

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

August 27, 2026

The below general decision frameworks are used to determine appropriate Federal limits for annual migratory game bird hunting seasons in the Pacific Flyway. Other general decision frameworks applicable to the Pacific 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 Pacific 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) Duck, Merganser, Coot, and Gallinule Seasons

Bracket Dates and Season Lengths: Bracket dates and season lengths are determined by the western mallard Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) decision framework (16 USC 704 (c), 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).

Daily Bag Limits: The daily bag limit for ducks and mergansers is in the aggregate and is determined by the western mallard AHM decision framework (73 FR 43290, July 24, 2008). The duck daily bag limit may include no more than 2 redheads. 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). The daily bag limit of coots and gallinules is 25 in the aggregate.

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.

Other Provisions: The seasons, limits, and shooting hours should be the same between the Colorado River Zone of California and the South Zone of Arizona.

3) Special Early Canada and Cackling Goose Seasons

Bracket Dates: September 1–20.

Season Lengths: 15 days.

Daily Bag Limits: 5 geese in the aggregate, except in Pacific County, Washington, where the daily bag limit is 15 geese in the aggregate.

4) Canada Goose, Cackling Goose, and Brant Seasons

Bracket Dates: Except as subsequently provided, Saturday nearest September 24–February 15.

Season Lengths: Except as subsequently provided, 107 days.

Daily Bag Limits: Except as subsequently provided, in Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming, the daily bag limit is 5 Canada and cackling geese and brant in the aggregate. In Oregon and Washington, the daily bag limit is 4 Canada and cackling geese in the aggregate. In California, the daily bag limit is 10 Canada and cackling geese in the aggregate.

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

Other Provisions:

California: In the Balance of State Zone, bracket dates are Saturday nearest September 24 and March 10. The season may be split into 3 segments. In the Balance of State Zone, North Coast Special Management Area, hunting days that occur after January 31 should be concurrent with Oregon's South Coast Zone.

Oregon: In the Northwest Permit Zone, season length is 74 days. The daily bag limit is 2 Canada and cackling in the aggregate. The season may be split into 3 segments. In the South Coast Zone, bracket dates are Saturday nearest September 24 and March 10. The daily bag limit is 6 Canada and cackling geese in the aggregate. The season may be split into 3 segments. Hunting days that occur after January 31 should be concurrent with California's Balance of State Zone, North Coast Special Management Area.

Washington: In Areas 2 Inland and 2 Coastal (Southwest Permit Zone), season length is 74 days. The daily bag limit is 2 Canada and cackling geese in the aggregate. The season may be split into 3 segments. In Areas 1 and 3, the daily bag limit is 3 Canada and cackling geese in the aggregate. In Area 4, the season may be split into 3 segments.

Permit Zones: In Oregon and Washington permit zones, the hunting season is closed on dusky Canada geese. A dusky Canada goose is any dark-breasted Canada goose (Munsell 10 YR color value 5 or less) with a bill length between 40 and 50 millimeters. Hunting is by State-issued permit only. Shooting hours for geese may begin no earlier than sunrise. Regular Canada and cackling goose seasons in the permit zones of Oregon and Washington remain subject to the Memorandum of Understanding entered into with the Service regarding monitoring the impacts of take during the regular Canada and cackling goose season on the dusky Canada goose population.

5) Brant Seasons

See Pacific brant harvest strategy (90 FR 40178, August 18, 2025). The strategy is repeated here for convenience.

Areas: California, Oregon, and Washington.

Bracket Dates: Saturday nearest September 24–December 15 in California and Oregon, and Saturday nearest September 24–last Sunday in January in Washington.

Season Lengths:

Parameter	Alternatives		
	Liberal	Moderate	Restrictive
Season length	37	27	16

The regulatory alternative is determined based on the estimated index of abundance of Pacific Brant from the Fall Brant Survey at Izembek Lagoon, Alaska. If results of the survey are not available, the most recent survey results should be used. A closed season is prescribed when the abundance index is below 102,000 brant. A restrictive alternative is prescribed when the abundance index is between 102,000 and 243,000 brant. A moderate alternative is prescribed when the abundance index is between 243,001 and 293,000 brant. And a liberal alternative is prescribed when the abundance index is $\geq 293,000$ geese. To reopen the season after closure, the abundance index must exceed 112,000 geese.

