

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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## DUCK HUNTING REGULATIONS TO BE MORE RESTRICTIVE THIS YEAR

Duck hunting regulations more restrictive than last year were announced today by Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton.

Ducks experienced poor production on summer breeding grounds because of drought and fall flights are expected to be down 12 to 30 percent in the various flyways. Largest decreases are predicted for the Mississippi and Central flyways, with lesser decreases in the Atlantic and Pacific flyways.

The tightened regulations do not apply to geese. With favorable weather on their Arctic breeding areas, most goose populations experienced good production this year and fall flights are expected to be good. The season, however, will remain closed on Atlantic brant in order to rebuild the population of this species.

"Duck hunting regulations this year are designed to reduce the harvest in each flyway in proportion to the predicted decrease in fall flight," Secretary Morton said. "These reductions in harvest are necessary in order to return an adequate population to the breeding grounds in 1974," the Secretary added.

Officials of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service caution that next year's regulations could be at least as restrictive as the 1973 rules, and possibly more so, depending on habitat conditions and duck production.

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Framework regulations, within which States select their hunting seasons, are established by the Fish and Wildlife Service after recommendations are made by State wildlife agencies, flyway councils, and major private conservation organizations.

For the coming season, hunting of canvasbacks and redheads is forbidden entirely in the Atlantic flyway and in high harvest areas of the Central and Mississippi flyways. If enough high harvest areas can be identified to significantly reduce the kill, then limits of one canvasback or one redhead will be established for the rest of the Central and Mississippi flyways. Decisions will be made by the Fish and Wildlife Service in cooperation with State fish and game agencies.

In the Pacific flyway, the high harvest area policy will apply to canvasbacks, but not to redheads, which have shown no decline in this flyway.

Copies of the Service's regulatory announcements, which appear in the Federal Register, may be obtained from its regional offices in Boston, Denver, Minneapolis, Albuquerque, Portland, and Atlanta, or from State fish and game agencies.

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