



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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SUPPLEMENTAL PROPOSALS PUBLISHED FOR NEXT
FALL'S HUNTING SEASON; INCLUDES BLACK DUCK RESTRICTIONS

New restrictions on the black duck are among the supplemental proposals published in the June 17, 1983, Federal Register by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the 1983-1984 migratory bird hunting season.

This is the second in a series of proposed, supplemental, and final regulatory actions that set the season dates, hours, and daily bag and possession limits for the 1983-1984 hunting season.

With the exception of more specific proposals to further restrict black duck hunting in the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways, few changes are being proposed to the initial frameworks published in the April 5, 1983, Federal Register.

Public comment on black duck and other "late season" (opening on or about October 1) regulations proposals will be accepted through August 19 and at a public hearing on August 2, at 9 a.m. in the Interior Department Auditorium in Washington, D.C. The comment period on the early season frameworks (opening prior to October 1) closed on June 22; a public hearing was held that same day.

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The black duck has been gradually declining in numbers for about 25 years. The Service announced last fall that further restrictions on the harvests would be implemented in 1983. The June 17 proposals are based on recommendations from States in the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways and are aimed at halting the downward trend in black duck numbers. In the Atlantic Flyway, where most of the U.S. harvest of black ducks occurs, the proposals are intended to meet the guidelines of a 25 percent reduction in State harvest recommended by the Flyway Council last year. Copies of the proposed regulations may be obtained by writing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (MBMO), Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

Waterfowl hunters need to be familiar with the 1983 regulations on black ducks, because the restrictions vary not only from State to State, but in some cases, by zones within States. State wildlife agencies in both flyways are gearing up to explain the new restrictions in a major hunter information program about black ducks, in cooperation with the Fish and Wildlife Service and several sportsmen and conservation groups. The program is designed to inform duck hunters of the black duck situation in advance of the hunting season and to ask their help in reducing the harvest.

The Fish and Wildlife Service is providing full-color leaflets and color posters about the black duck to the States and other cooperators for distribution to hunters. The leaflets explain the problem and what is being done, and also include identification aids. The Cooperative Extension Service also will distribute the leaflets and posters. Conservation and sportsmen groups plan to reprint the literature at their own expense and distribute them to their membership.

Comments and a notice of intention to participate in the August 2 public hearing should be sent to: Director (FWS/MBMO), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

The proposals are subject to change, based on additional data and comments received. Final regulations for the 1983-1984 waterfowl hunting season will be published in late August or early September.

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