

Background Report
Summary of Potential Changes to Migratory Bird Hunting Seasons, 2013-2014
Constant Agenda Item 4
September 5, 2013

The federal schedule for setting migratory bird hunting regulations precludes the Commission from taking timely conforming action to modify Rules 68A-13.003, F.A.C., Hunting Regulations for Ducks, Geese, and Coots, and 68A-13.008, F.A.C., Hunting Regulations for Migratory Birds other than Ducks and Coots. This report is to update the Commission on developments that have occurred recently, allowing us to anticipate changes in federal frameworks and our proposed rule changes for the 2013-2014 migratory bird seasons. The federal frameworks will not be final until late August for early-season migratory bird hunting regulations (dove, rail, gallinule, woodcock, snipe, and special early waterfowl seasons) and mid-September for the late-season migratory bird hunting regulations (regular waterfowl and coot season and limited Canada goose season). If final federal frameworks differ from our predictions, the Executive Director will confer with the Commission Chairman regarding any necessary decisions, and any resulting rule changes will be made initially by executive order, followed by a corresponding rule change at the December Commission meeting. The attached tables depict proposed season dates and bag limits for Florida's migratory bird seasons. Please note that the 2013-2014 information on the tables is not final and is subject to change. In early October, staff will provide the Commission with updated tables after the final federal frameworks are available for all seasons.

Possession Limits for all Migratory Game Bird Seasons

This is to advise that we anticipate one change in the federal frameworks for the 2013-2014 late migratory game bird seasons. Similar to the early season frameworks, the anticipated change is an increase in the possession limit for all migratory game birds to three times the daily bag. Staff recommends changing FWC's rules to allow this change. If the Commission agrees with this recommendation, we would make these changes by executive order in late September, followed by a corresponding rule change at the November Commission meeting. The tables in this report have been updated with this anticipated change.

Migratory Bird Seasons (other than Ducks, Geese, and Coots)

There are no proposed changes to federal frameworks for dove, rail, gallinule, woodcock, and snipe seasons. Dates and bag/possession limits for the 2013-2014 seasons, based on proposed federal frameworks and Rule 68A-13.008, F.A.C., are as indicated in the attached tables (Tables 1 and 2).

Special September Duck Season

There are no proposed changes to federal frameworks for Florida's special September duck season. Dates and bag/possession limits for the 2013 season, based on proposed federal frameworks and Rule 68A-13.003, F.A.C., are as indicated in Table 3.

Regular Waterfowl and Coot Season

Proposed late season frameworks will be published in the Federal Register on or about August 20. We anticipate that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will propose a 60-day season with a 6-bird bag limit again for 2013-2014 in Atlantic Flyway states, including Florida. The Atlantic Flyway Council Technical Section has endorsed this proposal.

There are two proposed changes to the species' bag limits: the scaup daily bag limit will be reduced from 4 to 2 and the daily bag for pintails will increase from 1 to 2. This proposed change is in response to the current breeding populations for this species. Staff recommends changing FWC's rules to allow this change. If the Commission agrees with this recommendation, we would make these changes by executive order in late September, followed by a corresponding rule change at the November Commission meeting. At this time, we expect all other daily bag limits will remain the same as last year and as currently contained in Rule 68A-13.003, F.A.C. Details for Florida's anticipated season structure based on these expectations, recommendations, and Rule 68A-13.003, F.A.C. are provided in Table 4.

Canada Goose Season

We anticipate no changes to federal frameworks for the regular Canada goose season. The attached table (Table 5) shows season dates and bag/possession limits for all phases of the statewide Canada goose season, based on the proposed federal frameworks and Rule 68A-13.003, F.A.C.

Table 1. Previous (2012-2013) dates and anticipated (2013-2014) dates, bag and possession limits for seasons for migratory birds other than ducks and coots. 2013-2014 season dates and bag and possession limits reflect anticipated federal frameworks. **Please note – these regulations are not final and are subject to change.**

Species	2012-2013	2013-2014	
		Dates	Bag/Possession
Mourning Dove and White-winged Dove	Oct. 6 – Oct. 29 ¹	Oct. 5 – Oct. 28 ¹	15/45 ²
	Nov. 10 – Nov. 25	Nov. 16 – Dec. 1	
	Dec. 8 – Jan. 6	Dec. 14 – Jan. 12	
Rails and Common Moorhen	Sept. 1 - Nov. 9	Sept. 1 - Nov. 9	15/45 - Clapper Rail, King Rail, & Common Moorhen; 25/75 - Virginia and Sora Rails
Snipe	Nov. 1 - Feb. 15	Nov. 1 - Feb. 15	8/24
Woodcock	Dec. 18 – Jan. 31	Dec. 18 – Jan. 31	3/9
Crow	Aug. 11 – Oct. 28 ³	Aug. 10 – Oct. 27 ³	None
	Nov. 11 – Feb. 18	Nov. 11 – Feb. 18	

¹ Shooting hours: noon until sunset.

