

# Migratory Game Birds

Licenses, applications, harvest reporting and general information: **1-888-248-6866**

## General Information

- You Must Have All of the Following While in the Field (page 8).
- License Requirements and Fees (see pages 8–13).
- Legal Sporting Arms for Migratory Game Birds (see page 27).
- Hunting on Military Reservations (see page 42).
- Proof of Species, Sex and Bag Limit: (See page 27-28).
- Possession, Donation or Sale of Game: (See page 28).
- Use of Dogs: (Page 29).

## Voluntary Harvest Reports

Migratory game bird hunters are encouraged to submit voluntary harvest reports on NMDGF's online harvest reporting system.

## Additional Requirements

For Habitat Stamp, Habitat Management and Access Validation, Harvest Information Program Number (HIP) and Duck Stamp requirements, see page 10.

### Free Band-tailed Pigeon Permit

All band-tailed pigeon hunters must possess a Band-Tailed Pigeon Permit. Permits are available online: [wildlife.dgf.nm.gov](https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov), by telephone: **1-888-248-6866** and at NMDGF offices and all license vendors (one-dollar vendor fee may apply).

### Free Light Goose Conservation Order Permit

A Light Goose Conservation Order Permit is required for hunters participating in the conservation order hunts Feb. 1–March 10, 2026. Please check the Migratory Game Bird Supplement, available in summer, for information on the light goose conservation order at <https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov/home/publications>. Permits are available online: <https://onlinesales.wildlife.state.nm.us>, by telephone: **1-888-248-6866** and at NMDGF offices and all license vendors (one-dollar vendor fee may apply).

### Free Eastern Sandhill Crane Permit

Each eastern sandhill crane hunter must possess the appropriate license(s) (page 8), plus an Eastern Sandhill Crane Hunting Permit (free). Permits are available online: [wildlife.dgf.nm.gov](https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov), at NMDGF offices and at all license vendors (one-dollar vendor fee may apply). A federal Duck Stamp is not required to hunt sandhill cranes. This permit allows sandhill crane hunting in Chaves, Curry, De Baca, Eddy, Lea, Quay and Roosevelt counties.



NMDGF photo

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## General Rules

### Nontoxic Shot Mandatory

Hunters must use and possess only USFWS-approved nontoxic shot when hunting any waterfowl, coot, gallinules, sandhill crane (draw hunt only), snipe, sora or Virginia rail with shotguns (including muzzle-loading shotguns).

Anyone hunting migratory game birds on Bernardo, La Joya or W.S. Huey WMAs must use and possess only USFWS-approved nontoxic shot. Nontoxic shot is not required for dove, band-tailed pigeon and the eastern sandhill crane hunt on other State Game Commission-owned or managed properties.

**Nontoxic shot includes:** bismuth-tin, iron (steel), copper-clad iron, iron-tungsten, iron-tungsten-nickel, tungsten-bronze, tungsten-iron-copper-nickel, corrosion-inhibited copper, tungsten polymer, tungsten-tin-iron, tungsten-tin-bismuth, tungsten-tin-iron-nickel and tungsten-iron-polymer.

### Shooting Hours

**Migratory Game Birds:** 1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset, unless otherwise noted.

**Bottomless Lakes Overflow:** 1/2 hour before sunrise to 1 p.m.

**Bernardo, Jackson Lake, La Joya and W.S. Huey:** 1/2 hour before sunrise to 1 p.m.

**Exceptions:** Shooting hours for the September Teal Season on the Bernardo and La Joya areas are from 1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset.

### Use of Boats

It is illegal to shoot at any protected species from within or upon a motor vehicle, motor-driven boat, sailboat or aircraft. However, a person may shoot from a motor-driven boat **when the motor has been completely shut off and its progress has ceased.**

### Federal Regulations

In addition to all New Mexico regulations in this booklet, the following federal regulations apply on federal lands when taking, possessing, transporting and storing migratory game birds. Persons cited for violating federal regulations will be required to appear in federal court. The complete federal regulations (50 CFR-Part 20) are available online: [ecfr.gov/current/title-50/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-20?toc=1](http://ecfr.gov/current/title-50/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-20?toc=1)



## Legal Methods

Migratory game birds may be taken with the use of artificial decoys, blinds and dogs.

## Illegal Methods

No person shall take migratory game birds:

1. From a sink box (a low floating device that has a depression affording the hunter a means of concealment beneath the surface of the water).
2. From or with the aid or use of a car or other motor-driven land conveyance or from or with the aid of any aircraft or drone.
3. By baiting (placing or directing placement of feed such as corn, wheat, salt, etc. for the purpose of causing, inducing or attempting to take any migratory game bird). Hunters should be aware a baited area is considered to be baited for 10 days after the removal of the bait.

## Importation of Harvested Migratory Game Birds

During any one week beginning on Sunday, no person shall import more than:

1. 25 doves and 10 pigeons from any foreign country.
2. 10 ducks and 5 geese from any foreign country, except Canada and Mexico.
3. the Canadian and Mexican export limits for doves and waterfowl, which vary for different foreign provinces and states.

