

INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE OFFICE OF INFORMATION PRESS SERVICE



Release - Immediate.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

July 21, 1932.

HOOVER APPROVES 2 MONTH SEASON ON DUCKS AND GEESE THIS FALL

The open season on wild ducks and geese has been set at two months for the coming fall, by amendments to the migratory-bird treaty-act regulations, adopted by Secretary Hyde of the Department of Agriculture and approved by the President (July 20). The lengthened season, it was explained by Paul G. Redington, Chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey, which administers the Federal game law and the regulations, is made possible by a general improvement observed this year over the disastrous drought conditions of 1931, when some species of ducks and geese were so seriously affected that the season had to be cut to one month.

The earliest open season in any State will be October 1 and the latest opening date November 16 with the exception of Florida, where it will be November 20. In Alaska the season will open September 1.

The general seasons on Wilson's snipe or jacksnipe, sora, woodcock, and doves (except in one county in Alabama) have not been changed.

The new open seasons for ducks, geese, brant, and coot are as follows:

In Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York (except Long Island), West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington--October 16 to December 15;

In Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, and Nevada -- October 1 to November 30;

On Long Island and in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Kentucky, California, and in western and northern Texas -- November 1 to December 31;

In southern and eastern Texas and in Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland -- November 16 to January 15;

In Florida -- November 20 to January 15; and

In Alaska -- September 1 to October 31.

On ducks the daily bag limit remains at 15 for all species, of which number not more than 5 may be sidler ducks and not more than 10 of each or in the aggregate may be canvasbacks, redheads, greater or lesser scaups, ringnecks, blue-winged teal, green-winged teal, cinnamon teal, gadwalls, or shovellers. This additional protection has been given to these species explained the Biological Survey Chief, because they did not recover from the effects of the drought that prevailed for several years past on their breeding grounds to the same degree as other species. This drought, together with the effects of heavy shooting and the loss of marsh areas by drainage and other causes, had reduced their numbers materially. Mallards, black ducks, geese, brant, and some other species were not so seriously affected by these factors, he said, because the greater part of their breeding grounds in the United States and Canada are not so closely limited to the regions that have been affected by the drought.

The possession limit on all species of ducks and geese is double the daily bag limit. To two other species of duck -- the ruddy and buffle-head -- the protection of a continuous closed season has been given. This was made necessary by an unusually serious diminution in their numbers.

The bag limit on mourning doves was reduced from 25 to 18 a day.

The new regulations provide an open season of two weeks on band-tailed pigeons in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Washington, and Oregon, with a bag limit of 10 a day and a possession limit of the same number. The band-tailed pigeon is a western game bird and has increased greatly in the past few years under the protection of a closed season. These birds have now reached the point in numbers where they do considerable damage to the fruit crops of these five Western States.

The number of live duck decoys that can be legally used anywhere in the United States is limited to 25. The use of live goose decoys, permitted elsewhere, is prohibited in California because of local conditions.

The Department of Agriculture was gravely concerned over the condition of many of the principal game species of wild ducks in 1931. Officials of the Survey recall that the disastrous drought prevailing for several years in the Prairie Provinces of Canada and in parts of the northwestern United States resulted in such a lack of water on the principal breeding grounds of waterfowl in these regions that the 1931 hatch of the birds was far below normal. To meet the emergency the Secretary of Agriculture with the approval of the President shortened the open season in 1931 to one month throughout the United States.

Investigators of the Biological Survey, who have continued their observations throughout the winter and spring, report that the short season of 1931 was successful in averting what otherwise might have been an irremediable disaster. The reduction of shooting during the fall and winter of 1931 enabled a good supply of mature birds to return to their breeding grounds this spring. In addition to this, investigators of the Survey who are now in those regions report a considerable improvement in water conditions. Marshes, lakes, and sloughs that have been entirely dry for several seasons past, they state, are rapidly filling with the resumption of normal rainfall over the area. Many species of ducks, however, are still below normal abundance.

Officials of the Biological Survey state that, all factors considered, the improvements noted have been sufficient to warrant a two-months season this year, especially as protection through lowered bag limit has been given to the species most seriously affected by the bad conditions of the past few years. The results of the 1932 season will be observed closely, however, to prevent if possible a repetition of the conditions that brought on the emergency situation of the previous year.