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MDC
Photo by MDC, courtesy Missouri Department of Conservation

Jan. 15-20, 2026, Jan. 22-27, 2026

Jan. 29-31, 2026

More information about MDC-managed waterfowl hunt at Fellows Lake

Fellows Lake is in Greene County, north of Springfield, and is owned by City Utilities of Springfield. MDC oversees waterfowl and deer hunting along with fisheries management at the reservoir. In previous years, waterfowl hunting was on a first-come, first-served basis. In cooperation with City Utilities, a managed waterfowl hunt was adopted to ensure hunters know when and where they are selected to hunt.

Earlier this year, Missouri residents entered an application period for the online draw system. Hunters were randomly chosen, selected and notified. MDC scheduled 12 hunts spanning 6 date ranges, including having an American Disabilities Act (ADA) draw. Additionally, selected hunters were required to attend a pre-hunt orientation in November at MDC's Springfield Conservation Nature Center, 4601 S. Nature Center Way.

Waterfowl Hunting at Fellows Lake

Unless exempt, all hunters participating in the Fellows Lake waterfowl hunts must possess a small game hunting permit, a migratory bird hunting permit, and a federal duck stamp. Statewide daily and possession limits apply. Hunting is allowed from one-half hour before sunrise until 1 p.m. during the designated hunting dates. Hunters are required to use non-toxic shot.

Hunters at Fellows Lake may hunt from their own blinds, which they can set up at eight specified sites on the south side of Fellows Lake. This provision allows individuals to hunt from blinds they have built themselves and, thus, have been constructed to fit personal preferences, comforts, and needs. (Commercially manufactured blinds are permitted.)

Hunters need to remember that decoys, boats, and other equipment used for waterfowl hunting can transport invasive plant species from one body of water to another. Hunters should clean, drain, and dry all waterfowl hunting equipment before and after the hunt.

More information on online draw system

Hunters who are interested in hunting waterfowl on Fellows Lake in the future will need to apply via the online draw system.

Information about the Fellows Lake managed waterfowl hunt and other managed waterfowl hunts in the state can be found at: https://mdc.mo.gov/hunting-trapping/species/waterfowl/managed-hunts-waterfowl

More information about waterfowl hunting at Fellows Lake can also be obtained by calling the MDC Southwest Regional office in Springfield at 417-895-6880.

MDC ENCOURAGES PUBLIC TO USE CAUTION AMIDST "BIRD FLU" OUTBREAK

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is actively monitoring reports of sick and dead waterfowl, such as geese and ducks, and raptors across the state. Testing of these birds has confirmed the cause to be Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), or "bird flu."

Avian influenza spreads among birds through contact with infected feces, saliva, or nasal discharges. Migratory birds traveling along North American flyways can carry the virus and it can move between wild birds and domestic poultry. Symptoms to look for in sick birds include tremors, head tilting, lethargy, loss of coordination, inability to fly or walk properly, or trouble standing upright.

While the risk from HPAI to the general public remains low, sporadic human infections have occurred usually after close exposure. MDC encourages hunters and others to take precautions:

For hunters:

Dress harvested game birds in the field or in an area away from poultry and other birds.

Dispose of carcasses and waste properly. Seal them in trash bags and place them in household trash or at a permitted landfill. Proper disposal helps protect raptors, including bald eagles, which are often scavengers and are highly susceptible to avian influenza.

Allow all hunting gear, boats, and waders to dry completely between trips to help prevent spreading the virus between locations.

For the public:

Avoid touching dead or sick birds.

Report sightings of dead geese, other waterfowl, raptors, or other large birds at short.mdc.mo.gov/4KD.

