

2026 LIGHT GOOSE CONSERVATION ORDER

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DATES: Feb. 16 – May 15, statewide

DAILY/POSSESSION LIMIT: Unlimited

LEGAL SPECIES: SNOWS, BLUES AND ROSS' GEESE.

Canada geese, white-fronted geese, or any other goose species **CANNOT** be taken.

SHOOTING HOURS: One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

NONTOXIC SHOT: Approved nontoxic shot includes steel shot, bismuth-tin, tungsten-polymer, tungsten matrix, and any combination of tungsten-iron-nickel-tin-copper-bismuth.

SHOTGUN SHELL CAPACITY: Shotguns with a shell capacity of more than 3 shells are allowed.

ELECTRONIC CALLS: Use of tapes of migratory bird calls or sounds, or electronically amplified imitations of bird calls is allowed.

STATE REFUGES: Except for the Wall Lake Game Bird Refuge in Hand County, Silver Lake in Hutchinson County, and the waterfowl refuges on the Missouri River that include Oahe Dam, Big Bend Dam and Fort Randall Dam, the taking of light geese is allowed in state Game, Game Bird and Waterfowl Refuges. Some refuges contain private land, and landowner permission is required to hunt those areas.

FEDERAL REFUGES: Some federal refuges may allow light goose hunting in a portion of the refuge. Check with specific refuge.

FEDERAL REGULATIONS FOR MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS

In addition to state regulations, these federal rules, enforced by both state and federal officers, apply to taking migratory game birds.

RESTRICTIONS

No person may take migratory game birds:

- » With trap, snare, net, crossbow, rifle, pistol, swivel gun, shotgun larger than 10 gauge, punt gun, battery gun, machine gun, fish hook, poison, drug, explosive or stupefying substance.
- » From a sink box (a low-floating device that conceals the hunter beneath the surface of the water).
- » From or with the aid of a car or other motor-driven land conveyance or an aircraft.
- » From a motorboat or sailboat unless the motor has been shut off or the sail furled and its progress has ceased.
- » By the use or aid of live decoys.
- » By driving, rallying or chasing birds with a motorized conveyance or a sailboat to put them in range of hunters.
- » By placing, exposing, or scattering feed such as corn, wheat, salt or other feed to lure migratory game birds to an area where hunters are attempting to take them. An area is considered to be baited for 10 days after the removal of the bait.

WANTON WASTE: All migratory game birds must be retrieved, if possible, and retained in the custody of the hunter in the field.

LIVE BIRDS: Crippled birds must be immediately killed.

LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Residents

All residents, regardless of age, need a 2025-26 Migratory Bird Certification (\$5) and one of the following licenses for which they qualify:

Combination (small game and fishing)	\$60
Senior Combination (small game and fishing)	\$43
Small Game	\$36
Youth Small Game, ages 12-17	\$5
Mentored Small Game	\$5
One-Day Small Game	\$15

- » Hunters 12 through 15 years of age must also possess a hunter safety card.
- » Details for the Mentored Hunt program can be found in the 2025 Hunting and Trapping Handbook or at the Game, Fish and Parks website at gfp.sd.gov.
- » Federal Waterfowl Stamp is not required.
- » Resident landowners do not need a state license to hunt their own land.

Nonresidents

All nonresidents, regardless of age, need a 2025-26 Migratory Bird Certification (\$5) and one of the following licenses for which they qualify:

Nonresident Spring Light Goose License	\$61
Youth Nonresident Spring Light Goose License (age 12 through 17) ...	\$21

- » The nonresident Spring Light Goose License is valid the entire season, statewide.
- » Licenses can be purchased on the GFP website or from license agents.
- » Nonresidents who are at least 12 years old may buy licenses to take light geese.
- » Hunters 12 through 15 years of age must also possess a hunter safety card or a license from another state to buy a South Dakota license.
- » Federal Waterfowl Stamp is not required.

