



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release to PM's OF TUESDAY, AUGUST 12, 1958

#### ANNOUNCE WATERFOWL HUNTING FRAMEWORK FOR 1958-59 SEASON

A cutback of 10 shooting days in the Atlantic Flyway States, certain restrictions on the bag and possession limits for canvasback and redhead ducks in the three eastern flyways, and an optional formula for the Central Flyway were announced today by Assistant Secretary of the Interior Ross Leffler in releasing the framework for State selections of seasons for hunting migratory waterfowl during 1958-59.

The new Federal proposals specify by flyways the length of the shooting seasons, bag and possession limits, and shooting hours, but do not include the specific season dates for the various States. These will be announced at a later date after the States have made their selections.

With the exception of the brant, coot, and gallinule seasons in the Pacific Flyway, the "outside dates" within which the States may select specific seasons for hunting waterfowl and coots will be October 1, 1958, to January 15, 1959, inclusive, the same length as last year.

The Atlantic Flyway will have a 60-day season for waterfowl and coots; the Mississippi will continue with a 70-day season; the Central is being offered an option of extending its 75-day season by 15 days with a reduction of one bird in daily bag and two in possession limits; and the Pacific will remain at 95 days, with these certain exceptions: Due to decrease in the brant population in the Pacific Flyway a season of 70 consecutive days will be provided but the season on these birds must terminate on or before January 31. A 105-day season on coots and gallinules beginning with the waterfowl season will be fixed for the Pacific Flyway.

Assistant Secretary Leffler stated that surveys in the northern States and in Alaska and Canada indicate that the reproductive success of waterfowl on their breeding grounds is not as good as last year except in areas which supply the Pacific Flyway. From observations and studies it appears that there will be a moderate decrease in the number of all species of waterfowl, except brant, that

frequent the Atlantic Flyway. It is expected that there will be a significant decrease in the number of diving ducks in the Central and Mississippi Flyways. Except for brant, an increase is expected in the number of waterfowl using the Pacific Flyway. No significant change is anticipated on population numbers of Wilson's snipe in any flyway.

Mr. Leffler emphasized that the basic data used to guide Director Daniel H. Janzen of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and his technical staff, in making their recommendations resulted from the cooperative surveys of the wintering grounds and the breeding grounds of the birds conducted by Bureau biologists and game management agents, State game department technicians, wildlife experts of the Canadian Wildlife Service, the Provincial Game Branches, and field personnel in Canada of Ducks Unlimited and the Wildlife Management Institute.

In the course of formulating the amended regulations, Director Janzen accorded full consideration to the opinions and recommendations of his Waterfowl Advisory Committee in order to obtain a "nationwide cross section of opinion."

This committee is composed of delegates of the National Waterfowl Council (whose membership is constituted of directors of State game departments), and representatives of the International Association of Game, Fish, and Conservation Commissioners, the Wildlife Management Institute, the National Wildlife Federation, the Outdoor Writers Association of America, the National Audubon Society, the Izaak Walton League of America, and the Wildlife Society. Representatives of the Canadian Wildlife Service and Provincial Branches and Ducks Unlimited were also present.

Director Janzen explained that the reduction to a 60-day season in the Atlantic Flyway is necessary because of a continuing decrease in the wintering population of ducks in that flyway which has steadily dropped each year since 1955. The 1958 population level is the lowest recorded in the 1949-58 period. The decrease has occurred in all of the important species.

The situation on diving ducks, critical for some years past, has been accentuated this year because of continued and more severe drought conditions on the northern breeding grounds, particularly in southern Saskatchewan. Since diving ducks appear to be less versatile to adapting themselves to adverse habitat conditions, this year's regulations will restrict the bag limit on canvasbacks and redheads to two per day and four in possession as a protective measure, except in the Pacific Flyway. Bureau officials hope that waterfowl hunters will recognize the seriousness of this situation and be scrupulous in their observance of the regulation on the taking of canvasbacks and redheads.

