



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

For Release: August 12, 1988 Craig L. Rieben 202-343-5634

### CUTBACKS IN DUCK HUNTING SEASON PROPOSED IN 1988-89

In response to an expected near record low fall flight of waterfowl and continuing habitat degradation resulting from the drought, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing significant cutbacks for this fall's duck hunting season. Major changes in the proposed regulations governing the 1988-89 migratory waterfowl hunting season are aimed at reducing the overall take of ducks by at least 25 percent.

"This has been a terrible year for ducks," says U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Frank Dunkle. "The drought simply wiped out many key nesting areas and we are predicting a fall flight of 66 million birds, the second lowest on record. The restrictions proposed for comment are intended to cut back the duck harvest this year. I am confident waterfowlers understand the need to take these steps and will do all they can to help ensure the future well-being of our waterfowl resource."

The regulations are proposed by flyway and reflect the relative numbers of birds. Major changes proposed for the 1988-89 duck hunting season are as follows:

- o Shooting hours for this year are changed pending review to sunrise to sunset in all flyways, as compared to one-half hour before sunrise to sunset in previous seasons. (This proposal applies to all migratory bird hunting.)
- o Duck season lengths are reduced by 25 percent in all flyways:

Atlantic Flyway:	From 40 days to 30 days
Mississippi Flyway:	From 40 days to 30 days
Central Flyway:	
High Plains:	From 67 days to 51 days
Low Plains:	From 51 days to 39 days
Pacific Flyway:	From 79 days to 59 days (66 days in Columbia Basin)

- o Duck season frameworks are October 8 to January 8 in all flyways.

(over)

- o All conventional bag limits are reduced by one duck:
  - Atlantic Flyway: From four to three
  - Mississippi Flyway: From four to three
  - Central Flyway: From four to three
  - Pacific Flyway: From five to four
- o The point system bag is suspended in all flyways for this year pending further review.
- o The mallard bag limit in the Pacific Flyway is reduced from four to three (only one of which may be a hen), and from three to two (only one hen) in the Central Flyway.
- o Limited pintail season:
  - Bag limits in all four flyways are one pintail of either sex during the first 7 days of the season.
  - During the last 7 days of the duck hunting season in the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways, the last 9 days in the Central Flyway, and the last 16 days in the Pacific Flyway, the limit is two male pintails.
  - Between these two periods, the season on pintails is closed.
- o Special scaup seasons, and bonus scaup and bonus teal limits, are suspended.
- o The season is closed on canvasbacks in all flyways.

#### GEESE

Weather and habitat conditions on goose nesting grounds were generally favorable and satisfactory fall flights are expected for most flocks. Regulations are similar to those of 1987-88. In the mid-Atlantic Flyway states, the season length for Canada geese has been shortened from 90 to 70 days and the bag limit reduced from four to two because of a decline in numbers of migrant geese and indications of a more northward shift in wintering flocks. In the Back Bay area of Virginia and part of North Carolina, the Canada goose season is only 11 days and the bag limit one per day.

Atlantic brant are doing well and the season has been increased from 30 to 50 days; the daily bag limit remains at two.

In the Mississippi Flyway, an expected increase in the fall flight of Mississippi Valley Population Canada geese has led to an increase in harvest quotas for these birds.

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In the Central Flyway, regulations for geese are nearly identical to those of last year. The same is true in the Pacific Flyway where restrictive regulations are continued in an effort to rebuild several flocks that have declined significantly.

#### SWANS

Seasons on western tundra swans in parts of Utah, Nevada, and Montana are unchanged from a year ago.

In the East, the experimental swan season will be continued in North Carolina and experimental seasons will be offered in Virginia and New Jersey. Seasons on eastern population tundra swans have been available to North and South Dakota, although to date neither state has initiated such a season.

Each year, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service publishes final waterfowl season frameworks from which states may select specific regulations for the waterfowl and coot hunting seasons. The states may adopt waterfowl hunting regulations that are more restrictive (but not more liberal) than the final frameworks published by the Service.

The proposed migratory game bird late season frameworks were published in the August 12 Federal Register. Interested parties are urged to submit comments on the proposal prior to August 25, the close of the public comment period. The comments and other additional information received will be considered prior to issuance of the final frameworks. Comments should be addressed to Director (FWS/MBMO), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Room 536 Matomic Building, Washington, DC 20240.