Daily Bag Limits: 2 brant.

Zones: Washington and California may select seasons in each of 2 zones.

6) White-fronted Goose Seasons

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

Parameter	Alternatives		
	Liberal	Moderate	Restrictive
Bracket dates	Saturday closest to September 24– March 10	Saturday closest to September 24– January 31	Saturday closest to September 24– January 31
Season length	107	79	37
Daily bag limit	6	4	2
Season segments	3	2	1

The regulatory alternative is determined based on the estimated index of abundance of the Pacific population of greater white-fronted geese. The index of abundance is the 3-year moving average predicted fall abundance. The population objective is at least 300,000 geese. A closed season is prescribed when the abundance index is below 100,000 geese. A restrictive alternative is prescribed when the abundance index is between 100,000 and 199,999 geese. A moderate alternative is prescribed when the abundance index is between 200,000 and 299,999 geese. And a liberal alternative is prescribed when the abundance index is $\geq 300,000$ geese. If the abundance index exceeds 450,000 geese further liberalizations should be considered. To

reopen the season after closure, the abundance index must exceed 120,000 geese. When in a moderate or restrictive regulatory alternative, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming have the option to include white-fronted geese in an aggregate bag limit in accordance with their established regular season framework for Canada and cackling geese and brant (dark geese). Seasons must end no later than January 31 if this option is selected. Implementation of this strategy will include consideration of effects on the Pacific Flyway population of Tule greater white-fronted geese. Three-segment seasons require Pacific Flyway Council and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approval, and a 3-year evaluation by each participating State.

Other Provisions:

California: In the Balance of State Zone, Sacramento Valley Special Management Area, the season must end on or before December 28, and the daily bag limit is 3 white-fronted geese. In the Balance of State Zone, North Coast Special Management Area, hunting days that occur after January 31 should be concurrent with Oregon's South Coast Zone. In the Northeastern Zone, the season may be split into 3 segments.

Oregon: In the Eastern Zone, for Lake County only, the daily bag limit is 1 white-fronted goose. In the Mid-Columbia Zone, Northwest Permit Zone, and South Coast Zone, the seasons may be split into 3 segments. In Oregon's South Coast Zone, hunting days that occur after January 31 should be concurrent with California's Balance of State Zone, North Coast Special Management Area.

Washington: In Areas 2 Inland and 2 Coastal (Southwest Permit Zone) and Area 4, seasons may be split into 3 segments.

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 Limits: 20 geese, except in Washington where the daily bag limit for light geese is 10 on or before the last Sunday in January.

Other Provisions: In California's Balance of State Zone, North Coast Special Management Area, and Oregon's South Coast Zone, hunting days that occur after January 31 should be concurrent.

8) Swan Seasons

Areas: Idaho, Montana, Nevada, and Utah.

Bracket Dates: Saturday nearest September 24–January 31.

Season Lengths: 107 days. Seasons may be split into 2 segments.

Permits: Hunting is by State-issued permit only. The total number of permits issued may not exceed 50 in Idaho, 500 in Montana, 750 in Nevada, and 2,750 in Utah. Permits will authorize the take of no more than 1 swan per permit. Only 1 permit may be issued per hunter in Idaho, Montana, and Utah; 2 permits may be issued per hunter in Nevada.

Quotas: The swan season in the respective State must end upon attainment of the following reported harvest of trumpeter swans: 20 in Utah and 10 in Nevada. There is no quota in Idaho and Montana.

Monitoring: Each State must evaluate hunter participation, species-specific swan harvest, and hunter compliance in providing either species-determinant parts (at least the intact head) or bill measurements (bill length from tip to posterior edge of the nares opening, and presence or absence of yellow lore spots on the bill in front of the eyes) of harvested swans for species identification. Each State should use appropriate measures to maximize hunter compliance with the State's program for swan harvest reporting. Each State must achieve a hunter compliance of at least 80 percent in providing species-determinant parts or bill measurements of harvested swans for species identification, or subsequent permits will be reduced by 10 percent in the respective State. Each State must provide to the Service by June 30 following the swan season a report detailing hunter participation, species-specific swan harvest, and hunter compliance in reporting harvest. In Idaho and Montana, all hunters that harvest a swan must complete and submit a reporting card (bill card) with the bill measurement and color information from the harvested swan within 72 hours of harvest for species determination. In Utah and Nevada, all hunters that harvest a swan must have the swan or species-determinant parts examined by a State or Federal biologist within 72 hours of harvest for species determination.