The shooting hours for 1958 will remain at one-half hour before sunrise to sunset in all flyways, except in the Mississippi where variations may occur from State to State, depending upon whether a particular State in the flyway selects a closed season on wood ducks or elects to include one wood duck in the daily bag and possession limits. The hunters of these States in the Mississippi Flyway which are

permitted to include one wood duck in the daily bag and possession limits will be required to stop shooting all species of waterfowl and coots at one-half hour before sunset to afford protection to wood ducks during the late hours of the day when they are most vulnerable to gun pressure.

The privilege of selecting split seasons is again being offered the States, subject to the customary 10 percent penalty. The split seasons may again be divided into unequal lengths.

The framework within which the States are permitted to select open season dates on ducks, geese, and coots are stated below by flyways:

#### Atlantic Flyway States

The States in this flyway--Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia--may select concurrent open seasons on waterfowl and coots of 60 consecutive full days, or two seasons aggregating 54 full days, beginning on or after October 1, 1958, and ending not later than January 15, 1959. The daily bag and possession limits on ducks shall be four and eight, respectively, except that the daily bag limit on ducks may not include more than (a) two canvasbacks, or (b) two redheads, or (c) one canvasback and one redhead. The possession limit may not include more than four canvasbacks, or four redheads, or four in the aggregate of both species.

The daily bag and possession limits on geese (except snow geese) shall be two and four, respectively.

The daily bag and possession limit on coots shall be 10.

The season for taking brant will conform to the season for ducks, geese, and coots, with a daily bag and possession limit of six.

The daily bag limit on ducks may include one wood duck and the possession limit may include two.

The daily bag and possession limits on other ducks may include not more than one hooded merganser.

In addition to the bag limits on other ducks, the daily bag limit on American and red-breasted mergansers is five, possession 10, singly or in the aggregate of both kinds.

In the States of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Rhode Island, the season for taking scoters, eider and old-squaw ducks beyond outer-harbor lines shall be from October 1 to January 15, inclusive. In areas other than those beyond outer-harbor lines scoters, eiders, and old-squaw ducks may be taken only during the open season for other ducks. In the States listed, the daily bag and possession limits, singly or in the aggregate of scoters, eiders, or old-squaw ducks, is seven and 14, respectively.

### Mississippi Flyway States

All the States in this flyway--Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin--are permitted to select concurrent open seasons on waterfowl and coots of 70 consecutive full days, or two seasons aggregating 63 full days, beginning on or after October 1, 1958, and ending not later than January 15, 1959. The daily bag and possession limits on ducks will be four and eight, respectively. However, the daily bag limit on ducks may not include more than two canvasbacks, or two redheads, or one canvasback and one redhead. The possession limit may not include more than four canvasbacks, or four redheads, or four in the aggregate of both canvasbacks and redheads. As was in effect last year, the daily bag and possession limit on geese shall be five. Such limits, however, may not include more than two Canada geese or its subspecies, or two white-fronted geese, or one Canada goose or its subspecies and one white-fronted goose.

The daily bag and possession limit on coots is 10.

The daily bag and possession limit for ducks may include one wood duck, provided that in States which elect to include one wood duck in the bag and possession limits, hunting of coots and all species of waterfowl must terminate one-half hour before sunset.

Daily bag and possession limits may include not more than one hooded merganser.

In addition to the bag limits on other ducks, the daily bag limit on American and red-breasted mergansers is five, possession limit 10, singly or in the aggregate of both kinds.

### Central Flyway States

As an experiment to determine the effect of increasing the length of the season for a certain number of days and reducing the daily bag limit by one duck, the States in this flyway--Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming--may choose the following option on season length and bag limits: 90 consecutive full days beginning on or after October 1, 1958, and ending not later than January 15, 1959, inclusive, with daily bag and possession limit four and eight, respectively. States not desiring to participate in this experiment may select an open season on ducks consisting of 75 consecutive full days or two seasons aggregating 68 full days, within the same framework dates. Daily bag and possession limit in this choice of season length shall be five and 10, respectively.

