

Hunting Geese in Mississippi

by

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Mississippi hunting seasons typically provide an abundance of opportunities for goose hunters. Whether it's early September Canada geese, white-fronted geese in December, or snow geese in February, goose hunters have plenty of options when planning their hunting trips. And with the abundant goose populations of recent years, all of these options provide hunters with a very good chance of producing great memories.

“Early Season” Canada Goose

The first 15 days of September in Mississippi are generally selected as the early Canada goose hunting season, also called the resident Canada goose season. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service allows states to select a maximum of 15 days to hunt resident Canada geese, populations of geese that stay in the local area year-round. In Mississippi, this hunting season provides a good early hunting opportunity for avid waterfowl hunters, while also reducing populations of resident geese (estimated at around 31,000 for Mississippi). Resident Canada geese can cause problems in residential areas during summer months when they are nesting and raising young. September goose hunting is usually done in dry field settings with layout blinds and full-body goose decoys. Other opportunities include reservoirs and other large bodies of water that harbor populations year-round. The daily bag limit for the September Canada goose season is typically 5 birds, with a 10 bird possession limit.

“Regular Season” Goose

All species of geese found in Mississippi have open hunting seasons that fall in line with the duck hunting seasons (generally late November through January). These “regular” goose hunting seasons slightly differ among species, but the bulk of hunting days overlap with open duck season. When this overlap occurs, waterfowl hunters enjoy the opportunity to harvest Canada geese, white-fronted geese (also known as “speckle-bellies”), snow geese, and Ross’s geese. During this time of year, geese can be hunted in a variety of ways; including layout blinds with elaborate goose decoy spreads in fields, or simply blowing a goose call at lone passing birds from a duck blind and hoping a few respond.

Light Goose Conservation Order Season

In 1999, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service implemented what is known as the light goose conservation order. This special hunting season was started as an effort to reduce populations of snow, blue, and Ross’s geese (collectively known as “light geese”) because of their extensive degradation of habitat on arctic tundra breeding grounds. Generally, this season is open any time all other waterfowl hunting seasons are closed. There is no bag limit during this season, and hunting methods are liberalized to allow for higher harvests. For example, hunters are allowed

to hunt with un-plugged shotguns and electronic calling devices, and hunting hours are extended to 30 minutes after sunset.

For more information on Mississippi waterfowl regulations or hunting opportunities, visit our website at www.mdwfp.com/waterfowl or call 662-432-2199.