Other Provisions: In Utah, the season is subject to the terms of the Memorandum of Agreement entered into with the Service in January 2019 regarding harvest monitoring, season closure procedures, and education requirements to minimize take of trumpeter swans during the swan season.

9) Sandhill Crane Seasons

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

10) Rail Seasons

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

11) Snipe Seasons

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

12) 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".

13) Pacific Coast Band-tailed Pigeon Seasons

Areas: California, Oregon, Washington, and Nevada

Bracket Dates: September 15–January 1.

Seasons Lengths and Daily Bag Limits:

Alternatives	
Moderate	Restrictive
9 days and 4 pigeons	9 days and 2 pigeons

The alternative for season lengths and daily bag limits are determined based on the estimated summer population size from monitoring data. The Pacific Coast Band-tailed Pigeon Mineral Site Survey (MSS) was developed specifically to index abundance of Pacific Coast band-tailed pigeons. It was initiated on an experimental basis in 2001 and became operational in 2004. The survey is a coordinated effort among state and provincial wildlife agencies in California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Canadian Wildlife Service. The MSS involves a visual count of the total number of band-tailed pigeons visiting each site from one-half hour before sunrise until noon on 1 day during July at select mineral sites throughout the population's range. For analysis, counts were limited to those in July at sites naturally occurring with a known source of minerals, with at least 2 annual counts, and that would likely be accessible for counting in the future ($n = 63$ sites; 12 in California, 22 in Oregon, 19 in Washington, and 10 in British Columbia; see appendix A for specific sites).

The annual index of abundance is estimated range-wide using a log-linear hierarchical model and Bayesian analytical framework (see annual status report for more details). The annual indices are used to calculate the mean index of abundance during the first 5 years of the survey (2004–2008) as a reference period population objective and also over the most recent 3-year interval. Markov-chain Monte Carlo methods are used to iteratively produce sequences of parameter estimates which form a posterior probability distribution (PPD) for each parameter, a natural and intuitive way to portray uncertainty in parameter estimates.

The PPD for the mean index of abundance over the most recent 3-year interval is used in a decision analysis framework to establish quantitative criteria for harvest regulation change. Regulatory alternatives are prescribed based on the degree of confidence that the estimated recent 3-year mean index of abundance exceeds a given amount. Regulations (season frameworks) are established according to closed, restrictive (2-bird daily bag limit), and moderate (4-bird daily bag limit) regulatory alternatives. Alternative regulatory options involve only changes in daily bag limit, otherwise season frameworks (i.e., opening and closing dates and season length) are unchanged.

Specifically, the season is restrictive unless a closed or moderate season is prescribed. A closed season is prescribed when $\geq 80\%$ of the PPD for the recent 3-year mean abundance is at or below the closure threshold, and a moderate season is prescribed when $\geq 80\%$ of the PPD for the recent 3-year mean abundance is at or above the moderate threshold. The closed and moderate thresholds are established based on 25% below and above the population objective, respectively. Once the season is closed, an open season may be prescribed when $\leq 80\%$ of the PPD for the recent 3-year mean abundance is $\leq 15\%$ below the population objective (effectively the threshold between a closed and restrictive season is moved up 10% to reduce the likelihood of toggling between open and closed seasons annually). The estimated 5-year mean index value can change annually with additional count data as parameter estimates in the hierarchical model are updated.

Zones: California may select seasons in each of 2 zones. The season in each zone may not exceed 9 days. The season in the North Zone must close by October 3.

14) Western Management Unit Dove Seasons

Bracket Dates: September 1–January 15.

Season Lengths and Daily Bag Limits: The daily bag limits are mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate.

