

National Environment and Planning Agency Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Guidelines for 2021 Game Bird Hunting Season

INTRODUCTION

The 2021 Game Bird Hunting Season will commence on 21 August 2021 and end on 26 September 2021. Careful consideration was given to the current COVID-19 pandemic and the implications it would have on hunting activity.

The Natural Resources Conservation Authority/ National Environment & Planning Agency (NRCA/NEPA) anticipates challenges in relation to the movement of hunters from mainly urban areas to remote rural areas, interactions amongst hunters, community members and field assistants (bird boys). The NRCA/NEPA also anticipates that there may be challenges in maintaining social distancing guidelines during the processing and issuing of Hunters' Licences, monitoring and checking of documents and birds in the field, and the processing of Hunters' Returns.

The continued impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) demands that measures are in place to ensure that due care is taken by all stakeholders when it comes time to operationalize the activities for the Season. These Guidelines have been prepared by NEPA/NRCA in accordance with the Guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW) and the Disaster Risk Management Act (DRMA) to address the specific concerns with administering a hunting season in light of the pandemic:

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

For Hunters

- Hunters 65 years and older should exercise due care or consider not taking part in this year's hunting season.
- Do not participate in hunting if you are feeling sick especially with a persistent cough or a fever.
- Hunters are encouraged to maintain safe distances of at least 6ft apart and observe hand and cough hygiene instructions.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as guns, gun cases, ammunition boxes, cellphones, licences, vehicle door handles and interior. Note that cleaning and disinfection should be according to MOHW guidelines or the manufacturer's instructions.
- Designate one person to retrieve and distribute refreshments from cooler boxes. This individual must always wear a face mask (correctly) and practice good hand hygiene.
- Limit the number of person traveling in each vehicle including the bed of a pick-up truck so as to maintain a minimum distance of 3 feet apart. If persons traveling together are not from the same household face masks must be worn at all times with the distancing observed.
- Do not congregate in groups of more than 20 people at gun clubs, community meeting areas or whilst in the field.
- Ensure that each field assistant or bird boy is aware of the general guidelines and have or are provided with face masks and hand sanitizer that contains at 65-70% alcohol.
- Hunters are encouraged to use credit card/debit card for payments and to disinfect these items frequently with 65-70% alcohol.
- Hunters should familiarize themselves with, and adhere to, curfew times and other advisories as outlined in the Orders of the DRMA.

- All Returns are either to be made directly to **Natural Resources Conservation Authority** using the drop box located at **NEPA, 10 Caledonia Ave, Kingston 5, submitted electronically using the Hunting Returns Portal on NEPA's website or are to be sent by registered mail to P.O. Box 207.**

For Vendors

- Limit the number of hunters purchasing hunting licences at any one time by implementing one or more of the following:
 1. Encourage call in purchases or reservations of time slots to purchase and pick up hunting licences.
 2. Designate a waiting area with consideration for social distancing measures while allowing only a limited number of persons within the establishment to purchase hunting licences.
- Wipe and disinfect surfaces such as chairs, tables and counters after use by each client.
- Encourage the use of credit card/debit card while maintaining safe distances and observing hand and cough hygiene instructions.
- Ensure all staff members are aware of the covid-19 guidelines for the Bird Shooting Season.
- Where possible a protected Plexiglas shield (higher than the level of a person's head when standing) should be installed at the desk of the cashier and processing officer during application process for a licence.

For Monitoring Teams (NEPA/NRCA, JCF¹, C-CAM², JCDT³)

- If persons assigned to a monitoring team feel sick or have a persistent cough or show signs of a fever they should not participate in monitoring activities.
- Monitoring team are limited to 3 for purposes of vehicular travel.
- At all relevant time persons monitoring must wear a face mask and shield and tight-fitting disposable gloves which are not reusable.
- Monitoring team should avoid handling any birds and documents (identification cards and hunting licence). Instead, the hunter should be instructed to display for observation by the monitoring team.
- In the event documents or surfaces are touched, monitoring teams should wash or sanitize hands before going inspecting another hunter.
- All monitoring teams should be equipped with sanitizers, extra gloves and masks.

Further to the Specific Guidelines above, the following General Guidelines are provided to buttress the foregoing:

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Wash your hands

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Wash hands after handling birds.
- Wash hands before preparing meals and before eating.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains 65-70% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact

¹ Jamaica Constabulary Force

² Caribbean Coastal Area Management Foundation

³ Jamaica Conservation & Development Trust

- Avoid close contact with persons who are sick, even inside your home, within motor vehicles and in the field.
- Maintain a distance of least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) between yourself and other persons outside your household. This is especially important for persons who are at a higher risk such as the elderly and persons with underlying conditions.
- Stay at least 3 feet from other people in a motor vehicle.
- Do not shake hands.

Cover face

- Everyone is required to wear a face mask in the correct manner at all times in any public space as outlined in the DRMA.

Cover coughs and sneezes

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow, if you do not have a face cover.
- Dispose of used tissues in a safe manner, not in the field.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains 65-70% alcohol.

Clean and disinfect

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces. Be sure to clean dirty surfaces with detergent or soap and water prior to the use of household disinfectant.

Monitor your health

- Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.
- Take your temperature if symptoms develop.
- Follow Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW) guidance if symptoms develop.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The MoHW has several COVID-19 Resources and Protocols⁴ that should be considered for reference. The can be accessed on the Ministry of Health and Wellness website at <https://www.moh.gov.jm/covid-19-resources-and-protocols/>. The main ones include:

1. Keeping Seniors Healthy During COVID-19 Outbreak (March 2020);
2. Interim Guide for COVID-19: Recommendations for Infection Prevention and Control by Employers (28 March 2020);
3. Important things to know about wearing a mask (January 2020);
4. Environmental Health Interim Guidelines and Procedures for the Reopening of Public Facilities /Spaces for COVID-19 (May 2020).

⁴ COVID-19 Resources and Protocols, Ministry of Health and Wellness <https://www.moh.gov.jm/covid-19-resources-and-protocols/> accessed on 28 May 2020.