



STANISLAUS COUNTY
PARKS & RECREATION

WATERFOWL HUNTING RULES & REGULATIONS 2025-2026 Season

WOODWARD RESERVOIR MODESTO RESERVOIR

1. WATERFOWL BLIND DRAW PROCEDURES

INITIAL _____

The waterfowl registration will begin at 12:00AM on Sunday, June 15, 2025, and will end at 11:59pm on Sunday July 27, 2025. The waterfowl draw will occur electronically on Friday, August 01, 2025.

ONLINE PINNING (2025) - The winners of the draw will pin on Wednesday August 6, 2025, in the Online Pinning process. The winners will have a time slot in priority order to select a floating waterfowl blind site. To be eligible to participate in this draw:

- a. All draw registrants **must be 18 years of age**, possess a valid picture identification card (i.e. state identification card or driver's license) **and** a current valid California Hunting License in the registrant's name. School identification cards are not permissible.
- b. Complete the online registration and payment before July 27th.

(Please note: Due to unforeseen circumstances or construction plans, a reservoir may be closed and, thus, unavailable for waterfowl hunting season with no refunds. The Department will provide park closure information prior to registration.)

- c. Payment in the amount of \$50.00 must be paid ONLINE during the registration process. This registration fee is **non-refundable**. We cannot accept cash or check payment as payments must be made during the registration process online.
- d. Only **one** applicant can be linked to a single account. This will allow us to ensure that the correct applicant, if drawn as a winner, is given the login for the pinning. Each applicant must sign to agree to terms of draw. Applicants will need to provide:
 - i. Name of Applicant(s)
 - ii. Phone number (s)
 - iii. Hunting License Number(s)
 - iv. Driver's License Number
 - v. Date of Birth
- e. Waterfowl Draw Winner selection is non-transferable. Declining selection is not grounds for a refund, and the selection will go to the alternates.
- f. By entering the Waterfowl Draw, applicants agree to have their Hunting License Number published at www.stancountyparks.com if selected.

(If the above information is not received with payment, your entry may be excluded from the draw.)

Please Note: Payment will only be accepted through the registration website. No cash or check payment can be accepted.

- g. All registration applications must be submitted and paid by the cutoff on July 27, 2025.
- h. The draw will occur electronically. This is done by an independent staff member in our department who has no personal interest in the draw nor does this person know or is familiar with anyone participating in the draw. Woodward Reservoir has 16 duck blind spots and Modesto Reservoir has 20 spots. Through the random drawing, 19 names will be selected for Woodward Reservoir and 23 names will be selected for Modesto Reservoir. This leaves 3 alternates for each site in the case that someone does not complete the online pinning at the specified time.
- i. All randomly drawn Hunting License Numbers will be posted on the Parks and Recreation website and sites will be selected in the same order as the names are drawn.
- j. Site Selection – After all names are drawn and posted on the website, selection of sites will occur:
 - a. **ONLINE: Specific details will be available when names are drawn.** Winners must make the payment for the permit and blind deposit online by 4:30pm the day before the Pinning date. No late payments will be accepted, and the winner will forfeit their spot.
- k. **Only the registrants selected will be sent the login credentials for the online pinning of the map.**
- l. The first name drawn will have the first choice of selecting a waterfowl blind site. The second name drawn will have the second choice and so on. Once the winners have chosen their sites and if there are still sites available, the alternatives may make their selection in the order they were selected until the sites are taken.
- m. When it is the turn for the person to select their site, there will be **15** minutes of lead time allotted to each site selection. If the person does not make their selection within 15 minutes, their session will remain active, but the map will open up to selection for the following winner at their designated time slot.
- n. After all the draw winners have selected their sites, any remaining waterfowl blind sites will be assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis by the Director or their designee upon request, availability, and completion of the requisite application.

