

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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1976-77 WATERFOWL HUNTING REGULATIONS PROPOSED

This fall's waterfowl hunting regulations as proposed by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are generally the same as last year.

The proposed changes include the following:

Atlantic Flyway:

- the closure of brant hunting because of poor production and marginal population levels.
- an option for upstate New York to be zoned experimentally into three areas, each having separate duck seasons.

Mississippi Flyway:

- increase in the daily bag limit of ducks from 4 daily and 8 in possession to 5 daily and 10 in possession.
- modification of some point values.

Central Flyway:

- reduction of basic daily bag limit on ducks from 6 to 5, only one of which may be a female mallard.
- separate seasons for dark and white geese.
- modification of some point values.

In all flyways using the point system it is proposed to reduce the point value for redhead ducks from 100 to 70, except in closed areas and retain the canvasback point value at 100 points.

The Service announced it was considering reopening certain areas primarily used by redheads, which are now closed to the hunting of both redheads and canvasbacks. This would provide some additional redhead hunting opportunity in the Mississippi and Central Flyways. Because of increased populations in the Pacific Flyway two canvasbacks in the aggregate with redheads are proposed in the daily bag for the San Francisco Bay area. As in the past, the Atlantic Flyway Council is offered options of flyway-wide closures for canvasbacks and redheads or closures of major harvest areas.

Last month the Service also issued final regulations requiring the use of steel shot in selected areas along the Atlantic Flyway.

The Service's recommended frameworks for season length, shooting hours, and bag limits on migratory waterfowl hunting were published in the August 13 Federal Register. Public comments are invited on these proposals and should be addressed to the Director (Attention: Migratory Bird Management), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240. The comment period closes August 23.

Final hunting season framework regulations will be published in the Federal Register after the public comment period ends and after the individual State governments review and comment on this current proposal. Within the final framework regulation, State game authorities can establish their own individual limits.

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