band numbers gives waterfowl biologists a wealth of information useful in managing the resource to provide hunters with maximum recreational opportunities while protecting waterfowl populations.

Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*)



Photo: Matt Williams

The Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*) is the smallest diving duck species and nearly the smallest duck species in North America, second only to the American green-winged teal. Bufflehead primarily breed across the boreal forest and aspen parklands of Alaska and Canada. Females nest in tree cavities most commonly excavated by Northern flickers (*Colaptes auratus*), where they lay 6-11 eggs. These birds primarily consume animal matter, diving below the water's surface to feed on aquatic macroinvertebrates, crustaceans, and mollusks. While bufflehead concentrate along the coasts during migration and winter, many birds pass through or stay within interior North America, utilizing open water areas including the Great Lakes, large wetlands and reservoirs, and river systems. They are less common than other diving duck species in Illinois, but can still be found during the migration and wintering periods. Bufflehead may be harvested during the Illinois duck hunting season. For more information visit huntillinois.org/waterfowl/.

Length: 13-15 inches

Wingspan: 21-22 inches

Weight: 11-18 ounces

Call: Typically silent. Males make a squeaking whistle. Females make soft *prrk prrk* sounds.

Habitat Preference: Wetlands in forested areas for breeding. Large bodies of water in the winter.

Food Preferences: Aquatic macroinvertebrates, crustaceans, and mollusks

Illinois Abundance: Uncommon migrant. Most commonly present in Illinois fall through spring.

Illinois Status: Migratory game bird

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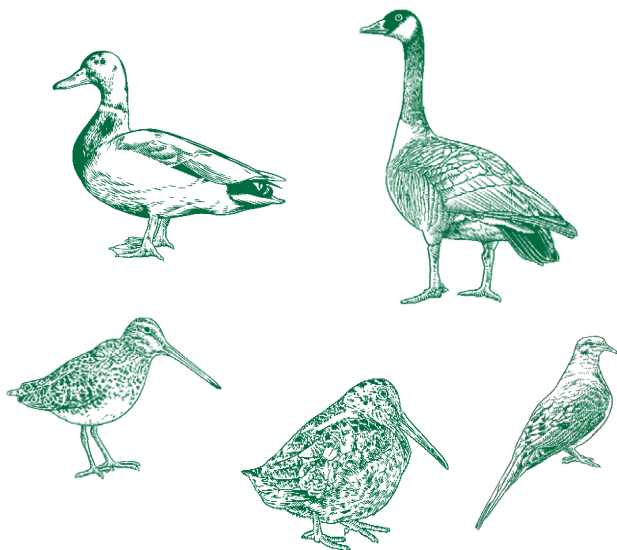


Don't Forget Your HIP

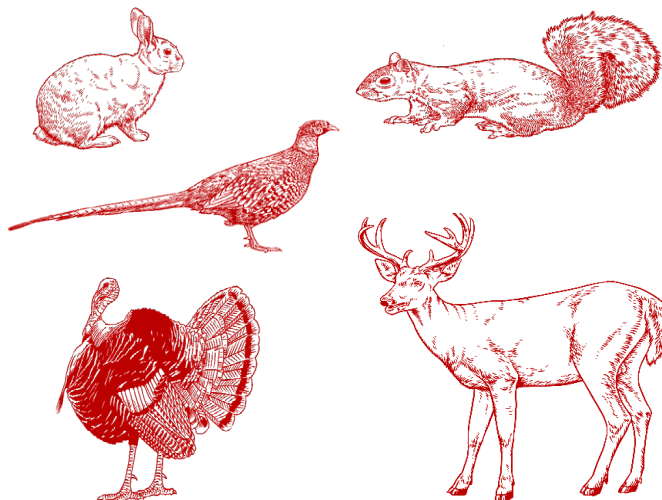
HIP Certification is required by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
for anyone intending to hunt migratory birds.
Use this quick guide to see if you need HIP!



SIGN UP



SKIP THE HIP



Public Duck and Goose Hunting Area Permit Applications

Application Period	Methods	Opens	Closes	Notes
Regular Season				
First (residents only)	Internet	16 Aug	31 Aug	dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/waterfowl/onlinepermitapplication
Second	Internet	1 Sept	15 Sept	
Third	Internet	16 Sept	28 Sept	
First-come-first-served	Internet	1 Oct	See Website	
Youth (Ages 10-17)	Paper Application	1 Sept	1 Oct	

Site-Specific Hunting Permits

Waterfowl hunting permits for specific dates on several IDNR sites are available through a lottery system. A total of 5 permits for ducks and five permits for geese may be obtained through the lotteries and unfilled quotas system. Applications from Illinois residents only will be accepted for inclusion in the first lottery. A second lottery will be held for unsuccessful resident applicants, nonresidents or anyone who did not apply in the first lottery. A third lottery will be held for applicants to receive either a first and/or second permit. Additional permits may be obtained from unfilled quotas on a first-come, first-served basis ending 72 hours prior to the hunt date by visiting dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/waterfowl/onlinepermitapplication beginning Oct. 1.

Other Hunting Opportunities

Public waterfowl hunting opportunities exist at over 100 sites in Illinois covering a broad range of access and management. Please see the regional site maps at the end of this digest for sites offering waterfowl hunting, check public hunting site information (hunter fact sheet) on huntillinois.org or call sites directly for details on hunting opportunities and regulations.

TOM ROSTER'S 2016 NONTOXIC SHOT LETHALITY TABLE[©]

Proven Nontoxic Loads For Waterfowl, Doves, & Upland Game Birds ¹ Vel. Range Tested: 1,225 – 1,700 FPS ACTIVITY	Observed Hunters' Typical Shooting Range During Activity (Yards)	Most Effective Nontoxic Shot Size(s) For Birds Listed Under ACTIVITY At The Distances Listed In The Second Column	Minimum Load Weight (Ounces)	Minimum Pellet Hits Needed on Lethal Areas for Clean Kills	Minimum Pattern Count Needed at Any Distance for Clean Kills (# of Pellets in 30" Circle)	Most Effective Choke(s) at Distance (Given in Lead Shot Choke Designations)	NOTE: The pellets in the steel shot loads listed in this table were traditional, highly spherical ball-shaped pellets of ~ 7.86 g/cc density and 90-95 DPH hardness. The HEVI-Shot pellets were of 12.0 g/cc density and are harder than traditional steel pellets.
Large Geese At Long Range Giant, Western, Atlantic and Interior Canadas	50-65 50-70	Steel BBB to T HEVI-Shot 2 to B	1-1/4 1-1/2	1-2 1-2	50-55 50-55	Improved Modified Improved Modified, Full	
Large Geese Over Decoys	35-50 35-50	Steel BB to BBB HEVI-Shot 2 to B	1-1/4 1-1/2	1-2 1-2	50-55 50-55	Improved Cylinder, Modified Improved Cylinder, Modified	
Medium/Small Geese Long Range Snow, White-fronted, Lesser Canadas	50-65 50-65	Steel BB to BBB HEVI-Shot 2	1-1/4 1-1/2	1-2 1-2	60-65 60-65	Improved Modified Improved Modified, Full	
Medium/Small Geese Over Decoys	35-50 35-50	Steel 2 to BB HEVI-Shot 4 to 2	1-1/8 1-1/4	1-2 1-2	60-65 60-65	Light Modified, Modified Improved Cylinder, Modified	
Large Ducks At Long Range Mallard, Black, Pintail, Goldeneye, Gadwall	45-65 45-65	Steel 2 to 1 HEVI-Shot 4	1-1/8 1-1/4	1-2 1-2	85-90 85-90	Improved Modified, Full Improved Modified, Full	
Large Ducks Over Decoys	20-45 20-45	Steel 6 to 2 HEVI-Shot 6 to 4	3/4 - 1 1-1/8	1-2 1-2	85-90 85-90	I.C. (20-35 Yds), Mod. (35-45 Yds) I.C. (20-35 Yds), Mod. (35-45 Yds)	
Medium Ducks Over Decoys Wigeon, Scaup, Shoveler	20-45 20-45	Steel 6 to 3 HEVI-Shot 6 to 4	1 1-1/8	1-2 1-2	115-120 115-120	I.C. (20-35 Yds), Mod. (35-45 Yds) I.C. (20-35 Yds), Mod. (35-45 Yds)	
Small Ducks Over Decoys Teal, Ruddy, Bufflehead	20-45 20-45	Steel 6 to 4 HEVI-Shot 6	1 1-1/8	1-2 1-2	135-145 135-145	Mod. (20-35 Yds), Full (35-45 Yds) Mod. (20-35 Yds), Full (35-45 Yds)	
Ring-Necked Pheasants	20-50 20-50	Steel 3 to 2 HEVI-Shot 6 to 4	1 1-1/8	2-3 2-3	90-95 90-95	I.C. (20-30 Yds), Mod. (30-50 Yds) I.C. (20-30 Yds), Mod. (30-50 Yds)	
Turkeys (Head and Neck Shots)	20-40	Steel 4; HEVI-Shot 6	1-1/4	3-4	210-230	Full or Extra Full	
Mourning Doves	20-45 20-45	Steel 8 to 7 HEVI-Shot 7 1/2	5/8 - 3/4 3/4	1-2 1-2	200-210 200-210	IC-8's/LM-7's (20-30 Yds); Mod>30 Yd I.C. (20-30 Yds); Light Mod (30-45 Yd)	
Northern Bobwhite Quail	20-30	Steel 8 to 7	5/8 - 3/4	1-2	200-210	Imp. Cyl., Light Modified	
Swatter Load For Wounded Birds	20-30	Steel 7 to 6	1	1	175	Improved Modified, Full	

This table summarizes Tom Roster's analyses to date of the lethality data bases for certain of the 16 U.S. steel vs lead waterfowl & dove shooting tests published between 1968 & 2014 & one steel-only pheasant shooting test (1999) plus lethality data bases owned by ammunition companies for birds taken with nontoxic shotshell loads Roster tested for them & the CONSEP Org. Note: Steel #BBB (.190") & HEVI-Shot #2 (.150") have exhibited the best all-around performance for taking geese; steel #3 (.140") & HEVI-Shot #4 (.130") the best all-around performance for taking ducks; steel #2 & HEVI-Shot #4 (.130") the best all-around performance for taking ring-necked pheasants; & steel 7's (.100") the best all-around performance for taking doves.

¹These findings are derived from testing 2 3/4" 28 gauge; 3" 20 ga.; 2 1/4", 3" & 3 1/2" 12 ga.; & 3 1/2" 10 ga. steel loads; plus 2 3/4" 28 ga.; 2 1/4" & 3" 20 ga.; and 2 1/4" & 3" 12 ga. HEVI-Shot loads.

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Migratory Waterfowl Regulations

The following state and/or federal rules apply to the taking, possessing, shipping, transporting and storing of migratory birds. This material is only a summary and hunters also should consult Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 20 www.ecfr.gov, 17 Ill. Adm. Code 590, Wildlife Code (520 ILCS 5/) or contact their local Conservation Police Officer at dnr.illinois.gov/lawenforcement

Prohibited Devices and Methods

You cannot legally:

- use a trap, snare, net, rifle, pistol, swivel gun, shotgun larger than 10 gauge, punt gun, battery gun, machine gun, fishhook, poison, drug, explosive or stupefying substance to harvest waterfowl.
- hunt by driving, rallying or chasing waterfowl with any motorized conveyance or any sailboat to put them in the range of the hunters.
- hunt with a shotgun capable of holding more than three shells, UNLESS it is plugged with a one-piece filler which limits total shell capacity to three and which is incapable of removal without disassembling the gun. This does not apply during Light Goose Conservation Order season.

Non-toxic Shot Requirements for Waterfowl, Snipe & Rail

You cannot legally:

- have in possession while attempting to harvest waterfowl (including coots and captive-reared mallards), snipe or rail any shotgun shells not approved as non-toxic by federal regulations. Most commercially available shot shells from major manufacturers are approved non-toxic options. A list of non-toxic shot currently approved by the USFWS can be found at: www.fws.gov/story/2022-04/nontoxic-shot-regulations-hunting-waterfowl-and-coots-us. Also see Tom Roster's Nontoxic Shot Lethality Table© on pg. 33.

Blinds

You cannot legally:

- hunt from a floating blind that is not anchored **except** a scull boat may be used on certain public waters and waterfowl may be harvested from a boat not mechanically powered (see Hunting From Vehicles and Boats in Statewide Regulations) and not camouflaged or disguised.
- hunt waterfowl from a moving watercraft propelled by mechanical power or sails.
- hunt from a sink box (a low floating device, having a depression affording the hunter a means of concealment beneath the surface of the water).

Attractants

You cannot legally:

- hunt waterfowl with the use or aid of live decoys. All live, tame or captive ducks and geese shall be removed for a period of 10 consecutive days prior to hunting and confined within an enclosure which substantially reduces the audibility of their calls and totally conceals such tame birds from the sight of migratory waterfowl.
- use a recording or electronic calling device to hunt migratory waterfowl. Such electronic calling devices may be used to hunt snow and Ross's geese during Light Goose Conservation Order seasons.

Retrieval of Downed Birds (Wanton Waste)

You cannot legally:

- fail to retrieve, if possible, and retain in the custody of the hunter in the field, all waterfowl killed or crippled. **Note:** You need permission to enter private property.
- have or carry an uncased or loaded shotgun in a motorized boat. Waterfowl hunters may have an uncased and unloaded gun in their boats for pursuing crippled waterfowl incapable of normal flight to reduce said bird to possession, provided that the attempt is made immediately upon downing the bird and is done within 400 yards of the blind from which the bird was downed. The gun cannot be loaded unless the motor has been completely shut off and crippled birds may not be shot from the boat until the motor has been completely shut off and the boat's progress has ceased.
- wantonly waste or destroy the usable meat (defined as the breast meat of a migratory game bird) of any game bird or migratory game bird that has a bag limit, and to leave, dump or abandon a wildlife carcass or its parts along or upon a public right-of-way or highway or on public or private property, including a waterway or stream without permission.

