

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

FEATURE MATERIAL

For Release December 10, 1970

Walker 343-2463
Carroll 343-5634

SOME WATERFOWL HUNTERS ARE "STOPPING AT TWO" UNDER NEW POINT SYSTEM REGULATIONS

Some waterfowl hunters are "stopping at two" this season under a new point system of hunting regulations being tried in many States.

The point system, implemented by the Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, allocates different values to various species and the sexes of ducks hunted. A hunter may shoot until he reaches the maximum "points," but if he is unable to identify the ducks he has killed, the practical result is that he can take no more than two under point rules. The general idea of a point system was suggested by a duck hunter.

With agreement of the States involved, the new system is being tried in New Jersey, Florida, Iowa, and Illinois, as well as in all of the Central flyway except North Dakota and Kansas. Trial runs in several areas were held in preceding years.

The point system essentially is a method of "wise use" of a resource--species less abundant or with higher mortality rates receive more points, species capable of withstanding greater shooting pressure are allocated fewer points.

Until this season, waterfowl hunting has been regulated mostly on a species by species basis, and hunters had the unenviable problem

of attempting to identify ducks in the air. They complained often that regulations were complex and befuddling.

The point system allows hunters to identify birds in hand; the Bureau and cooperating State agencies have issued a waterfowl identification guide to assist the effort. The hunter identifies species and sex, and adds the values of the ducks he has killed. He must stop shooting when he reaches the maximum permitted.

Mallard hens, hooded mergansers, black ducks, wood ducks, redheads, and canvasbacks in many areas are worth 90 points on a 100 point scale. If a hunter cannot identify ducks, he therefore must assume he has shot two 90-pointers.

The point system still is considered experimental. If it works well, it will be expanded to additional areas in future years. The Bureau will be surveying this season's results closely. If the new approach has greater effectiveness in managing the harvest, if it holds violations to an acceptable minimum, and if it is properly interpreted by hunters and courts, then "stop at two" will become a less common expression--at least for waterfowl hunters--as more and more of them bone up on their duck identification.

The waterfowl identification guide is available free of charge from the State wildlife agencies involved in the experiment.

X X X

29816-70