Habitat Stamp

A Habitat Stamp is required for anyone 18 years of age or older who purchases or applies for a hunting, fishing, or furbearer license. This includes both residents and nonresidents. The Habitat Stamp must be purchased before obtaining or applying for a license or at the time of a license sale or application.

This publication is a supplement to the 2025 Hunting and Trapping Handbook. Unless excepted above, all rules and laws published in the 2025 Hunting and Trapping Handbook apply.

LEGAL SPECIES

Snow and Blue Geese

Length: 27-31 in.

Weight: 4-6 1/2 lbs.

Adult snow geese are white with black wing tips. Blue geese are a color phase of the snow goose.

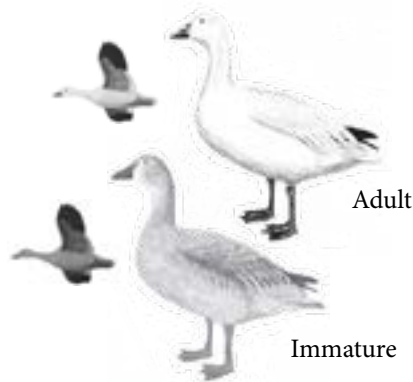
IN FLIGHT: Snow geese, blue geese and ross' geese all have black wing tips (primaries).

ROSS' GOOSE (no art)

The Ross' goose is similar to the snow goose, but smaller. In South Dakota, they associate with flocks of snow geese.

SNOW GOOSE (SNOWS)

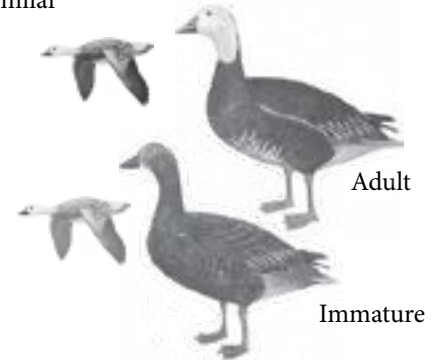
Sexes similar



BLUE GOOSE (BLUES)

Sexes similar

A color phase of the snow goose, sizes similar



NOT LEGAL SPECIES



Canada Geese

Canada geese are often called "honkers." Includes several races varying in weight from 3 to over 12 pounds. All have black heads and necks with a white cheek and throat patch. Similar habitats and voices. Sexes are identical.



White-fronted Geese

White-fronted geese are commonly called "speckle bellies" or "laughing geese." This medium-sized brown goose is distinguished in adult plumage by the striking black and white barring on the underparts. The head is dusky brown with a white mask.

IN FLIGHT: Black-barred or striping on under parts (chest) with Yellow-orange feet evident.

Length: 27-30 in.
Weight: 4 1/2-7 lbs.

SUNRISE/SUNSET

The following sunrise/sunset times are for Huron. For each 12 miles west, add 1 minute. For each 12 miles east, subtract 1 minute. Daylight Saving Time begins March 9.

DATE	RISE	SET
FEBRUARY		
16	7:308	6:03
20	7:24	6:08
23	7:19	6:13
26	7:14	6:17
28	7:11	6:19

DATE	RISE	SET
MARCH		
1	7:09	6:21
3	7:06	6:23
6	7:01	6:27
9	7:55	7:31
11	7:52	7:34
13	7:48	7:36
17	7:41	7:41
20	7:35	7:45
22	7:32	7:47
24	7:28	7:50
26	7:24	7:52
28	7:21	7:55
30	7:17	7:57

DATE	RISE	SET
APRIL		
1	7:13	8:00
3	7:10	8:02
6	7:04	8:06
9	6:59	8:10
11	6:55	8:12
14	6:50	8:16
17	6:45	8:19
20	6:40	8:23
22	6:37	8:26
24	6:34	8:28
26	6:30	8:31
28	6:27	8:33
30	6:24	8:35

DATE	RISE	SET
MAY		
1	6:23	8:37
3	6:20	8:39
5	6:17	8:41
7	6:15	8:44
9	6:12	8:46
11	6:10	8:48
13	6:07	8:51
15	6:05	8:53

