2023 SPRING LIGHT GOOSE HUNTING REGULATIONS

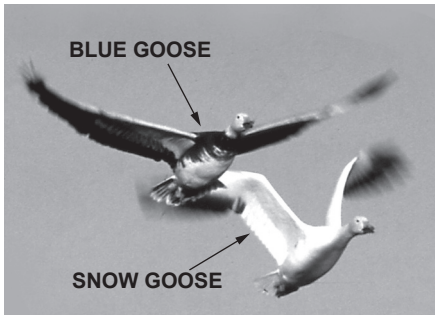
(CONSERVATION ORDER)

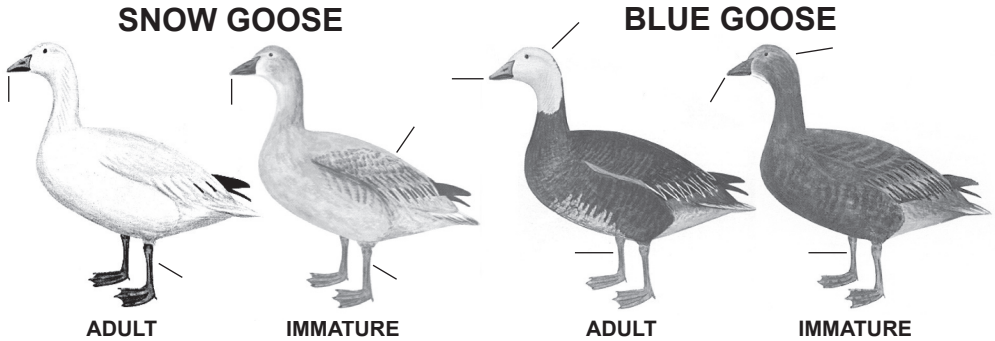
North Dakota Game and Fish Department, 100 North Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501-5095
Phone: 701-328-6300 Website: gf.nd.gov Email: ndgf@nd.gov

Species	Daily Limit	Possession Limit	Open Area and Dates	Shooting Hours
Snow geese, blue geese and Ross's geese	No Limit	No Limit	Statewide February 18 - May 14	30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset

- Residents must have either a 2022-23 (valid through March 31) or 2023-24 (required April 1) resident hunting license (fishing, hunting and furbearer certificate, and a combination license; or a certificate, and a small game, plus general game and habitat license). Resident youth under age 16 only need a general game and habitat license.
- Nonresidents must have a 2023 nonresident spring light goose license ($50). This license is valid statewide for the entire conservation order, and does not affect the eligibility to purchase a nonresident waterfowl hunting license for fall. Nonresident youth under age 16 can purchase a license at the resident fee if their state has youth reciprocity licensing with North Dakota.
- Required licenses must be purchased through the Department's website.
- Hunters must register annually with the Harvest Information Program prior to hunting in each state. Hunters can get HIP registered in North Dakota through the Department's website.
- A federal waterfowl stamp is not required.
- Electronic and recorded calls, as well as shotguns capable of holding more than three shells, may be used to take light geese.
- Waterfowl rest areas designated for 2022 are not in effect during this conservation order; however, private lands within a rest area may be posted.
- Nontoxic shot is required for hunting light geese.
- Driving off established roads and trails is strongly discouraged during this hunt because of the likelihood of soft, muddy field conditions, and winter wheat that is planted across the state. To encourage positive landowner/hunter relations, please seek permission before attempting any off-road travel. Sprouted winter wheat is considered an unharvested crop, therefore hunting or off-road travel in winter wheat is not legal without landowner permission.
- Wanton waste of migratory game birds. No person shall hunt any migratory game bird without making a reasonable effort to retrieve downed birds, and retain them in his/her possession until processing.

Only snow geese, blue geese and Ross's geese are legal. Below are some identification characteristics of these species. See back side for descriptions of birds that are not legal during spring conservation order.





