



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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FEDERAL DUCK HUNTING RULES ARE LIBERALIZED

New Regulations Also Cut Woodcock
Season and Reduce Bag Limit
on Geese and Doves

The duck-hunting rules have been liberalized.

Longer seasons, daily shooting to begin at sunrise, and a longer post-season possession of birds are among the 1940 rules for duck hunting announced today by Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes. They are included in amendments to regulations under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act adopted by Secretary Ickes and approved by President Roosevelt.

The regulations are the first to be announced after a full year of administration of the former Bureau of Biological Survey by the Department of the Interior. The 1939 regulations were announced last year by Secretary Ickes but were based on work done by the Biological Survey in the Department of Agriculture. Transferred from that agency to the Department of the Interior, the Biological Survey, now the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, has completed a year of work in this Department. The 1940 regulations thus are the first to be issued which are based solely upon the work of the Department of the Interior.

Governing the hunting of all migratory game birds in the United States and Alaska, the new regulations also provide shorter seasons on woodcocks and reduce the bag limits on geese, mourning doves, and white-winged doves.

Duck-population increases for five consecutive years have made it possible, Secretary Ickes said, to liberalize the duck-hunting rules this year, but he added, "we can not yet be sure that the day of stringent regulations is past."

"Our policy," he said, "is to keep the annual kill below the annual production until the carrying capacity of the winter feeding grounds has been reached. Favorable conditions this year, following the five years of successive increases, make it possible now to provide more hunting, but it will again be necessary to invoke tight restrictions if future years are not as favorable."

Secretary Ickes explained that geese have not increased along with the ducks and that it was therefore advisable to offset a lengthened season on these birds by placing the bag limit still lower than the reduced limit provided last year.

Similar action regarding the bag limit on ducks was not taken, he said, because of the satisfactory condition of these birds as to numbers, but a close watch will be kept over the ducks during the coming season and if the bag limit proves to be too large with the longer season the limit will be lowered next year--drastically, if necessary.

Sixty Days of Wildfowling

A season of 60 consecutive days, instead of 45, has been provided in each of three zones for hunting ducks, geese, coots, and jacksnipe. In the northern zone the season will be October 1 to November 29; in the intermediate zone, October 16 to December 14; and in the southern zone, November 2 to December 31. All dates are inclusive.

The longer seasons, Secretary Ickes explained, have not been provided to give individual hunters more shooting but to make as fair a distribution as is possible of the available hunting. Varying weather conditions, he pointed out, make it impossible to predict exactly when migrating waterfowl will be present in a locality, and climatic differences from north to south make it difficult to provide an equitable distribution of hunting during a short season. Duck increases this year make it possible to spread the hunting over a longer period, but shorter seasons may again be unavoidable and will be invoked if conditions call for them.

The northern zone comprises Maine, New Hampshire, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana. South Dakota and Wyoming were in the intermediate zone last year.

The intermediate zone this year includes Vermont, formerly in the northern zone; New Mexico, in the southern zone last year; and the following States as previously: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Idaho, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, California, Oregon, and Washington.

Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, and Arizona make up the southern zone.

In Fur Districts 1 and 3 of Alaska, the southeastern part of the Territory and parts of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska Peninsula, hunting will begin on October 1 and end November 29. Elsewhere in the Territory the season will be September 1 to October 30.

Scoters, sometimes called sea coots, may be taken in open coastal waters only beyond outer harbor lines in Maine and New Hampshire from September 15 to 30, and in New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island from September 15 to October 15. Thereafter they may be taken in these States from land or water during the waterfowl season.

Daily shooting hours for waterfowl and coot hunters will be from sunrise until 4 p. m., instead of from 7 a. m. to 4 p. m. Jacksnipe may be taken from sunrise to sunset.

The daily bag limit on geese, reduced last year from 5 to 4, has this year been lowered to 3. The bag limit on ducks remains at 10 a day.

