

## STAFF SUMMARY FOR FEBRUARY 8-9, 2023

**12. WATERFOWL HUNTING****Today's Item****Information** ☒**Action** ☐

Discuss proposed changes to waterfowl hunting regulations.

**Summary of Previous/Future Actions**

- |                                        |                      |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Wildlife Resources Committee vetting | Sep 15, 2022         |
| • Notice hearing                       | Dec 14-15, 2022      |
| • <b>Today's discussion hearing</b>    | <b>Feb 8-9, 2023</b> |
| • Adoption hearing                     | Apr 19-20, 2023      |

**Background**

The Department proposes changes to migratory waterfowl regulations as described in the initial statement of reasons for regulatory changes (ISOR, Exhibit 2) to comply with the proposed frameworks for the 2023-2024 hunting seasons as approved by the Pacific Flyway Council in August 2022 and by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Regulation Committee in October 2022. USFWS is scheduled to adopt the proposed frameworks in February 2023.

Significant changes proposed by the Department include:

- increasing the duck season length to 103 days for the Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone, Southern California Zone, and Balance of State Zone;
- increasing the goose season length to 103 days for the Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone and the Southern California Zone;
- combining the Youth and Veterans and Active Military Personnel waterfowl hunting days for the Northeastern California Zone, Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone, Southern California Zone, and Balance of State Zone; and
- allowing up to two days of falconry-only season for Northeastern California Zone, Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone, Southern California Zone, and Balance of State Zone.

Today, the Department will present the rationale for combining the youth and military weekends and provide various options to reduce overcrowding.

**Significant Public Comments**

1. Several regional organizations and two county fish and game commissions recommend increasing hunting opportunities by splitting the North Coast Special Management Area goose season into fall (starting on the first Saturday in October) and later in the spring (starting 30 days before March 10), when the Aleutian goose population is more abundant and cause the most depredation challenges to landowners. A county fish and game commission also supports decreasing the hunt

## STAFF SUMMARY FOR FEBRUARY 8-9, 2023

days for western Canada geese late in the waterfowl season when geese are paired and particularly vulnerable to hunting. The letters are provided in Exhibit 5.

2. Safari Club International supports the Department's recommendations, but highlights possible diminished youth hunting opportunity through increased competition for the same resource due to the proposed combination of Youth and Veterans and Active Military Personnel waterfowl hunting days (Exhibit 6).
3. Three commenters support combining the youth and military waterfowl hunting days to reduce the season length and avoid the late season when waterfowl are more vulnerable. A sample is provided in Exhibit 7.
4. Ten commenters oppose combining youth and military waterfowl hunting days, citing concerns about youth having to compete with adults for the same resource, a reduction in the quality of hunting opportunity for youth and adults, and reduced drawing odds, especially for properties with disabled access. One commenter also suggests the definition of a junior hunter should be changed to no older than 16. (See Exhibit 8 for individual comments)

**Recommendation (N/A)****Exhibits**

1. [Department memo, received November 14, 2022](#)
2. [Economic and fiscal impact statement \(STD 399\)](#)
3. [ISOR and proposed regulatory language](#)
4. [Department presentation](#)
5. [Letters from the Aleutian Goose Working Group, Buckeye Conservancy, Del Norte County Farm Bureau, Del Norte County Fish and Game Advisory Commission, and Humboldt County Fish and Game Advisory Commission, received December 16-28, 2022](#)
6. [Letter from Sven Lindquist, President, Safari Club International, received December 26, 2022](#)
7. [Email from Mike Kerley, Kerley's Sporting Adventures, received January 25, 2023](#)
8. [Emails from ten individuals opposing combined youth and military hunts](#)

**Motion (N/A)**

## Memorandum

Date: November 8, 2022

Signed original on file,  
Received November 14, 2022

To: Melissa Miller-Henson  
Executive Director  
Fish and Game Commission

From: Charlton H. Bonham  
Director

Subject: **Agenda Item for the December Fish and Game Commission Meeting - Initial Statement of Reasons to Amend Subsection Section 502, Title 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR), Waterfowl, Migratory, American Coot and Common Moorhen**

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) requests that the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) authorize publishing notice of its intent to amend section 502 of Title 14, CCR. The Department is proposing the following changes to the existing waterfowl regulations for the 2023-24 season:

- 1) Increase the duck season length to 103 days in subsection 502(d)(2)(B) for the Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone, in subsection 502(d)(3)(B) for the Southern California Zone, and in subsection 502(d)(5)(B) for the Balance of State Zone.
- 2) Increase the goose season length to 103 days in subsection 502(d)(2)(B) for the Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone and in subsection 502(d)(3)(B) for the Southern California Zone.
- 3) Combine the Youth and Veterans and Active Military Personnel waterfowl hunting days in subsections 502(e)(1)(B) and 502(f)(1)(B) for the Northeastern California, Southern San Joaquin Valley, Southern California and Balance of State zones.
- 4) Allow up to two days of falconry-only season in subsection 502(g)(1)(B) for the Northeastern California, Southern San Joaquin Valley, Southern California and Balance of State zones.

