U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Spring Waterfowl Hunting Northwest Arctic Region

What You Should Know

This is only a brief summary of some of the key regulations for spring bird hunting in the Northwest Arctic region. Please consult the full regulations or call our office if you have questions or if you hunt in another area.

Migratory bird hunting in the fall (beginning September 1) is governed by a different set of regulations. Please check with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game for seasons, bag limits and other rules.

Who Can Hunt?

All permanent residents of Northwest Alaska - both Native and non-Native - who have lived in the area for the previous 12 months can harvest migratory birds and eggs for subsistence in the spring and summer.

Immediate family members who live in non-subsistence areas may be invited to assist in hunting by a local village council. Contact us if you'd like more information on this process.

Licenses and Equipment

You need a hunting license if you are age 16 or older.

Low-income hunting licenses and elders' lifetime licenses are available.

Federal duck stamps are no longer required to participate in the spring/summer harvest.

You need a State duck stamp ($5) if you are 16 or older. (*Exception*: Disabled veterans, hunters 60 years and older, and hunters with a low-income license do not need a state duck stamp.)

State duck stamps are valid from April 2 - Jan. 31.

Both rifles and shotguns (no larger than 10 gauge) may be used. You do not have to plug your shotgun.

No lead shot may be used. Lead can be toxic to wildlife & people.

You are not allowed to have lead shot with you while hunting for migratory birds.

Seasons

In the Northwest Arctic region, migratory birds can be hunted during three seasons in the spring and summer:

- April 2 - June 9
- July 1 - July 31
  (only molting or non-nesting waterfowl)
- August 15 - August 31

In the NW Arctic, eggs can be gathered during two seasons:

- May 20 - June 9
  (geese, ducks and other waterfowl)
- May 20 - July 12
  (gulls, crowbills, puffins and other seabirds)

During the season you may hunt any time, 24 hours per day.

What Can Be Harvested?

There are no limits on the number of birds that can be taken, as long as the harvest is not wasteful.

However, these species are closed to hunting and egg gathering due to low numbers:

Liġliqpak (Emperor Goose)

Tuutlik (Yellow-billed Loon)

Qavaasuk (Spectacled Eiders)

Iŋniqaaqtuq (Steller's Eiders)

And no egg gathering is allowed for Cackling Canada geese.

Migratory birds may be taken only for human consumption. Taxidermy is not allowed.

Migratory birds and eggs can't be bought or sold.

More Information

This fact sheet is a publication of the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge in Kotzebue. For more information please contact:

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April 2016