



2025-26 Managed Waterfowl Hunting at Crow's Nest Natural Area Preserve

Lottery Information and Application

This is an opportunity to hunt **waterfowl** at Crow's Nest Natural Area Preserve in Stafford County, Virginia. Hunters will be selected by lottery. Successful applicants will be responsible for re-conditioning or re-constructing their own blinds at two assigned locations along the shoreline and marshes at Crow's Nest. Hunting will be on **Mondays Only** from ½ hour before sunrise to sunset during the September 2025 early goose and teal seasons, the October 2025 early duck season, and the general duck season beginning in November 2025 and ending in January 2026.

- To hunt waterfowl at Crow's Nest, hunters must apply and be chosen by lottery. Application deadline is 5:00 PM on Friday, August 8, 2025. A \$5.00 non-refundable application fee is required. A random drawing will be held on August 11, 2025, at 1:00 PM at the Richmond Office of DCR's Division of Natural Heritage located at 600 East Main Street. **Hunters must be 16 years of age or older to apply for this hunt.**
- Selected hunters (Chief-of-Party) will have the option of purchasing from one (1) up to three (3) permits @ \$100.00 each, allowing them to form a party consisting of themselves and up to two (2) guest hunters. The Chief-of-Party will make payment to DCR, distribute permits to other party members **and must be present whenever his/her blind is being used to hunt.** The Chief-of-Party may provide guest hunter permits to different individuals of his/her own choosing during the season.
- **AS WITH ALL DCR HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES, PROOF OF COMPLETION OF A HUNTER SAFETY COURSE IS REQUIRED FOR EACH HUNTER. HUNTER SAFETY CERTIFICATES MUST BE IN POSSESSION BY EACH MEMBER OF THE PARTY AND PRESENTED ALONG WITH LICENSES WHEN CHECKED DURING THE HUNT.**
- Blinds are accessible by water only. Navigation hazards are present in the area and include shallows, fishing nets/gear, stationary blinds/wooden pilings/other structures, dense aquatic vegetation (hydrilla) and occasionally large waves and ice. Water depth and boating conditions can vary drastically with wind direction, wind speed, tidal changes, fog and other factors.
- Only U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approved non-toxic shot is allowed for this hunt. Each hunter is limited to 25 rounds of ammunition in possession per hunt day. The use of dogs for retrieving waterfowl is strongly recommended.
- This hunt is for waterfowl only. All State and Federal migratory bird regulations and laws apply during the hunt. **HUNTERS MUST POSSESS: a Virginia state hunting license, both state and federal migratory waterfowl stamps, a hunter safety course certificate, and a 2025-26 HIP registration number. A HIP number may be obtained by calling 804-367-1000 or registering on-line at <https://dwr.virginia.gov/>.**

Hunting Blinds

- Each Chief-of-Party will be assigned two (2) blind sites for the 2025-26 hunting season. The Chief-of-Party is responsible for either constructing a stationary blind or reconditioning an existing blind at each site. Blind site locations will be assigned at the time of the lottery.
- DCR purchased all blind licenses and has posted them on stakes or on existing blinds at each blind site. **Any new blind must be constructed at the location of the posted stake before hunting the blind and no later than the end of day, October 15, 2025. The yellow blind license must be reattached to the new blind and be visible from the water. Final minor adjustments must be complete before November 1.**
- **If blinds are not constructed or adequately re-conditioned by October 15, the Chief-of-Party may forfeit the opportunity to participate in this hunt.** Permit fees paid will not be re-funded if the blind sites are re-assigned to another party.
- If the blind is accidentally destroyed during the season the Chief-of-Party will have 30 days to construct a replacement. If the blind license is lost or destroyed, the Chief-of-Party should contact DCR staff for a replacement.
- A bona-fide, legal and usable stationary blind must be constructed or reconditioned at each assigned blind site. For more information on Virginia Waterfowl Blind Laws, go to: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/hunting/regulations/waterfowl-blind-laws/>

