

IDFG Commission Meeting – April 11, 2019

2019 Migratory Game Bird Season-setting

Idaho's migratory game bird seasons are set within frameworks established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), after they consult with all state fish and wildlife agencies.

The Adaptive Harvest Management process determines the general duck season framework.

- process adopted by Service in 1996; used to evaluate duck habitat and populations annually to select the optimal season framework for U.S. duck seasons.
- special harvest strategies are used for some of the less common ducks (i.e., pintail, scaup).
- goose seasons are determined by flyway management plans for each goose population.

IDFG conducted a hunter opinion survey in 2016 to assess hunter preferences on how to structure waterfowl seasons and zones, within the confines of the federal framework. Responses from this survey are intended to guide Idaho waterfowl season proposals from 2016-2020.

Important results from the 2016 waterfowl hunter preference survey are:

- ✓ Most Idaho waterfowl hunters said they prefer continuous seasons, rather than split seasons.
- ✓ Hunters in most of north and southwest Idaho preferred waterfowl seasons that start and end later, to allow for hunting opportunities as close as possible to the end of the Federal Framework (as late in January as possible).
- ✓ Hunters in much of east Idaho preferred waterfowl seasons that start as early as possible in October to allow for hunting opportunities prior to wetlands freezing.

Recommendations presented today reflect hunter desires within the current Federal Framework.

WATERFOWL

Youth Waterfowl Season:

Proposed season structure:

Statewide: September 28-29

Ducks, Wilson's snipe, & American coot:

The proposed season structure for ducks is:

Zone 1: October 5, 2019 – January 17, 2020; Scaup: October 5, 2019 – December 29, 2019

Zone 2: October 5, 2019 – January 17, 2020; Scaup: October 5, 2019 – December 29, 2019

Zone 3: October 12, 2019 – January 24, 2020; Scaup: October 31, 2019 – January 24, 2020

Zone 4: October 5, 2019 – January 17, 2020; Scaup: October 5, 2019 – December 29, 2019

Proposed daily bag limit: 7 ducks; but not more than 2 female mallards, 2 redhead, 3 scaup, ~~2~~ 1 pintail or 2 canvasback.

Proposed daily bag limit: 8 Wilson's snipe.

Proposed daily bag limit: 25 American coots.

Canada geese:

The proposed season structure for Canada geese is:

Zone 1: October 5, 2019 – January 17, 2020

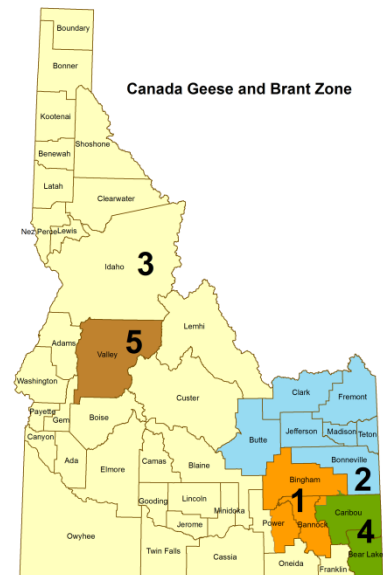
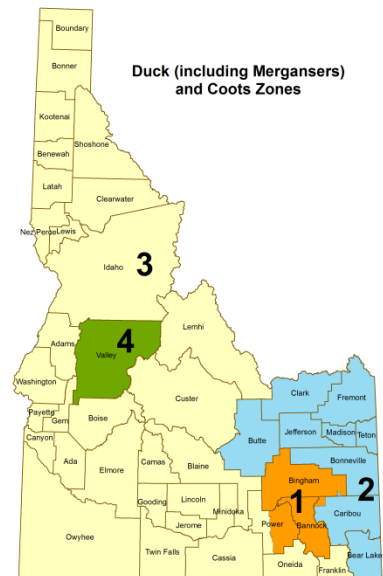
Zone 2: October 5, 2019 – January 17, 2020

Zone 3: October 12, 2019 – January 24, 2020

Zone 4: September 1, 2019 – September 15, 2019 & October 5, 2019 – January 2, 2020

Zone 5: October 5, 2019 – January 17, 2020

Proposed daily bag limit: 4 Canada geese, except in Zone 4 during September 1-15, when the daily bag limit would be 5 Canada geese.



