

2016-2017

GENERAL HUNTING REGULATIONS



Assateague Island National Seashore

National Park Service





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INTRODUCTION

Public hunting within the boundaries of Assateague Island National Seashore (Seashore) is recognized as a recreational activity in the legislation that established the Seashore (Public Law 89-195). The regulations for hunting within the Seashore are designed to provide a safe and meaningful experience for hunters.

Hunting is legal only in specifically designated areas and at specifically designated dates and times within the Seashore (36 CFR 1.5(f)). State and federal regulations governing hunting within the legislative jurisdiction of the park include the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), Code of Federal Regulations (Title 36 & 50), and United States Code (Title 16).

Only those species listed in this plan may be hunted by the indicated weaponry during the designated season within the Maryland portion of Assateague Island National Seashore.

******Hunting will be in accordance with applicable state regulations and the following special Assateague Island National Seashore regulations******

New for 2016-2017

- An ongoing infestation of Pine Bark beetles continues to kill pine trees on the island. There are currently five (5) areas (see hunting maps) where a significant number of pines are dead, with associated snags and 'widow-makers'. During wind events, these locations can experience falling dead timber which can cause serious injury. The use of the trees in these areas for hunting purposes is dangerous and discouraged. When setting up for a stationary hunting location you should make certain that you are not under, or in, the fall line of surrounding dead trees.
- The maximum age for hunters participating on the Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days has been increased from 15 to 16 years of age.

Legal Shooting Hours

- Deer: Daily **shooting hours** are one half hour before sunrise to one half hour after sunset
- Migratory Game Bird: **Shooting hours** are one half hour before sunrise to sunset
- Rabbit and Fox: **Shooting hours** are one half hour before sunrise to one half hour after sunset

There is NO Sunday hunting for any season



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GENERAL INFORMATION

Hunter Registration

Hunters at the Seashore are no longer required to obtain a hunter ID registration number.

Hunters are required to sign in and sign out each time they enter or leave the hunting zone using their name and state hunting license number. All hunters must check out no later than one-and-one-half hours after the end of official hunting time.

Closures and Restrictive Project Areas

Due to park research, management projects, and species protection, portions of the hunting area may be closed for the season or on a day to day basis. It is the hunter's responsibility to check with the ranger station for these closures. Hunters are responsible for being aware of any daily closures in the hunting zone. Hunters are prohibited from entering into and/or shooting into any signed or closed area.

Hunters are prohibited from interfering with scientific research within the Seashore. All fenced, posted or signed areas are not to be disturbed. Hunters should avoid moving or altering any study equipment, including PVC pipe, various posts, buckets, fencing, antennas or small cages. If there is any doubt as to what an item is, leave it alone. Researchers and other staff will be actively working at all hours in the field throughout the hunting season.

Parking Areas

Duck blinds and waterfowl hunting areas have designated parking areas. The parking areas are indicated on the map and are marked by signage in the field. Waterfowl hunters are to park in the designated area that is associated with their assigned duck blind/waterfowl hunting area.

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In addition to applicable State regulations as well as those listed elsewhere in this guide that are specific to seasons, **it is unlawful to:**

- Construct or use permanent blinds or tree stands. (Hunters may use portable hunting stands that do not damage vegetation; however, stands and ground blinds **must be removed at the end of each hunting day**)
- Use "screw in" steps.
- Use trail and route marking devices such as reflective tacks and flagging.
- Cut, thin, prune, remove, or damage any vegetation.
- Hunt with handguns of any kind. Muzzle loading handguns are **NOT** permitted during muzzleloader season.
- Possess a loaded and/or readily available weapon outside of any hunting zone. When exiting any hunting zone, weapons **MUST** be unloaded (including the magazine or bolt), cased, and stored in a manner that will prevent their ready use
- Use of laser sights.
- Discharge any weapon for a purpose other than hunting, except for making a muzzleloader safe at the end of an unsuccessful hunt.
- Pursue, shoot, shoot at, lie in wait for, or kill any four-legged animal within 300 yards of a waterfowl blind or a waterfowl hunter during the Waterfowl Season.



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- Bait, hunt over an area known to be baited, and fail to report baiting.
- Fail to report all wounded wildlife to the Ranger Station. (Hunters are required to make a concerted effort in locating (tracking) wounded game and are required to call the Ranger Station, (410) 641-3030, press 3 then 1, if tracking a deer will interfere with checking out on time)
- Field dress game in the campgrounds/developed areas of the park. The field dressing of game is to be completed *in the field*.