Blind Construction Guidelines

- Each blind must meet the minimum qualifications as defined by the Code of Virginia. The term “stationary blind” means a structure erected at a fixed location for the purpose of hunting and shooting waterfowl. A stationary blind must be (1) of such size and strength that it can be occupied by and conceal one or more hunters, or (2) large enough to accommodate and conceal a boat from which one or more hunters intend to hunt or shoot waterfowl.
- While each Chief-of-Party can re-apply for the hunt in the following year, participation and blind sites will change randomly from year to year. For this reason, it is suggested that blind designs and materials used be appropriate and tailored to this short term (single season) use arrangement. Within four weeks of the end of the regular duck season in January, each Chief-of-Party will have the opportunity to remove his/her blinds and such removal is strongly encouraged; otherwise, blinds will become state property.
- **A blind design as simple as four driven and braced 2 x 4's placed in a 4- x 8-ft rectangle and wrapped in burlap or similar material meets the legal requirements for a waterfowl hunting blind.**

Access to Blinds

- Access to all blinds is by water only. No boat launching facility or land access is available from Crow's Nest Natural Area Preserve and no public launch facility is available on either Accokeek or Potomac creeks.
- The canoe launch at Brooke Road will be closed on Mondays during the hunting season from sunrise until noon to minimize user conflict in Accokeek Creek.
- The closest private boat launch facility is Waugh Point Marina (Potomac Creek). There are also launch sites on Aquia Creek and at Fairview Beach on the Potomac River. Hunters should check with these or other facilities concerning boat launch availability and fees.
- Hunters will need a sufficiently large boat and be skilled in navigating the open waters of Potomac Creek and the Potomac River in order to safely access waterfowl blinds.

Each hunter must abide by all rules and regulations, including but not limited to ammunition restrictions, hunting ONLY from the assigned stationary blind, possessing all necessary licenses, state and federal duck stamps, a valid HIP number and a hunter safety certificate. NO EXCEPTIONS. Specific information including hunter permits, hunt rules and regulations, and a map showing blind locations will be sent as a packet to each successful applicant following

receipt of the **\$100 per hunter permit fee due by August 29, 2025.**

Questions about this hunting opportunity may be directed to James Watling, Northern Operations Steward at 540-824-2019.

How to Apply:

1. **Hunters must be 16 years of age or older to apply for this hunt.** Complete and mail the following application along with your \$5.00 application fee (check only) payable to NAPF (Natural Area Preservation Fund) to:

Attention: Crow's Nest Waterfowl Hunt
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
Division of Natural Heritage
600 East Main Street, 24th Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219

2. Applications will be accepted until the close of business (5:00 PM) on Friday, August 8, 2025. A computerized random drawing will be conducted on August 11, 2025 to select hunters and assign blind sites.
3. Only successful applicants will be notified – within one week of the drawing. **Selected hunters must return the \$100 per hunter Natural Area Preserve permit fee (maximum \$300) by 5:00 PM on Friday, August 29, 2025 to the above address.**
4. Your name can only appear one time in the drawing. **ALL DUPLICATE ENTRIES WILL BE DISQUALIFIED.**

**CROW'S NEST NATURAL AREA PRESERVE
2025-26 WATERFOWL HUNT APPLICATION**

****** ALL INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL BE DISCARDED ******

PLEASE PRINT

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

E-mail address _____

Telephone No. (____) _____ - _____ Date of Birth _____

2023-24 Hunting License # _____ Expiration Date _____

The Department of Conservation and Recreation reserves the right to manage hunter access and hunter use on Department owned lands as deemed appropriate.

***** HUNTER SAFETY CERTIFICATION IS REQUIRED OF ALL HUNTERS ***
FOR PARTICIPATION ON THIS AND ALL HUNTS ON DEPARTMENT OWNED LANDS**