



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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STATE AND FEDERAL WILDLIFE OFFICIALS URGE WATERFOWLERS TO
"KNOW THE BLACK DUCK," AS NEW HUNTING RESTRICTIONS TAKE EFFECT

New hunting restrictions on the black duck, one of the most important game ducks in the eastern United States, will be in effect this fall. The new restrictions, developed jointly by State and Federal wildlife officials, apply to the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways. They are part of a continuing Federal-State effort to halt a long-term downward trend in numbers of this popular game duck. Black duck hunting regulations have previously been more restrictive than those for most other game ducks.

In conjunction with the new restrictions, one million color leaflets are on the way to waterfowl hunters in both eastern flyways to alert them to the black duck situation and to illustrate how they can distinguish this chocolate-colored duck from its look-alike cousin, the hen mallard.

The leaflets, along with thousands of posters and dozens of identification films and slide-tape shows, are part of a coordinated effort by State and Federal wildlife managers and sportsmen's groups to inform hunters about the long-term decline in the black duck population, and to seek their help in the effort to halt it.

"I urge every duck hunter who hunts in the range of the black duck to get a copy of this leaflet," said Robert A. Jantzen, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "Study it. Carry it with you to the blind. Know the black duck so you don't shoot one by mistake. And be sure you know the local regulations on the black duck where you hunt."

(more)

The exact cause, or causes, of the decline in the black duck population--down about 38 percent from the 1960-1969 average population level--are a subject of debate among waterfowl managers and conservationists. It is not certain, given the several factors thought to be involved, that reducing the harvest will in fact stabilize the population. However, State and Federal wildlife officials are agreed that it is an immediate, first step that should be taken now.

The eastward expansion of the mallard into the black duck range, hybridization of mallards with black ducks, and loss of habitat quantity and quality are among the other factors thought to be contributing to the decline of the black duck. Biologists are searching for solutions to these complex, long-term problems.

Black duck identification leaflets are available from State hunting license vendors, State wildlife agencies, and by writing Publications, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240. Leaflets and posters are also being distributed by sportsmen's and conservation organizations and by the State Extension Services.

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Black and white photos of leaflet and poster are available by calling 202/343-5611.

Hunters... Know the Black Duck

Help Protect It --
New Harvest Restrictions
Are In Effect



For more information and a
black duck identification leaflet,
contact your State wildlife agency

A Cooperative Conservation Program by State Wildlife Agencies in the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways
and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior and Sportsmen of America

