

South Dakota 2018 LOWER OAH WATERFOWL HUNTING GUIDE

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Photo © Jim Thompson Jr.





LOWER OAHE WATERFOWL ACCESS AREA RULES/RESTRICTIONS

GENERAL RULES FOR ALL LOWAA

- No “skybusting,” or taking long distance shots at birds that are out of range.
- NO LITTERING! Please remove all trash, including empty shotgun shells. Do not clean or pick birds on the area or in the road rights-of-way. Hunters are responsible for removing all litter.
- All vehicles must park in designated areas or safely along roads/section lines.
- Hunters should watch for livestock in the adjacent pastures. Be extra careful when livestock is present.
- A limited number of laser rangefinders will be available for check out on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Special accommodations for handicapped hunters can be made by calling 605.264.5380 at least one day before hunting; however, several days advance notice is recommended.
- These areas are open for hunting during the Spring Light Goose Conservation Order, on a first-come, first-served basis.



DECOY ONLY CONTROLLED HUNTING UNITS - REGISTRATION REQUIRED

-  - Striped blue shapes, restricted to waterfowl hunting only (upland game hunting NOT allowed)
-  - Solid blue shapes, upland game hunting allowed. (See ❶ rules below)

Registration, Drawing Process and Field Assignments

- **BIG GAME HUNTING IS NOT allowed in these fields.**
- Access trails are for registered hunters only.
- Registration site is a GFP trailer just south of the JES Farm headquarters. The site is along Grey Goose Road, two miles north of the Hughes County line OR four miles east of Highway 1804 from Okobojo Point turnoff.
- Tentatively, the registration site will be open beginning the first day of Unit 2 Canada Goose season. Daily registration is required. A random drawing will be conducted one hour before sunrise each morning to determine the order in which a hunting party can choose a field. Opening of the registration site may be changed depending the arrival of the geese.
- Registration of hunting parties closes EXACTLY ONE HOUR before sunrise each day.
- Registration forms will be provided at the site. Each hunting group must designate one person to handle registration and provide information regarding the other hunters in their group.
- EACH HUNTER MUST HAVE THEIR LICENSE WITH THEM IN ORDER TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR REGISTRATION!
- Hunting groups are limited to no more than six hunters.
- Field shooting over decoys only. GFP decoys available for checkout.
- Hunters must hunt from the pits while using registration fields that have pits located in them, unless otherwise noted on board in registration trailer.
- Decoy-only field hunting area will be closed on December 25 and will re-open on December 26.
- Hunters must remain within their decoy spread while hunting. Pass-shooting is not allowed in any of the registration fields.
- The phone number for the registration trailer is 605.264.5380. NO REGISTRATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED BY TELEPHONE!
- This phone number will have recorded outgoing information only and to assist with accommodations for handicapped hunters.

PUBLIC WATERFOWL HUNTING UNIT - NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED

-  - Striped green shapes on map, restricted to waterfowl hunting only (upland game hunting NOT allowed)
-  - Solid green shapes on map, upland game hunting allowed until geese arrive. (See ❶ rules below)

- **BIG GAME HUNTING IS NOT allowed in these fields.**
- Designated access trails on these waterfowl areas are for dropping off equipment only. Driving on the trails for other purposes (such as scouting) is prohibited.
- Waterfowl hunting is allowed anywhere within the marked field boundaries.
- Use of decoys is strongly encouraged. No blinds or pits are provided.
- Pass-shooting is permitted, but should be restricted to the field borders and fence lines.
- Upland game hunting is allowed anywhere within the solid green field boundaries until the geese arrive.
- Birds downed on the adjacent private property may only be picked up through unarmed retrieval.
- Fields are not divided into smaller hunting units. Choice locations will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Be considerate of hunters already in the field when arriving and leaving. Don't crowd other hunting parties using the area.

❶ UPLAND GAME HUNTING

- Upland game hunting may begin during the normal shooting times for pheasant during the early, youth and regular season and will be open daily until the geese arrive. Hunters can find information on geese arrival from the message board posted outside of the registration trailer, from the outgoing message on the phone at the registration site, and at gfp.sd.gov/hunting/waterfowl. Upland game hunting will be closed until the geese leave the area or until the end of the small game season, whichever is first. Upland game hunters may only park in designated areas and on designated access trails only. Please don't block the gates or trails.
- When the fields are open for upland game hunting, small game may be hunted in fields not occupied by goose hunters or farm machinery.

