

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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## MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING REGULATIONS FOR NEXT FALL PROPOSED

Preliminary hunting regulations for ducks, geese, and other migratory game birds next fall have been proposed by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

These are being published in the February 15, 1978, Federal Register.

The proposal includes seasons, daily bag limits, and shooting hours for certain species. Recommendations for many seasons will not be developed until survey information becomes available. No major changes from last year's rules are proposed at this time.

Public comments are invited through May 16, 1978. 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, 1978, at 9 a.m. and the second on August 2, 1978, at 9 a.m. The first hearing will focus upon seasons opening in September and the second upon later seasons, including the regular waterfowl seasons. 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

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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.

Hunting season framework dates for ducks and geese are proposed to be generally the same as last year: from October 1, 1978, to January 20, 1979, for the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways and from September 30, 1978, through January 21, 1979, for the Central and Pacific Flyways.

Last year, for the first time, the Service permitted States to select extended falconry seasons outside the dates of regular hunting seasons. Eight States selected extended seasons. In other States allowing hunting with raptors, falconry could be practiced during the regular hunting season as it is a permissible means for taking migratory game birds.

Confusion arose from last year's extended falconry seasons regarding the daily bag and possession limits which varied depending upon whether the regular hunting season was open or closed.

The Service will propose specific falconry hunting regulations later as a supplemental proposed rulemaking. The delay will allow review of information arising from last year's extended falconry regulations and allow time to develop simplified regulations relating to extended falconry seasons.

Other regulatory changes which may arise from new information, including survey data, will be contained in supplementary proposed rulemaking in the Federal Register.