If you have any questions regarding this item, please contact Scott Gardner, Wildlife Branch Chief, at (916) 801-6257. The public notice for this rulemaking should identify Senior Environmental Scientist, Melanie Weaver as the Department's point of contact. She can be reached at (916) 502-1139.

cc: Chad Dibble, Deputy Director  
Wildlife and Fisheries Division

Scott Gardner, Branch Chief  
Wildlife Branch  
Wildlife and Fisheries Division

Melissa Miller-Henson, Executive Director  
Fish and Game Commission  
November 8, 2022  
Page 2

Melanie Weaver, Waterfowl Coordinator  
Wildlife Branch  
Wildlife and Fisheries Division

Ona Alminas, Program Manager  
Regulations Unit  
Wildlife and Fisheries Division

Mike Randall, Analyst  
Regulations Unit  
Wildlife and Fisheries Division

Ari Cornman, Wildlife Advisor  
California Fish and Game Commission

David Thesell, Program Manager  
California Fish and Game Commission

Maurene Trotter, Analyst  
California Fish and Game Commission

**ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT**

DEPARTMENT NAME <b>Fish and Game Commission</b>	CONTACT PERSON <b>David Thesell</b>	EMAIL ADDRESS <b>fgc@fgc.ca.gov</b>	TELEPHONE NUMBER <b>916 902-9291</b>
DESCRIPTIVE TITLE FROM NOTICE REGISTER OR FORM 400 <b>Amend Sect. 502, Title 14, CCR re: Waterfowl, Migratory; American Coot and Common Moorhen</b>			NOTICE FILE NUMBER <b>Z</b>

**A. ESTIMATED PRIVATE SECTOR COST IMPACTS** *Include calculations and assumptions in the rulemaking record.*

1. Check the appropriate box(es) below to indicate whether this regulation:

<input type="checkbox"/> a. Impacts business and/or employees	<input type="checkbox"/> e. Imposes reporting requirements
<input type="checkbox"/> b. Impacts small businesses	<input type="checkbox"/> f. Imposes prescriptive instead of performance
<input type="checkbox"/> c. Impacts jobs or occupations	<input type="checkbox"/> g. Impacts individuals
<input type="checkbox"/> d. Impacts California competitiveness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> h. None of the above (Explain below):

**Annual conformance with Federal Regs introduces no cost impacts**

*If any box in Items 1 a through g is checked, complete this Economic Impact Statement.  
If box in Item 1.h. is checked, complete the Fiscal Impact Statement as appropriate.*

2. The \_\_\_\_\_ estimates that the economic impact of this regulation (which includes the fiscal impact) is:

(Agency/Department)

<input type="checkbox"/> Below \$10 million
<input type="checkbox"/> Between \$10 and \$25 million
<input type="checkbox"/> Between \$25 and \$50 million
<input type="checkbox"/> Over \$50 million <i>[If the economic impact is over \$50 million, agencies are required to submit a <a href="#">Standardized Regulatory Impact Assessment</a> as specified in Government Code Section 11346.3(c)]</i>

3. Enter the total number of businesses impacted: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the types of businesses (Include nonprofits): \_\_\_\_\_

Enter the number or percentage of total businesses impacted that are small businesses: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Enter the number of businesses that will be created: \_\_\_\_\_ eliminated: \_\_\_\_\_

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Indicate the geographic extent of impacts: ☐ Statewide

☐ Local or regional (List areas): \_\_\_\_\_

6. Enter the number of jobs created: \_\_\_\_\_ and eliminated: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the types of jobs or occupations impacted: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Will the regulation affect the ability of California businesses to compete with other states by making it more costly to produce goods or services here? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If YES, explain briefly: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**ECONOMIC AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
(REGULATIONS AND ORDERS)**

STD. 399 (Rev. 10/2019)

**ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT (CONTINUED)****B. ESTIMATED COSTS** *Include calculations and assumptions in the rulemaking record.*

1. What are the total statewide dollar costs that businesses and individuals may incur to comply with this regulation over its lifetime? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

a. Initial costs for a small business: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Annual ongoing costs: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Years: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Initial costs for a typical business: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Annual ongoing costs: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Years: \_\_\_\_\_

c. Initial costs for an individual: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Annual ongoing costs: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Years: \_\_\_\_\_

d. Describe other economic costs that may occur: \_\_\_\_\_

2. If multiple industries are impacted, enter the share of total costs for each industry: \_\_\_\_\_

3. If the regulation imposes reporting requirements, enter the annual costs a typical business may incur to comply with these requirements.  
*Include the dollar costs to do programming, record keeping, reporting, and other paperwork, whether or not the paperwork must be submitted.* \$ \_\_\_\_\_4. Will this regulation directly impact housing costs? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If YES, enter the annual dollar cost per housing unit: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Number of units: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are there comparable Federal regulations? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Explain the need for State regulation given the existence or absence of Federal regulations: \_\_\_\_\_