Possession and Tagging

You cannot legally:

- possess more than one daily limit while in the field or while returning from the field to one's car, hunting camp, home, etc.
- at any time, or by any means, possess or transport live migratory game birds. Every migratory game bird wounded by hunting and reduced to possession by the hunter shall be immediately killed and become a part of the daily bag limit.
- completely field dress any migratory waterfowl and then transport the birds from the field. The head or one fully-feathered wing must remain attached to all such birds while being transported from the field to one's home or to a commercial preservation facility.
- give, put or leave any waterfowl at any place other than his/her personal abode, or in the custody of another person, unless the birds are tagged by the hunter with the hunter's signature and address, the total number of birds involved, by species, and the dates such birds were killed.
- receive or have in custody any waterfowl belonging to another person unless such birds are properly tagged. Tags available at: huntillinois.org/waterfowl/
- receive, possess or give to another any freshly-killed waterfowl as a gift, **except** at the personal abode of the donor or donee, unless such birds have a tag attached (see tagging requirements above).
- consider termination of bird possession by the hunter, until the hunter delivers the birds to another person as a gift or to a post office, common carrier or migratory bird preservation facility and consigned for transport by the Postal Service or a common carrier to some person other than the hunter.

Exporting and Importing

You cannot legally:

- ship migratory waterfowl unless the package is marked on the outside with the name and address of the person sending the birds, the name and address of the person to whom the birds are being sent and the number of birds, by species, contained in the package.
- import migratory waterfowl killed in any foreign country, **except** Canada, unless such birds are dressed (**except** one fully-feathered wing must remain attached to all migratory waterfowl being transported between a port of entry and one's home or to a migratory bird preservation facility), drawn and the head and feet are removed. For information regarding the importation of migratory waterfowl killed in another country, consult 50 CFR 20.61 through 20.66.
- import migratory waterfowl belonging to another person.

Federal Baiting Regulations

This is a summary of the federal regulations regarding baiting. Please see www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-20 for greater detail.

You cannot legally:

- take migratory game birds 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 (see www.ecfr.gov/current/title-50/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-20). An area is considered as baited during the presence of and for 10 consecutive days following the removal of the bait. However, nothing prohibits the taking of any migratory game bird, including waterfowl and coots, on or over the following lands or areas that are not otherwise baited areas:
 - i. Standing crops or flooded standing crops (including aquatics); standing, flooded or manipulated natural vegetation; flooded harvested croplands; or lands or areas where seeds or grains have been scattered solely as the result of a normal agricultural planting, harvesting, post-harvest manipulation or normal soil stabilization practice;
 - ii. From a blind or other place of concealment camouflaged with natural vegetation;
 - iii. From a blind or other place of concealment camouflaged with vegetation from agricultural crops, as long as such camouflaging does not result in the exposing, depositing, distributing or scattering of grain or other feed; or
 - iv. Standing or flooded standing agricultural crops where grain is inadvertently scattered solely as a result of a hunter entering or exiting a hunting area, placing decoys or retrieving birds.

Hunters MAY:

- hunt ALL legal migratory game birds, including waterfowl and coots.
- hunt ALL legal migratory game birds over standing crops, standing flooded crops and flooded harvested croplands.
- use natural vegetation to conceal a blind.
- hunt over natural vegetation that has been mowed or manipulated in other ways. There is no restriction on when manipulation may occur. In other words, the manipulation may occur before, during or after any season where seeds or grains have been scattered solely as the result of "normal agricultural planting, harvesting, post-harvest manipulation or normal soil stabilization practice."
- hunt over surface-mined lands being reclaimed where seeds or grains are scattered solely as a result of a "normal soil stabilization practice."
- use vegetation from agricultural crops to conceal a blind provided that the crop seed is not exposed, deposited, distributed or scattered in the process. For example, corn stalks may be used to camouflage a blind as long as the attached ears remain tightly in the husk.
- continue hunting over standing or flooded standing agricultural crops if they inadvertently scatter grain solely as a result of entering or leaving the field, placing decoys or retrieving downed birds.
- be charged with hunting over bait or a baited area if they "know or reasonably should know" that the area is baited.

With respect to federal prohibitions, hunters MAY NOT:

- place, expose, deposit, distribute, or scatter salt, grain or other feed that could lure or attract migratory game birds, **except** crows, to, on or over an area where hunters are attempting to harvest them.
- hunt migratory game birds, **except** crows, with the aid of bait or on or over any baited area.
- hunt over any baited area until all salt, grain or other feed has been completely removed for at least **10 days**.
- hunt waterfowl and coots over manipulated planted millet. Planted millet is not considered natural vegetation unless it becomes naturalized and grows (volunteers) on its own in subsequent years.
- hunt waterfowl and coots over seed or grain from manipulated agricultural crops or normal agricultural operations **except** where seed or grain is present solely as a result of "normal planting, harvesting or post-harvest manipulation" or "normal agricultural soil stabilization practices."
- hunt migratory game birds, other than crows, if the use of vegetation from agricultural crops to conceal a blind exposes, deposits, distributes or scatters grain or other crop seed.

Hunters also should remember that:

- they are responsible for ensuring that the hunting area has not been baited before they start hunting.
- they should physically inspect the field or marsh; question landowners, guides and caretakers; and take other reasonable steps to verify the legality of the hunting area.
- they must know and obey all applicable federal and state hunting regulations.
- when making agricultural determinations, the Fish and Wildlife Service relies on the official recommendations of state extension specialists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Cooperative Extension Service.

Don't Shoot a Swan!**Don't make a mistake!****All wild swans are protected in Illinois.**

Trumpeter Swans have made a substantial comeback throughout the Midwest region. These native swans are migrating through and wintering in Illinois. You can help bring back this magnificent swan by:

- Learning the difference between swans and snow geese.
- Reporting observations of swans having wing tags, neck collars or leg bands.
- Protecting wetland habitat.
- Reporting any harassment of trumpeter swans.

Report Swan Sightings to:

Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Waterfowl Program
700 South 10th Street, Havana, IL 62644 (309) 543-3065

Trumpeter Swan

Protected Species

Long neck

Length: ~4 ft.

Wingspan: ~7 ft.

Weight: 20-30 lbs

Caution - White

Pelicans have black wing tips, but their wingspan is 8-9 ½ ft.

Snow Goose

Legally Hunted

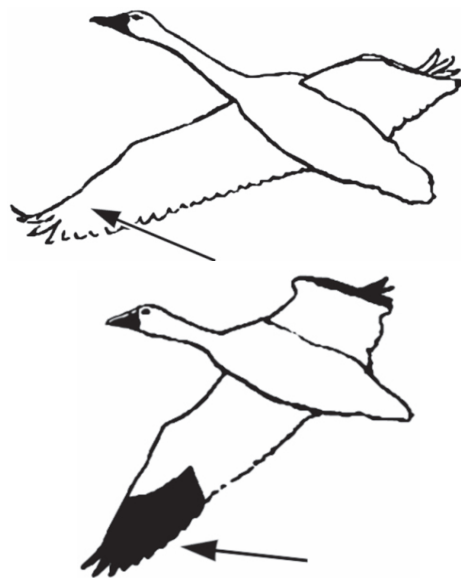
Short Neck

Length: ~1 ½ ft.

Wingspan: ~3 ½ ft.

Weight: 3-6 lbs

White plumage, but BLACK WING TIPS



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WILD GAME RECIPE

DUCK WITH ARUGULA/SPINACH PESTO

Recipe by: fieldandstream.com

INGREDIENTS

4-6 Duck Breasts
kosher salt
fresh ground black pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil

PESTO INGREDIENTS

1 cup toasted pine nuts
2 cups arugula/spinach blend, packed tightly
1 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 1/2 cups olive oil
Salt to taste

Heat oven to 350° F. Place the raw pine nuts on a baking sheet and bake until slightly toasted, about 4-5 minutes. Keep an eye on them so they don't burn. Remove from oven and let cool. In a food processor or blender, add toasted pine nuts, arugula/spinach blend, Parmesan cheese, garlic and a pinch of salt. Add oil and pulse to blend until semi-smooth. Adjust with more salt if needed. (This will yield roughly 2

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400° F. Coat duck breast with olive oil and season both sides with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper. Heat an oven proof skillet over medium heat and sear both sides of the duck breasts until golden brown. Remove from heat and set skillet in the oven. Remove from oven and let rest for 10 minutes before slicing. Serve sliced duck with arugula/spinach pesto. -Enjoy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.learn-to-hunt-il.com



Photo: Evan Laws

Definitions

Upland Game: Upland Birds (Bobwhite Quail, Hungarian Partridge, and Ring-necked Pheasant), Eastern Cottontail and Swamp Rabbit.

Small Game: for purposes of this digest are defined as Doves (migratory), Woodcock (migratory), Crows (migratory), and Squirrels.

Non-toxic shot: Any shot type that does not cause sickness and death when ingested by animals or humans. Shot types: www.fws.gov/story/2022-04/nontoxic-shot-regulations-hunting-waterfowl-and-coots-us

Lead Ammunition: A projectile containing one or more percent lead by weight.

UPLAND AND SMALL GAME SEASON DATES AND LIMITS

SPECIES	ZONE	DATES (inclusive)	HOURS	DAILY LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT	ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS
Doves (mourning and white-winged)	Statewide	1 Sept - 14 Nov 2026 and 26 Dec 2026 - 9 Jan 2027	Sunrise to Sunset	15	45	Protections for Eurasian-collared dove, ringed turtle dove, and pigeons have been removed, as they are non-native, invasive species. They can be harvested year-round with no limits, but during dove season, hunters may not remain in the field to continue taking these species after they have reached their daily bag limit for mourning/white-winged doves.
Pheasants (roosters only)	See zones map	7 Nov 2026 - 8 Jan 2027 (North Zone) 7 Nov 2026 - 15 Jan 2027 (South Zone)		2	6	Until the 3rd day of the hunting season, you may not possess more than twice the daily limit. Hen pheasants are illegal to harvest or possess, except as specified on controlled hunting areas.
Quail (Bobwhite)	See zones map	7 Nov 2026 - 8 Jan 2027 (North Zone) 7 Nov 2026 - 15 Jan 2027 (South Zone)		8	20	Until the 3rd day of the hunting season, you may not possess more than twice the daily limit.
Hungarian Partridge	See zones map	7 Nov 2026 - 8 Jan 2027 (North Zone) 7 Nov 2026 - 15 Jan 2027 (South Zone)		2	6	Until the 3rd day of the hunting season, you may not possess more than twice the daily limit.
Rabbits (cottontail and swamp)	Statewide	7 Nov 2026 - 15 Feb 2027		4	10	Until the 3rd day of the hunting season, you may not possess more than twice the daily limit.
Woodcock	Statewide	17 Oct - 30 Nov 2026		3	9	
Squirrels (gray and fox)	Statewide	1 Aug 2026 - 15 Feb 2027	½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset	5	10	Closed 20-22 Nov and 3-6 Dec 2026 in counties open for firearm deer hunting. Bag limits are for both species combined.
Crow	Statewide	28 Oct 2026 - 28 Feb 2027	½ hour before sunrise to sunset	No limit	No limit	

Hunting Credentials and Requirements

- To hunt upland and small game, residents and nonresidents will need a hunting license and a habitat stamp listed below. Individuals intending to hunt doves or woodcock will also need HIP Certification. Exemptions to these requirements are specified in table. For residency qualification, see Resident definition in Statewide Regulations.
- Individuals wanting to hunt upland birds and/or rabbits on specific IDNR sites may also need to apply for a Free Upland Game Permit.
- See upland and small game hunting map for associated upland bird hunting zones.

Types of Hunting Opportunities

There are different opportunities for hunting upland game on state, federal and private lands. The primary types of upland hunting include:

1. Open hunting on state owned property - some IDNR public hunting sites do not require a lottery permit to hunt upland and small game but may require a windshield card or signing in and out when you hunt. Check public hunting site information (hunter fact sheet) on huntillinois.org or call site for hunting opportunities and regulations in your area.
2. Upland Game Permit for IDNR public hunting sites - FREE permit issued by a lottery that takes place in August, see Upland Game Permit Process section hereafter.
3. Controlled Pheasant hunting on IDNR public hunting sites - application period and stand-by hunt info found in the 'controlled pheasant hunting' section
4. Open hunting on federal sites - see Public Hunting Site Information section for links to potential opportunities.
5. Open hunting on private lands - provided permission from landowner.

Non-toxic Shot and HIP Registration Requirement

Non-toxic Shot Requirement:

- Hunters should be aware that several IDNR sites now require use of non-toxic shot, such as steel.
- For ease of this conversion, note that steel shot #3 is ballistically similar to lead shot #5, and steel shot #6 is ballistically similar to lead shot #7.5 or #8.
- For comparison of shot size and effectiveness, see Tom Roster's Nontoxic Shot Lethality Table© (pg. 33).

HIP Registration:

- Free registration with HIP (National Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program) is required by law every year to **hunt mourning doves and woodcock** in Illinois. Crow hunting does not require HIP Certification. Get your HIP certification when purchasing your hunting or sportsman license or register for HIP by calling **1-866-716-6550** (record the transaction number on your license). Lifetime license holders also need to register with HIP on an annual basis. HIP is a nationwide program and you must register separately in every state where you hunt migratory birds. Cooperation and support from hunters make sound resource management possible.



Upland Bird Zones:

Zones for rooster pheasant, quail, Hungarian partridge are divided by U.S. Route 36 from the Indiana state line to Springfield, Illinois Route 29 from Springfield to Pekin, and Illinois Route 9 from Pekin to Dallas City, then due west to the Mississippi River.

Upland and Small Game Hunting Credentials (does not include vendor fees)

License/Permit/Stamps	Price		How to apply/purchase			Specifications
	Resident	Nonresident	Lottery	Online	Vendors	
Hunting License	Variable	Variable		X	X	See Statewide Regulations section for license types.
State Habitat Stamp	\$5.00	\$5.00		X	X	Required for all hunters 18+ years old. Not required to hunt hand-reared game birds on licensed game breeding and hunting preserve areas, as well as hand-reared pheasants on Department-controlled Pheasant Hunting Areas. Purchasers of a lifetime hunting license prior to 1993 and legally disabled veterans are exempt from this stamp.
Super Senior Habitat Stamp	Free	n/a		X	X	Must be 75 or older, and pay vendor fees.
HIP Certification	Free	Free		X	X	Before hunting Dove or Woodcock, all licensed hunters, including lifetime license holders, must register with HIP. See the HIP Registration section on pg. 30.
Upland Game Management Areas	Free	Free	X	X		
Controlled Pheasant Areas	Site Fee	Site Fee		X		See Upland Game Permit Process section for details. Fee may be charged at controlled hunting sites.
Dove Management Areas	Free	Free	X	X		

Upland and Small Game Hunting Regulations (Additional to Statewide Regulations)

Legal Firearm and Archery Equipment

- Upland birds, including migratory species, can be hunted with shotgun or bow and arrow (flu-flu arrows only; no broadheads) under regulations outlined in Statewide Regulations.
- Rabbits and squirrels can only be hunted with a gun or bow and arrow, but equipment regulations vary by site.
- Many IDNR sites require non-toxic shot, such as steel, but some do not. Check public hunting site information (hunter fact sheet) on huntillinois.org or call the site for site-specific regulations.

