



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE ISSUES FINAL CRITERIA FOR ESTABLISHING NONTOXIC SHOT ZONES

The Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has issued final criteria for guidelines to determine areas where lead poisoning of waterfowl is a significant problem and where hunters should be required to use nontoxic shot.

Up to this point, there have been no uniform criteria to identify areas where nontoxic shot should be used. Nontoxic (steel) shot is required in certain areas to prevent waterfowl from being poisoned by eating spent lead shot.

The final guidelines, published in the July 30, 1985, Federal Register, reflect comments received during the public comment period. By going through this process, with full public input, the Fish and Wildlife Service believes that the criteria represent a general consensus of the States, conservation organizations, waterfowl hunters and other interested groups.

The guidelines include "triggering" criteria for initial identification of areas where lead poisoning may be a problem, and "decision" criteria for determining whether or not a problem actually exists.

Counties or other waterfowl habitat areas will initially be identified under the triggering criteria if there is a harvest of 20 or more waterfowl (ducks, geese, swans, and coots) per square mile or 3 dead waterfowl diagnosed as having died from lead poisoning. The Service will implement a "phase-in" approach based on harvest levels as reflected below:

<u>Harvest Level</u> (birds per square mile)	<u>Hunting Season when</u> <u>Monitoring Is to Begin</u>
20 or more	1985-86
15 or more	1986-87
10 or more	1987-88
5 or more	1988-89

(over)