In addition, one fully feathered wing must remain attached to all harvested migratory game birds being transported or shipped between a port of entry and one's home or taxidermist. No person shall import harvested migratory game birds belonging to another person.

## Report All Banded Birds!

NMDGF requests all banded birds harvested be reported online: [reportband.gov](http://reportband.gov).

## Regulated Areas

### New Mexico State Parks

New Mexico State Parks are closed to all hunting except in designated areas. Contact state park superintendents for designated hunting areas and directions or call: **1-888-667-2757**.

1. **Bluewater, Caballo, El Vado, Heron, Conchas, Ute, Elephant Butte and Summer Lake State Parks:** Open for snipe, sora, Virginia rail and waterfowl.
2. **Navajo Lake State Park:** Open for snipe, sora, Virginia rail and waterfowl. Closed areas: Navajo Dam stilling basin which includes the area from the crest of the bluff above the north bank of the San Juan River to N.M. Hwy. 511 on the south side of the river for 1/4 mile downstream from the dam; Cottonwood Campground and Day Use Area from the lower boundary of the Quality Waters to a fence 1/4 mile downstream from the Cottonwood Day Use Area; Pine and Sims Mesa Recreation Area; and Navajo Reservoir Recreation Area south end.

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## National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs)

All state and federal regulations apply. Only USFWS-approved nontoxic shot may be used and possessed on refuges. Sporting arms must be unloaded and cased when transported.

### Bosque del Apache NWR

Conducts special permit light goose hunts and allows dove hunting in specific areas. For current information, maps and applications, call **575-835-1828** or visit: [www.fws.gov/refuge/bosque-del-apache/visit-us/activities/hunting](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/bosque-del-apache/visit-us/activities/hunting)

### Las Vegas NWR

Conducts special permit Canada goose hunts and limited dove hunting. For information, maps and applications visit: [www.fws.gov/refuge/las\\_vegas/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/las_vegas/) or call: **505-425-3581**.



### **Bitter Lake NWR**

Conducts limited hunting for ducks, geese, coot, sandhill crane and quail. For information, maps and applications visit: [www.fws.gov/refuge/bitter\\_lake](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/bitter_lake) or call: **(575) 244-6256**.

### **Sevilleta NWR**

Conducts limited hunting for mourning dove, white-winged dove, quail, geese, duck and coot. One handicap-accessible duck blind is available first-come, first-served. For more information and maps visit: [www.fws.gov/refuge/sevilleta](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/sevilleta) or call: **505-864-4021**.

### **Wildlife Management Areas**

Please check the Migratory Game Bird Supplement, available in summer, for information on migratory game bird hunting seasons on WMAs at <https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov/home/publications>.



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## Migratory Game Bird Seasons

### Dove and Band-Tailed Pigeon Seasons

Please check the Migratory Game Bird Supplement, available in summer, for information on dove and band-tailed pigeon seasons at <https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov/home/publications>.

### Sandhill Crane Draw Permits

Please check the Migratory Game Bird Supplement, available in summer, for information on sandhill crane draw seasons at <https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov/home/publications>.

Applications may be submitted online: [wildlife.dgf.nm.gov](https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov) or call: **1-888-248-6866**. Applications must be submitted by August 13, 2025 before 5 p.m. MDT. Up to four hunters may apply per application and up to two hunters may apply per youth-only hunt application. Nonrefundable application fees are \$7 per resident and \$13 per non-resident.



*NMDGF photo*

Additional information about hunt requirements will be given to successful applicants. Each draw-season sandhill crane hunter must have the appropriate license(s) (page 8), plus a draw permit. Check the Migratory Game Bird Supplement, available in summer, for hunt codes and dates. A federal Duck Stamp is not required. Cranes are often found on private property. To access private property, hunters must obtain and possess prior written permission.

### Eastern Hunt (Eastern)

Chaves, Curry, De Baca, Eddy, Lea, Quay and Roosevelt counties: All Eastern Sandhill crane hunters must possess an appropriate license (page 8), plus a free Eastern Sandhill crane permit (page 141). Permits are available online and at all license vendors.

### Southwest Hunt (SW)

**Parts of Sierra, Doña Ana, Luna, Grant and Hidalgo counties:** Bounded on the south by the New Mexico/Mexico border; Bounded on the west by the New Mexico / Arizona border north to I-10; Bounded on the north by I-10 east to US 180, north to NM 26, east to NM 27, north to NM 152 and east to I-25; Bounded on the east by I-25 south to I-10, west to the Luna county line and south to the New Mexico/Mexico border.

Hunters who draw special Southwest Crane Permits must return the Harvest Questionnaire and Bill Measurement Card to NMDGF no later than five days after the end of the permitted hunt dates.