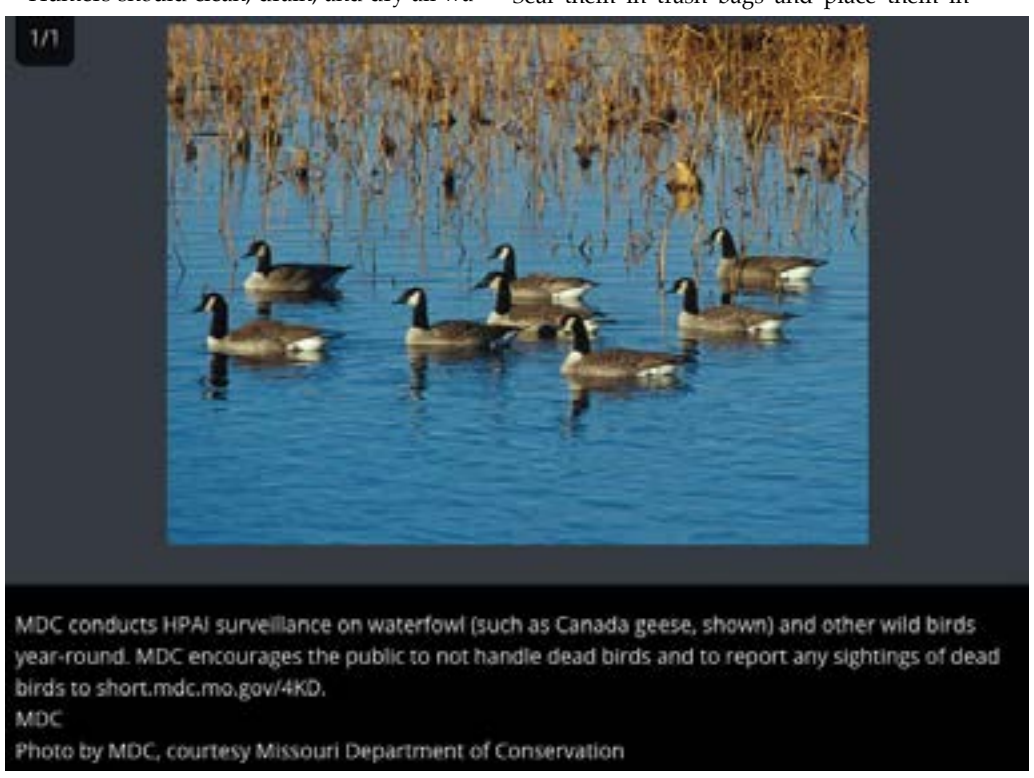
Do not report songbirds. HPAI has not been detected in any songbirds in Missouri. These species are not considered a significant concern regarding the virus.

Keep pets away from dead or dying wildlife.

If needing to handle a dead bird, wear gloves (disposable if available), consider a face mask, and wash hands thoroughly when done.

HPAI infections in humans are rare. Contact a healthcare provider if experiencing any unusual symptoms of possible infection, such as eye redness, respiratory problems, and fever. It is safe to eat properly handled and cooked poultry. Cooking meat to an internal temperature of 165°F, helps destroy the virus if present.

Get more information on HPAI from the Missouri Department of Agriculture at agriculture.mo.gov/avian-influenza.php.



MDC conducts HPAI surveillance on waterfowl (such as Canada geese, shown) and other wild birds year-round. MDC encourages the public to not handle dead birds and to report any sightings of dead birds to short.mdc.mo.gov/4KD.
MDC
Photo by MDC, courtesy Missouri Department of Conservation

MONTANA

APPLICATIONS SOUGHT FOR UPLAND GAME BIRD COUNCIL

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is seeking three people to serve on an advisory council that provides ongoing monitoring of upland game bird enhancement program activities. Council members represent all FWP administrative regions and include upland game bird hunters, chamber of commerce memberships, legislators, upland game bird biologists and others who have conservation interests.

For each appointment, the council member must be residing in FWP Region 4, Region 5 or Region 7. At least one appointment must be a landowner not enrolled in Block Management.

Council members will be appointed by FWP Director Christy Clark to participate in two meetings annually. Members will be asked to contribute to additional discussions throughout their four-year term.

To apply, visit FWP and search for UGBEP Council. Nominations must be submitted by Jan. 30. The next council meeting will be held in Helena on March 23 and 24.

For more information, call Debbie Hohler at 406-444-5647, or send an email to dhohler@mt.gov.

