



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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PROPOSED REGULATIONS ANNOUNCED FOR EARLY MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING SEASONS

Hunting regulations for the 1990 migratory bird early seasons, which open before October 1, have been proposed by the Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Included in the proposals are early season regulations for mourning, white-winged, and white-tipped doves; band-tailed pigeons; woodcock; common snipe; rails; common moorhens and purple gallinules; September waterfowl seasons; sandhill cranes; sea ducks; and falconry.

In general, this year's proposals are similar to the 1989 regulations, including shooting hours of one-half hour before sunrise to sunset and continued suspension of the September teal hunting season.

The Service has expanded September Canada goose hunting opportunities, introducing early seasons in New York, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Oregon, Washington and Utah. The September season is offered in areas experiencing agricultural damage from resident Canada geese.

The downward trend continued for blue-winged teal populations, prompting cancellation of the September teal season for the third consecutive year. Preliminary 1990 population status information shows a further decline in blue-winged teal numbers from last year's record low of 3.2 million to an estimated 2.8 million. A decrease in wetland availability, lack of nesting cover in breeding areas, and poor production in recent years all contributed to the decline.

The proposed regulations also include frameworks for migratory bird hunting seasons in Alaska, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, along with the following provisions:

Atlantic Flyway--Continuation of the 45-day woodcock season; continuation of early Canada goose hunting seasons in portions of

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North Carolina along with introduction of early Canada goose hunting in New York and Massachusetts; and continuation of a special 5-day September wood duck season in Florida.

Mississippi Flyway--Continuation of early Canada goose seasons in portions of Michigan, Illinois, and Minnesota, and initiation of this season in Wisconsin; and continuation of special September wood duck seasons in Tennessee and Kentucky.

Central Flyway--In Texas, the special white-winged dove season in the special dove area in the South Zone would be reduced from 4 days to 2 days.

Pacific Flyway--Continuation of a September season for Canada geese in Wyoming, and introduction of early Canada goose hunting in Utah, Oregon and Washington; reduction of the band-tailed pigeon bag limit from four to two for the Pacific Coast population.

In Puerto Rico, waterfowl hunting seasons would be modified to eliminate February hunting, and dove and pigeon hunting would be closed on Vieques Island due to the effects of Hurricane Hugo on habitat.

Complete information on proposed regulations was published in the July 10, 1990, Federal Register. Public comments on the proposals will be accepted through July 20, 1990, and should be addressed to the Director (MBMO), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240.

Hunting regulations for migratory bird seasons opening October 1 or later, including most fall waterfowl seasons, will be proposed in early August following completion of waterfowl population and habitat surveys currently underway.