



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE SETS EARLY HUNTING SEASON FRAMEWORKS FOR CERTAIN MIGRATORY BIRDS

Final regulations setting the 1981-82 hunting season frameworks for certain migratory birds have been announced by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The final rules, published in the July 29, 1981, Federal Register, set the limits on dates and times when hunting may begin and end. They also designate hunting areas and set bag and possession limits during the early hunting seasons that open before October 1. State wildlife officials may now select season dates and daily bag and possession limits from within these frameworks.

The early season regulations include these species: 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; ducks in Iowa, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Florida during September; sandhill cranes in portions of North and South Dakota; and certain migratory birds in Alaska, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Also included are falconry seasons in certain States meeting Federal falconry standards.

Changes made this year for this group of birds include:

--An increase in the mourning dove limits in the Central Management Unit (Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming) to 12 doves

over

daily and 24 in possession. As an option, States may select bag and possession limits of 15 and 30 doves, respectively, under a shorter, 45-day hunting season. A modification in the boundary separating Georgia's two dove hunting zones is provided, and a dove hunting season of 70 full days is offered in Arizona;

--Minor changes in the sandhill crane season lengths for North Dakota, with the addition of one county in the State to the hunting area;

--Experimental September duck seasons offered to Tennessee, Kentucky, and Florida. These 5-day seasons will allow greater harvest of locally-breeding wood ducks and early migrating teal. This year's regulations also continue the experimental September duck hunting season in Iowa.

--An experimental band-tail pigeon season offered in three counties of western Nevada;

--Protection from hunting for three additional species of ducks in Puerto Rico;

--An experimental duck season in the Virgin Islands under the same frameworks that apply to Puerto Rico. In addition, the hunting of scaly-naped pigeons will now be allowed on St. John and St. Croix Islands.

Additional information on the Federal early hunting season frameworks is available from the Service's Office of Migratory Bird Management in Washington, D.C. (202/254-3207) and the agency's regional offices. Because States may choose to make their own regulations more strict than the limits prescribed in the Federal frameworks, hunters are advised to check their State regulations carefully.

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