Small Game Hunting

REGULATIONS

A CURRENT AND valid hunting license (Bow and Arrow, Firearm or All-Around Sportsman) is required to pursue any small game species. See page 20 for General Hunting Regulations. The season for ruffed grouse is closed statewide. The use of dogs, unless specifically stated otherwise, is permitted to pursue any small game species, except wild turkey. Hunting for those species shown on page 51 is prohibited during the statewide Six-day Firearm (deer) Season and on the Wednesday of the Permit Shotgun (deer) Season that immediately follows the Six-day Firearm Season. For exceptions, see Coyote and Fox and Semi-wild and Commercial Preserve Hunting sections below. Sunday hunting is prohibited; see Raccoon and Opossum, page 49 plus Semi-wild and Commercial Shooting Preserves for exceptions.

Season Dates and Bag Limits: The Small Game Hunting Seasons table on page 51 lists dates, hunting hours and daily bag limits for all small game species open for hunting.

General Small Game Hunting Methods: Properly licensed hunters may hunt small game with shotguns or bow and arrow and limited hunting with small caliber rifles; see air gun and coyote/fox regulations. See also General Hunting Regulations, page 20.

Shotgun: Unless specifically stated otherwise, shotguns for small game hunting may be single or double barrel, rifled or smoothbore and not larger than 10-gauge or smaller than .410 caliber and capable of holding no more than three shells.

Shot: Unless specifically stated otherwise, shot size for small game hunting may be no larger than #4 fine shot.

Bow and Arrow: All bows must meet the requirements specified in General Hunting Regulations, page 20. For taking game birds in flight, arrows equipped with an edged head are prohibited. Flu flu arrows are required for taking game birds in flight.

Air gun: Air guns may be used for taking cottontail rabbit, hare and gray squirrel using ammunition not smaller than .177 caliber or larger than .22 caliber. Air gun BBs are not legal for hunting. See also Air

Five-step Guide to Using the Coyote/Fox Regulation Chart

1. Which column(s) include the date you want to hunt?
2. What weapon type will be used?
3. Follow across the row of Permit Requirements for weapon/shot size/hunting hours to determine if a permit is required.
4. For non-permit seasons (Bow Only and General seasons), follow regulations in the column that includes your hunt date.
5. For Special Permit Season, follow regulations in column matching hunting hours.

Coyote / Fox Seasons

An Apprentice License is not valid for taking coyotes or fox at any time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Bow Only Season</th>
<th>General Season (Bow or Shotgun)</th>
<th>Special Permit Season (Bow, Shotgun, Muzzleloading or Modern Rifle)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Oct. 3–Nov. 6 (except Sundays)</td>
<td>Nov. 7–March 15 (except Sundays and Dec. 7–12, 16)</td>
<td>Jan. 1–Mar. 15 (except Sundays*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permit Requirements</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Permit required when:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset</td>
<td>½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset, except 8 a.m. start on Nov. 7</td>
<td>½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon Type and Projectiles Permitted</td>
<td>All Firearms Prohibited</td>
<td>Shotgun: single or double barrel. Not smaller than 20 gauge or larger than 10 gauge, capable of holding no more than 3 shells. Shot Size: no larger than #4 fine.</td>
<td>Muzzleloading rifle: single-shot, single barrel no less than ,44 caliber. Flintlock, percussion and in-line ignitions permitted, loaded only with a single projectile, either round ball or conical bullet. Electronic ignitions prohibited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Call, hound, stalk or stand</td>
<td>Call, hound, stalk or stand</td>
<td>Call or stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manner</td>
<td>Call, hound, stalk or stand</td>
<td>Call, hound, stalk or stand</td>
<td>Call or stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bait</td>
<td>Not closer than 300 ft. when hunting elevated or in other structure</td>
<td>Not closer than 300 ft. when hunting elevated or in other structure</td>
<td>Use prohibited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decoys</td>
<td>Allowed (no live decoys)</td>
<td>Allowed (no live decoys)</td>
<td>Allowed (no live decoys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogs</td>
<td>Use prohibited</td>
<td>Use prohibited</td>
<td>Use prohibited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter Orange</td>
<td>Required if using a firearm</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>Optional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Bag Limit</td>
<td>Unlimited</td>
<td>Unlimited</td>
<td>Unlimited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Small Game Hunting**

**REGULATIONS**

**Guns under Firearms and Missiles, page 21.**

**Muzzleloading Rifles:** For limited small game rifle hunting, see below for **Coyote and Fox—Special Permit Season, Squirrel—Muzzleloading Rifle Season** and Woodchuck for restrictions.

