



WEST VIRGINIA SECRETARY OF STATE
KRIS WARNER
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW DIVISION

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Office of West Virginia
Secretary Of State

**NOTICE OF FINAL FILING AND ADOPTION OF A LEGISLATIVE RULE AUTHORIZED
BY THE WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

AGENCY: Natural Resources TITLE-SERIES: 58-56
RULE TYPE: Legislative Amendment to Existing Rule: Yes Repeal of existing rule: No
RULE NAME: Special Migratory Game Bird Hunting
CITE STATUTORY AUTHORITY: §20-1-7(31)

The above rule has been authorized by the West Virginia Legislature.

Authorization is cited in (house or senate bill number) SB 374

Section §60-10-5(g) Passed On 3/2/2026 12:00:00 AM

This rule is filed with the Secretary of State. This rule becomes effective on the following date:

April 30, 2026

This rule shall terminate and have no further force or effect from the following date:

August 01, 2031

BY CHOOSING 'YES', I ATTEST THAT THE PREVIOUS STATEMENT IS TRUE AND CORRECT.

Yes

Garner Marks -- By my signature, I certify that I am the person authorized to file legislative rules, in accordance with West Virginia Code §29A-3-11 and §39A-3-2.

**TITLE 58
LEGISLATIVE RULE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
DIVISION OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

**SERIES 56
SPECIAL MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING**

§58-56-1. General.

1.1. Scope. -- This rule establishes regulations when hunting migratory game birds in West Virginia.

1.2. Authority. -- W. Va. Code §20-1-7(31).

1.3. Filing Date. -- April 30, 2026.

1.4. Effective Date. -- April 30, 2026.

1.5. Sunset Provision. -- This rule shall terminate and have no further force or effect on August 1, 2031.

1.6. Seasons in General. -- All hunting seasons are subject to change under the provisions of W. Va. Code §20-1-7(7). Opening and closing dates are inclusive and time periods are prevailing time unless otherwise noted in this rule. Sunday hunting is legal in accordance with the provisions of W. Va. Code §20-2-5.

§58-56-2. Definitions.

2.1. "Aggregate" means the total bag or possession limit of similar kinds of migratory game birds.

2.2. "Bait" means shelled, shucked, or unshucked corn, wheat or other grain, salt, any other feed or edible enticement, or any non-edible facsimile of an edible enticement.

2.3. "Baited Area" means any area where baiting occurs.

2.4. "Baiting" means the direct or indirect placing, exposing, depositing, distributing, or scattering of bait so as to constitute for migratory game birds a lure, attraction, or enticement to, on, or over any areas where hunters are attempting to take them.

2.5. "Blind Area" means the area within 75 yards of the hunter's assigned blind.

2.6. "Migratory Game Birds" means doves, rails, snipe, and woodcock for which open seasons are prescribed in Section 4 of the W. Va. Code of State Rules, Series 58 Title 55, Migratory Bird Hunting.

2.7. "Prevailing Time" means either Eastern Standard Time or Eastern Daylight Time as established by the United States Congress.

§58-56-3. General Migratory Bird Hunting Rules.

3.1. Dual Violation. Violation of any provision of this rule is also a violation of federal migratory bird hunting regulations pursuant to Migratory Bird Hunting, 50 C.F.R. Part 20 Subpart H.

3.2. Illegal Methods of Taking Migratory Game Birds.

3.2.1. No person may take migratory game birds with a trap, snare, net, crossbow, rifle, pistol, swivel gun, shotgun larger than 10-gauge, punt gun, battery gun, machine gun, fishhook, poison, drug, explosive, or stupefying substance.

3.2.2. No person may take migratory game birds with a shotgun capable of holding more than three shells, unless it is plugged with a one-piece filler which is incapable of being removed without disassembling the gun.

3.2.3. No person may take migratory game birds from a sinkbox (i.e., a low floating device having a depression affording the hunter a means of concealment beneath the surface of the water).

3.2.4. No person may take migratory game birds from or with the aid or use of a motor vehicle, other land conveyance, or an aircraft of any kind including a drone or other unmanned aircraft.

3.2.5. No person may take migratory game birds from or by means of any motorboat or sailboat unless the motor has been completely shut off or the sail furled and progress from the motor or the sail has ceased.

3.2.6. No person may take migratory game birds by the use or aid of live birds as decoys.

3.2.7. No person may take migratory game birds by the use of records or tapes of bird calls or sounds, or recorded or electrically-amplified imitations of bird calls.

3.2.8. No person may take migratory game birds by concentrating, driving, rallying, or chasing the birds with any motorized land, water, or air conveyance, including a drone or other unmanned aircraft, or any sailboat.

3.2.9. No person may take migratory game birds by the aid of baiting, or on or over any baited area. Hunters should be aware that a baited area is considered to be baited for 10 days after the removal of the bait and is not necessary for the hunter to know an area is baited to be in violation of federal regulations and section 3.2. of this rule.

3.3. Wanton Waste. A hunter shall retrieve all migratory game birds killed or crippled, if possible and retain them in his or her custody in the field.

3.4. Tagging. No person may give, put, or leave migratory game birds at any place, or in the custody of another person, unless the birds are tagged by the hunter with the following information:

3.4.1. The hunter's signature;

3.4.2. The hunter's address;

3.4.3. The total number of birds involved, by species; and

3.4.4. The date on which each bird was killed.

3.5. Field Dressing. No person may completely field dress migratory game birds, except doves and band-tailed pigeons, and then transport the birds from the field. The head or one fully-feathered wing must remain attached to all birds while being transported from the field to the hunters home or to a migratory bird preservation facility, as defined in Migratory Bird Hunting, 50 C.F.R. §20.11.

3.6. Shipment. No person may ship migratory game birds unless the package is marked on the outside with the following information:

3.6.1. The name and address of the person sending the birds;

3.6.2. The name and address of the person to whom the birds are being sent; and

3.6.3. The number of birds, by species, contained in the package.

3.7. Importation. For information regarding the importation of migratory game birds killed in another country, hunters should consult Migratory Bird Hunting, 50 C.F.R. §20.61 through §20.66. One fully-feathered wing must remain attached to all migratory game birds being transported between the port of entry and the hunter's home or to a migratory bird preservation facility, as defined in Migratory Bird Hunting, 50 C.F.R. §20.11. No person may import migratory game birds killed in any foreign country, except Canada, unless the birds are dressed (except as required in Migratory Bird Hunting, 50 C.F.R. §20.63), drawn, and the head and feet removed. No person may import migratory game birds belonging to another person.

3.8. Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program. No persons, except those legally exempt from purchasing a hunting license, may take or attempt to take migratory game birds in West Virginia after July 1, 1998, unless they are enrolled annually in the Federal Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program as required by Migratory Bird Hunting, 50 C.F.R. §20.20.

3.8.1. The hunter shall carry current proof of annual enrollment while hunting migratory game birds.