



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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HUNTING SEASONS PROPOSED FOR WEBLESS MIGRATORY BIRDS AND SEPTEMBER WATERFOWL SEASONS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed hunting regulations for "early" (opening before October 1) migratory bird seasons. The regulations cover doves; woodcock; band-tailed pigeons; rails; snipe; common moorhens and purple gallinules; sandhill cranes; sea ducks; and special September wood duck and Canada goose seasons; as well as migratory bird hunting seasons in Alaska, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and the Virgin Islands.

In general, this year's proposals are similar to the 1990 regulations, including shooting hours of one-half hour before sunrise to sunset and continued suspension of September teal hunting. Hunters should check state hunting regulations for specific local information on permits, bag limits, and open areas.

The Service has expanded September Canada goose hunting opportunities, introducing 3-year experimental seasons in Indiana and Ohio. The closing date for Canada goose hunting in Utah is proposed for extension from September 9 to September 15. September Canada goose hunting has been closed in several

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Michigan counties where many migrating geese are present in September. The number of permits that can be issued has been increased to 150 in Wyoming, with each permittee allowed no more than two geese per season.

Woodcock numbers have declined significantly in the East since 1968, largely because of habitat changes. Trends for 1985-91 suggest that woodcock populations may be stabilizing in both the eastern and central portions of the country, but many states and provinces continue to show declines that justify concern for the welfare of the woodcock. The Service has proposed to continue to limit the season in the Atlantic Flyway to 45 days with bag and possession limits of three and six, respectively. In the Central and Mississippi Flyways, seasons may not exceed 65 days, with bag and possession limits of 5 and 10, respectively. The closing date for woodcock in central states has been changed from February 28 to January 31.

No significant changes are proposed for mourning dove hunting seasons. For white-winged doves, the Service has proposed to increase from two to six the number of whitewings permitted in the aggregate bag limit of mourning, white-winged, and white-tipped doves in most of Texas.

The closing date of the sandhill crane season has been extended from November 30 to January 31 for the Rocky Mountain population (portions of Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming) to help alleviate crop damage caused by migrating cranes.

In Alaska, the Service has proposed to close hunting seasons for Stellar's and spectacled eiders. In Puerto Rico, Vieques Island may be reopened for dove and pigeon hunting.

Other details of the proposed early migratory bird hunting seasons will be published in an upcoming Federal Register. Public comments are requested through July 22 and should be sent to the Director (MBMO), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 630 Arlington Square, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C St. NW., Washington, DC 20240.