Clothing Requirements

- A solid blaze orange or solid blaze pink cap/hat and an upper outer garment displaying at least 400 square inches of solid blaze orange or solid blaze pink material must be worn while hunting pheasant, quail, partridge, woodcock or rabbits on IDNR lands or when accompanying youth on controlled pheasant or firearm deer hunts.
- On non-IDNR land, a solid blaze orange or solid blaze pink hat/cap must be worn to hunt upland birds (**except** doves) or rabbits with a firearm.
- Camouflage blaze orange or camouflage blaze pink material does not meet the solid orange or solid pink requirement.
- No blaze orange or blaze pink clothing is required for hunting doves, crows and squirrels, unless simultaneously hunting other types of upland birds or rabbits which requires blaze orange or blaze pink clothing noted above.

Additional Hunting Regulations

Below are several pertinent regulations when hunting upland birds in Illinois. Numerous other state and/or federal regulations apply to the taking, possessing, shipping, transporting and storing of upland and small game birds, especially migratory species. Hunters should also consult Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 20 www.ecfr.gov, and Wildlife Code (520 ILCS/5) or talk with a Conservation Police Officer for questions on specific regulations.

You can legally:

- use dogs to hunt upland and small game.
- use all types of non-toxic shot, such as steel and bismuth at all IDNR sites.
- use stationary or spinning-wing decoys.

You cannot legally:

- use lead shot at many IDNR sites, but some allow lead shot. Check public hunting site information (hunter fact sheet) on huntillinois.org or call the site for site-specific regulations.
- use a recording or electronic calling device to hunt migratory birds other than crows.
- possess or use any net or trap for harvesting upland birds.
- trap rabbits or squirrels.
- attempt to harvest any other squirrel species besides gray and fox.
- harvest doves or woodcock by the use or aid of bait or baiting of any kind. "Bait" means any material, whether liquid or solid, including food, salt, minerals and other products that can be ingested, placed or scattered in such a manner as to attract or lure upland birds. "Baiting" means the placement or scattering of bait to attract upland birds. For the purposes of harvesting upland birds, nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the manipulation, including mowing or cutting, of standing crops as a normal agricultural or soil stabilization practice, food plots, or normal agricultural practices, including planting, harvesting, and maintenance, such as cultivating, or the use of products designed for scent only and not capable of ingestion, solid or liquid, placed or scattered, in such a manner as to attract or lure upland birds. An area is considered as baited during the presence of and for **10 consecutive days** following the removal of the bait.
- harvest upland birds on the ground or perched, unless crippled and not capable of normal flight and otherwise irretrievable. However, doves, woodcock and crows may be harvested while not in flight.
- remove plumage of pheasants in the field or while being transported to one's home, taxidermist or food processor.
- transport woodcock unless the head or one fully-feathered wing is attached.

Dove and Woodcock Banding

If you harvest a leg-banded dove or woodcock, we encourage you to report information about when and where you harvested the bird. You will be emailed a Certificate of Appreciation with information about when and where the dove or woodcock was banded. Your cooperation on reporting band numbers gives biologists a wealth of information useful in managing the resource to provide hunters with optimal recreational opportunities while protecting dove populations. **Report banded birds at: www.reportband.gov**

Lead Poisoning in Game Birds

The hazards of lead poisoning in game birds consuming spent shotgun pellets have been well-publicized. Research has determined that doves and other birds also are at risk from acute lead poisoning due to consuming spent shotgun pellets in hunted fields, and that many more doves may be dying each year than waterfowl did prior to the lead shot ban. While non-toxic shot is not required on all hunting sites, **upland and small game hunters are encouraged to use steel or other non-toxic shot types to spare doves and other wildlife from potential lead poisoning.** No. 6 or 7 steel shot used with shotgun chokes one size more open than typically used for lead are very effective in harvesting doves. Improved cylinder or skeet is the best choke to use with steel shot for doves. For pheasant, No. 2 or 3 steel will perform like lead No. 4 or 5 lead shot. Even though non-toxic shot is a little more expensive than lead, the cost is justified to help conserve our valuable wildlife resources.

Upland and Dove Permit Process

- Apply for **FREE** site-specific upland game and dove hunting permits (see tables on the next page for drawing information and website link and sites offering hunting opportunities). Residents receive application preference.
- Upland permit holding hunters can bring a number of hunting partners depending on the site but hunting partners cannot hunt without the permit holder being present and actively hunting.
- Dove permit recipients cannot bring hunting partners, unless the partner drew under the original application or the partner is a mentor/ hunting partner on a youth permit hunt.
- Hunting dates depend on each site. Check the IDNR Upland and Small Game webpage or contact the site directly for details.
- Tables hereafter show permit application information and a list of IDNR sites with Upland Game or Dove Hunting Permits.



Photo: Elijah Baffa

Upland and Small Game Permit Applications

Application Period/Location	Methods	Hunt Period	Opens	Closes	Specifications
Upland Game Hunt Permits (Free)					
One Drawing Only	Internet	Varies by Site	1 Aug	31 Aug	These free hunts limit the number of hunters, via permit, pursuing wild birds and rabbits on habitat areas and select state sites. Upland Game Hunting is for rooster pheasant, quail, Hungarian partridge, and rabbits. Applicants can receive only one (1) permit per year. See dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/uplandgame for more information.
Site-specific Dove Permit Hunts (Free)					
First (Residents Only)	Internet	1-5 Sept	1 June	30 June	The permit holder only hunts on IDNR managed dove fields. Applicants can apply for up to five (5) different sites and can apply with a partner who will receive a permit for the same site and date. Nonresidents can apply for the second lottery and also receive over-the-counter permits. Applications accepted for first or second permit during over-the-counter period. Youth hunters must be accompanied by a supervising adult. See dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/uplandgame for more information.
Second	Internet	1-5 Sept	6 July	20 July	
Over-the-counter	Internet	1-5 Sept	27 July	25 Aug	
Youth (ages 10-17)	Internet	1 Sept	Same as above		
Controlled Pheasant Hunts (Fee Charged)					
First	Internet	Varies by Site	5 Aug	12 Aug	These application-based hunts allow a controlled number of hunters to pursue released, captive-raised pheasants on state and public/private partnership sites. dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/controlledpheasanthunting
Second	Internet	Varies by Site	12 Aug	19 Aug	
Third	Internet	Varies by Site	19 Aug	26 Aug	
Youth (ages 10-17)	Internet	Varies by Site	5 Aug	26 Aug	

Upland and Small Game Permit Sites

Check public hunting site info (hunter fact sheet) and regulations by visiting huntillinois.org

Site Name	County	Non-toxic shot required
Birkbeck PHA	DeWitt	No
Bradford PHA	Stark	Yes
Burning Star	Jackson	Yes
Chatsworth PHA	Livingston	Yes
Clifton PHA	Iroquois	No
Coffeen Lake SFWA	Montgomery	No
Dublin Highlands PHA	Stephenson	No
Edward R. Madigan SP	Logan	Yes
Finrock SHA	DeWitt	No
Freeman Mine SWA	Montgomery	No
Gifford PHA	Champaign	No
Green River SWA	Lee	Yes
Hallsville PHA	DeWitt	No
Herschel Workman PHA	Vermilion	No
Hindsboro PHA	Douglas	No
Ilo Dillin HA	Tazewell	Yes
Jim Edgar Panther Creek SFWA	Cass	Yes
Larry D. Closson HA	Douglas	No
Little Rock Creek HA	Carroll	No
Loda PHA	Iroquois	No
Mackinaw River SFWA	Tazewell	Yes
Manito PHA	Tazewell	No
Mautino SFWA	Bureau	Yes
Maxine Loy LWR	Marion	Yes
Maytown PHA	Lee	No
Milks Grove PHA	Iroquois	No
Nachusa Prairie c/o Franklin Creek SNA	Ogle	No
Paul C. Burrus HA	Coles	No
Perdueville PHA	Ford/Champaign	No
Pyramid SP	Perry	No
Ramsey Lake SP	Fayette	Yes
Sand Prairie PHA	Lee	No
Sand Ridge SF	Mason	Yes
Sangchris Lake SP	Christian/Sangamon	No
Saybrook PHA	McLean	No
Sibley PHA	Ford	No
Steward PHA	Lee	No
Victoria PHA	Knox	Yes
Whitefield PHA	Marshall	Yes
Willow Creek HA	Edgar	No

Dove Hunting Permit Sites

Site	County	Specifications
Big Bend SFWA	Whiteside	This site list pertains to the online lottery. Other sites may conduct special onsite draws for permits. For all sites listed to the left: Lottery permit required first 5 days of season See hunting site information (hunter fact sheet) on huntillinois.org for check-in times. Many of these sites require Non-Toxic Shot. Please check the current hunting site regulations at huntillinois.org before hunting.
Des Plaines SFWA	Will	
Edward R. Madigan SP	Logan	
Green River SWA	Lee	
Horseshoe Lake SP	Madison	
Iroquois County SWA	Iroquois	
Jim Edgar Panther Creek SFWA	Cass	
Johnson Sauk Trail SRA	Henry	
Kankakee River SP	Kankakee/Will	
Mackinaw River SFWA	Tazewell	
Matthiessen SP	LaSalle	
Sangchris SP	Christian	
Silver Springs SFWA	Kendall	
Snakeden Hollow SFWA	Knox	

Youth Dove Permit Hunting Sites (Supervisor Hunt)

Jim Edgar Panther Creek SFWA	Cass
Jubilee College SP	Peoria
Kankakee River SP	Kankakee/Will
Mackinaw River SP	Tazewell
Mt. Vernon Game Farm	Jefferson
Ramsey Lake State Park	Fayette
Sam Parr SFWA	Jasper
Sangchris Lake SP	Christian/Sangamon
Silver Springs SFWA	Kendall

Youth hunts at these sites occur the first weekend day of the season or Labor Day, whichever comes first, with a supervisor allowed to hunt.

See hunting site information (hunter fact sheet) on huntillinois.org for check-in times.
No standbys available

Non-Toxic Shot required at all sites

Youth Dove Permit Hunting Sites (No Supervisor Hunting)

Horseshoe Lake SP	Madison
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Same regulations as above, but only youth is permitted to hunt. Supervisor **may not** hunt.



Photo: Dallas Glazik



Photo: Learn to Hunt

Controlled Pheasant Hunting

- On controlled pheasant hunting areas, State Habitat Stamps are not required when hunting captive-reared pheasants. State Habitat Stamps are required when hunting quail, Hungarian partridge and woodcock on controlled pheasant hunting areas where these species can be harvested during the controlled pheasant hunting season.
- Information about controlled pheasant hunting permit reservations is available at: dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/controlledpheasanthunting
- Thanksgiving Day hunting hours at all controlled pheasant hunting sites are **9 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

Permits Required for Leased Lands & Commercial Clubs

See Wildlife Code (520 ILCS 5/3.27) for more information on permits.

Disabled Hunters

Disabled hunters with Standing Vehicle Permits may obtain Controlled Pheasant Hunting Permits for Eldon Hazlet, Des Plaines and Moraine View where special vehicles are available to assist with the hunt. Disabled hunters, as defined by Wildlife Code (520 ILCS 5/2.33), may apply to the IDNR Office of Law Enforcement (217-782-6431) for a Standing Vehicle Permit. Information about controlled pheasant hunting permit reservations for disabled hunters is available at: dnr.illinois.gov/doo

Upland and Small Game Hunting FAQs

How do I check on the status of my Free Upland Permit?

A: Check the status of your Free Upland Permit here: dnr.illinois.gov/OnlineHuntingApplication/UplandGame/SearchUplandPermit.aspx

Is there a second lottery for leftover permits for the Free Upland Game Permit sites?

A: No, there are rarely any permits leftover.

How do I check on the status of my Controlled Pheasant Hunting Permit?

A: You may check the status of your Controlled Pheasant hunting

permit here: dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/controlledpheasanthunting
Can I use an air rifle to take upland/small game?

A: An air rifle can only be used to take rabbits and squirrels.

What do I do if I was drawn for a permit?

A: Download and print your permit under the permit inquiry page. We no longer contact successful permit recipients via email.

Why aren't there as many pheasant, quail and rabbits as there used to be?

A: Changes in habitat are the primary reasons and includes a decrease in the quantity and quality of habitat. There is less suitable habitat because of changes in the landscape including fewer fencerows, pastures, hayfields, small grains (wheat, oats, etc). Second, the existing habitat quality has decreased because of introduced grasses like fescue and brome that are too thick for upland game.

On some of your Habitat Areas, there is nothing but 'weeds', why doesn't the IDNR plant more food plots?

A: Many annual weeds, including ragweeds, foxtail, and crabgrass, provide important habitat and food sources throughout the lifecycle of upland game birds. The management focus of our habitat areas is to produce and sustain grassland species by providing all their habitat and resource needs on site. Food plots are far less important for upland species, than the cover and food provided by native grasses, wildflowers, and annual weeds.

Is it true that hawks and coyotes are killing all the upland game?

A: While predators do eat some game birds and rabbits, this is not what is causing our long-term decline. If we had adequate habitat (quantity and quality), there would be more game on the landscape.

Why did the IDNR add more sites to the list requiring non-toxic shot?

A: Lead shot is highly toxic to most bird species when ingested. Birds do not seem to be able to distinguish small weed seeds from small shot pellets. We are making these changes to reduce the amount of lead being deposited (and subsequently ingested by wildlife) on hunting sites with a high volume of shooting and/or sensitive areas.

ILLINOIS
LEARN to HUNT

The Learn to Hunt program provides FREE educational workshops aimed at teaching ADULT participants how to hunt deer, turkey, small game, upland game, waterfowl and furbearers.

SIGN UP TO LEARN

Hunting ethics and conservation - Equipment and safety
Licenses and laws - Game ecology - Target shooting
Hunting techniques - Butchering and processing wild game

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Facebook: www.facebook.com/IllinoisLearnToHunt
Website: www.learntohuntill.com

The graphic features a large red 'I' on the left, a silhouette of a turkey in the center, and a silhouette of a deer on the right, all set against a background of green grass and a yellow sky with a sun and clouds.