² The daily bag limit of doves is mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate.

³ Saturdays and Sundays only.

Table 2. Previous (2012-2013) dates and anticipated (2013-2014) dates, bag and possession limits for falconry season for migratory birds other than ducks and coots. 2013-2014 season dates and bag and possession limits reflect anticipated federal frameworks. **Please note – these regulations are not final and are subject to change.**

Species	2012-2013	2013-2014	
		Dates	Bag/Possession
Mourning Dove and White-winged Dove	Oct. 6 – Jan. 20	Oct. 5 – Jan. 19	3/9
Rails	Sept. 1 – Dec. 16	Sept. 1 – Dec. 16	3/9
Common Moorhen	Sept. 1 – Dec. 14	Sept. 1 – Dec. 14	3/9
Snipe	Nov. 1 - Feb. 15	Nov. 1 - Feb. 15	3/9
Woodcock	Nov. 24 - Mar. 10	Nov. 24 - Mar. 10	3/9

Table 3. Previous dates and anticipated (2013) dates, bag and possession limits for the special September duck season. 2013 season dates and bag and possession limits reflect anticipated federal frameworks. **Please note – these regulations are not final and are subject to change.**

2011	2012	2013	
		Dates	Bag/ Possession
Sept. 24-28	Sept. 22-26	Sept. 21-25	4/12 teal and wood ducks in the aggregate, no more than 2/6 of which may be wood ducks

Table 4. Previous dates and proposed (2013-2014) dates and bag and possession limits for ducks, coots, and light geese (snow [including blue] and Ross' geese). 2013-2014 season dates and bag and possession limits reflect anticipated federal frameworks. **Please note – these regulations are not final and are subject to change.**

Year	First Phase	Second Phase	Leon County ¹	Falconry
2011-2012	Sat., Nov. 19 – Sun., Nov.27 (Thanksgiving Nov. 24)	Sat., Dec. 10 – Sun., Jan. 29 Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days: Sat/Sun., Feb. 4 – 5, 2012	Thurs., Nov. 24 Fri. Nov. 25 Mon. Dec. 26 Mon. Jan. 2 Mon. Jan. 16 Thurs., Nov. 22 Fri., Nov. 23	Oct. 30 – Nov. 12 Feb. 6 – Mar. 2
2012-2013	Sat., Nov. 17 – Sun.,Nov.25 (Thanksgiving Nov. 22)	Sat., Dec.8 – Sun., Jan. 27 Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days: Sat/Sun., Feb. 2 – 3, 2013	Mon., Dec. 24 Tues., Dec. 25 Mon., Dec. 31 Tues., Jan. 1 Mon., Jan. 21 Thurs., Nov. 28 Fri., Nov. 29	Oct. 30 – Nov. 12 Feb. 4 – Mar. 1
2013-2014	Sat., Nov. 23 – Sun., Dec. 1 ² (Thanksgiving Nov. 28)	Sat., Dec. 7 – Sun., Jan. 26 ² Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days: ³ Sat/Sun., Feb. 1-2 , 2014	Tues., Dec. 24 Wed. Dec. 25 Tues. Dec. 31 Wed. Jan. 1 Mon., Jan. 20	Oct. 30 – Nov. 12 ⁴ Feb. 2 – Mar. 3

¹In addition to Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

²Bag/Possession limits: Ducks - 6/18. The 6-duck limit shall consist of no more than 1 black duck; 1 mottled duck, 1 fulvous whistling-duck, 2 pintail, 2 canvasback, 2 redheads, 2 scaup, 3 wood ducks, 4 scoters, and 4 mallards (no more than 2 of which may be females). All other species of duck (except harlequin ducks) may be taken up to the 6-duck daily limit. Coots - 15/45. Mergansers - 5/15, only 2/6 of which may be hooded mergansers. Light geese - 15/none.

³Bag/Possession limits: same as above; plus, common moorhen - 15/45.

⁴Bag/Possession limits: ducks, coots, and light geese - 3/9, singly or in the aggregate.

Table 5. Previous dates and proposed (2013-2014) dates and bag and possession limits for the Canada goose season. 2013-2014 season dates and bag and possession limits reflect anticipated federal frameworks. **Please note – these regulations are not final and are subject to change.**

Year	September Season	First Phase	Second Phase
2011-2012	Sept. 4-29	Sat., Nov. 19 – Sun., Nov. 27 (Thanksgiving Nov. 24)	Thurs., Dec. 1 – Mon., Jan. 30
2012-2013	Sept. 1-26	Sat., Nov. 17 – Sun., Nov. 25 (Thanksgiving Nov. 22)	Sat., Dec. 1 – Wed., Jan. 30
2013-2014 ¹	Sept. 7-25	Sat., Nov. 23 – Sun., Dec. 1 (Thanksgiving Nov. 28)	Sun., Dec. 1 – Thur., Jan. 30, 2014

¹Bag/Possession limits: 5/15