HUNTING
in Pennsylvania State Parks and Forests

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Pennsylvania state park and forest lands offer exciting opportunities for big game, small game and waterfowl hunting. All 20 of Pennsylvania's state forests, totaling 2.2 million acres, and 97 of the 120 state parks are open to hunting. Across varied landscapes and diverse habitats, hunters can spend time exploring fields and forests to pursue a range of game animals including white-tailed deer.

Hunting and trapping is permitted in designated areas of most state parks and on state forest lands. However, some state parks are closed to these activities. The Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) establishes state hunting and trapping seasons, and licenses and permits are required. All Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Pennsylvania Game Commission rules and regulations apply. For detailed information on seasons and licenses contact the PGC at 717-787-4250 or go to www.pgc.state.pa.us. Contact individual parks for specific hunting information and forest districts for detailed maps and forest road access information.

During established seasons, some DCNR land is also open to trapping in designated areas. Furbearers commonly taken during trapping seasons include muskrat, mink, raccoon, skunk, beaver, gray fox, red fox and eastern coyote.

Woodchuck hunting in state parks is prohibited.

Selected state parks and several state forests have areas enrolled in the Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) allowing hunters to harvest additional antlerless deer. Hunters can apply for a DMAP Harvest Permit through the PGC website or directly from a license issuing agent. Additional information can be found on the DCNR website hunting page.

Keep in Mind

State parks are open year-round from sunrise to sunset each day. Forests are also open year-round. In addition to hunters, other people use state parks and state forests throughout the seasons for various forms of recreation. Hunters must know hunting area boundaries and safety zones and use extreme caution while hunting.

In state parks, the training of dogs is only permitted from the day following Labor Day through March 31 in designated hunting areas. Hunters with disabilities should check with an individual park office or forest district office for ADA accessible hunting information and opportunities.

Firearms and Archery in State Parks

Firearms and archery equipment used for hunting may be uncased and ready for use only in authorized hunting areas during hunting seasons. In areas not open to hunting or during non-hunting seasons, firearms and archery equipment shall be kept in the owner's car, trailer or leased campsite. The only exception is that law enforcement officers and individuals with a valid Pennsylvania License to Carry Firearms may carry said firearm concealed on their person while they are within the park.

Contacts

For more information, contact:

Bureau of Forestry
PAForester@pa.gov
717-787-2703

Bureau of State Parks
ra-parkinfo@pa.gov
717-787-6640

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Waterfowl Hunting

Many state parks have a man-made lake with adjoining wetland habitat. Often a park's recreational focal point, these prolific water bodies also attract resident and migrating waterfowl such as Canada goose, wood duck, mallard, canvasback, hooded merganser, greater scaup and northern pintail. Each fall, waterfowl hunters enjoy duck and goose hunting in state parks across Pennsylvania. Large streams, rivers and beaver dams of many state forests hold opportunity for waterfowl hunting as well. All migratory birds are protected by federal law. Seasons and bag limits for migratory game birds are established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Waterfowl hunters must have a Pennsylvania Migratory Game Bird License and a Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp. Waterfowl hunters using watercraft are subject to all Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) regulations including regulation that requires a person to wear a Coast Guard approved Personal Floatation Device (PFD) from November 1st through April 30th while in any canoe, kayak or other boat less than 16 feet in length. Details on this and other boating regulations can be found at www.fish.state.pa.us.

STATE FOREST WATERFOWL HUNTING: Delaware, Lackawanna and William Penn

STATE PARK WATERFOWL HUNTING: Beltzville, Codorus, Gifford Pinchot, Laurel Hill, Marsh Creek, Maurice K. Goddard, Moraine, Pymatuning, Ryerson Station, Sinnemahoning, Swatara and Yellow Creek.

Lodging in State Parks

Some parks open for hunting also have places to stay. Many hunters camp while hunting on park and forest lands. Sixty parks have either seasonal or year-round camping with campsites ranging from tent camping to recreation vehicle camping. In addition, there are state park houses, modern and rustic cabins or yurts available for rent at many parks. The following parks offer overnight accommodations:

Black Moshannon, Blue Knob, Caledonia, Canoe Creek, Clear Creek, Cook Forest, Cowans Gap, Denton Hill, French Creek, Gifford Pinchot, Hyner Run, Keystone, Laurel Hill, Linn Run, Moraine, Nockamixon, Ole Bull, Parker Dam, Pine Grove Furnace, Prince Gallitzin, Promised Land, Pymatuning, Raccoon Creek, Raymond B. Winter, Ricketts Glen, Shawnee, Simon B. Elliott, Sinnemahoning, Trough Creek and Worlds End.

Camping and cabin reservations can be made online at visitPAparks.com or by calling the toll-free information and reservation line, 1-888-PA-PARKS (1-888-727-2757).

Pennsylvania State Forest Districts

Pennsylvania's state forests range in size from the 901-acre William Penn State Forest, a five-tract forest in the southeastern region, to the 305,450-acre Sproul State Forest. White-tailed deer hunting, squirrel hunting and rabbit hunting are common throughout yet each forest district provides a unique hunting experience. Northern forests, particularly Tiadaghton, Sproul, Tioga and Susquehannock, are popular places to hunt black bears. Sproul and Susquehannock also have notable grouse hunting opportunities and Lackawanna State Forest, in the northeast portion of the state, provides the opportunity to hunt for snowshoe hares. Some forests provide additional access to areas by opening gated roads during certain hunting seasons. Check with the following forest district offices for more information: www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/recreation/hunting

Hunting Tips

- Know and obey state park and state forest rules and regulations.
- Know and obey hunting regulations including seasons and bag limits.
- Be aware of state park and state forest boundaries, areas closed to hunting and safety zones.
- Wear the required amount of fluorescent orange for each species and season.
- Use extreme caution with firearms at all times.
- Clearly identify your target, as other hunters and non-hunters also use areas open to hunting.

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