

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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David Klinger 202/343-5634

NEXT FALL'S MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING REGULATIONS PROPOSED

Preliminary hunting regulations for ducks, geese, and other migratory game birds for the 1980-81 hunting season have been proposed by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. No major changes from last year's hunting regulations are proposed at this time.

The proposals, published in the February 29, 1980, Federal Register, describe tentative season frameworks, daily bag and possession limits, and shooting hours for migratory game birds in the contiguous United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Species discussed in the proposals include ducks, geese, brant and swans; doves and pigeons; cranes; rails, coots, and gallinules; and woodcock and snipe.

Shooting hours will remain from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. Framework dates for ducks and geese will be from October 1, 1980, to January 20, 1981, for the Atlantic and some Mississippi Flyway States, and from October 4, 1980, through January 18, 1981, for the Central and Pacific Flyways and other States in the Mississippi Flyway.

The Fish and Wildlife Service proposes to clarify the definition of "migratory game bird" by deleting the term "wild" where it is sometimes used to describe "ducks" and "doves and pigeons." This minor change would remove a point of possible confusion, but would not affect other portions of the regulations or add additional species to those presently listed as migratory birds.

All of the published proposals are subject to changes later if indicated by information obtained from surveys, State conservation agencies, and the public. Public comments on the proposals are invited through May 16, 1980, and should be addressed to the Director (FWS/MBMO), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

To ensure that the public has ample opportunity to comment on the proposals, two public hearings will be held to review the status of migratory game birds and consider proposed hunting regulations. The first hearing will pertain to early season regulations (seasons opening before October 1) and will be held on June 20, 1980, at 9 a.m. in the Department of the Interior auditorium on C Street between 18th and 19th Streets, N.W., in Washington, D.C. A second hearing on regulations for seasons opening on or after October 1 will be held on August 5, 1980, at 9 a.m., also in the Interior Department auditorium. Persons wishing to participate in these hearings should write to the Director (FWS/MBMO, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240, or telephone 202/254-3207. Those wishing to make statements should file copies with the Director before or during each hearing.