Photo: Kurt Jagielski

FURBEARER TRAPPING SEASON DATES AND LIMITS

SPECIES	ZONE	DATES	LIMIT	ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS
Raccoon	Statewide	10 Nov 2026 - 15 Feb 2027	None	
Opossum				
Striped Skunk				
Weasel (Least and Long-tailed)				
Mink				
Muskrat				
Red Fox*				*Gray fox trapping is closed.
Coyote				
Badger	North	10 Nov 2026 - 15 Feb 2027	2 per trapper per season	
	South		1 per trapper per season	
Bobcat	See Bobcat Zone map		One by permit only	Must possess a Bobcat Hunting and Trapping Permit BEFORE attempting to harvest a bobcat. Must purchase Bobcat Registration Permit within 48 hours of taking a bobcat. Taking a bobcat in the closed zone is prohibited.
Beaver	Statewide	10 Nov 2026 - 31 Mar 2027	None	
River Otter	Statewide	10 Nov 2026 - 31 Mar 2027	5 per trapper per season	Must purchase River Otter Registration Permit within 48 hours of taking each river otter.
Woodchuck (Groundhog)	Statewide	1 Jun - 30 Sept 2026	None	

FURBEARER HUNTING SEASON DATES AND LIMITS

SPECIES	DATES	HOURS	ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS
Raccoon	10 Nov 2026 - 15 Feb 2027 Closed during first and second firearm deer seasons in counties open to firearm deer hunting.	Open 24 hours and season begins ½ hour before sunrise on opening day and closes ½ hour after sunset on closing day except; during archery deer season, archery hunting hours for raccoon, opossum, red fox, coyote, and striped skunk will be ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.	There is no limit on red fox, coyote, opossum, raccoon, striped skunk and woodchuck. *Gray fox hunting is closed. Must possess a Bobcat Hunting and Trapping Permit BEFORE attempting to harvest a bobcat. Limit one bobcat per permit. Must purchase Bobcat Registration Permit within 48 hours of harvesting a bobcat. Taking a bobcat in the closed zone is prohibited. Hunters with unfilled firearm deer permits may harvest coyotes during firearm deer seasons with weapons legal for deer hunting ½ before sunrise to ½ after sunset.
Opossum			
Red Fox*			
Bobcat			
Woodchuck	1 Jun 2026 - 31 Mar 2027 Closed during first and second firearm deer seasons in counties open to firearm deer hunting.	½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset	
Coyote	Year round. Closed during the first and second firearm deer seasons in counties open to firearm deer hunting.	½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset. No time restriction 10 Nov 2026 - 15 Mar 2027	
Striped Skunk			

GRAY FOX SEASON CLOSED

The gray fox hunting and trapping seasons are closed. The gray fox population in Illinois and much of the Midwest has been in decline for some time. Research indicates that disease (e.g. canine distemper) and competition/predation from other canids (e.g. coyotes) are the most likely causes. There are no data to suggest that hunting and trapping are the reason for the decline, but the Department is closing the season to prevent any additive mortality or local impacts. Annual surveys will continue and if the population rebounds, the season can be re-opened by administrative rule. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in helping us protect this charismatic fox.



Photo: Michael Jeffords

Furbearer Trapping and Hunting Credentials (does not include vendor fees)

License/Permit/Stamps	Price		How to apply for or purchase			Specifications
	Resident	Nonresident	Lottery	Online	Vendors	
Trapping	Variable			X	X	First-time trappers born on or after Jan. 1, 1998 are required to complete a trapper education course before purchasing a license. 3-year license option available.
Youth Hunting and Trapping	\$7.00			X	X	Any hunter/trapper under 18 years of age may purchase this license. Hunters/trappers with this license must be supervised by an adult who is 21 years of age or older and has the appropriate Illinois hunting or trapping license. The youth shall not hunt or trap or carry a hunting device, unless the youth is accompanied by and under close personal supervision of that adult. See Wildlife Code (520 ILCS 5/3.1-9) for supervisory requirement exemptions.
Trapping (with state reciprocity)		\$175.00		X	X	Reciprocity means your state of residence allows Illinois residents to trap.
Trapping (without state reciprocity)		\$250.00		X	X	See reciprocity specification above.
Hunting License	Variable	Variable		X	X	Variable for veterans, seniors, etc. See Statewide Regulations section for license types.
State Habitat Stamp	\$5.00	\$5.00		X	X	
Species-specific Permits						
River Otter Registration Permit	\$5.00	\$5.00		X	X	Purchase within 48 hours after river otter harvest.
Bobcat Hunting & Trapping Lottery Application	\$5.00	\$5.00	X	X		Lottery applications accepted Sept 1-30. See lottery section for details.
Bobcat Registration Permit	\$5.00	\$5.00		X		Purchase within 48 hours after bobcat harvest.



Furbearer Zones:

Trapping (Badger): Divided by U.S. Route 36.

General Furbearer Regulations (Additional to Statewide Regulations)

Definitions

Furbearing Mammals: badger, beaver, bobcat, coyote, gray fox*, mink, muskrat, opossum, raccoon, red fox, river otter, striped skunk and weasel. *Gray fox hunting and trapping seasons are closed. See pg. 43 for more information.

Trap: To capture, or attempt to capture, by setting or placing a foothold trap, cushion-hold trap, body-gripping trap, cage or box trap, snare live-trap or other similar device permitted by Wildlife Code (520 ILCS/5) to capture, hold or kill any protected wildlife.

Water Set: Any trap or similar device that is placed or set in contact with flowing or impounded water.

Land Set: Any trap or similar device not placed or set in contact with flowing or impounded water.

Green Hide: Any hide or pelt which has not been tanned.

Trapping and Hunting Credentials/Requirements

- To trap furbearers, residents and nonresidents will need an appropriate trapping license and habitat stamp. Exemptions to these requirements are specified in the Furbearer Trapping and Hunting Credentials table. For residency qualification, see Resident definition in the Statewide Regulations section.
- To hunt furbearers, residents and nonresidents will need an applicable hunting license and state habitat stamp, as listed in the Statewide Regulations section.

Clothing Requirement

Trappers in the field during the firearm deer seasons must wear a cap and 400 square inches of solid blaze orange or solid blaze pink outer clothing.

Tree Climbing or Cutting Devices

You cannot legally use or possess any tree climbing or tree cutting device (i.e., saw or axe) when hunting furbearing mammals. Certain **exceptions** apply to coyote hunting; see "Coyote Hunting" section.

Written Authorization to Handle Traps of Another Person

You cannot legally remove mammals from, move, or disturb in any manner, traps owned by another person without written authorization of the owner to do so.



Bobcat Zones:

It is prohibited to take a bobcat in an area bounded by Interstate 39/Route 51 on the west side and U.S. Route 36 on the southside. Bobcat may be harvested with a valid permit in the remainder of the state.

Possession of Furbearers and Parts

Road-kill: Furbearing mammals that are found dead or unintentionally killed by a vehicle along a roadway may only be salvaged if the season for that species is open and you possess all appropriate licenses, stamps and permits required to salvage that species. (see credentials table) **Note:** Bobcat may only be salvaged by permit holders during the open season. Salvage of weasel, mink, muskrat, beaver, badger and river otter requires a trapping license and state habitat stamp if required; salvage of all other species requires a hunting or trapping license and state habitat stamp if required. Salvaged badger, bobcat and river otter become part of your harvest limit. River otter and bobcat are subject to registration and tagging requirements.

Green Hides: Green hides may be possessed year-round with a valid hunting or trapping license.

Live: Contact IDNR for more specific regulations regarding possession of live furbearing animals under Wildlife Code (520 ILCS 5/3.25).

Breeding: Persons within Illinois who hold, possess or engage in the breeding or raising of live furbearing mammals protected by Wildlife Code (520 ILCS/5) must have a valid Furbearing Mammal Breeder Permit. No permits will be issued for the breeding or raising of striped skunks or coyotes. Furbearers cannot be taken from the wild and kept or bred with this permit.

Furbearing mammal breeders shall keep a record for two years from the date of acquisition, sale or other disposition of each live furbearing mammal or its green hide so raised or propagated. Contact IDNR for more specific regulations regarding possession of live furbearing animals under Wildlife Code (520 ILCS 5/3.25).

Rabbits and Squirrels Cannot Be Trapped

It is only legal to trap furbearing mammals and woodchucks. No other game mammals or birds may be trapped.

Furbearer Trapping and Reporting Requirements

The Department conducts an annual survey of trappers to estimate the number of furbearing mammals trapped and sold during the regular trapping season. Approximately 20% of trappers are surveyed annually and if you receive a survey form, you are highly encouraged to complete and return it. For survey results visit: www.human-dimensions.inhs.illinois.edu/trapper/

Closed Trapping Season

You cannot legally:

- set or place any trap in the field, set or unset, during the closed trapping season. Setting out stakes or floats before the season opens, if no traps are attached to them, is permissible.

Illegal Traps

You cannot legally:

- use any trap with saw-toothed, spiked or toothed jaws.
- use or possess a deadfall, net or pit trap to take any protected wildlife.
- use any colony traps or cage, box or stove-pipe trap designed to harvest more than one mammal at a single setting. Single catch cage or box traps are legal.

Trap Tagging and Checking Requirements

You cannot legally:

- fail to mark or tag with metal tags or inscribe in lettering the name and address of the owner or customer identification number issued by the Department of Natural Resources, all traps used in the taking of furbearing mammals.
- fail to visit and remove all animals from traps at least once each calendar day.

Trap Size Restrictions

You cannot legally:

- on land use a foothold trap that has a jaw spread larger than 6 ½ inches or a body-gripping trap that has a jaw spread larger than 7 inches on a side, if square, and 8 inches, if round.
- in water use a foothold trap that has a jaw spread larger than 7 ½ inches or a body-gripping trap that has a jaw spread larger than 10 inches on a side, if square, and 12 inches, if round.
- trap beaver or river otter with a foothold trap or one of similar construction having a jaw spread of less than 5 ½ inches, **except** that this restriction shall not apply during the open season for trapping raccoons.
- trap beaver or river otter with a body-gripping trap or one of similar construction having a jaw spread of less than 7 inches or more than 10 inches on a side, if square, and 12 inches, if round, **except** that these restrictions shall not apply during the open season for trapping raccoons.

Note: diameter of traps is measured from the inside edges of the jaws.

Snares

You cannot legally:

- place, set, use or maintain a snare unless at least half of the loop is underwater at all times. When set, the snare loop must be 15 inches or less in diameter. Snares must be constructed of cable that is at least 5/64 inch, but no more than 1/8 inch in diameter, and must be equipped with a mechanical lock, anchor swivel and stop device that prevents the snare loop from closing to less than 2 ½ inches in diameter.
- use or possess cable or wire snares constructed of stainless steel metal.

Dens, Nest and Feed Beds

You cannot legally:

- molest or destroy any feed bed (a mound, pile or mat of branches, cattails or other vegetation gathered and piled by muskrats or beaver), nest, den, house or other animal cavity (**except** that this shall not apply to individuals who are removing beaver lodges/dams pursuant to a Nuisance Animal Removal Permit or Nuisance Wildlife Control Operator's Permit as provided by administrative rule or statute).
- set traps closer than 10 feet from any hole or den which may be occupied by a game mammal or furbearing mammal **except** that this restriction does not apply to water sets. Traps may be legally set within 10 feet of dens in water, but such sets are unlawful on land.

Beaver, Badger, River Otter, Weasel, Mink, and Muskrat (Trapping Only)

You cannot legally harvest beaver, badger, river otter, weasel, mink or muskrat **except** by trapping. However, beaver, river otter, weasel, mink, and muskrat can be shot with a firearm, pistol, or airgun of a caliber not larger than a .22 long rifle to remove the animal from the trap.

Bobcat Hunting and Trapping

Hunters and trappers must possess a Bobcat Hunting and Trapping Permit BEFORE taking or attempting to harvest a bobcat. Applications will be available online only at www.exploremoreil.com during **1-30 Sept**. Applicants must submit a \$5 non-refundable fee. Available permits will be allocated during a lottery and mailed to successful applicants.

- If you receive a Bobcat Hunting and Trapping Permit, you may harvest one bobcat by hunting, trapping or salvaging a road-kill during open seasons. Examples of legal methods of hunting include archery, predator calling, stalking, and treeing with dogs. The hunting season for bobcat is closed during firearm deer seasons.
- Taking a bobcat in the closed zone is prohibited.
- If you harvest a bobcat, you must purchase a Bobcat Registration Permit at www.exploremoreil.com within 48 hours (Code 306 under "Permits"). The cost of the permit is \$5 plus a vendor's fee. The Department will mail you a federal CITES tag within 2-3 weeks.
- NOTE: Bobcat Registration Permits are not available at license vendors.
- Unsealed CITES tags cannot be transferred to another person.
- A federal CITES tag must be permanently affixed to each bobcat pelt before it is exported from the United States or transferred to a fur buyer, taxidermist, fur tanner, or garment manufacturer. If you plan to have a bobcat mounted, we recommend making a slit between the inner lip and eye hole then placing a piece of wood or plastic in the slit before freezing the bobcat. This will make it easier to insert the federal tag when you receive it.
- Applicants who did not receive a permit the previous year will have preference by being part of the initial random drawing. If any additional permits remain to be allocated after that drawing, a second drawing will take place for all of the individuals who received a permit the previous year.

River Otter Harvest and Possession

- No more than five river otters may be harvested during the season. Possession limit is twice the season limit. Possession limits do not apply to fur buyers, tanners, manufacturers or taxidermists nor do they apply to tanned pelts, mounted specimens or manufactured products.
- Trapping is the only legal method of harvest. Licensed trappers may salvage river otter found dead along a roadway during the open season; such animals become part of the person's harvest limit and are subject to permit and tagging requirements.
- Trappers must purchase a River Otter Registration Permit **within 48 hours after harvesting a river otter**. The cost of a permit is \$5 plus a vendor's fee. Permits are available anywhere you can purchase a hunting or trapping license, including www.exploremoreil.com. You will be mailed an official CITES pelt tag within 2-3 weeks after purchasing a permit. Otter registration permits must be purchased by the individual who captured the otter and cannot be transferred to another person. **Note:** Do not purchase a permit before you harvest an otter.
- An official CITES tag must be permanently affixed to the green hide of each otter (including a whole, unskinned carcass) before it is exported outside the United States or transferred to a fur buyer, fur tanner, taxidermist or manufacturer (a manufacturer is an individual who dresses and fabricates green hides into fur garments or products). Unsealed CITES tags cannot be transferred to another person.

Exposed Bait

You cannot legally:

- place, set or maintain any foothold trap within 30 feet of bait placed in such a manner or position that is not completely covered and concealed from sight, **except** that this shall not apply to water sets.
- bait means any bait composed of mammal, bird or fish flesh, fur, hide, entrails or feathers. Foothold traps set on land may not be placed around exposed bait, such as animal carcasses.

