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Office of Information, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture.

240 NEW STATE GAME LAWS ENACTED IN 1915.

Much Local Legislation To Protect Birds and Big
Game--Nine States Bring Closed Seasons Into
Agreement With Federal Migratory Bird Law.

Washington, D. C., More than 240 new game laws were enacted during 1915--a larger number than in any previous year except 1911, according to Farmers' Bulletin 692, "Game Laws for 1915". Forty-three States held regular legislative sessions, and in all of these States except Arizona, Georgia, and Nebraska some changes were made in the statutes protecting game. The largest number of new game laws passed in any one State was 61, in North Carolina; but in California, Connecticut, Maine, New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin the number reached 10 or more. Several measures were vetoed, including a general game bill in Idaho, the first bill appropriating the hunting-license fund in Pennsylvania, a bill protecting bears in California, and three sections of the game bill in Washington. A number of bills were introduced for the purpose of harmonizing the State laws on migratory birds with the Federal regulations. In at least nine States changes were made which brought the seasons into substantial agreement, viz, California, Connecticut, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, Tennessee, and West Virginia. In Illinois the seasons for all migratory birds except coot and waterfowl, and in Washington for the smaller shore birds, were made to conform with the regulations under the Federal law. Uniformity was also secured by provisions in the laws of Connecticut, Maine, New Mexico, North Dakota, Washington, and Wisconsin, prohibiting hunting between sunset and sunrise. On the other hand, Delaware adopted a resolution opposing the migratory-bird law, and Ohio and Rhode Island, which had harmonized their seasons in 1914, changed the seasons on waterfowl this year.

As a result of the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States on January 19, 1914, sustaining the alien hunting law of Pennsylvania, legislation prohibiting aliens from hunting or owning shotguns or rifles was enacted in at least four States--Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Dakota, and West Virginia--but certain exceptions based on property qualifications were made in Massachusetts and New Jersey.

Close seasons extending for several years were provided for certain kinds of big game and also for game birds. Hunting mountain sheep was suspended in Idaho, Montana, and Washington, and goats were protected until 1918 in Montana. Moose were protected for four years in Maine, the first absolute close season on this species for 35 years--since the suspension of hunting from 1878 to 1880. Antelope were given indefinite protection in New Mexico and Montana. In Michigan, New Mexico, and Oklahoma prairie chickens were protected for several years. Michigan extended complete protection also to quail, imported pheasants, grouse, and wood ducks for five years. Minnesota protected doves, woodcock, plover, and wood ducks until 1918. New Mexico gave protection to pheasants, bob-whites, pigeons, and swans. Oklahoma protected doves, grouse, wood ducks, and curlew. Several birds were removed from the game list and protected through the year. Oklahoma gave such protection to pelicans, gulls, and herons. Tennessee declared ring-neck pheasants, bullbats, robins, and meadowlarks to be nongame birds. In a few cases protection was removed from certain species--notably the turkey buzzard in Delaware, Florida, and North Carolina, owls and starlings in New Hampshire, and cormorants in Illinois and North Dakota.

For the first time in 12 years moose hunting is permitted in Wyoming, and for the first time since 1907 prairie-chicken shooting is permitted in Indiana.

NOVEL FEATURES OF STATE LAWS.

Among the novel features in the laws this year may be mentioned the declaration in the Florida law that ownership of game is vested in the respective counties; the provision in the California law protecting spike bucks, or deer with unbranched horns, instead of deer with horns of a certain length; and the Wyoming experiment of allowing the killing of 50 bull moose under \$100 licenses instead of an indefinite number during a limited season. Methods of hunting were restricted in Michigan by prohibiting the use of automobiles in hunting partridges, and in Indiana by prohibiting the use of searchlights or other artificial lights attached to autos for hunting game on or near a highway. Several new restrictions on shipments appeared for the first time: Illinois prohibited importation from points outside the State of any

game except deer legally killed. Pennsylvania prohibited shipment of game by parcel post, and Wisconsin, shipment under an alias. Connecticut authorized the commissioners of fisheries and game to grant permits to bring in game lawfully killed outside the State, provided such game is not offered for sale.

QUAIL.

Notwithstanding the agitation in favor of protecting quail for several years in some sections, no bills of this kind were passed this year, and 39 States still provide quail shooting. The seasons were shortened six weeks in Oklahoma and two weeks in Nevada. Limits were established for the first time in Arkansas and New Hampshire, reduced in Iowa from 25 to 15 per day, in Oklahoma from 25 to 10, in Minnesota from 15 to 10, and increased in Nevada from 15 to 20. All but 14 of the States which permit quail hunting now have a limit of 20 birds or less per day.

WATERFOWL.

All the States now allow waterfowl hunting, but the wood duck is protected for several years throughout the northern zone and in the southern zone in the States of California, Kansas, and West Virginia. Daily bag limits were established for the first time in Arkansas and Connecticut, reduced in Oklahoma from 25 to 10, and increased in Missouri from 10 to 15. Most of the States now have a limit of 25 or less per day.

OPEN SEASONS.

Open seasons were lengthened in Montana on elk and deer two weeks; in Florida on deer and birds three weeks; in Minnesota on quail 20 days; and in Nevada on sage hens four and a half months, on grouse one month, and on quail two weeks. New Jersey reverted to the former plan of hunting deer on four consecutive Wednesdays instead of five consecutive days.

Seasons were shortened in a number of States. In the case of big game the deer season was curtailed in Arkansas three months; in Oregon and Washington two weeks. In New Mexico the seasons ~~were generally shortened and arranged in two districts divided~~ at latitude 35°. In California the dove season was made later and in Minnesota shortened 20 days; in Oklahoma the quail season was curtailed six weeks, and in Michigan, Nevada (ducks), Tennessee, and Wyoming, spring shooting of waterfowl was abolished.

LAWS PROTECTING BIG GAME.

The more important changes affecting big game included the closing of the season for four years on moose in Maine; authorization for the killing of 50 bull moose in Wyoming; lengthening the season on elk in Montana two weeks; closing the season on mountain sheep in Montana; changes affecting does in 7 States, including the removal of protection in Florida, Nevada, New Jersey, and Wyoming; establishment of a limit in Arkansas; and decrease in the limits in Alaska, Michigan, Montana, and Nevada.

Under present conditions deer hunting is permitted in 36 States, in about one-third of which the hunter is limited to one deer a season and in most of the others to two. Eighteen States protect does at all seasons and allow only bucks to be killed--namely, Alabama, Arizona, California, Georgia, Idaho, Missouri, Mississippi, New Mexico, Nevada, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Pennsylvania requires that deer killed shall have horns 2 inches above the hair, New York and Vermont at least 3 inches long, and West Virginia 4 inches long, while California prohibits entirely the killing of spike bucks.

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