

News Release



Office of Public Affairs
4401 North Fairfax Drive
Arlington, VA 22203
Phone 703/358 2220 Fax: 703/358 1930

July 27, 2012

Contact: Alicia King
571-214-3117
alicia_f_king@fws.gov

Noemi Perez
703-358-2688
noemi_perez@fws.gov

Waterfowl Hunting Late Season Frameworks Proposed

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced proposed hunting season lengths and bag limits for the upcoming 2012-13 late waterfowl seasons. The proposed federal frameworks include duck hunting season lengths of 60 days in both the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways, 74 days in the Central Flyway (with an additional 23 days in the High Plains areas), and 107 days in the Pacific Flyway. The proposed frameworks also include a full season on pintails with a two bird daily bag limit nationwide, and a full season on canvasbacks with a one bird daily bag limit nationwide. The proposed late season waterfowl frameworks will appear in a mid-August edition of the *Federal Register* for public comment.

States select their individual seasons from within the federal frameworks that establish the earliest beginning and latest ending dates and the maximum season length and bag limits. Flyway-specific highlights of the proposed late-season frameworks are as follows:

Atlantic Flyway (Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia):

- **Ducks:** A hunting season is proposed of not more than 60 days between September 22, 2012, and January 27, 2013. The proposed daily bag limit is 6 and may include no more than 4 mallards (2 hens), 4 scoters, 3 wood ducks, 2 redheads, 2 hooded mergansers, 4 scaup, 1 black duck, 2 pintails, 1 canvasback, 1 mottled duck, and 1 fulvous whistling duck.
- **Geese:** For light geese, states will be able to select a 107-day season between October 1, 2012, and March 10, 2013, with a daily bag limit of 25 birds and no possession limit. Seasons for Canada geese would vary in length among states and areas depending on the populations of birds that occur in those areas. The daily bag limit will be 5 birds in hunt zones established for resident populations of Canada geese. In hunt zones established for

migratory populations, bag limits will be 5 or fewer and vary among states and areas. For Atlantic brant, the season length may be 50 days with a daily bag limit of 2.

Mississippi Flyway (Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee and Wisconsin):

- **Ducks:** A hunting season is proposed of not more than 60 days between September 22, 2012, and January 27, 2013. The proposed daily bag limit is 6 and may include no more than 4 mallards (2 hens), 3 wood ducks, 1 mottled duck, 2 redheads, 4 scaup, 2 pintails, 1 black duck, and 1 canvasback. The proposed daily bag limit of mergansers is 5, only 2 of which may be hooded mergansers. In states that include mergansers in the duck bag limit, the daily limit is the same as the duck bag limit, only 2 which may be hooded mergansers.
- **Geese:** Generally, seasons for Canada goose would be held between September 22, 2012, and January 31, 2013, and vary in length among states and areas. States would be able to select seasons for light geese not to exceed 107 days with 20 geese daily between September 22, 2012, and March 10, 2013; for white-fronted geese the proposed season would not exceed 74 days with a 2-bird daily bag limit or 88 days with a 1-bird daily bag limit between September 22, 2012, and February 17, 2013; and for brant it would not exceed 70 days with a 2-bird daily bag limit or 107 days with a 1 bird daily bag limit between September 22, 2012, and January 31, 2012. There is no possession limit for light geese.

Central Flyway (Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and portions of Colorado, Montana, New Mexico and Wyoming):

- **Ducks:** Duck season frameworks are between September 22, 2012 and January 27, 2013. The daily bag limit would be 6 ducks, with species and sex restrictions as follows: 5 mallard, no more than 2 of which may be females; 3 wood duck, 2 pintail, and 2 redhead, 1 mottled duck and 1 canvasback. Mottled ducks may not be harvested during the first 5 days after the beginning of the regular season in Texas. The possession limit would be 2 times the daily bag limit. In the High Plains Mallard Management Unit (roughly west of the 100th Meridian), a 97 day season is proposed, and the last 23 days can start no earlier than December 8, 2012. A 74 day season is proposed for the remainder of the Central Flyway.
- **Geese:** States may select seasons between September 22, 2012 and February 17, 2013 for dark geese and between September 22, 2012, and March 10, 2013, for light geese. East-tier states would be able to select a 107 day season for Canada geese with a daily bag limit of 3. For white-fronted geese, east-tier states would be able to select either a 74 day season with a daily bag limit of 2 birds or an 88 day season with a daily bag limit of 1 bird. In the West-tier, states may select a 107 day dark goose season with a daily bag limit of 5 birds. In the Western Goose zone of Texas, the state would be able to select a 95 day season with a daily bag limit of 5 dark geese (including no more than 1 white-fronted goose). For light geese, all states would be able to select a 107-day season with a daily bag limit of 20 and no possession limit.

Pacific Flyway (Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and portions of Colorado, Montana, New Mexico and Wyoming):

- **Ducks:** States are allowed a 107-day general duck season between September 22, 2012, and January 27, 2013. The proposed daily bag limit is 7 ducks, including no more than 2 mallard hens, 2 redheads, 2 pintails and 1 canvasback.
- **Geese:** 107-day seasons are proposed for the Pacific Flyway between September 29, 2012, and March 10, 2013. Proposed basic daily bag limits are up to 10 light geese and 6 dark geese. There are many exceptions to the basic bag limits and season structures for geese in many states, so consult State regulations for specific details. In California, Washington and Oregon, the dark goose limit does not include brant. For brant, the proposed season lengths are 16 days in Oregon and Washington and 30 days in California, with a 2-bird daily limit. Washington and California are able to choose seasons in each of the two zones described in state regulations.

The Service's 2012 Waterfowl Population Status Report summarizes information on the status of duck and goose populations and habitat conditions during spring of 2012. In the traditional survey area, which includes the north-central United States, south-central and northern Canada and Alaska, the 2012 total duck population estimate was 48.6 million birds, an increase of 7 percent over last year's estimate. Despite poorer habitat conditions compared to 2011, population abundance estimates are good for this breeding season. The total pond estimate for prairie Canada and the US combined was 5.5 million, which is down 32 percent from last year.

The annual survey results guide the Service's waterfowl conservation programs under authority of the 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Each year the Service works in partnership with states from the four flyways to establish regulatory frameworks for waterfowl hunting season lengths, dates, and bag limits. All of this information represents the largest data set on any wildlife species group in the world and helps provide hunting opportunities while ensuring the long-term health of waterfowl populations.

The *Status of Waterfowl* report can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/>. To view a video of the *Status of Waterfowl* video visit: <http://flyways.us/status-of-waterfowl/video-report/>.

The mission of the Service's Migratory Bird Program is to ensure long-term ecological sustainability of migratory bird populations and their habitats for future generations, through careful monitoring, effective management, and by supporting national and international partnerships that conserve habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfws, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfws>.