Permission from Landowner

You cannot legally:

- trap furbearers on another person's property without his or her permission. This includes waters flowing over and/or standing on the land of another person.

Damaging Property While Trapping

You cannot legally:

- destroy or damage another person's property while trapping on his or her land.

Trapping Near Dwellings

You cannot legally:

- trap within 100 yards of an inhabited dwelling without first obtaining permission from the owner or tenant.

Furbearer Running Season

Furbearers may be pursued or chased with dogs, but not killed, during the running season. The running season for coyote, red fox, opossum, raccoon and striped skunk is open year-round. **Exception: You cannot legally** pursue any furbearer with a dog or dogs between the hours of sunset and sunrise during the **10-day period** preceding the opening date of the raccoon hunting season and the **10-day period** following the closing date of the raccoon hunting season. **Note:** Competitive hunts licensed by U.K.C., N.K.C., P.K.C. or A.K.C./A.C.H.A. may be held during the **10-day closed periods** under authority of a IDNR Field Trial Permit.

When training dogs from sunset to sunrise, no person in, along with or accompanying the dog training party shall be in possession of a firearm or live ammunition, **except** pistols capable of firing only blank cartridges **except** as provided in the Firearm Concealed Carry Act.

Nonresidents are prohibited from hunting furbearers or running their dogs in Illinois during any time when Illinois residents would not be allowed to hunt furbearers or run dogs in the nonresident's state.

You cannot legally:

- possess any firearm or ammunition other than a pistol loaded with blank cartridges while training dogs during the time when hunting seasons are closed **except** on an authorized field trial or dog training area **except** as provided in the Firearm Concealed Carry Act.



Photo: Matt Williams

Coyote Hunting

- Coyotes can be hunted 24 hours a day from **10 November** through midnight on **15 March**.
- During the rest of the year, hunting hours for coyotes are 1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset. Closed during firearm deer seasons - see restrictions below.
- Hunters need a hunting license and habitat stamp unless exempt.
- Coyotes may be hunted on private property using dogs, archery devices, any type and caliber of handgun, any type of legal rifle including semi-automatic rifles, and shotguns using any type of shell. During firearm deer seasons, coyotes may be harvested only by hunters with valid, unfilled deer permits using the same types of firearms that are allowed for deer. When hunting with a shotgun, make sure that the magazine has been fitted with a plug which makes the shotgun incapable of firing more than three consecutive shots.
- Electronic calling devices are legal for coyote hunting.
- It is legal to bait coyotes for hunting as long as any wild game used was legally harvested.
- Illinois does not restrict the type of sights or scopes used for coyote hunting (including laser sights and night vision scopes).
- Lights with any color of lens can be used while hunting coyotes as long as the lights are not used from or connected to any vehicle or conveyance (including ATVs, unmanned aircraft, and horses).
- It is illegal for a coyote hunter to wantonly allow a dog to hunt on another person's land without first obtaining permission of the landowner or tenant. If a hunting dog crosses onto property in which the coyote hunter has no permission to hunt, the hunter has no legal right to follow the dog. Illinois Animal Control Laws or other local animal control ordinances could apply to dogs running at large.
- Coyote hunters are required to keep their guns unloaded and in a case while in a vehicle or on a conveyance (including but not limited to ATVs and horseback) unless exempt by special IDNR permit.
- Guns must remain unloaded until the hunter is clear of the road and right-of-way alongside the road.
- Deer hunters with an unfilled firearm deer permit may hunt coyotes during the first and second firearm deer seasons, but must wear a cap and 400 square inches of solid blaze orange or solid blaze pink outer clothing when hunting.
- Before coyote hunting at a public hunting site, please check huntillinois.org to see if it is allowed at the site, for updated regulations and contact information. Check with the site office if more information regarding site specific regulations is needed.
- It is legal to hunt coyotes while using or possessing a tree climbing device. However, coyotes may not be hunted utilizing these devices during open season for deer **except** by properly licensed deer hunters.

Don't Shoot a Wolf

Coyote	Wolf
Light gray/brown 1.5 feet tall, 4 feet long Narrow snout Tall pointed ears 20-50 pounds Carries tail down while walking	Light gray to black 2.5 feet tall, 5-6 feet long Broad snout Round ears 80-120 pounds Carries tail elevated while walking

Coyotes are very common in Illinois and often get mistaken for gray wolves. Gray wolves rarely visit Illinois and are currently listed as federally and state endangered. They may not be killed or harassed unless they pose an immediate threat to one's life. Help us teach others the physical differences between a coyote and wolf.

Bobcat Hunting and Trapping

BOBCAT HUNTING/TRAPPING APPLICATIONS

SUCCESSFUL BOBCAT HUNTERS/TRAPPERS

2026 will be the 11th year for the bobcat hunting and trapping season in Illinois! The season opened in 2016 with 500 permits issued and interest has continued to grow. In 2025, there were over 9,700 applications for 2,000 permits. Annual surveys indicate that the bobcat population is still healthy and growing. The interest in this opportunity makes it hard to draw a permit, but success rates for those who are fortunate enough to draw a permit are high and average 32%. Figure 1 shows the zip code of all applicants and Figure 2 shows the zip code of all successful hunters and trappers in 2025-26. For more information on bobcat hunting and trapping, visit huntillinois.org/bobcat/.

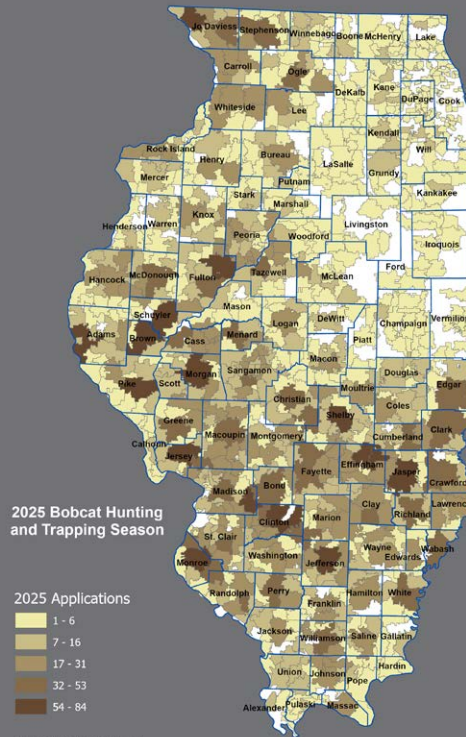


Figure 1: Applications for the 2025-26 bobcat hunting and trapping season by zipcode of applicants.

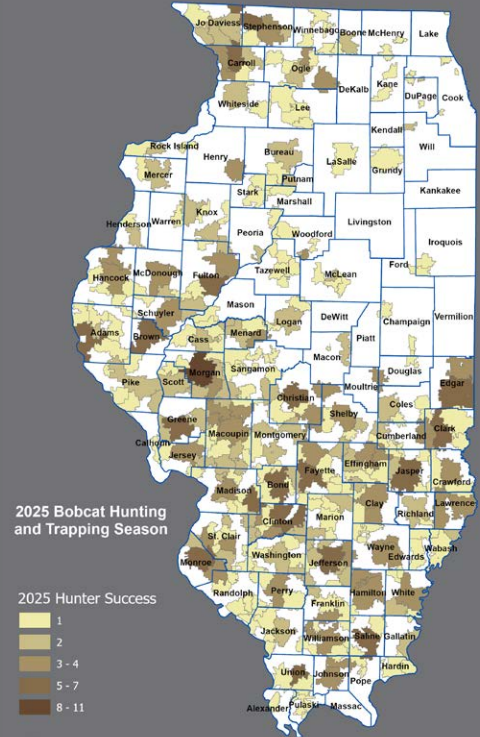


Figure 2: The zipcode of successful bobcat hunters and trappers in the 2025-26 season.



Dealing with Nuisance Wildlife?

There are two non-lethal options if control methods have failed and the animal must be removed:

1 Hire a Nuisance Wildlife Control Operator (NWCO)

2 Request a Nuisance Animal Removal Permit (NARP) & remove the animal yourself

You can request a permit from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) at:

wildlifeillinois.org/narp

After completing the online NARP application, some permits will be automatically issued. Others will require review by the local IDNR Wildlife Biologist before a permit is issued.

Bat photo by Andrew King, USFWS. Red fox photo by Karen Laubenstein, USFWS.

Deer Accidentally Killed/Injured by Motor Vehicles and Methods Other Than Lawful Hunting

To report and claim road-killed deer online, visit: dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/deer/claim-a-road-kill

There is no limit to the number of deer that may be possessed under these circumstances. No part of a deer so killed can be bartered or sold. **Except** for law enforcement officers in the performance of their duties it is illegal to kill a deer:

- crippled by a collision with a motor vehicle.
- crippled by methods other than lawful hunting unless permission has been obtained from a Conservation Police Officer (see phone numbers on pg. 1).

Motorists are reminded to report deer-related traffic accidents to appropriate law enforcement agencies when such reporting is required.

Collision with a motor vehicle

An Illinois resident/driver of a motor vehicle involved in a vehicle-deer collision has priority in legally possessing white-tailed deer killed/injured as a result of a collision with a motor vehicle. If the driver does not take possession of the deer before leaving the collision scene, any citizen of Illinois who is not delinquent in child support may possess and transport the deer. Nonresidents may not claim a road-killed deer. Individuals claiming such a deer must report the possession within 24 hours at dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/deer/claim-a-road-kill

Killed/injured by methods other than lawful hunting or a vehicle/deer accident

Any individual finding a dead or crippled deer, other than those killed/injured in a vehicle/deer collision or legally harvested by hunting methods, may not transport said deer parts until permission is obtained from a Conservation Police Officer. Permission will be granted if it is determined that the person requesting possession did not illegally kill or injure the deer. When retained, the head/antler and hide shall be properly tagged with an irremovable tag obtained from a Conservation Police Officer. The salvage tag shall remain attached to the deer until its parts are consumed or no longer possessed by any person.

Nuisance Wildlife Issues

As much as we all love wildlife, there are times when some individual animals can cause a threat to human health and safety or cause property damage. There are things you can do to try and resolve the issues legally and responsibly:

1. Wildlife Illinois website wildlifeillinois.org provides information on ways to mitigate conflict.
2. If the suggestions on Wildlife Illinois are tried and not effective, you may speak with a District Wildlife Biologist or Conservation Police Officer to see if there are other ways to reduce the conflict or apply for a Nuisance Animal Removal Permit at wildlifeillinois.org/narp/.
3. The Wildlife Illinois website has a list of Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators that specialize in resolving conflict and may be hired to help resolve wildlife issues (these are private businesses that are permitted by the Department and will charge for their services).

Do Not Spread Exotic Invasive Plants

Wildlife habitat throughout Illinois is being degraded and destroyed by invasive plants such as Russian olive, multiflora rose, bush honeysuckle and garlic mustard. Native vegetation supports a much greater variety of wildlife than a habitat of exotic plants. Invasive plants reduce the number and variety of forest wildlife by reducing the availability of food and suitable cover. For instance, bush honeysuckle will shade out oak tree seedlings and, over time, reduce the oak component of a forest. Fewer acorn-producing trees mean lower food availability and reduced habitat quality for white-tailed deer, squirrel, and turkey. Invasive plants in wetland areas and along lake shores, such as common reed, have a negative effect on a host of water birds. If invasive plants win, native plants and wildlife lose, and so do the people who enjoy them.

Here is what you can do to help:

1. Clean your boots and gear after each hunting trip to ensure you are not spreading invasive seeds to new locations.
2. Do not plant invasive plants for wildlife. Native species provide much better food and cover for native wildlife.
3. Do not use exotic plants for cover on blinds. This can spread them to new areas.
4. Learn to identify invasive plants and report any new sightings to local land managers.

Feral Swine in Illinois

Feral swine (wild pigs) are escaped animals from free range livestock operations, dumped pets and/or illegal releases. Feral swine negatively impact wildlife and wildlife habitat. These animals have a high reproductive potential and populations must be reduced by 70 percent each year simply to keep them from expanding.

The Department regulates the transport, release, and harvest of feral swine. Specifically:

- Hunters may only shoot feral swine during the firearm, muzzleloader, late winter, and CWD deer seasons if the hunter possesses a valid firearm, muzzleloader, late winter, or CWD deer permit. It is illegal to harvest feral swine outside of those dates, unless the individual has been issued a Nuisance Wildlife Permit from a District Wildlife Biologist. Pigs are considered feral swine if they are unrestrained and have adapted to living in a wild or free-roaming environment. Hunters who mistakenly or purposely shoot a domestic pig or someone's pet may be subject to civil and/or criminal charges.
- Hunter-killed feral swine must be reported to the Department by contacting the Wildlife Disease and Invasive Animals Program Manager at (773) 636-0819. Hunters may keep the legally harvested feral swine.
- It is illegal to provide outfitting or guide services for feral swine hunting in Illinois.
- It is illegal to hunt feral swine in an enclosure.
- It is illegal to release, transport, and/or possess feral swine.

Successful deer and turkey hunters who check in their harvest will be asked to report the number of feral swine they had observed during the hunting season in the county in which they were successful. These data will assist wildlife biologists in determining where feral swine are located and allow for removal of these animals before extensive agricultural and environmental damage occurs. The Department and the United States Department of Agriculture are working to eliminate feral swine populations in Illinois. Report feral swine sightings to:

wildlifeillinois.org/report-sightings/report-feral-swine-sightings/

Rare Visitors: Large Carnivores

Black bears, gray wolves, and mountain lions (also known as cougars and pumas) were once common across the Midwest. Today, there are no known breeding populations of these large carnivores in Illinois, though individual animals occasionally move through the state. A change in legal status following an amendment to Wildlife Code (520 ILCS 5/2.2b) permits the taking of black bears, gray wolves, and mountain lions only under certain circumstances, and in turn provides IDNR the authority to manage these animals and associated conflicts in the state. Gray wolves are currently listed as Endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act, and also by the State of Illinois. As such, it is illegal for any person to take gray wolves unless in defense of their own life or the lives of others per Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 17.2. "Take" is defined in the Statewide Regulations section of this Digest. For more information, visit wildlifeillinois.org/rare-visitors-large-carnivores/.

Nutria in Illinois

Nutria are semi-aquatic mammals native to South America that have been reported sporadically from various locations across southern Illinois since the early 2000s. In the spring of 2022, two nutria were caught by a beaver trapper in southern Pope County. The Department is interested in nutria sightings in southern Illinois. If you trap, photograph or find a dead nutria, please report your sightings to wildlifeillinois.org/report-sightings/report-nutria-sightings/. Reports should be limited to those that include a carcass or photos of reasonable quality.