2. **WATERFOWL BLIND PERMIT PROCEDURE**

INITIAL_____

If a waterfowl blind site is selected:

- a. The permittee must be a **minimum of 18 years of age**. The permittee is fully responsible for the waterfowl blind site and its occupants for the entire waterfowl hunting season. The permit is **non-transferable**.
- b. A **non-refundable** waterfowl blind permit fee of \$500 will be charged. This fee allows the permittee unlimited entry and launch day pass privileges for one vehicle and one boat during the season. They will be given a fob card that allows them access during the season. **(Pursuant to Stanislaus County Code Section 18.12.050)**
- c. A refundable **Blind Removal Deposit** of \$300 fee will be charged. The deposit shall be refunded to the applicant upon proper removal of the blind. **(Pursuant to Stanislaus County Code Section 18.12.050)**

- d. Additional passes for vehicles and/or boats may be purchased from Department staff.
- e. No waterfowl blind authorized and constructed shall be rented, leased, or sold during the period while it is installed and placed at one of the reservoirs controlled by the County. It is the intent of the County to provide these permits for private use only, and any commercial use will result in the revocation of the permit and/or other penalties as may be provided.
- f. Waterfowl blind permits shall not be issued after seven (7) days prior to the opening of the waterfowl season. **(Pursuant to Stanislaus County Code Section 18.12.060E)**
- g. Permits issued shall be valid from September 15th through March 10th during any fiscal year. **(Pursuant to Stanislaus County Code Section 18.12.060D)**

3. **WATERFOWL BLIND CHECK-IN**

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- a. **NEW REQUIREMENT FOR 2025-2026 SEASON:** The Department is implementing a banding and 30-day quarantine program which provides us with the opportunity to proceed with the hunting season this year.
 - i. All boats intending to launch for the waterfowl season must undergo a banding process and complete a mandatory 30-day quarantine before entering the water to begin placing blinds. This requirement applies to both Modesto and Woodward Reservoir. Once a boat has successfully completed the banding and quarantine process, it will be permitted to launch at both reservoir locations. To begin the process, an appointment must be scheduled by contacting the entrance station of the respective reservoir.
 - ii. If the boat would like to be launched for the Early Hunt dates, the boat must be banded by Tuesday, August 12th, 2025.
 - iii. If the boat will not be launched for Early Hunt and will only be used for the Regular Hunt season, the boat must be banded by Sunday, August 31, 2025.
 - iv. You may view the banding dates on the 2025 Waterfowl Draw Season Calendar.
 - v. Water access will be restricted until 6:00 AM throughout the season, aligning with the availability of on-site staff.
 - vi. There will be no exceptions to this requirement.
- b. **No waterfowl blinds shall be permitted on any reservoir prior to September 12, 2025.**
- c. Prior to installation of his/her waterfowl blind, the waterfowl blind permittee must make an appointment for the inspection and check-in of said waterfowl blind. Call to make an appointment at least two (2) days prior to desired check-in date. Prior to season opening and during a designated period, all waterfowl blinds must be installed by appointment during daylight hours. All waterfowl blinds must be installed no later than seven (7) days prior to the opening of the waterfowl hunting season. To make the required appointment, please contact Department representatives at the following numbers:

Modesto Reservoir	(209) 874-9540
Woodward Reservoir	(209) 847-3304
- d. Waterfowl blinds must be presented at inspection and checked-in by permittee. If the permittee is not present, the waterfowl blind will not be accepted for inspection or installation.
- e. Permittee must sign a **Hold Harmless Agreement** at the time of the waterfowl blind check-in.