As in previous years the number of waterfowl that may be possessed at any time is limited to 2 days bag, but a new rule this year makes it possible to possess the legal limit for 20 days after the close of the season instead of 10 days.

Special protection, as formerly, is afforded canvasbacks, redheads, buffleheads, and ruddy ducks by limiting to 3 the number of any one of these species that may be included in the daily bag and providing further that not more than 3 of this entire group in the aggregate may be taken in a day. The possession limit on these birds also is double the daily bag limit.

The bag limit on coots is 25 a day and on jacksnipes 15 a day, and as formerly the possession limits for these species may not at any one time exceed the daily bag limit.

Closed seasons throughout the United States and Alaska are continued on wood ducks, Ross's geese, and swans. There is also again no open season on snow geese and brants in Florida and States north thereof that border on the Atlantic coast.

Hunters may use bows and arrows or shotguns not larger than 10 gauge, as formerly. The 3-shell limit on repeating shotguns, either hand-operated or auto-loading, is continued, and it will still be illegal to take waterfowl by means of bait or the use of live decoys.

All persons over 16 years of age hunting migratory waterfowl are required to have with them an unexpired Federal Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp validated by their signature on the stamp. These stamps, commonly called duck stamps, may be purchased at post offices. They cost one dollar.

Woodcock Seasons Cut in Half

The open shooting seasons on woodcocks have been reduced from 30 days to 15 days, but the daily bag limit remains at 4 and the possession limit is still 8. Woodcocks also may be possessed not more than 20 days after the season's close.

Woodcock losses occasioned by excessively cold weather on the bird's wintering grounds in the south last winter, particularly in Louisiana, made it advisable to reduce the seasons, Secretary Ickes explained. Late snows on some of the breeding grounds caused additional losses of young birds.

Investigations conducted by agents of the Fish and Wildlife Service, he said, indicate that these much prized game birds are not present in normal numbers this year. These studies were conducted on the wintering grounds and also on nesting areas in Pennsylvania, New York, New England, and the Maritime Provinces of Canada.

"The 15-day reduction of the shooting season is a precautionary measure," Secretary Ickes said. "It is hoped that as a result of this additional protection the woodcock will recover sufficiently to permit restoration of the full 30-day season in 1941."

Mr. Ickes indicated that Canadian officials also are preparing to take special action to safeguard the woodcock.

Woodcock may be hunted from sunrise until sunset. The open seasons are as follows, both dates inclusive:

That part of New York lying north of the tracks of the main line of the New York Central Railroad extending from Buffalo to Albany and north of the tracks of the main line of the Boston & Albany Railroad extending from Albany to the Massachusetts State line, and in New Hampshire, North Dakota, and Wisconsin, October 1 to October 15. New York south of the line above described, except Long Island, and in Indiana, and Iowa, October 15 to October 29. Long Island, November 1 to November 15.

Arkansas, Kentucky, and Oklahoma, December 1 to December 15. Connecticut, October 25 to November 8. Delaware and Maryland, November 15 to November 29. Louisiana and Mississippi, December 15 to December 29. Maine, October 10 to October 24. Massachusetts, October 20 to November 3.

Michigan, in Upper Peninsula, October 1 to October 15; in remainder of State, October 15 to October 29. Minnesota, September 16 to September 30. Missouri, November 10 to November 24. New Jersey, and Rhode Island, November 1 to November 15. Ohio, October 10 to October 24. Pennsylvania, October 16 to October 30. Vermont and West Virginia, October 17 to October 31. Virginia, November 20 to December 4.

Reduce Bag Limit on Doves

The daily bag limit on mourning or turtle, doves and white-winged doves has been reduced from 15 to 12. Not more than 12 of either of these species, or of

the two together, may be taken in any one day, and the possession limit at any one time may not be more than the daily bag limit. Adjustments in the open seasons on these birds have also been made.

Doves in the southern States also suffered from the severe weather last winter, Secretary Ickes explained, and this, with overshooting in some areas in recent years, made the bag-limit reduction seem essential. Thousands of dead doves were found after the severe weather in the South last January.

