

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

For Release to PMs August 14, 1969

Hay 343-2252

DUCK HUNTING BY THE NUMBERS PROVES SUCCESSFUL

An experimental duck hunting season in Colorado last fall, based on a point system for each duck taken, has proved a success in improving waterfowl identification, pleasing hunters and rewarding skill, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Leslie L. Glasgow reported today.

Waterfowl biologists working for Interior's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife helped State technicians devise the test season wherein 10 "points" were assigned each mallard drake, 40 points each mallard hen, and 30 points to all other ducks and coots. The daily bag limit was reached when the points for the last duck taken totaled or exceeded 70 points. The kinds of ducks taken could be identified "in hand" and a mistake made in selecting flying birds did not result in violations.

Bureau Director John S. Gottschalk said: "This experimental season indicated that the point system not only divided shooting pressure among species and sexes, but was well received by hunters. The advantage of the tested system is that the 'point' limit in terms of numbers is flexible, depending on the species and sex of birds taken. Hunters who perfect their skill at identifying flying ducks can achieve a larger daily bag."

Experimental duck hunting seasons have been held in the San Luis Valley of south central Colorado since 1963 to obtain information on better management techniques and more recreational use of waterfowl.

The 1968 test was to determine the degree to which hunters could comply with a "point system," the effectiveness of the system to shift shooting pressure toward mallard drakes, the extent to which the system affected the kill, and hunter participation, success and attitude.

Gunners indicated a marked preference for the point system over previous regulations that permitted taking six birds, provided four were mallard drakes. A decrease in violations was recorded and most hunters seemed pleased by the flexibility and freedom from fear of accidental violation.

Basically, "points" provides a unique way to permit the skilled hunter to enjoy a larger daily bag while the unskilled hunter has a smaller limit, Dr. Gottschalk indicated.

Future experimental duck seasons will test the system, which might be applicable to an entire flyway. Arithmetic and duck hunting seem to make sense for both the resource and the hunter, Dr. Gottschalk added.

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