**Wildlife Damage:** Property owners or their agents, and occupants of dwellings that are suffering damage from coyote, fox, opossum, raccoon, skunk, squirrel, weasel or woodchuck may control them by lawful means at any time subject to local ordinances.

### Coyote and Fox, General and Special Permit Seasons

See chart on page 48 for the bow only, general and special permit season regulations for coyote and fox.

**The Special Permit Season Allows Hunters to:**

1. Hunt at night with 10-12 gauge shotgun and shot size #4 fine to “T”.
2. Use 10-20 gauge shotgun using shot size “BB” to #3 Buckshot during daylight.
3. Use a muzzleloading or small caliber rifle during daylight.
4. Hunt without the hunter orange requirement.
5. Use of dogs is prohibited when hunting under Special Permit provisions.

**Purchasing a Special Coyote/Fox Permit:**

- A $2 permit is required.
- Permits are available at any license agent, or via www.NJWildlifeLicense.com
- A license must be purchased prior to or in conjunction with, the purchase of a special season coyote/fox permit.

**Harvest Reporting:**

- All coyote and GRAY fox harvests must be reported by 8 p.m. on the day of harvest. RED fox harvests do NOT need to be reported.
- Use deer management zone (DMZ) boundaries to report harvest location.

**Two Options for Reporting:**

1. Call 1-855-I HUNT NJ (1-855-448-6865); OR 2. Report at www.NJWildlifeLicense.com via mobile device or computer

**ADDITIONAL Harvest of Coyote/Fox Allowed**

In addition to regulations specified in the page 48 table, hunters have the following opportunities:

- **Turkey Season** — Properly licensed turkey hunters may legally harvest coyotes, but NOT fox, if encountered incidental to legal turkey hunting. Turkey hunters shall not actively pursue coyotes or have coyote calls or decoys in possession.
- **Firearm Deer Seasons** — Properly licensed deer hunters may legally harvest coyotes or fox incidental to legal deer hunting during the Six-day Firearm, Permit Muzzleloader and Permit Shotgun seasons only if the coyote or fox is encountered before the hunter has taken the season bag limit of deer. After the daily bag limit of deer has been taken, the hunter must cease hunting immediately. Incidental hunting of coyote or fox while deer hunting may resume the following day (provided the season remains open and the season bag limit of deer has not been reached).

**Only applicable projectiles used for deer hunting** may be used to take coyote and fox incidental to deer hunting in the seasons outlined.

**Other Important Notes:**

- Coyote and fox hunting are allowed on WMAs including all legal sporting arms listed in the table on page 28.
- **Baiting** for coyote/fox is prohibited while hunting elevated in a standing tree or in a structure of any kind within 300 feet of a baited area.

### Rabbit and Hare

The rabbit and hare hunting season will begin the last Saturday in September. The early opening date allows for hunting opportunity when rabbit populations are at their peak. Air guns may be used for taking cottontail rabbit and hare using ammunition not smaller than .177 caliber or larger than .22 caliber. See also Air Guns under Firearms and Missiles, page 21 and General Small Game Hunting Methods, page 48. See Small Game Hunting Seasons chart, page 51.

### Squirrel, Regular Season

Air guns may be used for taking squirrel using ammunition not smaller than .177 caliber or larger than .22 caliber. See also Air Guns under Firearms and Missiles, page 21 and General Small Game Hunting Methods, page 48. See Small Game Hunting Seasons chart, page 51.

