



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release August 14, 1987

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### FRAMEWORKS ESTABLISHED FOR EARLY MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING SEASONS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has published final frameworks for regulation of this fall's early migratory bird hunting seasons. The frameworks were published in the August 6 Federal Register and states will select the actual hunting season dates and regulations from them. State regulations may be more but not less restrictive than the frameworks offered by the Service.

In general, the frameworks are much the same as last season. They cover seasons opening before October 1 and relate to mourning, white-winged, and white-tipped doves; band-tailed pigeons; woodcock; common snipe; rails; common moorhens and purple gallinules; teal; sandhill cranes; sea ducks; and special falconry seasons. Also outlined are special experimental September duck seasons in Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, and Tennessee, as well as experimental early-September Canada goose seasons in portions of Illinois, Michigan, and Minnesota.

Owing to a significant downward trend in mourning dove populations in the Western Management Unit (Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington), the frameworks contain restrictions on hunting mourning doves in this area.

These states may choose either a 30-consecutive-day season between September 1 and January 15, or a 45-day season to be split between two periods, September 1-15 and November 1 to January 15. In all states in this

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unit, the daily bag and possession limits are proposed to be 10 and 20 mourning doves, respectively. These measures will shorten the season framework from 70 days to a maximum of 45 and reduce the bag limit from 12 to 10. The framework dates for white-winged dove hunting in Arizona and portions of Nevada and California have been shortened to conform with the restricted mourning dove frameworks in those states.

Reductions have also been made for band-tailed pigeons in California, Oregon, Washington, and portions of Nevada, with a hunting season framework of September 7 to January 3, not more than a 16-consecutive-day season, and a daily bag and possession limit of 4 bandtails. These reductions reflect a significant decrease in population indices for this species in this area over the past 2 years.

The final frameworks continue the restrictive hunting regulations initiated in 1985 for woodcock in eastern states and the experimental September duck seasons in Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Iowa.

The frameworks permit limited hunting seasons for sandhill cranes in Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. The greater sandhill cranes in the Rocky Mountain population number at least 18,000 and are causing considerable crop damage in numerous fall staging areas and the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico.