

# KNOW YOUR LIMITS

## MAGAZINE CAPACITIES FOR HUNTERS IN ONTARIO



**T**hroughout the waterfowl, big- and small-game seasons, hunters have the opportunity to use a variety of shotguns, as well as rimfire and centrefire rifles. That sometimes causes confusion in terms of what magazine capacities are legal on any given hunt, especially since the rules are often different when visiting the range.

Confusion is no excuse when in the field, however. With that in mind, here is a summary of rifle and shotgun magazine capacities when hunting in Ontario.

### RIMFIRE RIFLES

For general hunting (small game only): **no limit**

*Not permitted for waterfowl or turkey*



#### Did you know?

The use of rimfire cartridges for big game is prohibited in Ontario. Check the provincial *Hunting Regulations* for more details.

### CENTREFIRE RIFLES BOLT, LEVER AND PUMP

For general hunting: **no limit**

*Not permitted for waterfowl or turkey*



### CENTREFIRE RIFLES SEMI-AUTO

For general hunting: **maximum 5-shot magazine**

*Not permitted for waterfowl or turkey*



### FEDERAL LAW

#### Centrefire semi-automatic rifles and shotguns

Federally, Part 4 of the Regulations Prescribing Certain Firearms and other Weapons,

*"Centrefire semi-automatic rifles and shotguns — 5-shot magazines. These restrictions do not apply to rim-fire rifles in general..."*

There are exceptions. To view them, visit [www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cfp-pcaf/bulletins/bus-ent/20110323-72-eng.htm](http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/cfp-pcaf/bulletins/bus-ent/20110323-72-eng.htm).

Some large-capacity magazines are prohibited regardless of the class of firearm to which the magazines are attached.



## SHOTGUNS SEMI-AUTO

For all hunting: **maximum 3 rounds, in plugged magazine and chamber combined**



## SHOTGUNS PUMP

For all hunting: **maximum 3 rounds, in plugged magazine and chamber combined**



## SHOTGUNS BREAK ACTION

For all hunting: **maximum 3 rounds, though most models can only hold 1 or 2**



## SHOTGUNS BOLT ACTION, WITH BOX MAGAZINE

For all hunting: **maximum 3 rounds, in plugged magazine and chamber combined**



### JUST TO BE CLEAR

So even though Federal firearms laws (see left) says you can own 5 round magazines in these shotguns, Federal Migratory Bird hunting laws (see below) and Ontario hunting laws (see right) state the gun can't hold more than 3 rounds when hunting.

## SHOTGUNS FOR BIG GAME

**20 GAUGE  
GUN OR  
BIGGER**

When hunting bear, elk, deer, or moose with a 20 gauge or bigger gun, you must use SG (No. 1 buck) or larger loads.

**SMALLER  
THAN 20  
GAUGE**

When hunting bear, elk, deer, or moose with a shotgun smaller than a 20 gauge, you must use solid (slug) loads only.



### 2018 Ontario Hunting Regulations

Page 25 of the 2018 regs state, "You must plug a semi-automatic or repeating shotgun [pump-action] so that it will not hold more than a total of three shells in the chamber and magazine combined."

Note this also includes shotguns with box magazines and is required for all hunting situations, not just waterfowling.

Plugs restrict the combined ammunition capacity to three shells, as missed animals typically move quickly out of effective range with each shot. In other words, an animal will likely be out of effective range by the time a hunter chambers the fourth round.

This also prevents an unsafe situation as an animal that has moved outside of effective range may have entered an area that a hunter has not yet determined to be safe.

Check the regulations before you go afield.



### Migratory Birds Regulations

"15 (d) with a shotgun of any description capable of holding more than three shells unless the capacity of the gun has been reduced to three shells in the magazine and chamber combined, by means of the cutting off or the altering or plugging of the magazine with a one-piece metal, plastic or wood filler that cannot be removed unless the gun is disassembled;"

To read the entire *Migratory Bird Regulations*, visit [http://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.\\_c.\\_1035/FullText.html](http://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C._c._1035/FullText.html).

