

TITLE 14. Fish and Game Commission Notice of Proposed Changes in Regulations

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Fish and Game Commission (Commission), pursuant to the authority vested by Sections 202 and 355 of the Fish and Game Code and to implement, interpret or make specific Sections 202, 355, and 356 of said Code, proposes to amend Section 502, Title 14, California Code of Regulations, relating to Waterfowl regulations.

Informative Digest/Policy Statement Overview

Current regulations in Section 502, Title 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR), provide definitions, hunting zone descriptions, season opening and closing dates, and establish daily bag and possession limits for waterfowl hunting.

California, and other states, must set its waterfowl hunting regulations within the federal Frameworks. The Frameworks for the 2018-19 season have been approved by the Flyway Councils and will be considered for adoption at the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Regulation's Committee meeting on October 17-18, 2017. The proposed Frameworks allow for a liberal duck season which includes a 107 day season, 7 daily duck limit including 7 mallards but only 2 hen mallards, 2 pintails, 2 canvasbacks, 2 redheads, and 3 scaup (during an 86 day season). Duck daily bag limit ranges, duck season length ranges and goose season length ranges have been provided to allow the Commission flexibility. Lastly, Federal regulations require that California's hunting regulations conform to those of Arizona in the Colorado River Zone and with those of Oregon in the North Coast Special Management Area. Based on the Frameworks, the Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) provides an annual recommendation to the Commission.

The Department's recommendations are as follows:

1. Create the Klamath Basin Special Management Area in subsection 502(b)6. This change will cause the renumbering of subsequent special management areas in this section.
2. Allow the white-fronted goose season to be split into three segments in the Northeastern California Zone subsection 502(d)(1)B.

Minor editorial changes are also proposed to clarify and simplify the regulations and to comply with existing federal Frameworks.

Non-monetary benefits to the public

The Commission does not anticipate non-monetary benefits to the protection of public health and safety, worker safety, the prevention of discrimination, the promotion of fairness or social equity, and the increase in openness and transparency in business and government.

Evaluation of incompatibility with existing regulations

The Commission has reviewed its regulations in Title 14, CCR, and conducted a search of other regulations on this topic and has concluded that the proposed amendments to Section 502 are neither inconsistent nor incompatible with existing State regulations. No other State agency has the authority to promulgate waterfowl hunting regulations.

Summary of Proposed Waterfowl Hunting Regulations for 2018-19			
AREA	SPECIES	SEASONS	DAILY BAG & POSSESSION LIMITS
Statewide	Coots & Moorhens	Concurrent w/duck season	25/day. 75 in possession
Northeastern Zone <i>Season may be split for Ducks, Pintail, Canvasback, Scaup, Dark Geese and White Geese. White geese and dark geese may be split 3-ways.</i>	Ducks	Between 38 & 105 days	[4-7]/day, which may include: [3-7] mallards no more than [1-2] females. 2 pintail, 2 canvasback, 2 redheads, 3 scaup. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
	Scaup	86 days	
	Geese	No longer than 105 days	30/day, which may include: 20 white geese, 10 dark geese, no more than 2 Large Canada geese. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone <i>Season may be split for Ducks, Pintail, Canvasback and scaup</i>	Ducks	Between 38 & 105 days	[4-7]/day, which may include: [3-7] mallards no more than [1-2] females. 2 pintail, 2 canvasback, 2 redheads, 3 scaup. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
	Scaup	86 days	
	Geese	Between 38 & 105 days	30/day, which may include: 20 white geese, 10 dark geese. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Southern California Zone <i>Season may be split for Ducks, Pintail, Canvasback and Scaup</i>	Ducks	Between 38 & 100 days	[4-7]/day, which may include: [3-7] mallards no more than [1-2] females. 2 pintail, 2 canvasback, 2 redheads, 3 scaup. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
	Scaup	86 days	
	Geese	No longer than 100 days	23/day, which may include: 20 white geese, 3 dark geese. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Colorado River Zone <i>Season may be split for Ducks, Pintail, Canvasback and Scaup</i>	Ducks	101 days	[4-7]/day, which may include: [3-7] mallards no more than [1-2] females or Mexican-like ducks. 2 pintail, 2 canvasback, 2 redheads, 3 scaup. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
	Scaup	86 days	
	Geese	101 days	24/day, up to 20 white geese, up to 4 dark geese. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Balance of State Zone <i>Season may be split for Ducks, Pintail, Canvasback, Scaup and Dark and White Geese.</i>	Ducks	Between 38 & 100 days	[4-7]/day, which may include: [3-7] mallards no more than [1-2] females. 2 pintail, 2 canvasback, 2 redheads, 3 scaup. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
	Scaup	86 days	
	Geese	Early Season: 5 days (Canada goose only) Regular Season: no longer than 100 days Late Season: 5 days (whitefronts and white geese)	30/day, which may include: 20 white geese, 10 dark geese. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS	SPECIES	SEASON	DAILY BAG & POSSESSION LIMITS
North Coast <i>Season may be split</i>	All Canada Geese	105 days except for Large Canada geese which cannot exceed 100 days or extend beyond the last Sunday in January.	10/day, only 1 may be a Large Canada goose. Possession limit triple the daily bag. Large Canada geese are closed during the Late Season.
Humboldt Bay South Spit (West Side)	All species	Closed during brant season	
Klamath Basin (NEW)	Dark and white geese	105 days except for Large Canada geese which cannot exceed 100 days or extend beyond the last Sunday in January.	30/day, which may include: 20 white geese, 10 dark geese only 2 may be a Large Canada goose. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Sacramento Valley	White-fronted geese	Open concurrently with general goose season through Dec 21	3/day. Possession limit triple the daily bag.