**Firearm Ammunition Legal for Hunting Coyote and Fox in New Jersey**

Scan this QR code or visit us at NJFishandWildlife.com/coyote-fox_ammo.htm for a reference chart useful for coyote-fox hunting during seasons that overlap other game species.
Small Game Hunting

REGULATIONS

Squirrel, Muzzleloading Rifle Season

Persons holding a current and valid firearm license and rifle permit may hunt for squirrels from sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset with a muzzleloading rifle (.36 caliber or smaller loaded with a single projectile) during the periods Sept. 26–Nov. 6 and Jan. 2–Feb. 20. See Small Game Hunting Seasons chart, page 51.

Hunting for squirrel in the manner described above is restricted to the areas described.

Pheasant

See Small Game Hunting Seasons chart, page 51 for season dates and bag limits. See exceptions page 52 for semi-wild and commercial preserve hunting.

Pheasant and Quail Stamp Areas: Anyone aged 16 and over (except 16 year olds whose Youth License remains valid until Dec. 31 in the year they reach 16 years of age) hunting or possessing pheasant or quail on the following designated wildlife management areas shall have in possession a current and valid Pheasant and Quail Stamp (Youth Hunting licenses include pheasant and quail stamp): Assunpink, Berkshire Valley, Millville (Bevan), Black River, Clinton, Colliers Mills, Dix, Flatbrook, Glassboro, Greenwood (including Howardsville), Heislerville, Tuckahoe (MacNamara), Mad Horse, Manahawkin, Manasquan River, Medford, Nantuxent, Peaslee, Pequest, Port Republic, Rockport, Stafford Forge, Wallpack, Whittingham and Winslow. A current and valid Pheasant and Quail Stamp is also required at the Delaware River National Recreation Area.

Pheasant and Quail Stocking

Wearing a hunter orange hat is required for all firearm small game hunters on wildlife management areas stocked with pheasant or quail.

Fish and Wildlife anticipates pheasant and quail releases to follow the table below. The table is a proposed schedule. To see the most up to date stocking schedule changes or other necessary adjustments, visit our website at NJFishandWildlife.com/smgame_info.htm.

Pheasants are stocked after dark, the evening before the date listed on the chart. Maps showing the specific field locations for every stocked wildlife management area are now available here: NJFishandWildlife.com/pheasmaps.htm.

Quail Stocking Schedule 2020

(Birds stocked the evening prior to the hunting dates listed.)


Quail Stocking Schedule 2020

(Birds stocked the evening prior to the hunting dates listed.)

Statewide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greenwood</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaslee</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>5,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For maps showing the areas to be stocked with pheasants during the small game season, visit NJFishandWildlife.com/smgame_info.htm.

* Number stocked subject to change based on pre-season farming practices and field conditions. Check for updates at the DFW website link, above.

