



Overview of Changes for 2019-20 Migratory Game Bird Seasons

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK ENDING DATE FOR DUCK HUNTING

Prior to 2019-20, federal frameworks required states to end the general duck season no later than the last Sunday in January. Beginning in 2019-20, federal frameworks now allow states to extend their 60 available hunting days for ducks to January 31 each year.

REDUCTION IN THE MALLARD DAILY BAG LIMIT

Hunters should be aware that the Atlantic Flyway has introduced a new process for establishing the general duck hunting season frameworks (season length and total duck bag limit). Since 2000, the status of eastern mallards has been used to set the duck hunting frameworks in the Atlantic Flyway. Due to a long-term decline in Atlantic Flyway mallards, setting all duck seasons based on the status of mallards is no longer the optimal approach because most other important duck species in the flyway (such as wood ducks, ring-necked ducks, and green-winged teal) are either stable or increasing while mallards continue to decline. By setting overall frameworks based on multiple important species, there is a greater chance of continuing more liberal frameworks in the Atlantic Flyway in the foreseeable future. In response to the long-term decline of eastern mallards, the mallard daily bag limit has been reduced to 2 mallards, with no more than 1 hen mallard.

REDUCTION IN DAYS OFFERED FOR ATLANTIC BRANT HUNTING

In response to several years of poor reproduction, this year's federal frameworks will reduce the brant hunting season from 60 days to a 30-day season with a 2-bird daily bag limit. While the currently approved Atlantic Flyway Brant Hunt Plan allows a 30-day season with a two-bird daily bag, the Commission remains concerned with the status of brant in North Carolina. In North Carolina, brant are found almost exclusively along the Outer Banks portions of Dare and Hyde counties. State surveys, along with information from local guides and hunters, indicate that brant numbers have fallen dramatically in recent years. In response, the Commission will continue to remain more restrictive than federal frameworks allow and will have a full 30-day brant season with a reduced bag limit of one-brant daily.

SPECIAL WATERFOWL HUNTING DAYS FOR VETERANS AND ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY

Recent federal legislation (NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ACT) allows for up to two special duck hunting days for veterans and members of the Armed Forces on active duty, including National Guard and Reserves on active duty (other than for training). The day(s) can occur up to 14 days before or after any regular hunting season for ducks, mergansers, and coots or in the closed portion between season segments. There can be no more than 2 special veteran/military waterfowl days and no more than 2 special youth waterfowl days (4 total special days). The special veterans/military waterfowl days can be held concurrently with the special youth waterfowl days. For 2019-20, the Commission will hold the special veteran/military days concurrent with the special waterfowl days offered for youth.