Birds Doing Damage

In Illinois, almost all birds and their nests with eggs, including Canada geese, are protected by the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Wildlife Code (520 ILCS/5). If birds are causing damage, non-lethal methods are typically encouraged first. If those methods do not abate the damage, a removal permit may be issued at the discretion of an IDNR wildlife biologist, in conjunction with federal permits coordinated by USDA APHIS-Wildlife Services and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Pigeons, house sparrows and European starlings are not protected in Illinois and may be removed without a permit. Please consult wildlifeillinois.org for further information including permit requirements regarding human-wildlife conflict.

Public Hunting Sites

Hunting regulations on the public hunting sites listed on the following pages are often more restrictive than the statewide regulations. Check public hunting site information (hunter fact sheet) on huntillinois.org or from the site. Hunting may be allowed for species not listed in the following tables. Consult huntillinois.org or contact the site directly for information on opportunities to hunt additional species. Some site-specific regulations that apply to all state sites are as follows:

General IDNR Site Regulations

You cannot legally:

- possess any alcoholic beverage or illegal drug or be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or intoxicating compounds while in any hunting/trapping area for the purpose of hunting or trapping.
- hunt or trap on any site with a manned check station without first declaring game killed on a previous hunt and in possession either on the hunter's person or in his vehicle.
- construct or use any tree stand using nails, screws or any device which pierces or cuts the bark of the tree on which it is installed.
- hunt or trap in a restricted area.
- occupy in any manner designated hunting sites during the permit dove hunting season and controlled pheasant hunting season at sites holding such seasons, or during any hunting season where such restrictions are so posted at the site, when authorized hunting is in progress, unless you are authorized to do so.
- enter a refuge, restricted area or waterfowl rest area unless authorized by the Department.
- hunt or trap on any Department owned or managed land that is not designated area pursuant to applicable species rules (17 Ill. Adm. Code 530, 550, 570, 590, 650, 660, 670, 680, 690, 710, 715, 720, 730, and 740).
- buy, sell or commercialize hunting or trapping rights, directly or indirectly, **except** that this does not apply to Department of Natural Resources hunting or trapping fees or to the operation of controlled pheasant hunting on Department lands pursuant to a written concession agreement.
- hunt or trap without a valid permit where permits are required.
- hunt with any weapon **except** shotgun or vertical bow and arrow or crossbow unless otherwise specified.

- track deer with dogs on any Department owned or managed site during hours when deer hunting is being conducted on the site.
- use or occupy a ground blind during any firearm deer season, unless at least 400 square inches of solid, vivid blaze orange or blaze pink material is securely attached to the uppermost portion of the blind and a substantial amount of orange or pink is visible for 360 degrees.

Non-Hunting or Non-Trapping Partners

Non-hunting or non-trapping partners may accompany hunters and trappers on their hunting or trapping trips. Partners must be unarmed and remain with the hunter or trapper throughout the trip. On sites where special permits are required, each permit holder or party is limited to one non-hunting or non-trapping partner per trip. On sites with waterfowl blinds, non-hunters count towards the blind's maximum occupancy.

Public Hunting Site Windshield Cards

Free Public Hunting Site Windshield Cards are required to hunt and/or trap at many Illinois Public Hunting Sites. Cards are available at: dnr2.illinois.gov/windshieldcard/. Print a card for each site you intend to hunt and/or trap and place on the dashboard of your vehicle when hunting or trapping the site. Each person hunting or trapping the site will need to display a windshield card. For information or assistance, contact the site where you intend to hunt and/or trap. For most species, hunters are required to return to the website prior to **Feb. 15** each year to record harvest information.

Additional Hunting Access Opportunities

- Shawnee National Forest: See the following USDA Forest Service website for hunting and trapping regulations: www.fs.usda.gov/r09/shawnee/recreation/opportunities
- US Army Corps of Engineers Lands: www.mvs.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/
- Numerous counties and local municipalities offer hunting access that are not listed in this digest, check for potential access in your area.
- US Fish and Wildlife Service has numerous opportunities as well.

Season Dates - Rule of Thumb

Coyote & Striped Skunk	Open year-round, except closed during firearm deer seasons.
Crow	Oct. 28 - Feb. 28.
Deer Archery	Oct. 1 through the 1st Sunday after Jan. 13 (closed during firearm deer season except in Cook, DuPage, Lake, and Kane counties).
Deer Firearm	The Friday, Saturday and Sunday immediately before Thanksgiving and the 1st four-day weekend (Thursday-Sunday) after Thanksgiving.
Deer Late Winter Antlerless/Special CWD	The 1st Thursday-Sunday after Dec. 25; and the 1st Friday-Sunday after Jan. 11.
Deer Muzzleloader	The 3rd three-day weekend (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) following Thanksgiving. Also allowed during the 2nd firearm deer season.
Deer Youth Firearm	The Saturday, Sunday, and Monday that includes the 2nd Monday of October.
Dove	90-day season. Split season opens Sept. 1 and runs approximately 75 days; reopens the day after Christmas and runs the remainder of the 90 days.
Furbearer Hunting	Nov. 10 - Feb. 15 for raccoon, opossum, red fox and bobcat (with permit), except closed during firearm deer seasons.
Furbearer Trapping	Nov. 10 - Feb. 15 for everything except river otter, beaver (Nov. 10 - Mar. 31) and woodchuck (June 1 - Sept. 30). Must wear blaze orange/pink during firearm deer seasons.
Pheasant, Quail, and Partridge	North zone - 1st Saturday in November through Jan. 8. South zone - 1st Saturday in November through Jan. 15.
Rabbit	1st Saturday in November through Feb. 15.
Rail	Opens with teal season and runs for 70 days.
Snipe	Opens with teal season and runs for 107 days.
Squirrel	Aug. 1 - Feb. 15, except closed during firearm deer seasons.
Teal	Opens on the 1st or 2nd Saturday in September and runs for 9 or 16 days.
Turkey Fall Archery	Oct. 1 through the 1st Sunday after Jan. 13, except closed during firearm deer seasons.
Turkey Fall Gun	The nine days beginning on Saturday of the 2nd complete two-day weekend (Saturday and Sunday) after Oct. 10.
Turkey Spring North Zone	Begins on the 2nd Monday in April after April 2 and ends 32 days later. Lengths for each season (in days) are 5, 6, 6, 7 and 8, respectively.
Turkey Spring South Zone	Begins on the 1st Monday in April after April 2 and ends 32 days later. Lengths for each season (in days) are 5, 6, 6, 7 and 8, respectively.
Turkey Youth Spring	The two consecutive weekends prior to the opening of South Zone's first season.
Waterfowl	Varies, see 5 year season plans online: huntillinois.org/waterfowl/
Woodchuck	June 1 - Mar. 31, except closed during firearm deer seasons.
Woodcock	45 days beginning on the third Saturday in October.

Public Hunting Sites | Region 1

Public hunting site information (hunter fact sheet) and regulations may be obtained by visiting huntillinois.org. Please visit Huntillinois to obtain site contact information, address, and current site regulations prior to hunting.

	Site Name	Huntible Acres	Waterfowl	Squirrel	Deer - Firearm	Deer - Archery	Deer - Muzzleloader	Deer - Late Winter Antlerless	Deer - CWD Season	Turkey - Spring	Turkey - Fall Gun	Turkey - Fall Archery	Rabbit	Dove	Quail	Pheasant	Woodcock	Raccoon/Opossum	Red Fox	Coyote	Trapping
1	Anderson Lake SFWA	1900	X/@	X		X				C		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E
2	Apple River Canyon SP Salem & Thompson Units	1157	X	X	S	X	S		S	S	S	X	X				X	X	X		
3	Argyle Lake SP	950		X	S	X	S	!C		C	C	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	E
4	Banner Marsh SFWA	3000	D/@			X							X	X	X	X				X	E
5	Big Bend SFWA	2338	@	X		X				S		X	X	S	X	X	X	X	X	X	E
6	Big River SF	2970		X	S	X		!C		S	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
7	Bradford PHA	103				X							@		@	@					
8	Buffalo Prairie PHA	300											X		X	X					E
9	Buffalo Rock SP	310				X															
10	Castle Rock SP	1620		X	S	X	S		S	S		X									
11	Coleta Ponds	11																			E
12	Donnelley SFWA	676	X/D																		
13	Donnelley SFWA - Putnam Co Unit	255				X						X									
14	Double T SFWA	460	@										X	X							E
15	Dublin Highlands PHA	122				X							@		@	@					
16	Franklin Creek SNA	635			S	X		S	S			X									
17	Franklin Creek-Nachusa Prairie SNA	72											@		@	@					
18	French Bluff SNA	342		X	S	X	S		S	S		X									
19	George S. Park SNA	80			C	X	C	!C	C												
20	Green River SWA	2515		X	S	X		!C	C	S		X	@	S/D	@	@		X	X	X	
21	Hanover Bluff SNA	500		X	S	X	S		S	S	C	X	X					X	X	X	E
22	Henderson Creek SFWA	800	X			X															E
23	Hennepin Canal ST	350				X						X		X				X		X	E
24	Ilo Dillin SHA	75				X							@		@	@					E
25	Johnson Sauk Trail SRA	862		X	D	X				S		X	X	S	X	X			X	X	E
26	Jubilee College SP	2900		X	D/S	D	S			S		X	X	X	X	☒	X			X	E
27	Ken Russell "T" Lake SHA	188				X									X	X					E
28	Kishwaukee River SFWA	484			S	X			S	S		X									E
29	Lake DePue SFWA	1700	X																		
30	Lake Le-Aqua-Na SRA	560			S	X			S					X							E
31	Little Rock Creek SHA	148				X							@		@	@					E
32	Lost Mound Unit FL	6000			S/C/D																
33	Lowden Memorial SP	80				X						X									
34	Lowden-Miller SF	2225		X	S	X			S	S		X									
35	Mackinaw River SFWA	1400		X	S	X	S			S		X	@	X	@	@	X	X	X	X	E
36	Manito PHA	70											@		@	@					
37	Marseilles SFWA	2239		X	S	X	S		S	S		X	X	X	X	X				X	
38	Marshall SFWA	5804	X/@	X	S	X	C	!C		S		X	X	X	X	☒	X	X			E
39	Matthiessen SP	1500	X	X	S	X	S		S	S		X		X							
40	Mautino SFWA	891				X				S		X	@	X	@	@					
41	Maytown PHA	159				X						X	@		@	@					
42	Miller-Anderson Woods SNA	524			C	X	C	!C	C												
43	Mississippi Palisades SP	1500			S	X				D/S		X									
44	Mississippi River Pool 12 FL*	7990	X	X	C	X	C		C	C	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
45	Mississippi River Pool 13 FL*	10482	X	X	C	X	C		C	C	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
46	Mississippi River Pool 14 FL*	1472	X	X	C	X	C	!C		C	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
47	Mississippi River Pool 16 FL*	4492	X	X	C	X	C	!C		C	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
48	Mississippi River Pool 17 FL*	2883	X	X	C	X	C	!C		C	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
49	Mississippi River Pool 18 FL*	5173	X	X	C	X	C	!C		C	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
50	Mitchells Grove SNA	170			S	X	S		S												
51	Morrison Rockwood SP	950		X	S	X				S				X							E
52	Pekin Lake SFWA	1200	X			X															E
53	Powerton Lake SFWA	855	X																		
54	Rall Woods SNA	283		X	S	X	S		S	S	C	X	X					X	X	X	
55	Rice Lake SFWA	2500	X/@			X								X			X				E
56	Rock Cut SP	2570		X		X					D		X								E
57	Rockton Bog SNA	150				X				S		X									
58	Sand Prairie PHA	316											@	S	@	@					
59	Sandy Ford SNA	203		X	S	X	S		S	S		X									

Public Hunting Sites | Region 1

Public hunting site information (hunter fact sheet) and regulations may be obtained by visiting huntillinois.org. Please visit HuntIllinois to obtain site contact information, address, and current site regulations prior to hunting.

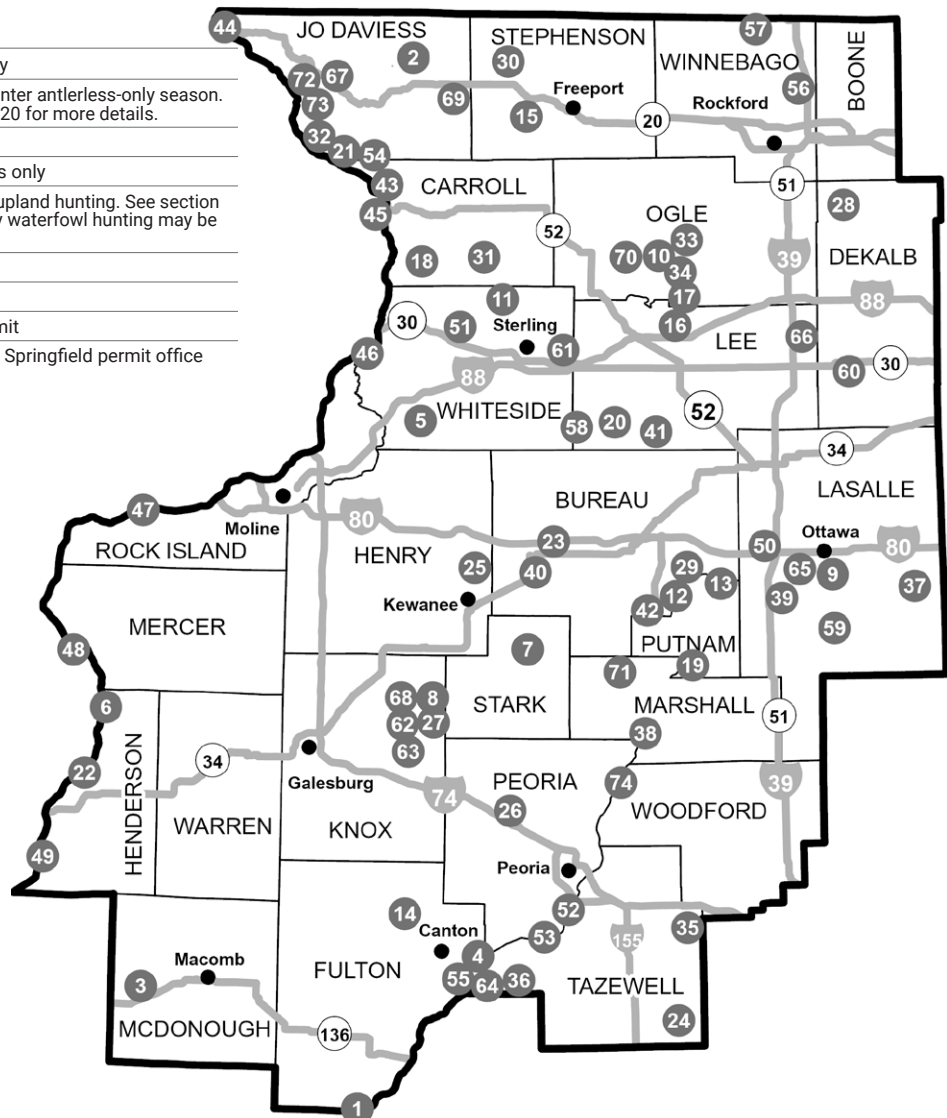
Site Name	Huntable Acres	Waterfowl	Squirrel	Deer Firearm	Deer Archery	Deer Muzzleloader	Deer Late Winter Antlerless	Deer CWD Season	Turkey Spring	Turkey Fall Gun	Turkey Fall Archery	Rabbit	Dove	Quail	Pheasant	Woodcock	Raccoon/Opossum	Red Fox	Coyote	Trapping
60 Shabbona Lake SP	776	X/D			X/D						X/D	X/D								E
61 Sinnissippi Lake SFWA	700	X																		E
62 Snakeden Hollow SFWA	2497	D/@			X							X	D/@			X				E
63 Spoon River SF	1680		X	D/S	X	S	!/C		S	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E
64 Spring Lake SFWA	1500	X/@	X		X						X									E
65 Starved Rock SP	2817	X		D/S	X	S		S	S		X		X							
66 Steward PHA	80											@		@	@					
67 Tapley Woods SNA	259		X	S	X	S		S	S	C	X	X					X	X	X	
68 Victoria PHA	241	X										@	@	@	@	X				E
69 Ward's Grove NP	337			S	X	S		S												
70 White Pines SP	300			S	X						X									
71 Whitefield PHA	117				X							@		@	@					
72 Winston Tunnel SNA	207		X	S	X	S		S	S	C	X	X					X	X	X	
73 Witkowsky SFWA	1086		X	S	X	S		S	S	S	X	X							X	
74 Woodford SFWA	1350	X	X		X												X			