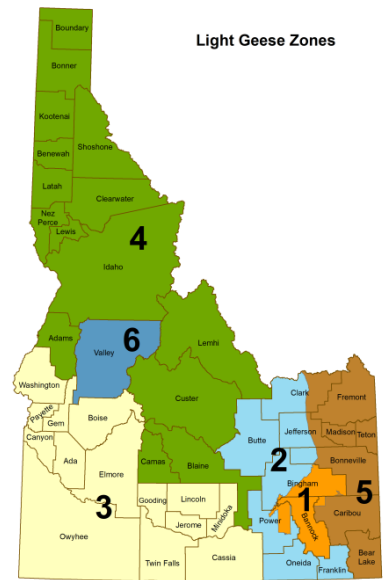
Light Geese (Snow and Ross's Geese):

The proposed season structure for light geese is:

- Zone 1: October 5, 2019 – January 17, 2020
- Zone 2: November 6, 2019 – January 17, 2020 & February 8, 2020 – March 10, 2020*
- Zone 3: November 27, 2019 – March 10, 2020
- Zone 4: October 12, 2019 – January 24, 2020
- Zone 5: October 5, 2019 – January 17, 2020*
- Zone 6: October 5, 2019 – January 17, 2020

Proposed daily bag limit: 20 white geese.

*The Department proposes to shift Butte County and those portions of Bonneville, Jefferson, and Clark counties west of Interstate 15 from Zone 5 to Zone 2. Reflected in map.

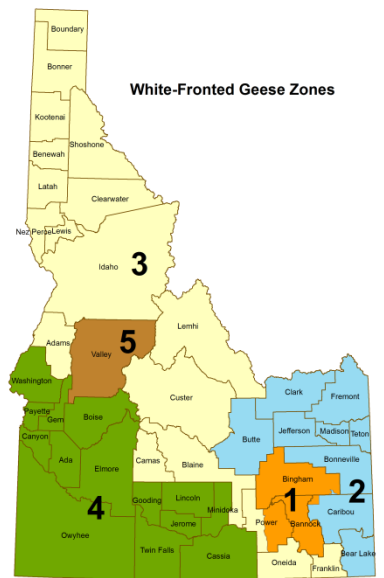


White-fronted Geese:

The proposed season structure for white-fronted geese is:

- Zone 1: October 5, 2019 – January 17, 2020
- Zone 2: October 5, 2019 – January 17, 2020
- Zone 3: October 12, 2019 – January 24, 2020
- Zone 4: November 4, 2019 – February 16, 2020
- Zone 5: October 5, 2019 – January 17, 2020

Proposed daily bag limit: 10 white-fronted geese.



Possession limits are three times the daily bag limit.

Sandhill Cranes:

The Pacific and Central Flyway Management Plan for the Rocky Mountain Population (RMP) of sandhill cranes allows for the regulated harvest of cranes when the population exceeds 15,000, as estimated by the average of the three most recent reliable surveys. Based on the allowable harvest for this population, 1,628 sandhill cranes may be harvested from the RMP during the 2019 hunting season.

Idaho's 2019 crane harvest allocation, as provided by the Flyway Management Plan, is 220 cranes, down from 306 in 2018.

The Department proposes the following actions:

All tags (441) will be offered on a first-come first-served basis at any vendor as per the allocation below.

Hunt Area	Season	Tags
1 - Bear Lake	9/1-9/15	238 130
1 - Bear Lake	9/16-9/30	149 130
2 - Teton	9/1-9/15	35 25
3 - Fremont	9/1-9/15	41 33
3 - Fremont	9/16-9/30	41 33
4 - Jefferson	9/1-9/15	23 20
4 - Jefferson	9/16-9/30	24 20
5 - Swan Lake	9/1-9/15	29 25
6 - Malad	9/1-9/15	25

Proposed daily bag limit: 2 cranes for all hunts; season limit is 2 cranes.

Doves:

Dove seasons are guided by the mourning dove harvest strategy for doves in the Western Management Unit, which is based on band returns. The USFWS approved the STANDARD (60 days; 15-bird bag) regulatory alternative for the 2017 season, which allows for a maximum season of 60 days, occurring between September 1 and January 15.

The proposed season structure for doves is:

Statewide: September 1 – October 30

Proposed daily bag limit: 15 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate.

Possession limit: 45 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate.

American Crow:

American crow seasons are set by states following guidance provided for in the Federal Register (i.e., 50 CFR 20.133). The season shall not exceed 124 days during a calendar year, and shall not be permitted during the peak crow nesting period within a State.

The proposed season structure for American crows is:

Statewide: October 1 – January 31

Proposed daily bag limit: no limit.