Continued on page 52.
## 2020–21 Small Game Hunting Seasons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species (alphabetical)</th>
<th>Inclusive Dates</th>
<th>Hunting Hours</th>
<th>Daily Limits</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bobwhite (quail)</td>
<td>Closed statewide; except at Peaslee &amp; Greenwood WMAs (see Notes)</td>
<td>Sunrise to ½ hour after sunset</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8 a.m. start on Nov. 7. Quail may be hunted ONLY at Peaslee and Greenwood Forest WMAs. Pheasant and Quail Stamp required. Season closed in remainder of the state. (See exceptions under Semi-Wild and Commercial Preserve Hunting, page 52.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coyote* and Fox*, General</td>
<td>Bow and Arrow only: Oct. 3–Nov. 6 Firearm or Bow and Arrow: Nov. 7–Dec. 5; Dec. 14, 15 &amp; 17–31 to Mar. 15 (except Sundays)</td>
<td>½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset</td>
<td>No limit</td>
<td>8 a.m. start on Nov. 7. Deer hunters may harvest coyote and fox during all open deer seasons with restrictions as specified under Small Game Hunting, Coyote and Fox, page 48. Rifle Permit required in possession when hunting with rifle (allowed only incidental to deer hunting).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coyote* and Fox*, Special Permit Season</td>
<td>Firearm or Bow and Arrow: Jan. 1–Mar. 15 (except Sundays) (permit required)</td>
<td>Permit holders may hunt day and night with certain restrictions; see Notes at right. Sunday hunting for coyote/fox is not legal. All such hunting must end at 11:59 p.m. Saturday night and may resume at 12:01 a.m. Monday morning.</td>
<td>No limit</td>
<td>For complete details, and for when a permit is required, see Small Game Hunting, Coyote and Fox, page 49. Calling and standing hunting only. Predator calling device must be in possession. See Coyote/Fox Season table, page 48, for firearm and ammo restrictions. Rifle Permit required in possession when hunting with any legal rifle, allowed only during daytime hunting hours. During night hunting (½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise), only 10–20 gauge shotguns are permitted. See pellet restrictions in table on page 48. Coyote/fox Permit required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crow** (Mon., Thurs., Fri., Sat.)</td>
<td>Aug. 10–Dec. 5** and Dec. 14–Mar. 20 (See Notes.)</td>
<td>Sunrise to ½ hour after sunset</td>
<td>No limit</td>
<td>8 a.m. start on Nov. 7. Maximum shot size is #4. Ruffed grouse may not be harvested anywhere in the state. See page 56.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grouse, Ruffed</td>
<td>Closed statewide No exceptions</td>
<td>Season closed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Rifle Permit required when hunting with rifle. 7:41 p.m. start on Oct. 1. Closed Dec. 7–12 &amp; 16.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opossum, Raccoon</td>
<td>Oct. 1–Mar. 1 (except Sunday evenings)</td>
<td>1 hour after sunrise to 1 hour before sunset</td>
<td>No limit</td>
<td>8 a.m. start on Nov. 7. Pheasant and Quail Stamp required on designated areas (see Small Game Hunting page 50).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pheasant &amp; Partridge</td>
<td>Nov. 7–Dec. 5; Dec. 14, 15 &amp; 17–31 to Feb. 15 (except Sundays)</td>
<td>Sunrise to ½ hour after sunset</td>
<td>Pheasant — 7</td>
<td>8 a.m. start on Nov. 7. Air guns are legal to harvest rabbits, hare and jackrabbit. See Rabbit and Hare, page 49.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabbit, Hare &amp; Jackrabbit</td>
<td>Sept. 26–Dec. 5; Dec. 14, 15 &amp; 17–31 to Feb. 20 (except Sundays)</td>
<td>Sunrise to ½ hour after sunset</td>
<td>Cottontail — 4 Hare — 1 Jackrabbit — 1</td>
<td>8 a.m. start on Nov. 7. Air guns are legal to harvest rabbits, hare and jackrabbit. See Rabbit and Hare, page 49.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squirrel, Gray</td>
<td>Sept. 26–Dec. 5; Dec. 14, 15 &amp; 17–31 to Feb. 20 (except Sundays)</td>
<td>Sunrise to ½ hour after sunset</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8 a.m. start on Nov. 7. Air guns are legal to harvest squirrel. See Squirrel, Regular Season page 49.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squirrel, Gray: Muzzleloading Rifle (.36 caliber or smaller)</td>
<td>Sept. 26–Nov. 6 and Jan. 2–Feb. 20 (except Sundays)</td>
<td>Sunrise to ½ hour after sunset</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rifle permit required. Designated areas only (see Squirrel, ML Rifle Season page 50).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey (Fall, Either-Sex) (Period N)</td>
<td>Oct. 24, 26–31</td>
<td>½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset. 1 Turkey (either sex) per permit</td>
<td>Permit required. All Turkey Hunting Areas statewide are now open to fall hunting. See page 53.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey (Spring Gobbler) (Periods A to E)</td>
<td>April 26–May 28, 2021</td>
<td>½ hour before sunrise to noon; starting May 17, hours are ½ hour before sunrise to sunset. 1 Male Turkey per permit</td>
<td>Permit required. See turkey hunting regulation, page 53.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey (Spring Gobbler, Youth) (Period Y)</td>
<td>April 24–May 28, 2021</td>
<td>½ hour before sunrise to noon; starting May 17, hours are ½ hour before sunrise to sunset. 1 Male Turkey per permit</td>
<td>Permit required. See turkey hunting regulation, page 53.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodchuck: Bow, Rifle or Shotgun</td>
<td>Mar. 2–Sept. 30, 2020 (except Sun.) Mar. 1–Sept. 29, 2021 (except Sun.)</td>
<td>Sunrise to ½ hour after sunset</td>
<td>No limit</td>
<td>Rifle Permit required when hunting with rifle. Rifle hunting prohibited on state property (see General Hunting Regulations; page 20 and Woodchuck page 52).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodchuck: Bow or Shotgun</td>
<td>Sept. 26–Dec. 5; Dec. 14, 15 &amp; 17–31 to Feb. 15 (except Sundays)</td>
<td>Sunrise to ½ hour after sunset</td>
<td>No limit</td>
<td>8 a.m. start on Nov. 7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodcock**</td>
<td>North of Rt. 76: Oct. 17–31; Nov. 3–28 (except Sundays) South of Rt. 76: Nov. 7–Dec. 1; Dec. 17–Jan. 2, 2021 (except Sundays)</td>
<td>Sunrise to sunset</td>
<td>3 daily; 6 possession</td>
<td>HIP number required (see page 59). 8 a.m. start on Nov. 7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Turkey Day</td>
<td>April 24, 2021</td>
<td>½ hour before sunrise to noon</td>
<td>1 Male Wild Turkey</td>
<td>Permit required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Upland Bird Days</td>
<td>Oct. 31 &amp; Nov. 2–6</td>
<td>8 a.m. to sunset</td>
<td>Partridge — 7 Pheasant — 2 Quail — 4</td>
<td>Selected WMAs and licensed semi-wilds (see page 18).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* All harvested coyotes and GRAY fox must be reported using the electronic license system by 8 p.m. on the day of harvest. See page 49 for details.

