



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 only offer them when we can, and we'll advise if that window of opportunity exists during your stay.

It's important that your hunting expectations match what we can deliver. The guidelines we ask you to abide by are:

- We do not hunt more than three locations each day. This is why we limit the maximum number of hunters to 12 with 10 preferable.
- Waterfowl shooting times are from 30 minutes before sunrise to no later than 9:30.
- There is no afternoon waterfowl hunting.
- We minimize disturbance during the day.

The following is information to help you prepare for your Spread Oaks Ranch waterfowl adventure!

Pre-arrival Planning:

- *How many are hunting?* Communicate the number in your booked party that will be hunting waterfowl. We schedule the number of guides to the number of hunters in a party.

- *What is 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. We also cater to the most ardent of waterfowlers. Let us know.
- *What is the level of "difficulty" you and your guests expect from your hunt?* We really do have something for everyone. Most often, we go the birds to respond to their constantly changing patterns. Tell us your preference – dry and easy, or a bit more challenging and muddier. We offer places to hunt that require just a pair of rubber boots in comfortable pit, permanent, or levee blinds. You won't walk more than a few feet, and your feet don't touch the water. Yes, there are many times when you will shoot fewer ducks than a harder hunt, but not always. The flip side is the dedicated waterfowlers. For you, 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.
- *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 one box of 12-gauge or 20-gauge 3" steel shot ammunition per guest per hunt at no extra cost. If you are more comfortable with extra shells, or your gun only handles shells chambered for 2 ¾", or are using another gauge, or prefer other shot types (i.e., bismuth, tungsten, etc.) you will need to bring your own ammunition.
- *Gear.* Waterfowling is gear intensive, and you need to bring most of what you need to be comfortable in the field. The ranch does keep a supply of rubber boots in adult sizes and has a limited supply of "backup" waders, hip boots, and rain jackets in the event you forget something. A typical list of fowling gear to consider includes:
 1. Waders, hip boots, and/or rubber boots.
 2. Foul weather gear: rain jacket, water resistant pants, cold weather jacket.
 3. Concealment: camo caps, coats, jackets, gloves, face masks, etc.
 4. Misc.: Headlamp, high quality hearing protection, shooting glasses, etc.

5. Your favorite shotgun(s).
6. 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).

The evening before your hunt you will meet with the ranch staff to go over:

- Hunting license review.
- Match available ammunition to your gauge gun.
- Organize parties for the next day.
- Discuss hunt logistics.

The morning of your hunt:

- Meet in gun room adjacent to the main lodge. Here, you'll gear up for the journey to the field, and return in time for breakfast.

After the hunt:

- 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 coolers and/or thermal bags. Usually, on the last day of your hunt, we provide birds from a previous hunting group. That is because it takes from 3 to 6 hours to clean ducks, and we rarely complete this before checkout time. You are encouraged to pluck your own birds if you like. We do not ship birds, but we can help you with local taxidermist logistics.

Hunting 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.