SNOW AND BLUE GEESE: Snows and blues are medium-sized geese measuring 25-31 inches from beak to tail, and weighing 4-6.5 pounds. They are different color phases of the same species, and have the same harsh, high-pitched call. Adult bill is pink with whitish tip, and feet are pink. Immature bill and feet are gray. Adult snow geese are all white except for black wing tips. Immature snow geese are dusky white with black wing tips. Adult blue geese have a white head and slate gray body color with some white on lower chest and abdomen. In spring, immature blue geese have all slate-gray bodies but head may be white or gray. Wings are slate gray with darker tips in both adult and immature.

ROSS'S GEESE: Ross's geese are identical to snow geese in coloration, but they have a shorter bill and neck, and are much smaller, weighing 3-4 pounds. Adults have a wart-like tissue at the base of the bill.

Learning to properly identify waterfowl before shooting is a hunter's responsibility. Only snow geese, blue geese and Ross's geese are legal during the spring conservation order, but Canada geese, white-fronted geese and tundra swans may be in the same area, or traveling in the same flock. Whooping cranes may also be present in the same area. A waterfowl identification booklet is available from the Game and Fish Department upon request.

THESE ARE NOT LEGAL SPECIES...

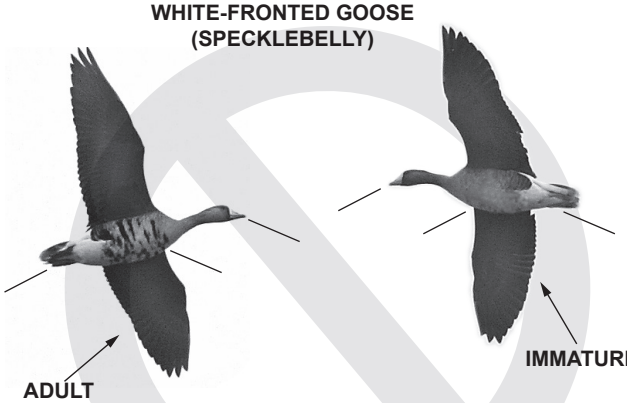
TUNDRA SWAN

WHOOPING CRANE

TUNDRA SWAN: Tundra swans are large white birds with long necks, weighing 10-23 pounds, more than twice as big as snow geese. Unlike snow geese, they do not have black wing tips, but their black feet and bill are evident in flight.

WHOOPING CRANE: Snowy white and stands more than four feet tall. In flight, its black wingtips are visible, its neck is extended and its long dark legs extend beyond the tail. It has a wingspan of 7.5 feet. Whoopers usually are found in small groups of seven or fewer.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (SPECKLEBELLY)



IMMATURE WHITEFRONT: No barring on breast, overall grayish in color, similar in appearance to immature blue geese.

CANADA GOOSE

WHITE-FRONTED GEESE: Medium-sized goose 27-30 inches long and 4.5-7 pounds. The body is grayish brown. Adults have black barring on breast and white on face around bill. Feet are yellow-orange. Bill is orange with adult showing some pink at base and tip. The call is a high-pitched ke-lee-lee-le. In flight the yellow-orange feet and black-barred breast of adults are evident.

CANADA GEESE: Several subspecies ranging from 2.5 to more than 15 pounds. Has a dark brown back and sides. Chest and belly vary from brownish to pearl gray, with larger subspecies usually lighter. Head and neck are jet black with white cheek and throat patch. Bill and feet are black. The call is a deep-throated honk. In flight their black head and neck with white cheek and throat are evident.

REPORT BANDED BIRDS

Banded birds provide important management information. If you shoot or find a bird with a federal band, report it at www.reportband.gov. The band number, and date and location of recovery are needed. You will receive information about the bird. The band is yours to keep.

Refer to the North Dakota 2022-23 Hunting and Trapping Guide for additional information. This spring light goose guide is provided for informational purposes and is not intended as a complete listing of regulations. For more specific information on regulations and laws, visit the Game and Fish Department website (for season proclamations) or for North Dakota state laws go to www.legis.nd.gov/cencode/T20-1.html.

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