**Section 590.15 Duck, Goose and Coot General Hunting Regulations on Department‑Owned, -Leased and -Managed Sites Listed in Sections 590.40 and 590.50**

a) Definitions

1) Blind builder – Person who has been assigned a blind site as a result of the drawing.

2) Blind partner – Persons chosen by the builder to assist in construction and maintenance of the blind and to share its blind claiming and hunting privileges.

3) Blind registration card – Card issued by the Department and tacked inside each blind, or carried on the hunter for claiming hunting sites, listing names and addresses of blind builders.

4) Blind site – A position within 10 feet of a marked location where blind must be constructed. Sites shall be located and marked by the Department.

5) Complete blind – A blind with all framework and siding constructed and in readiness for use, including final brushing.

6) Dog Hide – A compartment or area within or attached to a blind that houses a dog used to retrieve downed waterfowl.

7) Drawing – Procedure by which blind sites are assigned.

8) Herbaceous vegetation – for purposes of this Section, is a plant species that is not a tree or shrub.

9) Hunting party – An individual or group of hunters occupying a single boat, blind, or hunting site.

10) Hunting site – a position within 10 feet of a marked location where temporary blinds may be used. Sites shall be located and marked by the Department. Temporary blinds must be removed at the end of each day's hunt.

11) Temporary blind – A place of concealment that is removed in its entirety at the end of each day's hunt, including boat blinds.

12) Woody vegetation – for the purposes of this Section, is a species of tree or shrub.

b) Blind Construction

1) Blinds must be at least 4 feet x 8 feet, but no higher than 14 feet from the water surface at normal pool level, to the top of the shooting box, sturdy enough to withstand daily usage, and must be maintained in good condition by blind builders throughout the duck season. Blinds shall be numbered and that number shall be visible from the outside of the blinds. Blinds must be placed within 10 feet of assigned Department marked site.

2) Blinds built over water must be of platform construction with the platform constructed above normal water conditions or they may be floating blinds. At Mississippi River Pools 25 and 26, river blinds located on the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers and at Batchtown management area located on the river side of the closing levee may also be pull-in boat hide blinds. Boat hide blind must have a minimum size of 18' x 7.5', be sturdy enough to withstand daily use considering conditions of the site, and be maintained in good condition throughout the season. Boat hide blinds shall be completed, including final brushing by four weeks prior to opening day of duck season for other areas mentioned in this subsection (b)(2). Failure to meet these standards shall result in forfeiture of the blind site.

3) Except for Meredosia Bay, Mississippi River Pools 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24 and the Sparland Unit of Marshall State Fish and Wildlife Area, blinds must be completed, including final brushing, 3 weeks in advance of opening date of regular duck season (except at Mississippi River Area Pools 25 and 26 blinds and final brushing must be completed 4 weeks in advance of opening date of regular duck season) after which time the Department shall inspect all blinds and blind sites and issue Blind Registration Cards to those which pass inspection. Blind builders shall not gain access to Redwing Slough/Deer Lake State Natural Area until the day following Labor Day. Blind builders must post Blind Registration Card in the blind prior to the first day of regular duck season. If adverse weather or water conditions make compliance with this rule difficult the Site Superintendent or the District Wildlife Manager may grant extensions.

4) Sites on which blinds have not been built or registered, as well as sites on which blinds of an unsatisfactory quality have been built, shall be reassigned to alternates selected at a drawing or by a first come-first served allocation held on a day publicly announced by the Department. All reassigned blinds must be completed, including final brushing, 7 days prior to the opening date of the duck season on sites posted as being closed to trespassing 7 days prior to regular duck season. At Mississippi River Area Pools 25 and 26 reassigned blinds must be completed by sunset of the Sunday immediately preceding the opening day of regular duck season. On all other sites reassigned blinds must be completed, including final brushing, by the day before the opening day of the regular duck season.

5) Not more than 3 persons shall be registered for assignment of any one blind site. Blind builders shall submit partner names on a blind registration form as designated at the site drawing. After the designated time, no changes shall be accepted. As directed by the information sheet available at each site, the registration form must be filled out and returned within 30 days after the blind drawing date. Failure to do so shall result in forfeiture of blind/hunting site.

6) No person shall be allowed to be a blind builder or partner on more than one public waterfowl blind managed by the Department.

7) Boat hides are required, except as noted in Sections 590.40 and 590.50, and must have minimum dimensions of 18' x 7½'. Boat hides shall be sturdy enough to withstand daily use considering the conditions of the site, and must be maintained in good condition throughout the season, and shall be completed including final brushing by 3 weeks prior to the opening day of duck season, except at Mississippi River Area Pools 25 and 26 boat hides and final brushing must be completed 4 weeks prior to the opening day of duck season; failure to meet these standards shall result in forfeiture of blind site.

8) Previous year's blind builders shall have until 7 days after the next allocation period drawing to salvage materials from their blinds except as indicated in Sections 590.40(a) and (b) and 590.50(a) and (b).

