

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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McGarvey 202/343-5634

MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING REGULATIONS FOR NEXT FALL PROPOSED

Preliminary hunting regulations for ducks, geese, and other migratory game birds next fall were proposed on March 10, 1977, by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The proposal included seasons, daily bag limits, and shooting hours for certain species. No major changes from last year's rules are proposed.

Public comments are invited through May 18, 1977. They should be addressed to the Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240.

Two public hearings on the proposals will be held in the Auditorium of the General Services Administration Building, F Street between 18th and 19th Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C., the first on June 21, 1977, at 9 a.m. and the second on August 2, 1977, at 9 a.m. Persons wishing to participate should notify the Service by writing to the Director or calling 202/343-8827. Those wishing to have statements in the record should file them in writing before or immediately after each hearing. These steps are again being taken to insure that the public has ample opportunity to review and comment on the proposals.

No changes are proposed in shooting hours for next year. They are proposed as one-half hour before sunrise until sunset. A detailed discussion of shooting before sunrise is included in the proposal. Essentially,

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it asserts that studies show light at that time of day is enough for a person to read by, so it is sufficient for hunting. Further, hunting that takes place during this period poses no discernible threat to the populations being hunted including those accorded special protection.

Hunting season framework dates for ducks and geese are proposed to be generally the same as last year: from October 1, 1977, to January 20, 1978, for the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways and from October 1, 1977, through January 22, 1978, for the Central and Pacific Flyways.

A possible change is proposed for wood duck hunting in the Southeastern United States because of a doubling of the population from 2 to 4 million birds since the late 1960's.

Consideration will be given to extending the snow goose season in the Atlantic Flyway in 1977 from 30 days to 50 days, provided that breeding ground conditions are favorable.

The severe winter of 1977 caused an undetermined loss of Atlantic brant--a sea goose--along the east coast. No changes will be proposed until population counts and breeding ground surveys are completed this summer.

The Service will also consider a request by the North American Falconers Association to extend the season for taking migratory game birds by falconry.

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