



What to Expect on a Spread Oaks Waterfowl Hunt

Spread Oaks Lodge offers a full range of Texas riverine to prairie waterfowl hunting. Teal, gadwalls, and pintails are our staple species with subordinate wood ducks and mallards. Some years we have good sandhill crane opportunities and even snipe over decoys, but success with these hunts is variable. We offer them only as a “bonus” to your duck hunting adventures.

The best way for the Spread Oaks staff to deliver a hunt to your expectations is for you to communicate what they are. Think about your hunt from your guide’s point of view. We scout all the ponds and usually know if we have 25 good locations or, for example, only two. From this, we can better advise your hunting options when we know the following:

- 1) **How many in your booked party will be hunting waterfowl.** We schedule the number of guides to the number of hunters in a party. Knowing how many that is allows us to schedule enough guides to meet your needs.
- 2) **Your party’s experience level.** We encourage and can accommodate the inexperienced, the non-hunter, family members, or most anyone who wants to participate in or witness the hunt. Let us know. We also cater to the most ardent of waterfowlers. Let us know.
- 3) **Your preferences on the number of hunters in each blind.** We traditionally hunt 3 to 4 shooters per blind, but some guests prefer to combine their party – we have had as many as 7 in a blind. We try to accommodate requests, and we will tell you when and why if we cannot.

- 4) **The level of “difficulty” you and your guests expect from your hunt.** We offer places to hunt that require little more than a pair of rubber boots in comfortable pit, permanent, and levee blinds. You won't walk more than a few feet, and your feet don't touch the water! The flip side is the dedicated waterfowlers. For those, we can provide hunts at locations that require waders, a walk in the mud or through the timber, or with temporary blinds or no blinds at all. Again, we can do a better job if we know your expectations.
- 5) **The number of guests who would like to take ducks home.** Here's how our duck cleaning service works. We provide breasts with the skin on and a wing (required by federal law) with a duck tag. Typically, we combine tagged and cleaned birds 6 to a bag. We prefer you bring your own cooler for transport, but we do have portable thermal bags. It is possible to ship birds on your behalf, but it is expensive. Please let us know in advance so we can provide a quote. We can, however, help you with the logistics of handling any birds you wish to take a taxidermist with no advance notification.

Guns and Ammo. Spread Oaks Lodge provides over-and-under 12-gauge shotguns for those who do not want to transport their own. We also provide 12-gauge and 20-gauge 2 ¾” and 3” steel shot ammunition at no extra cost. If you are using another gauge, or prefer other shot types (i.e., bismuth, tungsten, etc.) you will need to bring your own ammunition.

Gear. We keep rubber boots in adult sizes and have a limited supply of “backup” waders, hip boots, rain jackets, caps, headlamps, hearing protection, etc. For those who wish to bring their own gear, consider the following:

1. Waders, hip boots, and/or rubber boots.
2. Foul weather gear (caps, coats, jackets, gloves, etc.)
3. Your favorite shotgun(s).
4. Game bag/backpack.

Licenses. You will be responsible for a valid Texas hunting license with state and federal migratory bird endorsements, HIP certification, and proof of hunter safety course (see separate license document).

Safety. Spread Oaks' number one priority is the safety of our guests and staff. Safety is just as much your responsibility as it is ours, meaning do not hesitate to bring anything that makes you uncomfortable to anyone's attention, whether on staff or not. Guidelines in the field are as follows:

1. Listen to your guide's safety talk.
2. Guns are to remain in cases until guide gives the go ahead.
3. Breeches are to remain open at all times until guide gives the OK to load.
4. Check gun is unloaded before entering or leaving blind/field.
5. Be sure your guide has made you aware of your safe shooting lanes **and follow them.**
6. All guns in blind must be pointed up and away from others in blind.
7. Keep gun safety on at all times.
8. Guides call the shots unless you are advised to the contrary.
9. Never swing a gun across or over an adjacent shooter.
10. When dogs are working and/or guide is out of blind there is to be no shooting.
11. Your guide is encouraged to stop the hunt if safety protocols are not followed.

To discuss the details of your hunt, contact Rob Sawyer at rob@spreadoaksranch.com or 713-494-4866. Texts and emails are best, but phone calls will be returned usually by the end of each day.