- f. Waterfowl blinds presented to the Department for inspection at check-in must be complete. Partial blinds will not be accepted or be allowed to be placed into a reservoir. A waterfowl blind, when presented for check-in, shall have the following:
- A functional commercially manufactured **PORTABLE TOILET**. Department staff will determine the serviceability of the portable toilet. Hunters are encouraged to use the portable toilet to ensure the water quality of the reservoir is not degraded. A sewage dump station is available at each reservoir for convenient dumping.
 - All materials for construction, regardless of the type of waterfowl blind.
 - All sections of floating waterfowl blind, including floats.
 - All anchors that are to be placed to secure the blind.
 - Waterfowl blind permit numbers, no less than twelve (12) inches, must be **clearly visible** on two (2) sides of the waterfowl blind. Permit number color shall contrast with the waterfowl blind for best visibility above the waterline.
 - All flotation devices must have the waterfowl blind permit number written on them for identification purposes in the event a blind capsizes or loses a float.
 - Decoys shall be marked with the owner's name.
 - Permittee must present a County permit and a current valid California Hunting License with appropriate waterfowl stamps. The stamps must be permanently affixed and initialed in accordance with State hunting laws.
- g. Seven (7) days prior to opening day (5 p.m. Friday), the waterfowl blind must be adequately disguised with brush for concealment of hunters and equipment, be structurally safe, and the inspection completed and signed off by Department staff and the permittee. Alterations to waterfowl blinds will not be permitted the week prior to opening day of waterfowl season.
- h. Any material added or removed from the blind during the course of the season must be approved by Department staff and recorded as added or removed from the check-in list. The permittee must be present to initial any changes on the list. [Also see 4-l]
- i. Brush cutting is prohibited in the recreation areas. Brush utilized in waterfowl blind concealment must not be deposited on any park property.

4. USE AND MAINTENANCE OF WATERFOWL BLINDS

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- a. Once an authorized blind is installed at the designated point or location, it shall not be moved. Water level fluctuation will not be a cause for moving a waterfowl blind. (**Pursuant to Stanislaus County Code Section 18.12.030A**. Violation of the provision shall be punishable as an infraction as provided in **Stanislaus County Code Section 1.36.020**.)
- b. Any waterfowl floating blind that breaks loose from its moorings **must** be returned to its assigned location and properly anchored before it can be used for hunting. Any waterfowl blind that breaks moorings or anchor lines and poses a threat to the dam structure or creates a hazard may be removed at the permittee's expense. The Department will not assume any responsibility for the damage done to the blind. If possible, the owner of the blind will be notified.
- c. A minimum of a 300-yard distance **must** be maintained between waterfowl blinds. Refer to map for specific details regarding potential exclusions.
- d. Waterfowl hunting is permitted only from registered and authorized waterfowl blinds. Hunting from boats (including boat blinds), islands or from the shoreline at reservoirs is **prohibited**. (**Pursuant to Stanislaus County Code Section 18.12.080C**. Violation of this provision shall

be punishable as a misdemeanor as provided in **Stanislaus County Code Section 1.36.010)**