Symbol Key:

X	Available at site
☒	Rare on site, but legal to take cocks only
!	Open only if county is included in late winter antlerless-only season. Announced by 1 Oct. each year. See pg. 20 for more details.
*	Mostly boat accessible only
**	Deer and/or turkey hunting for residents only
@	Lottery permit required for waterfowl & upland hunting. See section on special hunts at public sites. Standby waterfowl hunting may be available.
C	County Permit Required
D	Opportunities for Disabled Hunters
E	Contact site office for site-specific permit
S	Special Hunt Area permit required from Springfield permit office

Site Classification:

CA	Conservation Area
FL	Federal Lands
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
PHA	Pheasant Habitat Area
SF	State Forest
SFWA	State Fish and Wildlife Area
SHA	State Habitat Area
SHS	State Historic Site
SNA	State Natural Area
SP	State Park
SRA	State Recreation Area
ST	State Trail
SWA	State Wildlife Area
SWMA	State Wildlife Management Area



Public Hunting Sites | Region 2

Public hunting site information (hunter fact sheet) and regulations may be obtained by visiting huntillinois.org. Please visit HuntIllinois to obtain site contact information, address, and current site regulations prior to hunting.

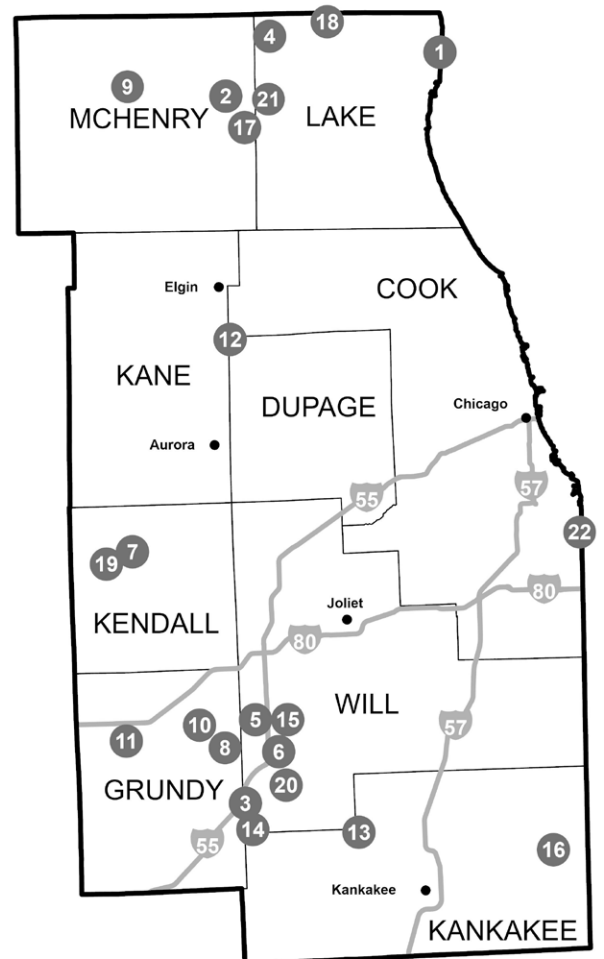
Site Name	Huntible Acres	Waterfowl	Squirrel	Deer - Firearm	Deer - Archery	Deer - Muzzleloader	Deer - Late Winter Antlerless	Deer - CWD Season	Turkey - Spring	Turkey - Fall Gun	Turkey - Fall Archery	Rabbit	Dove	Quail	Pheasant	Woodcock	Raccoon/Opossum	Red Fox	Coyote	Trapping
1 Adeline Jay Geo-Karis Illinois Beach SP	900		X		E														E	E
2 Black Crown Marsh SNA	136	@																		
3 Braidwood Lake SFWA	1100	X																		
4 Chain O' Lakes SP	2578	X	X	S	X				S		X	X	X						X	
5 Des Plaines SFWA	3500	X		S	X						X	X	X	D					X	
6 Des Plaines Game Propagation Center	134				X															E
7 Fox River - Kendall County	260	X																		
8 Goose Lake Prairie SNA	3127			S	X	S		S	S											
9 Hackmatack State Natural Area	71	X			X					X										
10 Heidecke Lake SFWA	1800	X	X	S	X	S		S	S											
11 I & M Canal ST	1100																			E
12 James Pate Phillip SP	415				E															
13 Kankakee River SP	2017	X	X		S/D				S		X	X	X		X		X	X	X	E
14 Mazonia SFWA	2250	X			X						X		X	X			X	X	X	E
15 Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie	9117			S	X	S			S											
16 Momence Wetlands	460	X	X	S	X				S								X	X	X	
17 Moraine Hills SP	2400			S	E					E									E	E
18 Redwing Slough/Deer Lake SNA	155	X	X																	
19 Silver Springs SFWA	900		X		X								X		X				X	
20 Vesely/Wilmington Shrub Prairie SNA	300			S	X				S											
21 Volo Bog SNA	1000				E					E									E	
22 William W. Powers SRA	442	X			E															

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*	Mostly boat accessible only
**	Deer and/or turkey hunting for residents only
@	Lottery permit required for waterfowl & upland hunting. See section on special hunts at public sites. Standby waterfowl hunting may be available.
C	County Permit Required
D	Opportunities for Disabled Hunters
E	Contact site office for site-specific permit
S	Special Hunt Area permit required from Springfield permit office

Site Classification:

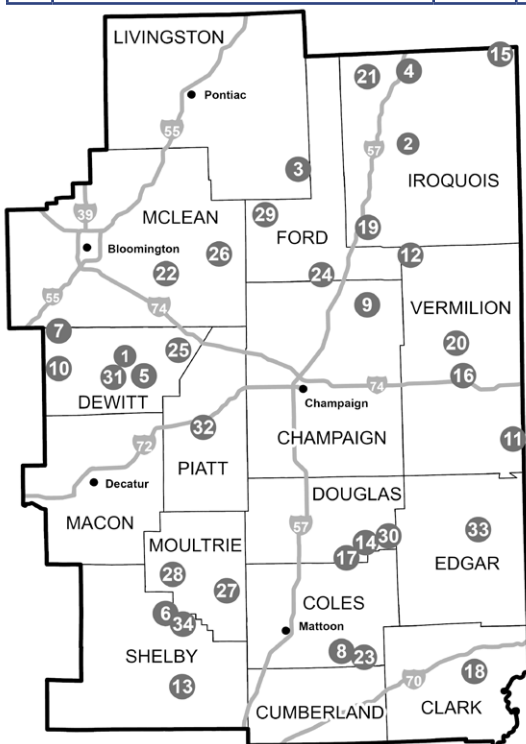
CA	Conservation Area
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NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
PHA	Pheasant Habitat Area
SF	State Forest
SFWA	State Fish and Wildlife Area
SHA	State Habitat Area
SHS	State Historic Site
SNA	State Natural Area
SP	State Park
SRA	State Recreation Area
ST	State Trail
SWA	State Wildlife Area
SWMA	State Wildlife Management Area



Public Hunting Sites | Region 3

Public hunting site information (hunter fact sheet) and regulations may be obtained by visiting huntillinois.org. Please visit HuntIllinois to obtain site contact information, address, and current site regulations prior to hunting.

Site Name	Huntible Acres	Waterfowl	Squirrel	Deer - Firearm	Deer - Archery	Deer - Muzzleloader	Deer - Late Winter Antlerless	Deer - CWD Season	Turkey - Spring	Turkey - Fall Gun	Turkey - Fall Archery	Rabbit	Dove	Quail	Pheasant	Woodcock	Raccoon/Opossum	Red Fox	Coyote	Trapping
1 Birkbeck PHA	80											@		@	@					E
2 Butterfield Trail SRA	120		X	S	X	S			S		X					X				E
3 Chatsworth SHA	240											@		@	@					
4 Clifton PHA	79											@		@	@					
5 Clinton Lake SRA	4125	X/D	X	D/S	X	S			S		X	X	E/X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E
6 Eagle Creek SP	520				D				S		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
7 Finrock SHA	365				X							@		@	@					E
8 Fox Ridge SP	1082	X	X	S	X				S			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
9 Gifford PHA	100											@		@	@					X
10 Hallsville PHA	82				X							@		@	@					E
11 Harry "Babe" Woodyard SNA	1150		X	S	X	S			S		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E
12 Herschel Workman PHA	141											@		@	@					X
13 Hidden Springs SF	963	X	X	S	X	S			S		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E
14 Hindsboro PHA	88		X		X							@		@	@					X
15 Iroquois County SWMA	2185	X	X	S	X				S		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
16 Kickapoo SRA	1253	X	X	S	X	S			S		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E
17 Larry D. Closson SHA	130	@	X		X							@		@	@					X
18 Lincoln Trail SP	875		X		X						X						X			E
19 Loda PHA	160				X							@		@	@					
20 Middle Fork SFWA	2628	X	X	S	X	S			S		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E
21 Milks Grove PHA	78											@		@	@					
22 Moraine View SRA	1191		X		X				S		X	X	X	X	E/X	X	E	E	X	E
23 Paul C. Burrus SHA	376		X	S	X				S			@		@	@					X
24 Perdueville PHA	282											@		@	@					E
25 Salt Creek WMA	60	D/@																		
26 Saybrook PHA	646											@		@	@					E
27 Shelbyville FL	9000		X	D/S	X	X			S		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
28 Shelbyville SFWA	6343	X	X	S	X	S			S		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E
29 Sibley SHA	637											@		@	@					E
30 Walnut Point SP	571		X		X/D												X			X
31 Weldon Springs SP	500																			E
32 Weldon Springs SP - Piatt County Unit	770		X	S	X				S			X		X	X					
33 Willow Creek SHA	197		X		X							@		@	@					X
34 Wolf Creek SP	920			D/S	X				S		X	X		X	X		E			



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Site Classification:

CA	Conservation Area
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NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
PHA	Pheasant Habitat Area
SF	State Forest
SFWA	State Fish and Wildlife Area
SHA	State Habitat Area
SHS	State Historic Site
SNA	State Natural Area
SP	State Park
SRA	State Recreation Area
ST	State Trail
SWA	State Wildlife Area
SWMA	State Wildlife Management Area

