

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FRAMEWORKS FOR EARLY MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING SEASONS AND SUPPLEMENTAL LATE SEASON CHANGES PROPOSED

Regulations setting the frameworks for 1980-81 early migratory bird hunting seasons have been proposed by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Several supplemental late season framework proposals also were published at the same time.

Generally the early season frameworks are the same as last year except for a few minor changes that affect local areas or regions. Early hunting seasons are those that open before October 1.

The proposals, published in the July 1, 1980, Federal Register, set forth the species to be hunted during early seasons, daily bag and possession limits, shooting hours, season lengths, earliest opening and latest closing season dates, and special closures. From these frameworks, State conservation agencies may select hunting season dates and options.

Species included in the early season proposals are mourning doves, white-winged doves, band-tailed pigeons, rails, woodcock, common snipe, and gallinules; teal in portions of the Mississippi and Central Flyways during September; sea ducks in designated areas of the Atlantic Flyway; an experimental early duck season in Iowa in late September; and sandhill cranes in portions of North Dakota and South Dakota. The proposal includes an option for a falconry season in certain States meeting Federal falconry standards.

Changes being proposed for this group of birds include full-day mourning dove hunting in the Eastern Management Unit (all States east of the Mississippi River

(over)

and Louisiana), hunting areas and seasons for mourning and white-winged doves in Arizona and Texas, and sandhill crane seasons in North Dakota and South Dakota.

The Service also proposed some changes in hunting regulations for the late seasons (seasons that open on or after October 1, 1980). These include an experimental increased limit of canvasbacks within a late portion of the regular waterfowl season in designated areas of the Atlantic Flyway. The Service also proposes to eliminate the special closed areas for redheads in the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyways. The changes for canvasbacks and redheads are contingent upon the findings of this spring and summer's waterfowl surveys.

In the Atlantic Flyway, zoning for the purpose of establishing waterfowl seasons is proposed for implementation this fall in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. In the Mississippi Flyway, regulatory relaxations are recommended for Canada geese in a small zone in southeastern Michigan. Also, the Mississippi Flyway's possession limits for waterfowl would be double the daily bag limits. In the Central Flyway, separate limits are proposed for light (snow and Ross' geese) and dark geese (Canada and white-fronted geese).

Interested persons have until July 12, 1980, to comment on the early hunting season proposals. The public comment period for the proposed late seasons changes ends on August 23, 1980. All comments should be addressed to the Director (FWS/MBMO), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

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