PASS-SHOOTING STRIPS AND PITS - NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED

- Yellow coded lines on map, Pass Shooting Strips/Canal
- Yellow dots on map, Pass Shooting Pits

- Designated and marked pits available on a first-come, first-served basis each day.
- All waterfowl hunters must be within designated pits while hunting. No one is allowed outside of the pit, except when retrieving downed birds.
- Birds downed on adjacent private property may only be picked up through unarmed retrieval.
- Only one pit per party of hunters is allowed. A group of hunters arriving at the unit together in one vehicle will be considered one party. One person alone cannot hold a pit. In cases where only one hunter is occupying a pit, another hunter can join that hunter in the pit. Pits have a minimum occupancy of two hunters, with a maximum party size of four hunters.
- Since the location of some pits may be difficult to find in the dark, it is recommended that hunters scout the area prior to hunting.
- Following harvest of the crops, additional pits/blinds may be provided in the cropland. If pits/blinds are added, directional signs will be erected and the pits/blinds will be marked.

For weekly waterfowl reports, please visit our website at:
GFP.SD.GOV/HUNTING/WATERFOWL

Questions or comments about hunting on all of these areas should be sent to:
**Game, Fish and Parks
Lower Oahe Access Plan
20641 SD Hwy 1806
Fort Pierre, SD 57532-6100**

LOWER OAHE WATERFOWL, DECOY ONLY CONTROLLED FIELD MANAGEMENT

The Department makes every attempt to manage the Lower Oahe Waterfowl Hunting Area to provide consistent hunting opportunity throughout the entire season by using management practices such as:

Closing fields to hunting: This allows waterfowl an opportunity to feed undisturbed, while still providing hunters with great opportunities in other fields adjacent to the closed area. This practice also helps to keep waterfowl in this area throughout the hunting season.

Requiring hunters to use the hunting pits in fields where pits are located: Pits in the registration fields have proven to be very popular for most of the hunters using the area. Requiring the hunters to hunt from pits allows the birds to feed elsewhere in the field for several days or weeks and sometimes most of the season. Many times these fields don't need to be closed, or for only short periods.

Closing areas to upland game hunting: This practice is used when waterfowl migrate into the Lower Oahe Waterfowl Hunting area AND begin consistently feeding in the decoy-only controlled hunting fields. Closing these areas to upland game hunting reduces disturbance to feeding waterfowl and provides better waterfowl hunting opportunities.

FARMING OPERATIONS

As you hunt, please remember farming operations and activities will continue on privately owned areas. The landowners participating in these programs have agreed to allow public hunting access, but also need to maintain their farming procedures. There may be times when farm machinery, ATVs or pickups will travel through the fields to complete daily farm work.

As responsible hunters, we need to be patient and tolerate any slight interruptions as the landowner will be quick and efficient in completing their task. Under joint cooperation among landowners, GFP and hunters, it is the intent of all involved to give the hunter better opportunities for a quality hunt.

Please do not block gates, crowd roads or hamper any normal farming operations. Being courteous and respectful will help ensure the future of hunting in these areas in particular and build good relations with private landowners.

Treat the land as if it were your own. Be considerate of other hunters. Respect the resource. Keep the land clean. Be safe.

LOWER OAHE ACCESS AREA

UNARMED RETRIEVAL

Unarmed retrieval of downed birds is permitted. Small game, including waterfowl, when shot in a lawful place may be retrieved from private property if the person is unarmed and does not use a vehicle. Retrieval should be in a direct line to and from the downed bird. The retrieval of downed birds should be immediate unless a delayed retrieval would substantially reduce disturbance to other hunters or persons using that property. Please be considerate of other hunters and landowners and minimize intrusion onto private lands.

DECOYS AVAILABLE

For hunters who do not own decoys, but would like to experience waterfowl hunting opportunities provided on the registration fields, GFP has decoys available to loan free of charge at the registration trailer.

DECOY LOANER TRAILER

In a continued effort to recruit and retain waterfowl hunters the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks, along with great sponsors has equipped three 6x12 enclosed trailers with either DOA or Big Foot full body decoys along with two dozen DOA or Big Foot sleeper shell decoys, two Banded layout blinds, two Cabela's layout blinds, Canada goose flags, along with ear and eye protection. Thanks to these program supporters, the trailers are FREE to use! For more information on reserving these trailers, visit: gfp.sd.gov/hunting/waterfowl