Shooting doves that have been attracted to hunting areas by use of bait is prohibited, as formerly.

Doves may be hunted from sunrise to sunset.

Open seasons on mourning doves, sometimes called turtle doves, are as follows, both dates inclusive:

Alabama, north of United States Highway No. 80, October 1 to October 31 and December 20 to January 31; south of said highway, November 20 to January 31.

Georgia, in Troup, Meriwether, Pike, Lamar, Monroe, Jones, Bladwin, Washington, Jefferson, and Burke Counties, and all counties north thereof, October 1 to October 31 and December 20 to January 31; in remainder of State, November 20 to January 31.

Mississippi, October 1 to October 15 and December 1 to January 31.

South Carolina, in Oconee, Pickens, Greenville, Spartanburg, Cherokee, York, Chester, Fairfield, Union, Laurens, Anderson, Abbeville, Greenwood, McCormick, Edgefield, and Aiken Counties, September 15 to October 15 and December 20 to January 31; in remainder of State, November 20 to January 31.

Arizona, California, Idaho, Kansas, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, and Oklahoma, September 1 to November 15.

Arkansas, Delaware, North Carolina, and Tennessee, September 15 to November 30.

Florida (except in Dade, Broward, and Monroe Counties), November 20 to January 31. Dade, Broward, and Monroe Counties in Florida, October 1 to November 15.

Illinois, September 1 to September 30. Kentucky, September 1 to October 31. Louisiana, December 1 to January 31. Maryland, September 1 to September 30 and November 15 to December 31. Minnesota, September 16 to September 30.

Texas, in Yoakum, Terry, Lynn, Garza, Kent, Stonewall, Haskell, Throckmorton, Young, Jack, Wise, Denton, Collin, and Hunt Counties, and all counties north thereof, and in Parker, Tarrant, Dallas, Rockwall, Kaufman, Johnson, Hopkins, Delta, Franklin, and Ellis Counties, September 1 to October 31; in remainder of State, September 15 to November 15.

Virginia, September 1 to September 30 and November 20 to December 31.

The following are the open seasons on white-winged doves, both dates inclusive:

Arizona, August 16 to September 15.

Texas, in Yoakum, Terry, Lynn, Garza, Kent, Stonewall, Haskell, Throckmorton, Young, Jack, Wise, Denton, Collin, and Hunt Counties, and all counties north thereof, and in Parker, Tarrant, Dallas, Rockwall, Kaufman, Johnson, Hopkins, Delta, Franklin, and Ellis Counties, September 1 to October 31; in remainder of State, September 15 to November 15.

Rules Made For Hunting Other Game Birds

Other rules included in the new regulations govern the hunting of band-tailed pigeons, rails, and gallinules. These birds may be hunted in season from sunrise until sunset, with the exception that the coot may be hunted from sunrise until 4 p.m.

The daily bag limit for rails and gallinules, other than soras and coots, is continued at 15 in the aggregate of all kinds. Other bag limits are as follows: Soras, 15; coots, 25; and band-tailed pigeons, 10. Soras and coots may be taken in addition to the limit on other rails and gallinules. Possession limits for all these species may not at any one time exceed the daily bag limit.

The open seasons on coots are the same as those for waterfowl, the special coot season provided experimentally in Illinois last year having been eliminated. The season on other gallinules and on rails is from September 1 to November 30, both dates inclusive, except as follows, both dates inclusive:

Alabama, November 20 to January 31. Louisiana, November 1 to January 31. Massachusetts, New York, including Long Island, and Washington, October 16 to December 14. Minnesota, September 16 to November 30. Wisconsin, October 1 to November 29. District of Columbia, no open season.

The seasons on band-tailed pigeons are as follows, both dates inclusive: Arizona, New Mexico, and Washington, September 16 to September 30. California, December 1 to December 15. Oregon, September 1 to September 15.

Copies of the complete regulations may be obtained as soon as available from the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C.