- e. Hunters shall make an effort to retrieve wounded waterfowl. **Only in the attempt to retrieve wounded waterfowl**, if it is necessary to discharge your weapon to render the **wounded waterfowl** immobile, the hunter may discharge his/her weapon from a boat while outside the blind. However, pursuant to California Department of Fish and Game §251, “the motor of such motorboat, airboat, or sailboat must be shut off and/or the sails furled and its progress therefore has ceased, and it is drifting, beached, moored, resting at anchor, or is being propelled by paddle, oar or pole.” Hunters shall exercise extreme caution and care regarding the discharge of weapons at all times, ensuring the safety and welfare of persons and property. **(Pursuant to Stanislaus County Code Section 18.12..)**
- f. Cleaning of waterfowl is **prohibited** on any park property.
- g. All boats **must** comply with the Harbors and Navigation Code, and will be subject to periodic inspections to insure proper safety equipment is aboard. All boats must maintain current registration. Day-use decals are **not valid** on boats with expired registration.
- h. All hunters are required to pay appropriate fees or have the appropriate day-use pass. The day-use pass does not apply to dogs brought into the park and does not apply to camping fees. Separate fees for day-use, dogs, and camping are **required** upon entering the park.
- i. **AT MODESTO RESERVOIR: All dogs, horses, and pets are prohibited at all times. (Please report any violations to a Department staff immediately.)**
- j. **AT WOODWARD RESERVOIR: Due to the no body to water contact, all dogs, horses and pets are not permitted in the water during this season. (Please report any violations to a Department staff immediately.)**
- k. Each waterfowl hunter shall possess, or be with a person possessing, a valid waterfowl blind permit, or have in his possession written permission signed by the permittee of the waterfowl blind from which he/she will be hunting. Permittee shall provide copies of written permission to Director or his/her designee. Copies shall be kept in permittee's file. **(Pursuant to Stanislaus County Code Section 18.12.020C.)**
- l. Waterfowl blinds may be modified or altered with brush during the hunting season from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on weekdays and from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on weekends without an appointment. **However**, Department staff must be notified **in writing** in advance of the waterfowl blind number and type of brush that will be used.
- m. The Department will send a written notice to remove a blind to any permittee/owner that is not in compliance with all rules and regulations, or with any of the terms of the waterfowl blind permit. Any violation of rules and regulations or permit conditions may result in forfeiture of waterfowl blind location, hunting privileges, and revocation of waterfowl blind permit. **(Pursuant to Stanislaus County Code Sections 18.12.060 and 18.12.070.)**
- n. If authorized Department personnel find that required waterfowl blind standards have not been met, the permittee shall have 48 hours after notification to correct identified deficiencies. If deficiencies are not corrected within 48 hours the **permit may be revoked**. No hunting will be allowed from the waterfowl blind until all identified deficiencies have been corrected and approved in writing by the Director or his/her designee. **(Pursuant to Stanislaus County Code Sections 18.12.030 and 18.12.070.)**

- o. Operation of any and all watercraft in the area between the buoys and the water quality wall at Woodward Reservoir is punishable by a \$500 fine. (**Pursuant to Stanislaus County Code Section 18.20.040 Misdemeanor designated**)

5. REMOVAL OF WATERFOWL BLIND AND DEPOSIT REFUND

INITIAL_____

To be eligible to receive a refund of the deposit:

- a. Permittee **must** schedule a removal inspection with Department representative to check-out at least two (2) days prior to check-out.
- b. The waterfowl blind **must** be completely removed from the recreation area no later than March 14th, 2026. Violation of this provision shall be punishable as an infraction as provided in Section 1.36.020. (**Pursuant to Stanislaus County Code Section 18.12.030C.**)
- c. The complete removal of a waterfowl blind **must be verified** by Department staff by signature of the Application for Return. The application will then be delivered to the Department's main office for processing.
- d. Refunds will **not** be made for any blind left beyond March 14th, 2026, or for any blind that was taken out of the park without being inspected and signed-off by a Department staff. (**Pursuant to Stanislaus County Code Section 18.12.050.**)
- e. The County may dispose of any waterfowl blind or parts thereof that remain at the recreation area after March 14th, 2026. (**Pursuant to Stanislaus County Code Section 18.12.030D.**)
- f. Permittee **will be responsible for all costs** of removal above the initial deposit. In addition, the permittee leaving a blind or any part of a blind or other hazardous debris in a recreation area may be subject to legal action. In accordance with **Stanislaus County Code Title 1, General Provisions Section 1.36**, General Penalties, failure to remove the waterfowl blind after March 14th constitutes an infraction of **Stanislaus County Code Section 18.12.030C** and is punishable by a **mandatory fine** of:
 - i. \$100 for a first violation;
 - ii. \$200 for a second violation of the same Code Section within one year; and
 - iii. \$400 for each additional violation of the same Code Section within one year.
 - iv. **Each and every day, or portion thereof that a violation of this Code Section continues or goes unabated, is deemed to be and constitutes a separate violation of the same Code Section.**

6. CONDUCT

INITIAL_____

- a. The permittee is responsible for fair, sportsmanlike and polite behavior at all times between other permittees, Stanislaus County Parks and Recreation staff and patrons. Any aggressive or threatening behavior will result in loss of permit and, if necessary, will be reviewed by Director or authorized agent for further disciplinary action.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand that it is my responsibility to comply with these Rules & Regulations.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____