DEER HUNTING REGULATIONS

Some Prohibited Activities

- Sunday hunting.
- Driving deer. Two or more hunters driving deer through an area towards standers positioned for a shot.
- Dogs cannot be used to hunt deer.
- Hunting with a rifle.
- Hunting with a shotgun rifle combination.
- Baiting deer.

Deer Check-In

All hunters are required to sign in and sign out at the Hunter Station that is located outside the Ranger Station or inside during regular business hours, each time they enter or leave the **hunting zone**. All game taken must be recorded at the Hunter Station during the hunter sign out process. **All hunters are also required to register their deer with Maryland Department of Natural Resources using the Telecheck System. The hunt code for Assateague Island National Seashore is 585.**

Hunter Limits during Shotgun/Muzzleloader Season (Excluding the LATE SEASON Sika Hunt)

Due to potential safety problems and overcrowding, the National Park Service (NPS) limits the number of deer hunters and/or aids permitted in the hunting zone at any one time to **140**. This number is reduced to **125** for the bonus hunt. After this limit is reached, hunters will be admitted to the hunting area on a one-off one-on basis.

Junior Deer Hunt Days

The Junior Deer Hunt Days are for hunters age 16 or younger only. These junior hunters must have completed a hunter education course and be accompanied by a licensed (or exempt from license requirement) unarmed adult age 21 or older.

Specific Regulations for the LATE SEASON Sika Hunt:

The maximum number of hunters allowed in the Southern Hunt Zone will be **125**. Shotgun and muzzleloader are the only weapons approved during this hunt. **NO** white-tailed deer may be harvested. Access to the hunt zone will be on a first-come, first served basis. Hunters must sign in at the ranger station, no earlier than **0500** the morning of the hunt. Hunters will be unable to access the hunt zones prior to 0500. Once the 125 limit is reached, additional hunters will be allowed to stay on "stand-by" status and will be signed in. Access to the hunt zone will be on a "one-off, one-on" basis, as hunters sign out of the hunt zone throughout the day. Hunters must be physically present while waiting on "stand-by."



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DEER SEASON & BAG LIMITS

Season takes are independent. Each season is separate and takes during that open season in no way count towards another season, except for the Late Season Sika hunt.

Deer taken on Assateague Island *will not* count toward State bag limits.

****It is required that one (1) of the first two (2) Sika deer harvested under the bag limit for each independent season be *antlerless*.****

Deer outfitted with radio neck collars and/or ear tags *can* be harvested.

2016-2017 DEER SEASONS & BAG LIMITS – ANTLERED & ANTLERLESS DEER
*****One (1) Antlerless White-tailed deer may be harvested during the ENTIRE 2016-2017 hunting season (Excluding the Late Season Sika hunt)*****
 The following seasons will be CLOSED in the Southern Hunt Zone during the LATE Season Sika hunt: Archery, White-tailed deer, Rabbit, Fox, Mourning Dove, and portions of Duck

Season	Dates	Total Bag Limit	Notes
Archery	<u>Northern and Southern Zone:</u> Oct. 1 – Jan. 31	<u>Sika:</u> 2 antlered 4 antlerless <u>White-tailed:</u> 1 antlered	Season CLOSED to archery hunters Jan. 14 & 16
Muzzleloader (All Types)	<u>Southern Zone:</u> Oct. 20 - Oct. 22 Oct. 24 – Oct. 29	<u>Sika:</u> 2 antlered 4 antlerless <u>White-tailed:</u> 1 antlered	
Shotgun Or Muzzleloader	<u>Southern Zone:</u> Nov. 26 – Dec. 3 Dec. 5 – Dec. 10 <u>Late Season Sika Hunt (Southern Zone):</u> Jan. 14 & 16	<u>Sika:</u> 2 antlered 4 antlerless <u>White-tailed:</u> 1 antlered <u>Late Sika Hunt:</u> 2 antlered 4 antlerless	Muzzleloaders can be used during the shotgun season. Bag limits are for the shotgun even if taken by muzzleloader.
Junior Hunt Days	<u>Northern and Southern Zone:</u> Nov. 11	<u>White-tailed Deer:</u> 1 antlered 1 antlerless <u>Sika:</u> 2 antlered 4 antlerless	Separate Bag Limit: Deer taken by junior hunters during the Junior Hunt Day do not count towards the regular Archery, Muzzleloader, or Shotgun season bag limits Zones: Northern zone open to archery only.



