

General Decision Frameworks for Determination of Federal Limits for Annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons: Mississippi 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 Mississippi Flyway. Other general decision frameworks applicable to the Mississippi 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 Mississippi 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) Special Early Teal-Wood Duck Seasons
See “General Decision Frameworks for Determination of Federal Limits for Annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting: Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyways”.

4) Special Black-Bellied Whistling Duck Seasons
Areas: Louisiana.
Bracket Dates: First Saturday in October—continuing for 9 days.
Season Lengths: 9 days.
Daily Bag Limits: 4 black-bellied whistling ducks.
Other Provisions: The season is experimental through the 2029–30 hunting season, operational status pending 3-year evaluation of hunter attempts to take non-target species.

5) 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 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 1 mottled duck, 2 redheads and 3 wood ducks. The daily bag limits for pintail, scaup, black ducks, and canvasbacks are determined by the respective AHM decision framework for pintail (90 FR 17300, April 24, 2025), scaup (73 FR 51124, August 29, 2008; and 73 FR 43290, July 24, 2008), and black ducks (77 FR 49868, August 17, 2012) and the canvasback decision support tool (81 FR 17302, March 28, 2016). In Louisiana, no mottled ducks may be taken during the first 15 days of the season. The daily bag limit of mergansers is 5, only 2 of which may be hooded mergansers. In States that include mergansers in the duck daily bag limit (i.e., in the aggregate), the daily limit is the same as the duck bag limit, only 2 of which may be hooded mergansers. 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.

6) Canada and Cackling Goose Seasons

Bracket Dates, Season Lengths, Daily Bag Limits, and Season Segments:

Parameter	Alternatives		
	Liberal	Standard	Restrictive
Bracket dates	September 1– February 15	September 1– February 15	September 1– January 31
Season length and daily bag limit	107 days, 5 geese	107 days, 5 geese September 1–30 and 2 geese October 1– February 15; OR 92 days, 3 geese October 1– February 15	75 days, 5 geese September 1–15 and 2 geese October 1– January 31; OR 92 days, 2 geese September 1– January 31
Season segments	4	4	3

The regulatory alternative is determined based on the estimated abundance of temperate- and subarctic-breeding Canada geese. The lower abundance threshold for temperate-breeding Canada geese is 1.2 million birds (population objective range is 1.2 to 1.4 million birds); the lower threshold for subarctic-breeding Canada geese is >15% average annual decline over 3 years (3-year moving average), >10% average annual decline over 6 years (running mean), or >5% average annual decline over 9 years (3-year moving average). A liberal alternative is prescribed if both (a) temperate-breeding Canada geese abundance is above 1.2 million and (b)

subarctic-breeding Canada geese abundance trends do not meet or exceed lower threshold decline criteria. A standard alternative is recommended if temperate-breeding Canada geese abundance is above 1.2 million birds and subarctic-nesting Canada geese abundance trends meet or exceed lower threshold decline criteria. A restrictive alternative is recommended when both temperate- and subarctic-breeding Canada geese abundance equals or is below lower thresholds defined above.

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 for Canada and cackling geese if all other waterfowl and crane seasons are closed in the specific applicable area.

7) 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”.

8) Brant Seasons

Bracket Dates: September 1–February 15.

Season Lengths and Daily Bag Limits: 70 days with a daily bag limit of 2 brant or 107 days with a daily bag limit of 1 brant. Seasons may be split into 4 segments.

Other Provisions: In lieu of a separate brant season, brant may be included in the season for Canada and cackling geese with a daily bag limit of 5 geese in the aggregate. The cackling goose, Canada goose, and brant season option only applies when the Canada and cackling goose season framework is liberal.

9) Dark Goose Seasons

Areas: Alabama, Iowa, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin in lieu of separate seasons for Canada and cackling geese, white-fronted geese, and brant.

Bracket Dates: September 1–February 15.

Season Lengths: 107 days, which may be split into 4 segments.

Daily Bag Limits: 5 geese in the aggregate.

Other Provisions: The dark goose season option only applies when the Canada and cackling goose season framework is liberal.

10) Light Goose Seasons

Bracket Dates: September 1–February 15.

Season Lengths: 107 days, which may be split into 4 segments.

Daily Bag and Possession Limits: The daily bag limit is 20 geese. There is no possession limit for light geese.

11) Sandhill Crane Seasons

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

12) Gallinule Seasons

Areas: Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyways

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

13) Rail Seasons

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

14) Snipe Seasons

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

15) American Woodcock Seasons

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

16) Eastern 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) 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”.

18) Special Falconry Regulations

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

End of Document