Mourning Doves: Season lengths and daily bag limits are determined in the national dove harvest strategy (78 FR 52658, August 23, 2013).

White-winged Doves:

Alternatives		
Standard	Restrictive	Very restrictive
60 days and 15 doves	60 days and 10 doves	60 days and 2 doves

The alternative for the white-winged dove season length and daily bag limit is prescribed based on NA Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) index of abundance (average white-winged doves per route) from the Western Management Unit, specifically the most recent moving 3-year average index relative to the long-term (1968–2022) average index. The Standard alternative will be prescribed when 85% confidence (lower 70% credible interval) in the most recent moving 3-year average index is $\geq 50\%$ above the long-term average. The Restrictive alternative will be prescribed when 85% confidence in the most recent moving 3-year average index is $\geq 30\%$ above the long-term average. The Very Restrictive alternative will be prescribed when 85% confidence in the most recent moving 3-year average index is $\geq 20\%$ above the long-term average. A closed season will be prescribed when either the above conditions for an open season are not met or when the season for the Western Management Unit Population of mourning doves is closed.

Zones and Split Seasons: Seasons must comply with Federal zone and split-season configurations for doves (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. Arizona and California may split their seasons between 2 periods, September 1–15 and November 1–January 15.

15) Special Falconry Regulations

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

16) Alaska

Duck, Goose, Sandhill Crane, and Snipe Seasons

Bracket Dates: Except as subsequently provided, September 1–January 26.

Season Lengths: Except as subsequently provided, 107 days for ducks, geese (except brant), sandhill cranes, and snipe. The season length for white-fronted geese in Unit 9, in the Gulf Coast Zone, Unit 10, in the Pribilof and Aleutian Islands Zone, and Units 17 and 18, in the North Zone will be determined based on the harvest strategy above under White-Fronted Goose Seasons. The season length for brant will be determined based on the Pacific brant harvest strategy (90 FR 40178, August 18, 2025). The strategy is repeated here for convenience.

Parameter	Liberal	Alternatives	
		Moderate	Restrictive
Season length	107	107	51
Daily bag limit	4	2	2

The regulatory alternative is determined based on the estimated index of abundance of Pacific Brant from the Fall Brant Survey at Izembek Lagoon, Alaska. If results of the survey are not available, the most recent survey results should be used. A closed season is prescribed when the abundance index is below 102,000 brant. A restrictive alternative is prescribed when the abundance index is between 102,000 and 243,000 brant. A moderate alternative is prescribed when the abundance index is between 243,001 and 293,000 brant. And a liberal alternative is prescribed when the abundance index is $\geq 293,000$ geese. To reopen the season after closure, the abundance index must exceed 112,000 geese.

Zones and Split Seasons: A season may be established in each of 5 zones. The season in the Southeast Zone may be split into 2 segments. Season segments for white-fronted geese will be determined based on the harvest strategy above under White-Fronted Goose Seasons.

Closed Seasons: The hunting season is closed on the spectacled eider and Steller's eider.

Daily Bag and Possession Limits and Special Conditions

Ducks: The basic daily bag limit is 7 ducks. The basic daily bag limit in the North Zone is 10 ducks and in the Gulf Coast Zone is 8 ducks. The basic daily bag limits may include 2 canvasbacks and may not include sea ducks. In addition to the basic daily bag limits, the sea duck daily bag limit is 10, including 6 each of either harlequin or long-tailed ducks. Sea ducks include scoters, common and king eiders, harlequin ducks, long-tailed ducks, and common, hooded, and red-breasted mergansers.

Light Geese: The daily bag limit is 6 geese.

Canada and Cackling Geese: The daily bag limit is 4 Canada and cackling geese in the aggregate with the following exceptions, and subject to the following conditions:

1. In Game Management Units (Units) 5 and 6, in the Gulf Coast Zone, bracket dates are September 28–December 16.
2. On Middleton Island in Unit 6, in the Gulf Coast Zone, all hunting is by permit only. Each hunter is required to complete a mandatory Canada and cackling goose identification class prior to being issued a permit. Hunters must check in and check out when hunting. The daily bag and possession limits are 1 goose. The season will close if incidental harvest includes 5 dusky Canada geese. A dusky Canada goose is any dark-breasted Canada goose (Munsell 10 YR color value 5 or less) with a bill length between 40 and 50 millimeters.
3. In Unit 10, in the Pribilof and Aleutian Islands Zone, the daily bag limit is 6 geese in the aggregate.
4. In Unit 9, in the Gulf Coast Zone, and Units 17 and 18, in the Northern Zone, the daily bag limit is 3 Canada and cackling geese in the aggregate.

