

WATERFOWLERS ACADEMY

Roadmap to a Mentored Waterfowl Hunt

Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, through the Waterfowlers Academy, has developed a "Roadmap" to help anyone interested in participating with a mentored waterfowl hunt. A mentored hunt could be either a WDNR sanctioned Learn to Hunt Waterfowl program (training day followed by hunt day) or a one-on-one mentored hunting experience with a mentor you have connected with.

Embark on an exciting journey as a waterfowl hunter and experience the thrill of engaging with nature while learning valuable hunting skills. The Waterfowlers Academy Roadmap offers a pathway to help you reach your destination as a mentored waterfowl hunter. Regardless of the route you take, the roadmap serves as the foundation for additional learning, exploration, unforgettable experiences and confidence to try waterfowl hunting.

VIDEO INTRODUCTION TO WATERFOWLING

Begin your journey by watching a series of informative videos, in partnership with the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) – Hunters Connect. These videos cover different aspects of waterfowl hunting, providing you with a basic understanding of essential topics. We recommend starting with the following five videos, which will take about 17 minutes to view:

- Waterfowl Hunting Gear
- Scouting for Waterfowl
- Setting up Waterfowl Decoys
- How to Make a Basic Duck Call
- Properly Maintaining Your Shotgun

If these videos spark your interest, feel free to explore the other five waterfowl videos or other resources provided by Hunters Connect through IHEA

The link connects you to [Hunter Connect](#) . Select "Asset Type – video" and "Species - duck" to access 10 duck and goose related videos.

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FIREARM AND HUNTING SAFETY

Safety is our top priority! Whether you are participating in a formal mentored hunt or exploring waterfowl hunting on your own, it is crucial to review safe firearm handling practices.

If you haven't taken a hunter safety program, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) offers a few options:

- Hunter Internet Field Day Course: Complete an approved online course through [Hunter-Ed](#) (6-8 hours), along with a required in-person field day.
- Traditional Hunter Education Course: Join an in-person classroom-style program with up to 19 hours of instruction. Register online for course availability.
- Online Program (18 years or older): Take an entirely online program through [Hunter-Ed](#) (4-6 hours) available for students 18 years or older.

Regardless of your experience level, a firearm safety study guide is available through Hunter-Ed, offering a great refresher.

Participants hunting in a [formal mentored hunt](#) are exempt from the hunter safety requirement. *(The WDNR requires that anyone born on or after Jan. 1, 1973, must complete a hunter education course and have a hunter education safety certificate on file to purchase any hunting license in Wisconsin - while not required for the mentored hunt, completion of a hunter safety program is encouraged.)*

Review of safe firearm handling is important regardless of your training or experience level. A firearm safety study guide is available through [Hunter-Ed](#). The nine units outlined provide a great refresher regardless of your experience level.

NEW OR NOVICE HUNTER RESOURCES

Explore the resources and opportunities offered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources R3 Team, focusing on recruiting, retaining, and reactivating hunters. The [R3 website](#) offers a variety of programs, resources, and videos to assist anyone exploring hunting.

Learn to Hunt Program: a formal program authorized by WDNR, usually hosted by a conservation organization. The program involves a mandatory training day followed by a mentored hunt. As a formal program, some license fees can be waived and some species can be hunted outside the normal season or within closed areas. A nominal program fee may be required; however, many programs are at no cost to the student.

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Mentored Hunting: a one-on-one hunt with an experienced hunter (mentor). Mentor and student must be licensed, with some reduced license options for the student. The mentor/student connection is often through friends, co-workers, family members and conservation organizations. Depending on species hunted, license fees are usually less than \$50.

WATERFOWL RESOURCES

Dive into the WDNR [Waterfowl website](#), which provides information on regulations, seasons, population surveys and hunting guides. While exploring the website, check out the waterfowl identification videos on the "Hunter Resource" tab and The Basics of Waterfowl Hunting in Wisconsin.

Looking for a place to start your waterfowl adventure? Check out [Finding Public Land for Waterfowl Hunting](#)

WATERFOWL HUNTERS EXPO

Attend the [Waterfowl Hunter Expo](#) on Aug 26, 2023 at the Sunnyview Expo Center in Oshkosh. This one-day family and dog-friendly event hits on all aspects of waterfowling, regardless of your experience level. The Expo features a wide variety of seminars, equipment vendors, try-a-shotgun shooting, and dog training.

As a hunter participating in the Waterfowlers Academy, your entry to the Expo is free, and the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association will provide an itinerary to help you make the most of your Expo experience. For more information and free entry, contact Todd Schaller (c217tazman@gmail.com).

VIRTUAL TRAINING EXPERIENCE

Join the Waterfowlers Academy's Zoom sessions covering essential waterfowl hunting topics for new and novice hunters. Each 45-minute session will include an opportunity for questions and answers. The topics covered include:

- What to expect from a mentored experience
- Firearm Safety Review
- Waterfowl ID and Regulations

Sessions will be offered on weekday evenings in September. For more information and details, contact Todd Schaller (C217tazman@gmail.com).