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RABBIT & FOX REGULATIONS

Some PROHIBITED Activities

- Use of **dogs** when hunting rabbit or fox
- Trapping of any furbearers
- The use of electronic calling devices
- Hunting within 300 yards of any waterfowl blind or waterfowl hunter
- Hunting by falconry
- Use or possession of buckshot
- Use of handguns and rifles

RABBIT & FOX SEASON & BAG LIMITS

2016-2017 RABBIT SEASON & BAG LIMITS		
Species	Open Season	Daily Bag Limit
Eastern Cottontail Rabbit	Nov. 5 – Jan. 31	4

2016-2017 FOX SEASON & BAG LIMITS		
Species	Open season	Daily Bag Limit
Fox (Red & Gray)	Nov. 15 – Jan. 31	No Limit

MOURNING DOVE SEASON & BAG LIMITS

Species	Season	Daily Bag Limit
Mourning Dove	Oct. 21 – Nov. 19 Dec. 7 – Jan. 7	15



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WATERFOWL REGULATIONS

Waterfowl Hunting Season Fee

The Seashore charges an annual \$20.00 Waterfowl Hunting Season Fee. This will be charged once for each waterfowl hunting season (this includes both splits) and may be purchased at the Ranger Station during normal business hours.

Hunting Areas for Waterfowl

Most constructed blinds have been removed and replaced by markers to delineate "hunting areas" to allow waterfowl hunters the use of portable blinds and anchored boats. Hunting areas will be identified by marked posts in each particular zone. Hunters **must hunt within 100 yards** of the marked post or blind. Hunters must hunt from a stationary position and may not walk hunt in their assigned area. Rangers can provide information regarding the type of blind site or hunting areas.

Alternate Hunt Areas for Waterfowl

Two additional hunt areas (designated by PVC post) will be established along existing hunt area trails at Area C and Area 21. These additional hunt areas will provide more options for waterfowl hunters, to adjust their location based on habitat, weather conditions and/or waterfowl movement. Accessibility will also be improved by the shorter distance to travel to reach the alternate locations. The alternate sites will not be available independent of their primary hunt areas. For example, only hunters who have drawn or registered for A-21 will be able to hunt A-21 alternate. The existing restrictions and regulations established for hunt areas also apply to the alternate locations.

Assignment of Blind Sites

Hunters must register for all blinds and hunting areas in person at the Ranger Station. A daily random drawing for waterfowl sites is held at 5:00 am most mornings, although self-registration can be scheduled at the discretion of park rangers. Hunters should not arrive before 4:30 am. All hunters signed in before 5:00 am can participate in the drawing; however, hunters are **NOT** guaranteed a site in which to hunt. Depending on the number of hunters participating in the drawing, there may be times when there are more hunters than available sites. Hunters not drawing a site may be turned away until a site is vacated. Waterfowl hunters wishing to switch blinds in the field can do so by contacting a ranger at the Ranger Station via phone *after 8:00am*, at (410) 641-3030, press 3 then 1. Hunters are required to **speak to an employee** at the Ranger Station. Messages/voicemails are not valid.

If any sites are available following the morning drawing, the remaining sites will be assigned on a first-come first-served basis. Individuals wanting boat-in sites who choose not to participate in the morning draw may register for vacant boat-in sites by phone. Hunters should call (410) 641-3030, press 3 then 1, between 5:15 a.m. and 5:30 a.m. or after 8:30 a.m. to register for boat-in sites. **There may be no more than three people, including any observers, total in any blind or area.**

Hunter Registration

All hunters and observers accompanying hunters are required to sign in and sign out at the Ranger Station each time they enter or leave the hunting zone. All persons accompanying hunters and not



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hunting should write the word "Observer" in the Hunter ID# box. Groups in blinds or areas are limited to a maximum of three persons, and one gun per hunter. An exception may be made for the physically challenged blind. Contact ranger station for details.

Hunters **MUST** sign-out in person at the Ranger Station. Hunters registered for boat-in blinds are required to check out by phone, (410) 641-3030, press 3 then 1, **within two hours** of the end of official shooting hours. **Hunters must report any wildlife taken. Failure to properly checkout of sites or report any wildlife taken may result in restricted or revoked hunting privileges, and/or fines.**

Temporary Blinds

Same-day set up and removal of temporary (portable) blinds is permitted in designated hunting areas. Portable blinds or blind materials brought into Assateague Island National Seashore **MUST NOT** contain any forms of live or dead vegetation (ie. Realgrass, Instagrass, Fastgrass, Raffiagrass, etc.) Camouflage cloth or material is recommended. The use of common reed (*Phragmites australis*) is prohibited.

