



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FINAL FRAMEWORKS FOR EARLY SEASON MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING REGULATIONS PUBLISHED

Final frameworks governing this fall's early migratory bird hunting seasons have been published by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The regulations cover seasons opening prior to October 1, and relate to mourning doves, white-winged and white-tipped doves, band-tailed pigeons, woodcock, common snipe, rails, common moorhens, purple gallinules, teal, sandhill cranes, and sea ducks. Also outlined are special experimental September duck seasons in Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, and Tennessee, as well as a special sandhill crane-Canada goose season for southwestern Wyoming. The proposal also includes extended falconry seasons.

In general, the frameworks are much the same as last year. Shooting hours will be from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset and daily bag and possession limits remain nearly identical.

The U.S. and Canada recently completed a cooperative survey of woodcock breeding populations. In the Eastern Region (Atlantic Flyway), the study indicates an increase of 2.7 percent in this species since 1985. However, this population remains at a low level and has declined significantly during the long term. As a result, the Service has continued restrictive regulations required last year for woodcock hunting in the Atlantic Flyway. In the Central Region (the Mississippi Flyway and a portion of the Central Flyway), the survey indicated an increase of 6.3 percent since 1985.

The frameworks also call for a continuation of experimental early duck seasons in Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, and Tennessee. In Kentucky and Tennessee, only two of the four ducks permitted in the daily bag may be wood ducks. The effect of this reduction in the wood duck bag limit will be evaluated.

Complete information on the proposals can be obtained from the Federal Register. The individual States will select their early fall hunting seasons from within these frameworks. Hunters are urged to contact the appropriate State wildlife agency for the exact dates and other information concerning the early waterfowl season for the State in which they intend to hunt.