Morro Bay	All species	Open in designated areas only	Waterfowl season opens concurrently with brant season.
Martis Creek Lake	All species	Closed until Nov 16	
Northern Brant	Black Brant	Open Nov 8 extending for 37 days	2/day. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Balance of State Brant	Black Brant	Open Nov 9 extending for 37 days	2/day. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Imperial County <i>Season may be split</i>	White Geese	Up to 103 days	20/day. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
YOUTH WATERFOWL HUNTING DAYS	(NOTE: To participate in these Youth Waterfowl Hunts, federal regulations require that hunters must be 17 years of age or younger and must be accompanied by a non-hunting adult 18 years of age or older.)		
	SPECIES	SEASON	DAILY BAG & POSSESSION LIMITS
Northeastern Zone	Same as regular season	The Saturday fourteen days before the opening of waterfowl season extending for 2 days.	Same as regular season
Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone	Same as regular season	The Saturday following the closing of waterfowl season extending for 2 days.	Same as regular season
Southern California Zone	Same as regular season	The Saturday following the closing of waterfowl season extending for 2 days.	Same as regular season
Colorado River Zone	Same as regular season	The Saturday following the closing for waterfowl season extending for 2 days.	Same as regular season
Balance of State Zone	Same as regular season	The Saturday following the closing of waterfowl season extending for 2 days.	Same as regular season
FALCONRY OF DUCKS	SPECIES	SEASON	DAILY BAG & POSSESSION LIMITS
Northeastern Zone	Same as regular season	Between 38 and 105 days	3/day. Possession limit 9
Balance of State Zone	Same as regular season	Between 38 and 107 days	3/day. Possession limit 9
Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone	Same as regular season	Between 38 and 107 days	3/day. Possession limit 9
Southern California Zone	Same as regular season	Between 38 and 107 days	3/day. Possession limit 9
Colorado River Zone	Same as regular season	105 days	3/day. Possession limit 9

Benefits of the regulations

The benefits of the proposed regulations are consistency with federal law and the sustainable management of the State's waterfowl resources. Positive impacts to jobs and/or businesses that provide services to waterfowl hunters will be realized with the continued adoption of waterfowl hunting seasons in 2018-19.

Consistency and Compatibility with State Regulations

The Fish and Game Commission, pursuant to Fish and Game Code Sections 200, 202 and 203, has the sole authority to regulate hunting in California. Commission staff has searched the California Code of Regulations and has found no other agency with the authority to regulate the waterfowl hunting in California. Therefore the Commission has determined that the proposed amendments are neither inconsistent nor incompatible with existing State regulations.

NOTICE IS GIVEN that any person interested may present statements, orally or in writing, relevant to this action at a hearing to be held in the Resources Building, Auditorium, First Floor, 1416 Ninth Street Sacramento, California, on Thursday, February 8, 2018 at 8:00 a.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard.

NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN that any person interested may present statements, orally or in writing, relevant to this action at a hearing to be held in Four Points by Sheraton Ventura Harbor

Resort, 1050 Schooner Drive, Ventura, California, on Thursday, April 19, 2018, at 8:00 a.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard. It is requested, but not required, that written comments be submitted on or before 5 p.m. on April 5, 2018 at the address given below, or by email to FGC@fgc.ca.gov. Written comments mailed, or emailed to the Commission office, must be received before 12:00 noon on April 13, 2018. All comments must be received no later than April 19, 2018, at the hearing in Ventura, California. If you would like copies of any modifications to this proposal, please include your name and mailing address.

Availability of Documents

The Initial Statement of Reasons, text of the regulations, as well as all related documents upon which the proposal is based (rulemaking file), are on file and available for public review from the agency representative, Valerie Termini, Executive Director, Fish and Game Commission, 1416 Ninth Street, Box 944209, Sacramento, California 94244-2090, phone (916) 653-4899. Please direct requests for the above mentioned documents and inquiries concerning the regulatory process to Valerie Termini or Jon Snellstrom at the preceding address or phone number.