The daily bag limit on ducks regardless of the season length selected may not include more than two canvasbacks, or two redheads, or one canvasback and one redhead. The possession limit may not include more than four canvasbacks, or four redheads, or four in the aggregate of both canvasbacks and redheads.

The States in this flyway may select a season of 75 consecutive full days on blue and snow geese or two seasons aggregating 68 full days and a season of 60 consecutive full days or two seasons aggregating 54 full days on Canada geese including their subspecies and white-fronted geese. The goose season need not run concurrent with the duck and coot season. The daily bag and possession limits on geese, generally, will be decreased from six to five, but these limits may not include more than one white-fronted goose.

Based on recommendations of the Central Flyway Council, special provisions designed to provide added protection again this year for the Great Basin Canada geese are as follows:

In Goshen County, Wyoming, and throughout all other States in the flyway, the bag and possession limit on geese may not include more than two Canada geese or its subspecies, or one Canada goose and one white-fronted goose: Provided, that a closed season is prescribed on Canada geese in Moffat County, Colorado. In all areas of Wyoming (other than Goshen County), the bag and possession limit on geese may not include more than one Canada goose or its subspecies.

A closed season is prescribed on blue and snow geese in Beaverhead, Gallatin, and Madison counties in Montana, and in the entire State of Wyoming.

There will be a closed season in all States on Ross's geese and on black-bellied tree ducks in Texas.

These States may select an open season on coots of 75 consecutive full days or two seasons aggregating 68 full days, within the established framework. In those States which select a 90-day duck season in accordance with the optional formula, the coot season will be 90 consecutive days. Daily bag and possession limit will be 10.

The daily bag and possession limits on ducks may not include more than one wood duck and one hooded merganser.

In addition to the daily bag and possession limits on ducks, the daily bag limit on American and red-breasted mergansers is five, possession limit is 10, singly or in the aggregate of both kinds.

#### Pacific Flyway States

The States in this flyway--Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington--may select concurrent open seasons on ducks and geese (except Ross's geese) of 95 consecutive full days, or two seasons aggregating 86 full days, within the prescribed framework of October 1, 1958, to January 15, 1959, inclusive.

These States are also offered the option of selecting a single bag and possession limit of six ducks, which may be increased to 10, provided such increased limit contains not less than four pintails, four widgeons, or four of these species in the aggregate of both kinds; or they may select a daily bag limit of five ducks

and a possession limit of 10, which such limits may be increased to 9 and 14, respectively, provided such increased limits contain not less than four pintails, four widgeons, or four of these species in the aggregate of both kinds.

The daily bag and possession limit on geese (except Ross's geese) will be six with the limitation that not more than three of the dark species may be included in such limit.

To afford continued further protection to the Great Basin Canada geese the following additional restrictions will apply:

In the counties of Bear Lake, Caribou, and Bonneville, Idaho; Clark County, Nevada; Mohave and that portion of Yuma County, Arizona, lying north of U. S. highways 60 and 70; that portion of California Fish and Game District No. 22 (as defined in the California Fish and Game Code) lying north of U. S. Highways 60 and 70; and the entire State of Utah, the daily bag and possession limit may not include more than one Canada goose or its subspecies. In those portions of Yuma county, Arizona, and California Fish and Game District No. 22 lying south of U. S. Highways 60 and 70, the season on Canada geese and their subspecies will be closed.

Because of the continuing decline in the number of brant in the Pacific Flyway, a season of 70 consecutive days may be selected, however, the season on these birds just terminate on or before January 31, 1959.

Due to the continuing increase in the coot population in this flyway, a coot and gallinule season of 105 days beginning with the waterfowl season may be selected this year. The daily bag and possession limits will be 25.

Daily bag and possession limits on ducks may not include more than one wood duck and one hooded merganser.

In addition to the limits on ducks, the daily bag limit on American and red-breasted mergansers is five, possession limit 10, singly or in the aggregate or both kinds.

x x x