NEBRASKA

PATH HAS MENTORED YOUTH HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES OVER HOLIDAYS

Plenty of holiday break mentored hunting opportunities exist for youth aged 17 or younger through the Passing Along the Heritage Program.

Lake Wanahoo, a mile north of Wahoo in Saunders County, has seven hunting sites totaling 1,067 acres available for mentored youth hunting. They are available during the Thanksgiving and Christmas school breaks.

PATH provides Nebraska youth and their mentors access to hunting on private lands and selected public lands. Only youth aged 17 or younger may hunt on these sites. The mentor is there to "pass along" their knowledge to youth and ensure a safe hunting experience.

Interested mentors must create an account at apps.outdoornebraska.gov/PATH before they can reserve a PATH site. After choosing an available PATH property and reserving a date, a mentor will be able to print a permission slip, which must be carried during the hunt. Mentors may have no more than five reservations per youth hunter annually.

The Lower Platte North Natural Resources District owns and manages the habitat in cooperation with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. There are five upland sites that allow for hunting of deer, upland birds, and waterfowl and two waterfowl-only sites. Sites range in size from 135 to 200 acres.

Learn more about PATH and its other hunting sites, including Chat Canyon Wildlife Management Area in Cherry County and Rowe Sanctuary in Buffalo County, at the program's website.

The program is made possible by a partnership between the Game and Parks, National Audubon Society and Nebraska landowners.

PHEASANTS TO BE RELEASED FOR HUNTING BEFORE THANKSGIVING

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission will release adult rooster pheasants on 18 wildlife management areas leading up to the Thanksgiving holiday weekend.

The WMAs, including counties, are Arnold Trupp (Morrill), Arrowhead (Gage), Bordeaux (Dawes), Branched Oak (Lancaster), Cornhusker (Hall), George D. Syas (Nance), Hickory Ridge (Johnson), James N. Douglas (Johnson), Kirkpatrick Basin North (York), Wood Duck (Stanton), Peru Bottoms (Nemaha), Powder Creek (Dixon), Pressey (Custer), Rakes Creek (Cass), Randall W. Schilling (Cass), Sherman Reservoir (Sherman), Wilkinson (Platte), and Yankee Hill (Lancaster).

To view a map of the pheasant release sites, visit the Upland Hunting page at OutdoorNebraska.gov.

The pheasants will be released to enhance hunting opportunities over the extended Thanksgiving holiday weekend and encourage families to spend time together in the field. Non-toxic shot is required at Kirkpatrick Basin North, Peru Bottoms, Randall W. Schilling, and Wilkinson WMAs, but otherwise all usual regulations apply.

Game and Parks reminds hunters that safety in the field and of those releasing pheasants is of utmost importance; for this reason, a specific schedule for pheasant releases will not be issued.

Nebraska's pheasant, quail, and prairie grouse seasons run through Jan. 31, 2026. Permits and applicable stamps may be purchased at OutdoorNebraska.gov.

For more information on these and other publicly accessible lands throughout Nebraska, visit Game and Parks' Public Access Atlas online or contact Game and Parks at 402-471-0641

BEGIN BUYING 2026 GAME AND PARKS PERMITS NOV. 15

Don't wait to begin buying Nebraska Game and Parks Commission permits for the upcoming year.

The 2026 annual hunt (small game), fishing, fur harvest and state park entry permits are available online, at district offices and state park areas beginning Nov. 15. These permits are valid Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2026.

A Nebraska vehicle park entry permit is an affordable way to have fun outdoors. Access more than 75 state park, recreation areas and state historical parks for an entire year or explore miles of trails, watch wildlife and get in touch with nature. Find your first at OutdoorNebraska.gov/Parks/Find-a-Park.

Hunt, fishing and fur harvest permits are valid statewide and provide an array of opportunities across Nebraska's landscape. View the 2025-2026 Small Game and Waterfowl Guide and 2025 Fishing Guide at OutdoorNebraska.gov to discover available possibilities.

Spending time outdoors is good for one's physical and mental well-being, and it's an investment in Nebraska's natural resources for the future.

Age and residency restrictions apply to some permits. Stamps also may be required. For more information on permits, including how to purchase them, visit OutdoorNebras-