9) Blinds must include a dog hide that is on the same level as the blind. The dog hide can either be incorporated into the blind by providing a hole at floor level that measures at least 20 inches high by 20 inches wide or by providing a separate compartment that is attached to the blind. Hides attached to the blind should have a minimum floor space that measures 2 feet by 2 feet and should be at least 2.5 feet high with 2 openings. One opening should be between the blind and the dog hide, should measure at least 20 inches by 20 inches, and should be constructed at the same level as the blind floor. The water access opening should be at least 20 inches wide and 20 inches high. Hides either within the blind or attached should have an enforced ramp to water level that is at least 15 inches wide with cleats every 12 inches. Openings in the blind must be capable of being closed when not in use.

c) Use of Blinds

1) Attempts to claim blinds/hunting sites by any manner other than actual occupation shall be considered in violation of this Part. The insertion of a boat into the boat hide and/or the spreading of decoys before a blind shall not be considered legal occupation of a blind.

2) No person shall hunt, or attempt to hunt, except from within a registered blind, except for Meredosia Bay, Mississippi River Pools 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24 and the Sparland Unit of Marshall State Fish and Wildlife Area.

3) Persons under 16 years of age shall not hunt, or attempt to hunt, unless accompanied by an adult due to safety factors.

4) Blinds shall not be locked.

5) Claiming or attempting to claim any blind that is legally occupied, and/or harassing, in any manner, the occupants of a blind which has been legally occupied, is unlawful.

6) No person shall fish within 250 yards of an occupied blind within the hunting area.

7) All hunting parties shall hunt over a spread of at least 12 decoys during duck season and Canada goose season. The decoys shall be staked, placed, or floating, be individually visible, be at least 8 inches long, and not be within a boat, blind or container.

8) At sites where a manned check station is in operation, hunters are required to show their hunting license and Federal and State Migratory Waterfowl Stamp. Persons exempt by law from having a hunting license and an Illinois stamp must show valid photo identification (example: Firearm Owner's Identification Card, driver's license, etc.).

9) Cutting of woody vegetation greater than 4 inches in diameter at breast height (d.b.h.) is prohibited. No cutting of oak trees of any size is allowed. Killing or harming herbaceous vegetation, including but not limited to herbicide treatments or natural vegetation killers, or otherwise damaging or destroying habitat on Department managed lands by any means is prohibited. Planting crops or other vegetation, as well as spreading mineral supplements, including but not limited to salt, is prohibited on lands controlled by the Department. Violations of these rules without written permission of the Site Superintendent will result in loss of the blind for the current allocation period for that site.

d) Public Drawing

1) Time and place for all sites holding drawings shall be publicly announced by the Department.

2) A registrant for a drawing must be at least 16 years of age and possess a current or preceding year's annual Illinois hunting license that allows the individual to hunt without additional supervision, a current or preceding year's Illinois Migratory Waterfowl Stamp unless exempted by law, and a valid photo identification (example: Firearm Owner's Identification Card, driver's license). Persons exempted by law from possessing a hunting license or waterfowl stamp must have valid photo identification. In order to be an eligible applicant for the drawing, the participant must not at the time of the drawing have his/her hunting privileges suspended or revoked by the Department or any other jurisdiction. Applicants must be present for the registration and drawing to be eligible for allocation of blind sites.

3) No person is eligible to draw for a waterfowl blind or hunting site who has had his or her hunting privileges suspended by Illinois or any other state, or is prohibited from possessing a firearm due to a conviction for violation of a State or federal law, or is prohibited from possessing a firearm by action of law regardless of conviction status (such as homeland security, under order of protection, etc.). Any ineligible person who submits an application to draw for a waterfowl blind or hunting site shall be refused, if known by the drawer at the time to be ineligible, or shall have his or her draw declared void upon discovery of ineligibility by the Department. A refused or voided application shall be referred to the appropriate State's Attorney for possible prosecution under the Criminal Code of 2012 [720 ILCS 5].

e) Flood Rules

1) Unless site-specific flood rules are listed in Sections 590.40, 590.50 or 590.60, in the event that State managed sites are flooded to the point that public waterfowl blinds cannot be constructed or waterfowl blinds are no longer usable during a flood, or if the receding flood water does not allow for Department blind inspection under subsection (b), the Department, by public announcement and/or posting, may permit waterfowl hunting under one of the following subsections:

A) If the check station for that site is open, all rules apply, except that hunting will be allowed from boat, platform or floating blinds which must be located within 10 feet of the marked blind site.

B) If the check station is not operable, all rules apply except that hunting will be allowed from boat, platform or floating blinds which must be located within 10 feet of the marked blind site. Additionally, rules listed in Section 590.40(b)(1), (2), (3), (4) and (9) shall not be in force. Rules concerning blind claiming as listed in Section 590.50(b) shall apply.

C) If blind sites have not been marked and no check station is operable, the area will be open to hunting from platform, floating or boat blinds or by walk-in hunting, anywhere on the area except refuges and closed waterfowl rest areas. Preplacement of unattended decoys and/or unoccupied blinds or boat hides do not constitute lawful possession of a hunting site. All hunting parties must remain 200 yards apart and follow normal closing hours for the site.

D) In all above flood circumstances, regulations requiring the construction of a separate boat hide and regulations regarding the minimum standards for blind construction and inspection shall be suspended for that season.

2) Hunting locations allocated via public drawing shall be retained by blind registrants despite the lack of a completed blind.

f) Only flu flu arrows may be used by bow and arrow hunters; broadheads are not allowed.

(Source: Amended at 48 Ill. Reg. 3899, effective March 1, 2024)