

CRITERIA FOR SPECIAL CANADA GOOSE SEASONS

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Option 1:

States (except Alaska and Hawaii) may hold a special early Canada goose season of up to 15 days between September 1-15. Such a season must receive Flyway Council endorsement prior to the establishment of federal frameworks, and States must agree to close any areas to hunting where evidence from band recoveries or other sources indicates unacceptable (greater than 10%) harvest of non-target populations during the special season.

The Counties of Tuscola, Huron and Saginaw in Michigan are not eligible for this option because evidence of excessively high harvests of Southern James Bay Canada geese was obtained in a previous experimental evaluation. Additionally, because of evidence suggesting early-arriving migrant Canada geese, these special early Canada goose season in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan cannot extend beyond September 10.

Option 2:

States may hold a special early Canada goose season that would include dates after September 15, except in those areas identified in Option 1. Such a season would be subject to all data-gathering, monitoring and reporting requirements in the special-season criteria. Additionally, such a season would not be subject to any modification during the experimental period.

The Service also proposes that when the criteria for special Canada goose seasons are modified, no additional modifications will be considered for at least 5 years, to allow sufficient time for evaluation of cumulative impacts.

The special-season criteria, including the modifications indicated above, are shown below:

Criteria for Special Canada Goose Seasons

1. States may hold special Canada goose seasons, in addition to their regular seasons, for the purpose of controlling local breeding populations or nuisance geese. These seasons are to be directed only at Canada goose populations that nest primarily in the conterminous United States and must target a specific population of Canada geese. The harvest of nontarget Canada geese must not exceed 10 percent of the special-season harvest during early seasons or 20 percent during late seasons. More restrictive proportions may apply in instances where a nontarget Canada goose population of special concern is involved.
2. Early seasons must be held prior to the regular season.
3. Late seasons must be held after the regular season but no later than February 15.
4. The daily bag and possession limits may be no more than 5 and 10 Canada geese, respectively.
5. The area(s) open to hunting will be described in State regulations.
6. For seasons that include hunting days after September 15:
 - A. All seasons will be conducted under a specific Memorandum of Agreement (Agreement). Provisions for discontinuing, extending, or modifying the seasons will be included in the Agreement.

- B. All seasons initially will be considered experimental. The evaluation required of the State will be incorporated into the Agreement and will include at least the following:
 - (a) Conduct neck-collar observations (where appropriate) and population surveys beginning at least 2 years prior to the requested season and continuing during the experiment.
 - (b) Determine derivation of neck-collar codes and/or leg-band recoveries from observations and harvested geese.
 - (c) Collect morphological information from harvested geese, where appropriate, to ascertain probable source population(s) of the harvest.
 - (d) Analyze relevant band-recovery data.
 - (e) Estimate hunter activity and harvest.
 - (f) Prepare annual and final reports of the experiment.
- C. If the results of the evaluation warrant continuation of the season beyond the experimental period, the State will continue to estimate hunter activity and harvest for all areas, including those areas where seasons do not extend beyond September 15, and report these to the Service annually until the State begins participating in the Harvest Information Program.

7. All special seasons will be subject to periodic re-evaluation when circumstances or special situations warrant.