



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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"OUTSIDE DATES" ESTABLISHED FOR HUNTING OF DOVES, RAILS, GALLINULES, WOODCOCK, AND BAND-TAILED PIGEONS

Revisions in bag limits and adjustments in seasons for some areas were announced today by the Department of the Interior in releasing the framework of "outside dates" for State selections of hunting seasons for doves, rails, gallinules, woodcock, and band-tailed pigeons in the United States. Migratory bird hunting seasons in Alaska are included in today's announcement.

The principal changes this year include a five-day extension of the season for mourning doves in the Eastern States and an increase in the possession limit on this species throughout the country, except in California.

This portion of the annual revision of the hunting regulations, as prepared by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, sets forth the "outside dates" for these species as follows: mourning doves, September through January 15; rails and gallinules, September 1 through January 10; woodcock, October 1 through January 20; and band-tailed pigeons, September 1 through January 10. Within these sets of dates the various State game departments may select their own seasons for hunting these birds. The specific dates will be published later after the States have notified the Department of their selections.

Although the proposals released today contain those for the shooting of waterfowl, coots, and Wilson's snipe in Alaska where the season begins on September 1, Daniel H. Janzen, Director of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, stated that the detailed regulations for the hunting of migratory waterfowl, coots, and Wilson's snipe in the United States will not be issued until late in August.

Regulations by species are as follows:

Mourning Doves. Results of a recently completed dove survey indicate that the 1958 dove breeding population is generally equal to that of 1957; any slight changes are not significant. In recognition of prospects for good production, the regulations are being liberalized slightly by lengthening the season in the Eastern States and extending the framework dates throughout the country.

The outside dates within which the State game departments in the Eastern States may recommend specific seasons on mourning doves for 1958 will be from September 1 through January 15. This represents an addition of five days at the end of the season, as compared with the September 1-January 10 framework in 1957.

Within the September 1-January 15 framework, all States east of the Mississippi River, plus Arkansas and Louisiana, may submit recommendations for dove hunting seasons that conform to the following conditions:

- (1) Hunting to be conducted only from 12 noon to sunset;
- (2) 65 consecutive half-days; or
- (3) Two periods totaling 65 half-days.

For all States west of the Mississippi River (exclusive of Arkansas and Louisiana, the same season will prevail in 1958 as in 1957--50 full days within the outside dates of September 1 through January 15.

The possession limit on mourning doves throughout the entire country, except in California, has been increased to 20 after the first day of the season with the daily bag limit remaining at 10.

In New Mexico the daily bag limit will be 10 mourning doves or 10 white-winged doves or 10 in the aggregate of both kinds with 20 in possession singly or in the aggregate.

The following option has been offered to California:

- (1) A daily bag limit of 10 mourning doves or 10 white-winged doves or 10 in the aggregate of both kinds, with possession limit of 20 singly or in the aggregate; or
- (2) A daily bag and possession limit of mourning and white-winged doves of 10, singly or in the aggregate of both kinds.

Because of its large size, Texas will again be permitted to recommend three separate mourning dove seasons on the same basis as last year. This includes the provision that hunting will be confined to the period of 12 noon to sunset. Texas, therefore, can select seasons for each of three geographical areas.

Half-day shooting is defined as the period from 12 noon to sunset. "Full days" refer to the period from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. If a split season is selected by any State (except Texas to which the split-season option does not apply), the two hunting periods need not be of equal length.

White-winged Doves--Arizona, California, and New Mexico. A white-winged dove season will be prescribed for Arizona and New Mexico and for Imperial, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties, California, which will conform to the mourning dove season recommended by the State game departments.

In Arizona in 1957 mourning and white-winged doves were grouped together in a daily bag and possession limit which was set at 25, provided such limit did not contain more than 10 mourning doves. In 1958 in this State the possession limits will be separated, with the daily bag and possession limit for white-winged doves being set at 25.

Band-tailed Pigeons. The outside dates for hunting this species in two areas in California and in Oregon and Washington are from September 1 to January 10--a -day extension. Daily bag and possession limit will remain at six.

Rails and Gallinules. In line with the practice followed for the last few years, the outside dates within which the States in the Atlantic, Mississippi, and central flyways may recommend specific seasons on these species have been fixed at September 1 through January 10. Within these dates the States may select a season of 70 consecutive days, the same as last year. Because of lack of hunter interest on rails in the Pacific Flyway, no season has been set on this species in that region.

Since no significant changes have been reported in the populations of rails and gallinules in the Atlantic Flyway, the same limits will prevail in 1958 as in 1957--for rails (except sora) and gallinules, 15 daily and 30 in possession, singly as in the aggregate of both species. In the Mississippi and Central Flyways, last year's bag and possession limit of 15 on rails (except sora) and gallinules will remain in effect this year.

Although no season on gallinules is being provided at this time in the Pacific Flyway, when the regulations are drawn up for waterfowl and coots, consideration will be given to continuing the provision made last year under which gallinules could be taken with coots to avoid the technical violations which could occur through the inadvertent taking of gallinules when coots are being hunted.

Woodcock. Because there has been no significant changes reported in the woodcock population, no liberalization of the framework dates or other provisions will be made in 1958. The season remains at 40 days in length within the outside dates at October 1 through January 20. Daily bag limit remains at four and possession limit at eight.

Waterfowl, Coots, and Wilson's Snipe in Alaska. The season, bag and possession limit for Wilson's snipe in Alaska will remain the same as in 1957. The season will begin on September 1 and extend through October 15; bag and possession limit, eight.

The waterfowl season in Alaska will run from September 1 to December 3. Except for geese, the daily bag and possession limit will remain the same as last year, seven and 14.

In the case of geese in Alaska for 1958, the daily bag limit will be five of which two must be snow geese and the possession limit will be 10 of which four must be snow geese. Last year the regulations permitted a daily bag limit of three geese and six in possession. This year's slight liberalization is due to the healthy condition of the population of the snow geese and the limited gun pressure exerted on them in Alaska.

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