** The starting time to hunt migratory birds on Nov. 7 only on those WMAs designated as Pheasant and Quail Stamp Areas shall be 8 a.m. See list of areas, page 50.
Semi-Wild and Commercial Preserve Hunting

Hunting for pheasant, quail and partridge is allowed from Nov. 1 through May 1 on semi-wild and commercial preserves. These game birds may be hunted on Sunday only on semi-wild or commercial preserve lands. Youth hunters (in possession of a valid Youth Hunting License and accompanied by a licensed, non-shooting adult) will be permitted to hunt pheasant, quail and partridge on licensed semi-wild preserves on Saturday, Oct. 31—the Youth Upland Bird Hunting Day.

All game taken on semi-wild or commercial preserves must be properly tagged before being transported off the licensed property. A person may legally hunt on semi-wild or commercial preserves for game birds during deer seasons, but no shot larger than #4 may be used. There are no daily bag or seasonal limits for pheasant, quail, partridge or mallards taken on commercial preserves. There are no daily bag limits for pheasant, quail or partridge taken on semi-wild properties. Seasonal harvests on semi-wild properties may not exceed the number of birds to be stocked as indicated on the semi-wild permit application.

Woodchuck Season

Woodchuck

All persons in possession of a rifle (including a muzzleloading rifle) while hunting woodchuck must have a current and valid rifle permit in addition to the current hunting license. Rifle hunting (of any kind) for woodchuck is prohibited on state wildlife management areas, state parks, state forests or state recreation areas. Farmers and their agents may shoot not larger than #4 buckshot to control woodchuck causing damage. Hours of hunting are sunrise to ½ hour after sunset. See chart above for woodchuck hunting details. "'

Ruffed Grouse in New Jersey

Ruffed grouse harvests have fallen precipitously over time. The population can no longer support a recreational hunting season.

Fish and Wildlife is developing a predictive model to direct habitat improvements where they will have the greatest benefit. See the latest on grouse in New Jersey by following the links below.

Grouse Season Closure:

Ruffed Grouse Ecology
by Joseph R. Garris, Upland Game and Furbearer Research Project at https://www.njfishandwildlife.com/artgrouse_tame.htm

New Jersey’s Grouse Priority Areas
Siting Tool