

General Decision Frameworks for Determination of Federal Limits for Annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons: Central Flyway

August 27, 2026

The below general decision frameworks are used to determine appropriate Federal limits for annual migratory game bird hunting seasons in the Central Flyway. Other general decision frameworks applicable to the Central Flyway are contained in a second document titled “General Decision Frameworks for Determination of Federal Limits for Annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting: Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyways” where the results apply to two or more flyways. Where noted, these general decision frameworks are supplemented by other species-specific decision frameworks similarly adopted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) in a Federal Register final rule. The most currently available data is applied to these decision frameworks to determine the appropriate Federal limits. All prescribed Federal limits resulting from these decision frameworks are maximums. If the Central Flyway Council and the Service Migratory Birds Regulations Committee (SRC) recommend more restrictive season limits than prescribed by these decision frameworks, then this would be discussed during Flyway Council and SRC meetings open to the public. If supported by the Service, this would be noted in the Federal policy memorandum with the annual hunting season limits including the restrictions and unforeseen substantiating circumstances for public review and comment.

Decision Frameworks

1) Special Youth and Veterans—Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Days

See “General Decision Frameworks for Determination of Federal Limits for Annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting: Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyways”.

2) Special Early Teal Seasons

See “General Decision Frameworks for Determination of Federal Limits for Annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting: Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyways”.

3) Duck, Merganser, and Coot Seasons

Bracket Dates and Season Lengths: Bracket dates and season lengths are determined by the Midcontinent mallard Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) decision framework (16 USC 704 (c); and 73 FR 43290, July 24, 2008). The season lengths for scaup are determined by the scaup AHM decision framework (73 FR 51124, August 29, 2008; and 73 FR 43290, July 24, 2008).

Duck Daily Bag Limits: The daily bag limit for ducks and mergansers is in the aggregate and is determined by the Midcontinent mallard AHM decision framework (73 FR 43290, July 24, 2008). The duck and merganser daily bag limit may include no more than 2 redheads and 3 wood ducks. The daily bag limits for pintail, scaup, and canvasbacks are determined by the respective AHM decision framework for pintail (90 FR 17300, April 24, 2025) and scaup (73 FR 51124, August 29, 2008; and 73 FR 43290, July 24, 2008) and the canvasback decision support tool (81 FR 17302, March 28, 2016). In Texas, the daily bag limit for mottled ducks is 1, except that no mottled ducks may be taken during the first 5 days of the season.

Coot Daily Bag Limits: The daily bag limit of coots is 15.

Zones and Split Seasons: Seasons must comply with Federal zone and split-season configurations for ducks (90 FR 17300, April 24, 2025). Changes among configurations may occur the first year of the fixed multi-year (generally 5-year) period that it would apply.

4) Special Early Canada and Cackling Goose Seasons

Bracket Dates and Seasons Lengths: In Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Texas, 30 days between September 1–30; in Colorado, New Mexico, Montana, and Wyoming, Canada and cackling goose seasons of not more than 15 days between September 1–15; and in North Dakota, 22 days between September 1–22.

Daily Bag Limits: 5 geese in the aggregate in Colorado, New Mexico, Montana, Wyoming, and Texas; 8 geese in the aggregate in Kansas, Nebraska, and Oklahoma; and 15 geese in the aggregate in North Dakota and South Dakota.

Shooting Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset, except that during September 1–15 shooting hours may extend to one-half hour after sunset if all other waterfowl and crane seasons are closed in the specific applicable area.

5) Canada Goose, Cackling Goose, and Brant Seasons

Bracket Dates: Saturday nearest September 24–the Sunday nearest February 15 (February 18).

Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: In Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and the Eastern Goose Zone of Texas, 107 days with a daily bag limit of 8 geese; in Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, and Wyoming, 107 days with a daily bag limit of 5 geese; and in Texas (Western Goose Zone), 95 days with a daily bag limit of 5 geese.

Split Seasons: Seasons may be split into 3 segments. Three-segment seasons require Central Flyway Council and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approval, and a 3-year evaluation by each participating State.

6) White-fronted Goose Seasons

See “General Decision Frameworks for Determination of Federal Limits for Annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting: Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyways”.

7) Light Goose Seasons

Bracket Dates: Saturday nearest September 24–March 10.

Season Lengths: 107 days. Seasons may be split into 3 segments.

Daily Bag and Possession Limits: The daily bag limit is 50 with no possession limit.

Other Provisions: In the Rainwater Basin Light Goose Area (East and West) of Nebraska, temporal and spatial restrictions that are consistent with the late-winter snow goose hunting strategy cooperatively developed by the Central Flyway Council and the Service are required.

8) Swan Seasons

See “General Decision Frameworks for Determination of Federal Limits for Annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting: Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyways”.

9) Sandhill Crane Seasons (Midcontinent Population)

See “General Decision Frameworks for Determination of Federal Limits for Annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting: Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyways”.

10) Sandhill Crane Seasons (Rocky Mountain Population)

See “General Decision Frameworks for Determination of Federal Limits for Annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting: Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyways”.

11) Gallinule Seasons

See “General Decision Frameworks for Determination of Federal Limits for Annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting: Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyways”.

12) Rail Seasons

Areas: Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyways and the Pacific Flyway Portions of Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, and Wyoming.

See “General Decision Frameworks for Determination of Federal Limits for Annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting: Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyways”.

13) Snipe Seasons

See “General Decision Frameworks for Determination of Federal Limits for Annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting: Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyways”.

14) American Woodcock Seasons

See “General Decision Frameworks for Determination of Federal Limits for Annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting: Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyways”.

15) Interior Band-tailed Pigeon Seasons

See “General Decision Frameworks for Determination of Federal Limits for Annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting: Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyways”.

16) Central Management Unit Dove Seasons

See “General Decision Frameworks for Determination of Federal Limits for Annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting: Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyways”.

17) Special Falconry Regulations

See “General Decision Frameworks for Determination of Federal Limits for Annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting: Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyways”.

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