Accessible Blind for the Physically Challenged – Blind "A"

The Seashore maintains one blind (Blind "A") for hunters with physical challenges. This blind may be reserved in advance by calling (410) 641-3030, press 3 then 1. Hunters with reservations **MUST** check in at the Ranger Station no later than 9:00 a.m. the day of their scheduled hunt via phone or in person or they will lose their reservation. Reservations can be made beginning September 1, 2016. Hunters with physical challenges may reserve the blind for a maximum of six days total per person during waterfowl season. Hunters with physician verification of physical challenges have priority access to the blind. The National Park Service reserves the right to cancel any reservation made for this blind by a hunter who cannot provide written verification of a disability. Written verification should be from the hunter's primary care physician. It is recommended that all hunters using this blind be accompanied by hunting partners. Contact the Ranger Station for additional information.

Temporary closing of boat-in blinds

Weather conditions may result in restricting the safe access to the park's boat-in hunting blinds. Such conditions include prolonged below average temperatures, thick ice and/or heavy winds and/or a small craft advisory. In the interest of safety, the park may institute closures of specific or all boat-in blinds when a combination of these conditions exists.

National Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days

Hunters age 16 or younger may participate in National Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days if they possess a valid license (or are exempt from the license requirement) and a printed receipt showing the proof of purchase of the 2016-2017 Maryland Migratory Game Bird Stamp. A Federal Migratory Bird and Conservation Stamp **is not required of those 15 and younger**. The stamp **is required of those who are 16 years old**. Junior waterfowl hunters must be accompanied by a licensed (or exempt from license requirement) and unarmed adult age 21 or older. The accompanying adult may not possess a hunting weapon and may not participate in other waterfowl seasons that are open on the youth days. The bag limits for the Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days are: 6 ducks no more than: 4 mallards (only 2 hens), 3 wood ducks, 2 scaup, 2 redheads, 2 pintails, 2 hooded mergansers, 2 canvasback, 1 black duck, 1 fulvous tree duck, 1 mottled duck, 5 seaducks (no more than 4 scoters, 4 long-tailed ducks, and 4 eiders), 2 Canada Geese, 2 brant, 25 light geese, 15 coots.



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Waterfowl Hunting Regulations

- Waterfowl shall be hunted only from within 100 yards of a numbered NPS-owned blind or numbered hunting area (except Blind A).
- Trained dogs are permitted for waterfowl retrieval provided they are leashed elsewhere in the park.
- Walk hunting to drive or "kick-up" waterfowl is prohibited. Using dogs to "kick up" waterfowl is also prohibited.
- No firearms shall be discharged from outside a blind or hunting area unless the hunter is actively attempting to retrieve downed and crippled waterfowl.
- Parties in blinds or areas are limited to 3 persons and 1 shotgun per hunter.
- Hunters under 16 years of age must be accompanied by a licensed adult 21 years old or older.
- Hunters shall not enter the public waterfowl hunting area more than one hour before legal shooting time and shall be out of the blind or area 45 minutes after the close of legal shooting time.
- Hunters shall remove spent shells and garbage from the blind or hunting areas.
- Hunters using NPS-owned blinds or areas shall enter and leave the hunting area via designated routes on the island.
- The leaving of decoys or equipment at a blind site for the purpose of holding occupancy is prohibited.



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WATERFOWL SEASON & BAG LIMITS

Possession Limit for all migratory game birds is three times the daily bag limit, unless otherwise noted.

2016-2017 DUCKS, COOTS, & MERGANSERS SEASONS & BAG LIMITS

Species	Open Season	Daily Bag Limit
Ducks, Coots, and Mergansers	Nov. 12- Nov. 25 Dec. 13 – Jan. 28	6 ducks, no more than: 4 mallards (only 2 hens), 3 wood ducks, 2 scaup, 2 redheads, 2 pintails, 2 hooded mergansers, 2 canvasback, 1 black duck, fulvous tree duck, 1 mottled duck, 5 seaducks (no more than 4 scoters, 4 long-tailed ducks, and 4 eiders). All other species of ducks may be taken up to the 6 duck limit
Black Duck	Nov. 12 - Nov. 25 Dec. 13 - Jan. 28	1
National Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days	Nov. 5 & Feb. 11	Limited to Developed Area Only

