



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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HUNTERS WARNED REGULATIONS ALLOW ONLY ONE WOOD DUCK IN POSSESSION

Hunters of migratory waterfowl in 15 States are advised that Federal regulations permit only one wood duck in possession, officials of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, said today.

No more than one wood duck, they emphasized, may legally be in a hunter's possession at any time.

The wood duck may be legally taken and possessed in Pennsylvania, Delaware, Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas.

Wood ducks were placed on the restricted hunting list this year for the first time since 1918, when the low numbers of the species led Federal officials to place the bird under the fully protected species.

In recent years many hunters have mistakenly taken a wood duck in areas where the bird concentrates in larger numbers, Secretary Ickes explained, and the 1941 regulations were drafted to permit a hunter to keep the bird rather than waste it.

Protection given the wood duck since 1918 resulted in an increased population, he added, and officials believe that placing the bird on the restricted list would prevent conscientious sportsmen from breaking the law.

~~Emphasizing~~ the desirability of continuing special protection for the species, Secretary Ickes urged hunters to avoid shooting these birds.

It was pointed out that the "one wood duck in possession" regulation is an experiment. If there is evidence of abuse, Secretary Ickes predicted that the bird would be returned to the fully protected list.

Wildfowl Beau Brummel

Described by Ornithologist Arthur C. Bent as the "Beau Brummel among birds," the wood duck is brilliantly colored, with a rich chestnut brown chest, a head of bronze, green, blue, and purple feathers, and a sharp white band gracing the fore part of the neck.

Strictly a North American species and principally a bird of the United States, the wood duck once was a popular game species among sportsmen. Ordinarily its flight is swift and direct. Characteristic is its habit of bobbing its head as it flies. Fond of wooded areas, the bird is expert in threading its way through the interlacing branches of the forest.

Popular names for the bird are summer duck, and squealer, especially in the South, and tree duck, from its habit of nesting in trees.

In "Original and Present Breeding Ranges of Certain Game Birds in the United States," a Fish and Wildlife Service leaflet, Robert C. McClanahan describes the wood duck's original breeding range as the Pacific Coast States, western Montana, northwestern Wyoming, and almost all of Idaho; and the eastern half of the United States from eastern North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas to the Atlantic Coast States.

The western breeding grounds are now principally in western Washington and Oregon, and extreme northern California; and in the east from eastern Minnesota, eastern Iowa, eastern Oklahoma, and southern Texas, to the Atlantic Coast.