White-fronted Geese: The daily bag limit is 4 geese with the following exceptions:

1. In Unit 9, in the Gulf Coast Zone, Unit 10, in the Pribilof and Aleutian Islands Zone, and Units 17 and 18, in the North Zone, the daily bag limit will be determined based on the harvest strategy above under White-fronted Goose Seasons.

Emperor Geese: The emperor goose season is subject to the following conditions:

1. All hunting is by permit only.
2. One goose may be harvested per hunter per season.
3. Total harvest may not exceed the number of emperor geese in the prescribed alternative.

Alternatives	
Standard	Restrictive
500 geese	250 geese

The alternative for total harvest is prescribed based on total bird index from the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta (YKD) Coastal Zone Survey. The total bird index is a relative measure of population size based on the number of geese detected from aerial surveys on the YKD during the early nesting period. Based on the total bird index, the harvest strategy defines a regulatory harvest closure threshold of 23,000 birds. This represents approximately 120,000 emperor geese based on a theta-logistic population model currently in development (USFWS, R7-Migratory Bird Management). The standard alternative will be prescribed if the total bird index from the previous year is greater than 23,000 birds. When the population index is less than 28,000 birds, a restrictive alternative will be considered. The season will be closed if the total bird index from the previous year is less than 23,000 birds.

4. In Unit 8, in the Kodiak Zone, the Kodiak Island Roaded Area is closed to hunting emperor geese. The Kodiak Island Roaded Area consists of that portion of Kodiak Island (including exposed tidelands) south of a line from Termination Point along the north side of Cascade Lake to Anton Larsen Bay and east of a line from Crag Point to the west end of Saltery Cove. Marine waters adjacent to the Kodiak Island Roaded Area within 500 feet from the water's edge are included in the Kodiak Island Roaded Area. The Kodiak Island Roaded Area does not include islands offshore of Kodiak Island.

Brant: The daily bag limit for brant will be determined based on the Pacific brant harvest strategy (90 FR 40178, August 18, 2025) as described above for Alaska.

Snipe: The daily bag limit is 8 snipe.

Sandhill Cranes: The daily bag limit is 2 cranes in the Southeast, Gulf Coast, Kodiak, and Pribilof and Aleutian Islands Zones, and Unit 17 in the North Zone. In the remainder of the North Zone (outside Unit 17), the daily bag limit is determined based on the "General Decision Frameworks for Determination of Federal Limits for Annual Migratory Game Bird Hunting: Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyways".

Tundra Swan Seasons

Bracket Dates: September 1–October 31.

Season Lengths: 61 days.

Daily Bag and Possession Limits and Special Conditions: All hunting is by permit only according to the following conditions.

1. In Unit 17, in the North Zone, 200 permits may be issued; 3 tundra swans may be authorized per permit, and 1 permit may be issued per hunter per season.
2. In Unit 18, in the North Zone, 500 permits may be issued; 3 tundra swans may be authorized per permit, and 1 permit may be issued per hunter per season.

3. In Unit 22, in the North Zone, 300 permits may be issued; 3 tundra swans may be authorized per permit, and 1 permit may be issued per hunter per season.

4. In Unit 23, in the North Zone, 300 permits may be issued; 3 tundra swans may be authorized per permit, and 1 permit may be issued per hunter per season.

17) Hawaii

Mourning Dove Seasons

Bracket Dates: October 1–January 31.

Season Lengths and Daily Bag Limits: 65 days with a daily bag limit of 15 doves or 75 days with a daily bag of 12 doves.

Note: Mourning doves may be taken in Hawaii in accordance with shooting hours and other regulations set by the State of Hawaii, and subject to the applicable provisions of 50 CFR part 20.

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