



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release July 13, 1981

Inez Connor 202/343-5634

### SUPPLEMENTAL CHANGES PROPOSED IN EARLY AND LATE MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING SEASONS

Regulations setting the frameworks for 1981-82 early and late migratory bird hunting seasons have been proposed by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Several supplemental late season framework proposals also were published.

Generally the early season frameworks are the same as last year except for a few minor changes that affect local areas or regions. Early hunting seasons are those that open before October 1.

The proposals, published in the Federal Register on July 8 and July 13, 1981, set forth the species to be hunted during early seasons, daily bag and possession limits, shooting hours, season lengths, earliest opening and latest closing season dates, and special closures. Within these frameworks, when finalized, State conservation agencies may select hunting season dates and options.

Species included in the early season proposals are mourning doves, white-winged doves, band-tailed pigeons, rails, woodcock, common snipe, and gallinules; teal in portions of the Mississippi and Central Flyways during September; sea ducks in designated areas of the Atlantic Flyway; experimental duck seasons in Iowa, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Florida in September; sandhill cranes in portions of North Dakota and South Dakota; and migratory bird hunting seasons in Alaska, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The proposal includes an option for a falconry season in certain States meeting Federal falconry standards.

over

Changes being proposed for this group of birds include a basic mourning dove season of 60 full days in the Central Management Unit (consisting of the Dakotas, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, and Texas) with 12 doves daily and 24 in possession (in 1980, 10 and 20 doves), or an option of a 45-day season with daily bag and possession limits of 15 and 30 doves, respectively. Seventy full-days of dove hunting, rather than the 70 half-days offered last year, are proposed for Arizona. In south Texas, a 5-day white-winged dove season is contemplated. An experimental band-tailed pigeon season is proposed for three counties of western Nevada. Minor changes are proposed in the sandhill crane frameworks for portions of North Dakota. Experimental September duck seasons are being offered in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Florida, primarily to allow greater harvests of southern nesting wood ducks and early migrating teal. A waterfowl season is being proposed for the Virgin Islands and the permissible hunting area for scaly-naped pigeons expanded. No changes are proposed for Alaska.

The Service also proposed some changes in hunting regulations for the late seasons (seasons that open on or after October 1, 1981). Central Flyway States are offered the option of either setting duck seasons by geographic zones or by splitting the seasons into three segments Statewide. A proposal for an experimental sandhill crane season in the Wilcox Basin area of Arizona is under study. Several minor changes in zoning boundaries and local goose regulations are proposed for public comment. Finally, the Service wants to abolish a reporting requirement for States offering extended falconry seasons because of the biological unimportance of this means of taking migratory birds.

A public hearing on the proposed late season changes will be held August 4, 1981, at 9:00 a.m., at the Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. Comments on late season proposals will be accepted through August 24, 1981, and should be addressed to the Director (MBMO), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

X X X