



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Canada Goose Hunting

Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge

General Information

Just 26 miles as the crow flies from New York City, Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge attracts an estimated 185,000 visitors a year to its 7,855 acres. The refuge hosts a limited September Canada Goose season, in accordance with New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife (NJDFW) regulations. This special season targets resident Canada geese which degrade habitat over time and compete with migratory geese and waterfowl for vital resources. All hunters must obtain a refuge hunting permit, in addition to a New Jersey state license, before scouting and hunting.

Hunting Regulations

The regulations below supplement the general regulations which govern hunting on National Wildlife Refuges as set forth in Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations.

2026 September Canada Goose Season

Sept. 1 – Sept. 30

THE REFUGE IS NOT OPEN FOR SUNDAY HUNTING

Permits

While **hunting or scouting**, permittees **MUST** carry a valid New Jersey Hunting License, a New Jersey Waterfowl Stamp Certification, a Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (Federal Duck Stamp), a Harvest Information Program (HIP) certification, and a Great Swamp NWR Canada Goose Hunting Permit. Permits are not transferable and are not valid until signed.

Weaponry

Weaponry and shot shell capacity allowed per NJDFW regulations. Please consult the NJ Hunting Digest. **Nontoxic shot is required in accordance with state and refuge regulations.**

Bag Limit

Daily bag limit set forth by NJDFW. Please consult the NJ Hunting Digest.

Scouting

Scouting is permitted two weeks prior to season opening. Weapons are prohibited while scouting.

Caller/Observer

All refuge permit holders will receive one Caller/Observer Permit to allow one non-hunting person to accompany the hunter. This is an opportunity for others to learn about hunting or to assist the hunter. The holder of this permit must be set up with the hunter at the same location, and is not allowed to possess or shoot a weapon.

Blinds/Dogs/Kayaks

Only temporary blinds may be used. Dogs are permitted to retrieve geese and must be on leash while in areas open to the public. Non-motorized kayak/canoe permitted only to retrieve geese. A non-motorized cart may be used to wheel kayaks/canoes from the parking lot to the impoundment.

Trail markers

All marking tape, reflective pins, or other materials used to mark trails must be removed at the end of the hunt day. The use of paint is prohibited.

Hours

Hunters may enter the refuge two hours before shooting time and leave no later than two hours after shooting time. Please consult NJ Hunting Digest for legal hunting hours.

Parking

Hunters must park in designated refuge parking areas (see map) with the Refuge Parking Permit displayed on the vehicle's dash. Do not block gates, roads and buildings.

No Hunting Zones

No Hunting Zones are located in various areas within the refuge. Hunting is prohibited in these areas. Refer to refuge hunt map for details.

<i>Nature Trails</i>	Hikers may be using the hiking trails during the hunting season. Use extreme caution. Refer to refuge hunt map for trail locations.
<i>Report Your Harvest</i>	Harvested game must be reported in accordance with state regulations. Please indicate you are hunting on FEDERAL land.
<i>Law enforcement</i>	Individuals utilizing the refuge are subject to inspections of permits, licenses, hunting equipment, bag limits, boats, vehicles, and their contents by refuge or state law enforcement officers.

 Refuge hunting areas may change each year. Hunters are required to read the hunt maps provided. Please respect adjacent landowners, **DO NOT TRESPASS!**

Prohibited Activities

- Littering
- Use of a spotlight or other artificial light may not be used to locate wildlife.
- Baiting or hunting over bait, salt or any consumable attractant.
- Drives are prohibited.
- Drive or screw a nail, spike or other metal object into a tree or hunt from any tree in which such an object has been driven.
- Trimming or cutting vegetation.
- Use or possession of alcoholic beverages.
- Use of ATVs and/or dirt bikes.
- Target practice
- Camping and campfires
- Overnight parking
- Searching for or removing any object of antiquity including arrowheads, pottery or other artifacts.
- Blocking gates or roadways with vehicles.
- Use of motorized boats.

An Important Message

Our wildlife is a valuable resource. Laws and regulations are intended to protect them, while allowing for some consumptive use. Hunters are encouraged to report any violations they may encounter to a State or Federal employee. The future of hunting on the refuge requires responsible hunter behavior and compliance with regulations.

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32 Pleasant Plains Rd.
 Basking Ridge, NJ 07920