Public Hunting Sites | Region 4

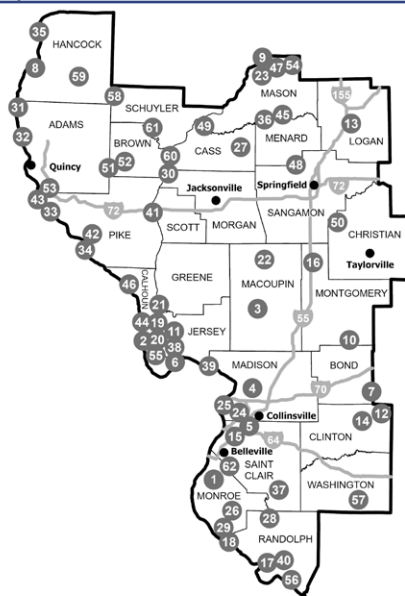
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Site Name	Huntable Acres	Waterfowl	Squirrel	Deer - Firearm	Deer - Archery	Deer - Muzzleloader	Deer - Late Winter Antlerless	Deer - CWD Season	Turkey - Spring	Turkey - Fall Gun	Turkey - Fall Archery	Rabbit	Dove	Quail	Pheasant	Woodcock	Raccoon/Opossum	Red Fox	Coyote	Trapping
1 Annbriar Karst SNA	160				X															
2 Batchtown SFWA*	2436	X	X	C	X	C			C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	E
3 Beaver Dam SP	430		X		D/X				S		D/X						X	X	X	X
4 Bohm Woods NP	90				E															
5 Cahokia Mounds SHS	702				E															
6 Calhoun Point FL	2215	X	X	C	X	C			C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	E
7 Carlyle Lake SFWA	9868	X	X	C	X	C			S		X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
8 Cedar Glen SNA	1150			S	X	S														
9 Clear Lake SWMA*	200	X																		
10 Coffeen Lake SFWA	3063	X	X	S	X				S		X	@	X	@	@				X	E
11 Copperhead Hollow SFWA	1351	X	X	S	X	C			C	C	X	X	X				X	X	X	E
12 East Fork Management Unit SFWA	394		X	S		S			S			X				X	X	X	X	E
13 Edward R. Madigan SFWA**	220				X				S			@	S	@	@					
14 Eldon Hazlet SRA	1699	X	X		D		/C		D/S		X/D	X	X	X	D	X	X	X	X	E
15 Frank Holten SP	300				X						E									E
16 Freeman Mine SHA	24	X			X							@	@	@	@					
17 Ft. DeChartres SHS (muzzleloading only)	800	X	X	C	X	C	/C		C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	E
18 Ft. Kaskaskia SHS	140				X						X									
19 Fuller Lake SWMA*	1817	X	X	C	X	C			C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	E
20 Glades - 12 Mile Island SWMA*	1814	X	X	C	X	C			C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	E
21 Godar-Diamond/Hurricane Island SWMA*	2617	X	X	C	X	C			C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	E
22 Goode's Woods NP	40				E															
23 Henry A. Gleason NP	220			S	X															
24 Horseshoe Lake SP (Madison County)	2000	X			E	S			S				S/X				X	X	X/E	E
25 Horseshoe Lake SP (Gabaret, Mosenstein, & Chouteau Island Unit)	2329	X	X		X				C	C	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	E
26 Illinois Caverns SNA	116				X															
27 Jim Edgar Panther Creek SFWA	16400	X	X	S	X	S			S	S	X	@	S/X	@	@	X	X	X	X	E
28 Kaskaskia River SFWA	14000	D	X	C/S	X	C	/C		C	C	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	E
29 Kidd Lake SNA	465	@			X															E
30 Meredosia Lake	690	X																		
31 Mississippi River (Pool 21)*	8536	X	X	C	X	C	/C		C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
32 Mississippi River (Pool 21)* Great River NWR (Long Island & Bear Creek)	6300	X	X	C	X	C	/C		C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	E
33 Mississippi River (Pool 22)* Saverton Pool FL	6861	X	X	C	X	C	/C		C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
34 Mississippi River (Pool 24)* Clarksville Pool FL	10211	X	X	C	X	C	/C		C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
35 Nauvoo SP - Max Rowe Unit	30		X		X				C	C	X	X	X	X						
36 Oakford SHA	115	X	X	C	X	C			C		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
37 Peabody River King SFWA	1500		X	E	X				C		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	E
38 Pere Marquette SP	5000		X	C	X	C			C/S	C	X	X	X	X	X		E	E	E	E
39 Piasa Island SWMA*	400	X	X	C	X	C			C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	E
40 Randolph County SRA	820		X		X				S		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	E
41 Ray Norbut SFWA	1290	X	X	S	X	C	/C		C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	E
42 Ray Norbut SFWA - Dutch Creek Unit	410		X	S	X	C	/C		S	C	X	X		X		X	X	X	E	
43 Ray Norbut SFWA - East Hannibal Unit	46				X						X									E
44 Red's Landing SWMA	737	X	X	C	X	C			C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	E
45 Revis Springs Hill Prairie	420			S	X															
46 Riprap Landing SWMA	2949	X	X	C	X	C			C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	E
47 Sand Ridge SF	6300		X	S	X	C			S	S	X	@	X	@	@	X	X	X	X	E
48 Sangamon County State CA	178		X	S	X	S			S		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
49 Sanganois SFWA	7000	D/@	X	S	X	S			C/S		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E
50 Sangchris Lake SP	2480	X	X		X	S			S		X	@	S/X	@	@			X	X	E
51 Siloam Springs SP	3255		X	D/S	D/X	D/S			D/S	C	X		X				E			E
52 Siloam Springs SP - Buckhorn Unit**	2272		X	D/S	D/X	D/S	/D/C		S	C	X	X	X	X			E			E
53 Siloam Springs SP - Fall Creek Unit	190				X															E
54 Sparks Pond	400				X						X			@	@	@				
55 Stump Lake SWMA*	3580	X	X	C	X	C			C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	E
56 Turkey Bluffs SFWA	2250	X	X	C	X	C	/C		C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	E
57 Washington County SRA	750		X		X				S		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	E
58 Weinberg-King SP	760		X	S	X	C	/C		C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X			E
59 Weinberg-King SP - Cecil White Unit	30		X		X				C	C	X	X		X						
60 Weinberg-King SP - Spunky Bottoms Unit**	822	X	X	C	X	C	/C		C	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E

Public Hunting Sites | Region 4

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61 Weinberg-King SP - Scripps Unit**	747		X	S	X	C	I/C		S	C	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	E
62 Zoeller SNA	160				X				E		E									



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Public Hunting Sites | Region 5

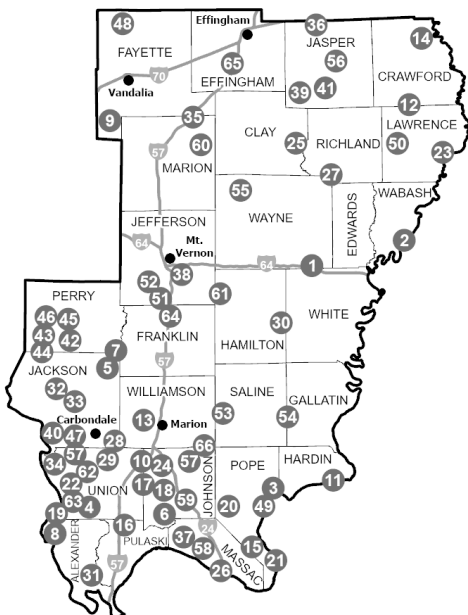
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1 Alvah Borah SHA	87		X	C	X	C	I/C		C	C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2 Beall Woods SP	516				X															E
3 Big Grand Pierre Glade SNA	318		X	C	X	C	I/C		C	C	X						X	X	X	
4 Bluff Lakes FL	516	X	X	C	X	C	I/C		C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
5 Burning Star SFWA	4644	X	X	S	X	X			S			S	X	S		X	X	X	X	E
6 Cache River SNA	15505	X	X	C	X	C	I/C		C	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
7 Campbell Pond SHA	520	X	X	C	X	C	I/C		C		X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	
8 Cape Bend SFWA	1380	X	X	C	X	C	I/C		C	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
9 Carlyle Lake SFWA	9868	X	X	C	X	C			S		X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
10 Cave-in-Rock SP - Kaegi Tract	175	X	X	C	X	C	I/C		C	C	X	X	X	X	☒		X	X	X	X
11 Cedar/Draper Bluff HA	1315		X	C	X	C	I/C		C	C	X						X	X	X	E
12 Chauncey Marsh SNA	1314	X	X	S	X	C	I/C		S		X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
13 Crab Orchard NWR	23000	X	X	D/S	X/E	C/E			C/S	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	E
14 Crawford County SFWA	1129		X	C	X	C	I/C		S	S	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
15 Cretaceous Hills SNA	254		X	C	X	C	I/C		C	C	X	X	X	X	☒		X	X	X	X
16 Cypress Creek NWR	16000	X	X	C	X	C			C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	E
17 Cypress Pond SNA	1047	X	X	C	X	C	I/C		C	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
18 Deer Pond SNA	190	X	X	C	X	C	I/C		C	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
19 Devil's Island SWMA	2741	X	X	C	X	C	I/C		C	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
20 Dixon Springs SP	567		X	D/S	X	C	I/C		D/S	C	X		X				X	X	X	
21 Dog Island SWMA	220	X	X	C	X	C	I/C		C	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
22 Dug Hill SFWA	272	X	X	X	X	C	I/C		X		X	X	X	X	☒					X
23 Embarras River Bottoms SHA	535	@	X	S	X	S			S	S	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
24 Ferne Clyffe HA	450		X	S	X	C	I/C		S	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X				
25 Flag Pond SNA	255		X	S	X				C	C	X									
26 Fort Massac SP	1287	X	X	S	X	S	I/C		D/S	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X				
27 Fox Creek SFWA	2000	@	X	S	X				S		X	X		X						E
28 Giant City SP	2891		X	C	X	C	I/C		C	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E

Public Hunting Sites | Region 5

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Site Name	Huntable Acres	Waterfowl	Squirrel	Deer - Firearm	Deer - Archery	Deer - Muzzleloader	Deer - Late Winter Antlerless	Deer - CWD Season	Turkey - Spring	Turkey - Fall Gun	Turkey - Fall Archery	Rabbit	Dove	Quail	Pheasant	Woodcock	Raccoon/Opossum	Red Fox	Coyote	Trapping
29 Guthrie Cave SNA	80				X															
30 Hamilton County SFWA	1530		X	C	X	C	!C		S	S	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	X
31 Horseshoe Lake SFWA (Alexander County)	11772	@/D	X	C/S	X	C	!C		C	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
32 Kinkaid Lake SFWA	3757	X	X	C	X	C	!C		C	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	X
33 Lake Murphysboro	1022																			E
34 LaRue Swamp FL	1000	X	X	C	X	C	!C		C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
35 Maxine Loy	213				X							S		S	☒					
36 Meeker SHA	72		X	C	X	C			S	S	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
37 Mermet Lake SFWA	2000	D/@	X	C	X	C	!C		D/S	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
38 Mt. Vernon Game Propagation Center	600		X		X				S		X	X	X							E
39 Newton Lake SFWA	6500	X	X	S	X				S	S	X	X	X	X	☒	X				E
40 Oakwood Bottoms FL	3400	X	X	C	X	C	!C		C	C	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X
41 Prairie Ridge SNA	2614			S	X	S														
42 Pyramid SRA - Park Unit	2754		X	C	X	C	!C		S		X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
43 Pyramid SRA - Captain Unit	6105	X	X	C	X	C	!C		S		X	@	X	@	@	X	X	X	X	E
44 Pyramid SRA - Denmark Unit	4385	X	X	C	X	C	!C		S		X	@	X	@	@	X	X	X	X	E
45 Pyramid SRA - East Conant Unit	2824	X	X	C	X	C	!C		S		X	@	X	@	@	X	X	X	X	E
46 Pyramid SRA - Galum Unit	2520	X	X	C	X	C	!C		S		X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
47 Ralph Clover SNA	60		X	X	X	X			X		X						X	X	X	X
48 Ramsey Lake SRA	1610		X		X				S		X	@	X	@	@	X	E	E	E	E
49 Rauchfuss Hill SRA	150		X		X				C	C	X						X	X	X	
50 Red Hills SP	736		X		X				S		X	X	X	X	☒	X			X	E
51 Rend Lake FL	7740	D	X	D	X	C	!C		C	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	X
52 Rend Lake SFWA	7690	D	X	C	X	C	!C		C	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	X
53 Sahara Woods SRA	3800		X	S	X	S	!C		S	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
54 Saline County SFWA	1000	X	X	C	X	C	!C		C	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
55 Sam Dale Lake SFWA	950	X	X		X				S		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
56 Sam Parr SFWA	840		X		X				S	S	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
57 Shawnee National Forest FL	284726	X	X	C	X	C	!C		C	C	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
58 Sielbeck Forest SNA	385	X	X	C	X	C	!C		C	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	X
59 Skinner Farm SHA	100		X	C	X	C	!C		C	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	
60 Stephen A. Forbes SRA	2580	X	X		X				S		X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
61 Ten Mile Creek SFWA	4995	X	X	C	X	C	!C		S	S	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
62 Trail of Tears SF	4784		X	C	X	C	!C		C	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E
63 Union County SFWA	6202	D/@	X	C/S	X	C			C	C	X	X	X	X		X				E
64 Wayne Fitzgerald SRA	1800		X	D	X				S		X				X					
65 Wildcat Hollow SHA	675			C	X	C	!C		C		X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	
66 Wise Ridge SNA	550	X	X	C	X	C	!C		C	C	X	X	X	X	☒	X	X	X	X	E



Symbol Key:

X	Available at site
☒	Rare on site, but legal to take cocks only
!	Open only if county is included in late winter antlerless-only season. Announced by 1 Oct. each year. See pg. 20 for more details.
*	Mostly boat accessible only
**	Deer and/or turkey hunting for residents only
@	Lottery permit required for waterfowl & upland hunting. See section on special hunts at public sites. Standby waterfowl hunting may be available.
C	County Permit Required
D	Opportunities for Disabled Hunters
E	Contact site office for site-specific permit
S	Special Hunt Area permit required from Springfield permit office

Site Classification:

CA	Conservation Area
FL	Federal Lands
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
PHA	Pheasant Habitat Area
SF	State Forest
SFWA	State Fish and Wildlife Area
SHA	State Habitat Area
SHS	State Historic Site
SNA	State Natural Area
SP	State Park
SRA	State Recreation Area
ST	State Trail
SWA	State Wildlife Area
SWMA	State Wildlife Management Area

Public Access on Private Property *with the* ILLINOIS RECREATIONAL ACCESS PROGRAM



IRAP is funded by the NRCS Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program. IRAP leases private land for semi-controlled public access activities.

Activity	Who Can Apply	How	When to Apply	IRAP Activity Date	Additional Information
Youth TURKEY Hunting	Licensed youth hunters age 17 and under	Complete online application	Online application available November 20	Youth Spring Turkey Season	Must hunt with a non-hunting adult
Spring TURKEY Seasons 3 & 4	Any licensed hunter	Complete online application	Online application available November 20	North/South zones 3rd and 4th spring seasons	
SPORTFISHING	Any licensed angler	Register and reserve a site online	Online reservations available March 25	April 1—September 30 Friday—Monday	Bank Fishing Only
SQUIRREL Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Register and reserve a site online	Online reservations available July 25	August - September 15	Up to 4 in hunting group
Youth Firearm DEER Hunting	Licensed youth hunters age 17 and under	Complete online application	Online application available July 1	Saturday through Monday of Columbus Day Weekend	Must hunt with a non-hunting adult
Archery DEER Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Complete online application	Online application available July 1	Month of October and December 16-31	
WATERFOWL Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Complete online application	Online application available August 15	November 1 - December 31	Blinds or stakes on site; Dogs allowed; up to 4 in hunting group
UPLAND GAME with RABBIT Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Complete online application	Online application available October 1	December 10-31 2-day weekend hunts	Dogs allowed; Up to 4 in hunting group
RABBIT Hunting	Any licensed hunter	Register and reserve a site online	Online reservations available November 25	December 10-31	Dogs allowed; Up to 4 in hunting group

IRAP is available to Illinois residents and non-residents. A participant must have an IRAP site permit and reservation prior to using any site. Participants must follow all laws and obtain necessary permits and licenses as outlined in the Illinois Digest of Hunting and Trapping and Fishing Regulations. Applications/additional information can be found online at: dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/irap, by emailing DNR.IRAP@illinois.gov or by calling 217-782-0137.

HUNTERS SUSTAIN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Pittman-Robertson Act • Since 1937