Melanie Weaver, Senior Environmental Scientist, (916) 445-3717, has been designated to respond to questions on the substance of the proposed Waterfowl hunting regulations. Copies of the Notice of Proposed Action, the Initial Statement of Reasons, and the text of the regulation in underline and strikeout can be accessed through our website at <http://www.fgc.ca.gov>.

Availability of Modified Text

If the regulations adopted by the Commission differ from but are sufficiently related to the action proposed, they will be available to the public for at least 15 days prior to the date of adoption. Circumstances beyond the control of the Commission (e.g., timing of Federal regulation adoption, timing of resource data collection, timelines do not allow, etc.) or changes made to be responsive to public recommendation and comments during the regulatory process may preclude full compliance with the 15-day comment period, and the Commission will exercise its powers under Section 202 of the Fish and Game Code. Regulations adopted pursuant to this section are not subject to the time periods for adoption, amendment or repeal of regulations prescribed in Sections 11343.4, 11346.4 and 11346.8 of the Government Code. Any person interested may obtain a copy of said regulations prior to the date of adoption by contacting the agency representative named herein.

If the regulatory proposal is adopted, the final statement of reasons may be obtained from the address above when it has been received from the agency program staff.

Impact of Regulatory Action/Results of the Economic Impact Assessment

The potential for significant statewide adverse economic impacts that might result from the proposed regulatory action has been assessed, and the following initial determinations relative to the required statutory categories have been made:

- (a) Significant Statewide Adverse Economic Impact Directly Affecting Businesses, Including the Ability of California Businesses to Compete with Businesses in Other States:

The proposed action will not have a significant statewide adverse economic impact directly affecting business, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states.

The proposed regulations would provide additional recreational opportunity to the public and could result in minor increases in hunting days and hunter spending on equipment, fuel, food and accommodations.

- (b) Impact on the Creation or Elimination of Jobs Within the State, the Creation of New Businesses or the Elimination of Existing Businesses, or the Expansion of Businesses in California; Benefits of the Regulation to the Health and Welfare of California Residents, Worker Safety, and the State's Environment:

The Commission does not anticipate any impacts on the creation or elimination of jobs, the creation of new business, the elimination of existing businesses or the expansion of businesses in California. The proposed waterfowl regulations will set the 2018-19 waterfowl hunting season dates and bag limits within the federal Frameworks. Little to minor positive impacts to jobs and/or businesses that provide services to waterfowl hunters may result from the proposed regulations for the waterfowl hunting season in 2018-19.

The most recent U.S. Fish and Wildlife national survey of fishing, hunting, and wildlife associated recreation for California (2016 data has not been released as of October 2017), estimated that migratory bird hunters contributed about \$169,115,000 to businesses in California during the 2011 migratory bird hunting season. The impacted businesses are generally small businesses employing a few individuals and, like all small businesses, are subject to failure for a variety of causes. Additionally, the long-term intent of the proposed regulations is to sustainably manage waterfowl populations, and consequently, the long-term viability of these same small businesses.

The Commission anticipates benefits to the health and welfare of California residents. Hunting provides opportunities for multi-generational family activities and promotes respect for California's environment by the future stewards of the State's resources. The Commission anticipates benefits to the State's environment by the sustainable management of California's waterfowl resources. The Commission does not anticipate any impacts to worker safety because the proposed amendments will not affect working conditions.

- (c) Cost Impacts on a Representative Private Person or Business:

The Commission is not aware of any cost impacts that a representative private person or business would necessarily incur in reasonable compliance with the proposed action.

- (d) Costs or Savings to State Agencies or Costs/Savings in Federal Funding to the State: None.
- (e) Nondiscretionary Costs/Savings to Local Agencies: None.
- (f) Programs Mandated on Local Agencies or School Districts: None.
- (g) Costs Imposed on Any Local Agency or School District that is Required to be Reimbursed Under Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4, Government Code: None.
- (h) Effect on Housing Costs: None.

Effect on Small Business

It has been determined that the adoption of these regulations may affect small business. The Commission has drafted the regulations in Plain English pursuant to Government Code Sections 11342.580 and 11346.2(a)(1).

Consideration of Alternatives

The Commission must determine that no reasonable alternative considered by the Commission, or that has otherwise been identified and brought to the attention of the Commission, would be more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the action is proposed, would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons than the proposed action, or would be more cost effective to affected private persons and equally effective in implementing the statutory policy or other provision of law.

FISH AND GAME COMMISSION

Dated: December 26, 2017

Valerie Termini
Executive Director