### **Estancia Valley Hunt (EV)**

**Portions of Bernalillo, Santa Fe and Torrance counties:** Bounded on the west by NM 55 starting at Mountainair and north to NM 337, north to NM 14 and north to I-25; Bounded on the north by I-25 east to US 285; Bounded on the east by US 285 south to US 60; Bounded on the south by US 60 from US 285 west to NM 55 at Mountainair. Hunters who draw Special Estancia Valley Crane Permits must return the Harvest Questionnaire and Bill Measurement Card to NMDGF no later than five days after the end of the permitted hunt dates.

### **Middle Rio Grande Valley (MRGV) Hunts and Resident Youth-only Hunt**

Hunters who draw Special MRGV Crane Permits must: 1) Check all cranes harvested at the designated check station; and 2) File a harvest report no later than five days after the end of the permitted hunt dates via the Department's online licensing system or by calling 888-248-6866. For check-station dates, see the Migratory Game Birds Supplement. Harvest Questionnaires and hunt letters are available online:

<https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov/hunting/information-by-animal/migratory-bird/>

**Regular draw hunts:** Valencia and Socorro counties only. Bernardo, La Joya and Casa Colorada WMAs are closed to crane hunting during regular draw hunts.

**Resident Youth-only Hunt:** Youth hunters will be assigned to hunt on either Bernardo or Casa Colorada WMAs.

### **Maps**

Maps of State Game Commission Lands, including La Joya and Bernardo WMAs are available at <https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov/conservation/state-game-commission-lands>

## **Migratory Game Bird Seasons in the Central and Pacific Flyways**

Please check the Migratory Game Bird Supplement, available in summer, for information on migratory game bird hunting seasons at

<https://wildlife.dgf.nm.gov/home/publications>.

# Waterfowl Identification

## Mallard

Length: 24"

Weight: 2.75 lbs.

- ▶ Eclipse drake
- ▶ Drake
- ▶ Hen



## Northern pintail

Length: 26"

Weight: 1.75 lbs.

- ▶ Drake
- ▶ Eclipse drake
- ▶ Hen



## Gadwall

Length: 21"

Weight: 2 lbs.

- ▶ Drake
- ▶ Eclipse drake
- ▶ Hen



## American wigeon

Length (males): 26"

Length (females): 21"

Weight: 1.75 lbs.

- ▶ Eclipse drake
- ▶ Hen
- ▶ Drake



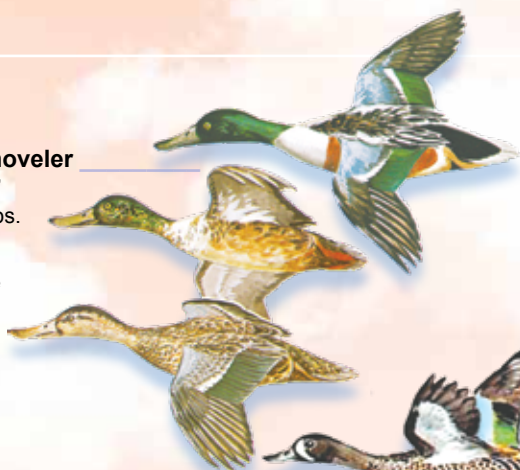


### Northern shoveler

Length: 19.5"

Weight: 1.5 lbs.

- ▶ Drake
- ▶ Eclipse drake
- ▶ Hen



### Blue-winged teal

Length: 16"

Weight: 15 oz.

- ▶ Drake
- ▶ Eclipse drake
- ▶ Hen



### Green-winged teal

Length: 15"

Weight: 14 oz.

- ▶ Eclipse drake
- ▶ Drake
- ▶ Hen



### Wood duck

Length: 18.5"

Weight: 1.5 lbs.

- ▶ Eclipse drake
- ▶ Drake
- ▶ Hen



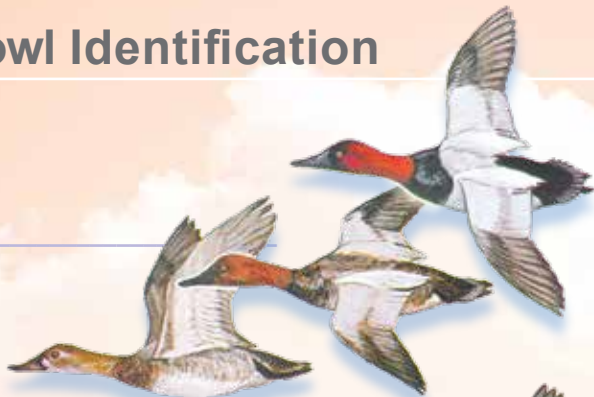
# Waterfowl Identification

## Canvasback

Length: 22"

Weight: 3 lbs.

- ▶ Drake
- ▶ Eclipse drake
- ▶ Hen



## Redhead

Length: 20"

Weight: 2.5 lbs.

- ▶ Eclipse drake
- ▶ Drake
- ▶ Hen



## Ringneck

Length: 17"

Weight: 2.5 lbs.

- ▶ Drake
- ▶ Eclipse drake
- ▶ Hen



## Scaup

Length: 18.5"

Weight: 2 lbs.

- ▶ Eclipse Drake
- ▶ Hen
- ▶ Lesser Drake
- ▶ Greater Drake