2015-2016 SEA DUCKS, GEESE, AND BRANT SEASONS & BAG LIMITS

Species	Open Season	Daily Bag Limit
Sea Ducks (Scoters, Lon-tailed Duck, and Eiders)	Nov. 12 - Jan 13	5 (no more than 4 scoters, 4 long- tailed ducks, and 4 eiders)
Canada Goose Atlantic Population	Nov. 19 - Nov. 25 Dec. 16 – Jan. 28	2
Atlantic Brant	Dec. 12 – Jan. 31	2
Light Goose	Nov. 28- Dec. 10	25



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Hunting Zones

The attached hunting maps show the designated hunting zones. The hatch-marked areas on the maps delineates "no hunting" areas. Public hunting is prohibited in all of the hatch-marked areas. Legal hunting areas are as follows:

SOUTHERN HUNT ZONE: Deer, Fox, Rabbit & Mourning Dove

Northern Boundary

The northern boundary of the deer hunting zone is the east-west "double-track" trail located south of "South Ocean Beach Parking." It is marked with "No Hunting" Signs. Hunting is permitted south of this line.

Southern Boundary

The southern boundary is the Maryland-Virginia State Line. A beach-to-bay fence line delineates the boundary.

Eastern Boundary

The white markers on the beach east of the primary dunes define the eastern boundary. These white markers also indicate the western limits of the Over Sand Vehicle Route Zone. Hunters may not hunt east (ocean side) of these markers. OSV users may not drive west (bayside) of these markers, except at designated crossings. Parking west of these markers is prohibited unless it is in a designated parking area. The hunting zone is primarily accessed by vehicles which have a valid Over Sand Vehicle zone permit. Hunters who do not possess a permit can access the hunting area by parking in the "South Ocean Beach" parking area and walking south on the trail until they enter the hunting area. Before entering or exiting the hunting area, hunters must unload their weapons.

NORTHERN HUNT ZONE: Deer (Archery Only)

The northern 10 Kilometers (6 miles) of Assateague Island National Seashore that lies north of Assateague State Park is too flat and narrow to permit the use of firearms. **This portion of the island is designated as an archery-only Sika and White-tailed deer hunting area.** The Northern Hunt Zone allows for boat-in and walk-in opportunities as listed below.

Northern Hunt Zone hunters may reserve no more than 5 days a month for each month of archery season (October–January). Reservations are recommended. Reservations can be made by calling (410) 641-3030, press 3 then 1. Each hunter's name and state hunting license number must be provided for each reserved spot in either the walk-in (6 hunters max.) or boat-in areas (4 hunters max.). Hunters with reservations **MUST** check in at the Ranger Station no later than 9:00 a.m. the day of their scheduled hunt via phone or in person or they will lose their reservation. Reservations can be made beginning September 1, 2016. Hunters without reservations interested in same day hunting must check-in at Ranger Station. Any open spaces will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.



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Northern Hunt Zone Boat-In

This area begins at the Ocean City inlet and goes south to kilometer 6.0. From the water, the southern boundary is located east of Buoy 14 and will be marked on land by a white PVC post marked with a #6. A maximum of 4 hunters by boat will be permitted to hunt this zone. Hunters traveling by boat must check in and out by telephone 8:30am-4pm at (410) 641-3030, press 3 then 1, or in person at the Ranger Station. Boat-in hunters are required to launch from a local public boat ramp. All deer harvested must be called into the Ranger Station.

Northern Hunt Zone Walk-In

This area begins at the National Seashore and Assateague State Park boundary line. The boundary is identifiable by the east/west trail that runs from the clam shell road, west towards duck blind "A" (handicapped accessible duck blind). The Walk-In area extends north from that trail to the Ocean City Inlet. A maximum of 6 hunters by foot will be permitted to hunt this zone. Parking for the Northern Hunt Zone Walk-In will be in the northwest corner of the Assateague State Park parking lot. **Walk-in hunters without reservations must sign-in and sign-out in person at the ranger station. Walk-in hunters are prohibited from driving or boating in to retrieve game.**



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For additional information see the "Maryland Guide to Hunting and Trapping 2016-17" and/or the State of Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources website at www.dnr.state.md.us

For any questions on the pre-mentioned hunting season regulations please contact
U.S. Park Ranger I. Morton (Hunting Program Coordinator at Assateague Island N.S.)
Office: 410-629-6047
E-mail: ian_morton@nps.gov

How to Contact Us
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Deborah R. Darr

-Superintendent

8/10/16

Date