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NEW WATERFOWL REGULATIONS
FAVOR BIRDS AND SPORTSMEN

Duck hunters in the United States will have fewer days of shooting this year than last, but they will have a longer season and will hunt on days recommended by their own State game departments.

Shooting waterfowl on baited premises may continue, but only under permit, and the baiting of mourning doves has been prohibited.

Hunting previously permitted during the half hour before sunrise has been made illegal, but the former restriction on shooting before noon on the opening day of the seasons has been removed.

Bag and possession limits on specially imperiled species of ducks have been reduced, but limits on other ducks and migratory game birds remain the same as last year.

So states the Bureau of Biological Survey in summarizing changes in the regulations under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act adopted August 15 by Secretary Wallace and approved August 20 in a proclamation by President Roosevelt.

"In other words," says the Bureau's statement, "both birds and hunters have been given special consideration in the new regulations, and the sportsmen this year will have as great hunting privileges as are consistent with the precarious status of our waterfowl. Although charged with the responsibility of protecting the birds that migrate between the United States and Canada, the Biological Survey is of the opinion that the sportsmen should have something to say about matters affecting regulations governing their hunting, and the regulations this year have been drafted with this thought in mind. They were made in accordance with the recommendations of the Secretary's Advisory Board of sportsmen and conservationists, following the most extensive wild-fowl investigations ever undertaken, and they are in line with predictions made by the Bureau after the Advisory Board's meeting.

"These predictions," the statement continues, "aroused protests, but many of the critics from both sides after reviewing the waterfowl reports later expressed approval of the proposed action, confirming our judgment that these regulations come as near as possible to combining adequate conservation with reasonable sporting privileges. We are convinced that any further concessions in either direction would have increased dissatisfaction."

Flexible Seasons Provided

Though reduced to a 30-day maximum because of a general decrease of waterfowl, the open seasons on these birds have been determined in accordance with a flexible provision permitting game departments to recommend the time and spread of shooting considered most suitable for their own States. This provision has made it possible for States in areas affected by drought or other special conditions to make appropriate recommendations. The flexible-season provision has also made it possible to eliminate zoning within States, with the single exception of New York, where a separate season is continued for Long Island.

The new open seasons prescribed for waterfowl, Wilson's snipe or jacksnipe and coot, are as follows:

California has chosen a season of 22 days consisting of Saturdays and Sundays during 11 weeks beginning October 20 and ending December 30, and New Mexico will have a 28-day season providing shooting on Saturdays and Sundays for 14 weeks, October 13 to January 13.

All other States have elected 30-day seasons.

Two States will have continuous seasons--Nebraska October 16 to November 14 and West Virginia November 1 to 30.

Hunters in 9 States will shoot 5 days a week for 6 weeks--Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wyoming Wednesday to Sunday October 3 to November 11; Iowa Wednesday to Sunday October 10 to November 18; and Arkansas and Mississippi Tuesday to Saturday November 6 to December 15.

In Florida, the only State choosing a 4-day-a-week season, shooting will be permitted Thursday to Sunday during 7 weeks beginning November 22 and ending January 6 and on the succeeding Thursday and Friday, January 10 and 11.

In 30 States and in Alaska the shooting will be on 3 days a week for 10 weeks--Alaska, on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday September 1 to November 5; Ohio, Indiana, Maine, and New York (except Long Island), Thursday, Friday, and Saturday October 4 to December 8; Long Island and Delaware, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday October 25 to December 29; New Hampshire, Vermont, South Dakota, and Montana, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday October 5 to December 9; Kansas, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday October 11 to December 15; Utah, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday October 12 to December 16; Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania Thursday, Friday, and Saturday October 18 to December 22; Missouri, Oregon, and Washington, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday October 19 to December 23; Oklahoma, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday October 20 to December 24; Texas, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday October 26 to December 30; Rhode Island, Kentucky, and Louisiana, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday November 2 to January 6; and Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee, on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday November 8 to January 12.

In 3 States--Arizona, Idaho, and Illinois--the hunting days will be Saturdays and Sundays during 15 weeks beginning October 6 and ending January 13, and in 2 States--Colorado and Nevada--the two opening days will be Monday and Tuesday, October 1 and 2, and the season will continue on Saturdays and Sundays for 14 weeks, October 6 to January 6.

Baiting to be Regulated

As predicted in a recent statement by the Biological Survey, the new regulations include an amendment designed to control the principal abuses of baiting migratory waterfowl and thus to protect further the birds and, as a necessary consequence, to increase ultimately the opportunities for legitimate sport.

The control provided for is a system of permits, the permits to be issued without charge by the Chief of the Biological Survey and revocable by the Secretary of Agriculture. The permits will be issued upon the conditions that migratory waterfowl on baited premises will not be shot after 3 p.m., nor while resting on water or land, nor in violation of State law or regulations.

Each baiting permittee is also to agree to keep an accurate record of the number of persons shooting on the premises and of the species and number of each species of waterfowl killed on the premises during the open season, the number of blinds employed, the numbers of birds killed at each blind each day, and the kinds of food employed and the intervals of feeding the birds. All this information must be reported to the Chief of the Biological Survey within one month after the close of the open season.

"With this information within reach for the first time, the Department of Agriculture, "says the Bureau, "will have extensive and reliable data upon which to determine its future policy with reference to the very controversial question of baiting."

By a further amendment the new regulations absolutely prohibit the shooting of mourning doves attracted or enticed to baited fields.

Bag Limits on Imperiled Ducks Reduced

Because of the specially critical status of certain species of ducks revealed by the Biological Survey's investigations, the daily bag limits on these birds have been reduced from 8 to 5 and the possession limits from 16 to 10.

The species so affected are the canvasback, redhead, eider duck, greater scaup, lesser scaup, ringneck, blue-wing teal, green-wing teal, cinnamon teal, shoveller, and gadwall.

Other Changes Summarized

Other amendments to the regulations change the seasons on rails and gallinules (except coot) in Massachusetts, Wisconsin, and New York (including Long Island) and on mourning doves in Louisiana and Texas, all in accordance with suggestions of the State game departments.

In Wisconsin and New York the seasons on rails and gallinules have been made to conform with the waterfowl seasons, and in Massachusetts the season under the amended regulation will be October 4 to November 2.

The new mourning-dove season in Louisiana will be November 2 to January 31, and the Texas season has been changed by providing a separate season for Brazos County--November 15 to January 15. This change, the Biological Survey explains, was recommended by the Advisory Board, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, because of a temporary confusion in special State legislation.

Regulations Being Published

The amended regulations as approved by the President are now in press, and copies may be obtained, as soon as issued, from the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.

Hunting Stamps Required

In accordance with a recent act of Congress, the Bureau also points out that this year for the first time all migratory-waterfowl hunters who are over 16 years of age will be required to carry a Federal hunting stamp. These stamps are sold at \$1 each at all post offices in towns of 2,500 population or more, in county seats, and in certain other localities. The fund derived from the sale of these stamps has been set aside by Congress to be used in purchasing or leasing marsh and water areas to be acquired as waterfowl refuges.