Enter any additional costs to businesses and/or individuals that may be due to State - Federal differences: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**C. ESTIMATED BENEFITS** *Estimation of the dollar value of benefits is not specifically required by rulemaking law, but encouraged.*

1. Briefly summarize the benefits of the regulation, which may include among others, the health and welfare of California residents, worker safety and the State's environment: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Are the benefits the result of: ☐ specific statutory requirements, or ☐ goals developed by the agency based on broad statutory authority?

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What are the total statewide benefits from this regulation over its lifetime? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

4. Briefly describe any expansion of businesses currently doing business within the State of California that would result from this regulation: \_\_\_\_\_

**D. ALTERNATIVES TO THE REGULATION** *Include calculations and assumptions in the rulemaking record. Estimation of the dollar value of benefits is not specifically required by rulemaking law, but encouraged.*

1. List alternatives considered and describe them below. If no alternatives were considered, explain why not: \_\_\_\_\_

**ECONOMIC AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
(REGULATIONS AND ORDERS)**

STD. 399 (Rev. 10/2019)

**ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT (CONTINUED)**

2. Summarize the total statewide costs and benefits from this regulation and each alternative considered:

Regulation: Benefit: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Alternative 1: Benefit: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Alternative 2: Benefit: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

3. Briefly discuss any quantification issues that are relevant to a comparison of estimated costs and benefits for this regulation or alternatives: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_4. Rulemaking law requires agencies to consider performance standards as an alternative, if a regulation mandates the use of specific technologies or equipment, or prescribes specific actions or procedures. Were performance standards considered to lower compliance costs? ☐ YES ☐ NOExplain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**E. MAJOR REGULATIONS** *Include calculations and assumptions in the rulemaking record.****California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) boards, offices and departments are required to submit the following (per Health and Safety Code section 57005). Otherwise, skip to E4.***1. Will the estimated costs of this regulation to California business enterprises **exceed \$10 million**? ☐ YES ☐ NO***If YES, complete E2. and E3******If NO, skip to E4***

2. Briefly describe each alternative, or combination of alternatives, for which a cost-effectiveness analysis was performed:

Alternative 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternative 2: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Attach additional pages for other alternatives)*

3. For the regulation, and each alternative just described, enter the estimated total cost and overall cost-effectiveness ratio:

Regulation: Total Cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Cost-effectiveness ratio: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Alternative 1: Total Cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Cost-effectiveness ratio: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Alternative 2: Total Cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Cost-effectiveness ratio: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

4. Will the regulation subject to OAL review have an estimated economic impact to business enterprises and individuals located in or doing business in California exceeding \$50 million in any 12-month period between the date the major regulation is estimated to be filed with the Secretary of State through 12 months after the major regulation is estimated to be fully implemented?

☐ YES ☐ NO*If YES, agencies are required to submit a [Standardized Regulatory Impact Assessment \(SRIA\)](#) as specified in Government Code Section 11346.3(c) and to include the SRIA in the Initial Statement of Reasons.*

5. Briefly describe the following:

The increase or decrease of investment in the State: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_The incentive for innovation in products, materials or processes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_The benefits of the regulations, including, but not limited to, benefits to the health, safety, and welfare of California residents, worker safety, and the state's environment and quality of life, among any other benefits identified by the agency: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**A. FISCAL EFFECT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT** *Indicate appropriate boxes 1 through 6 and attach calculations and assumptions of fiscal impact for the current year and two subsequent Fiscal Years.*

☐ 1. Additional expenditures in the current State Fiscal Year which are reimbursable by the State. (Approximate)  
(Pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution and Sections 17500 et seq. of the Government Code).

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ a. Funding provided in \_\_\_\_\_  
Budget Act of \_\_\_\_\_ or Chapter \_\_\_\_\_, Statutes of \_\_\_\_\_

☐ b. Funding will be requested in the Governor's Budget Act of \_\_\_\_\_  
Fiscal Year: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ 2. Additional expenditures in the current State Fiscal Year which are NOT reimbursable by the State. (Approximate)  
(Pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution and Sections 17500 et seq. of the Government Code).

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Check reason(s) this regulation is not reimbursable and provide the appropriate information:*

☐ a. Implements the Federal mandate contained in \_\_\_\_\_

☐ b. Implements the court mandate set forth by the \_\_\_\_\_ Court.

Case of: \_\_\_\_\_ vs. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ c. Implements a mandate of the people of this State expressed in their approval of Proposition No. \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Election: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ d. Issued only in response to a specific request from affected local entity(s).

Local entity(s) affected: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

☐ e. Will be fully financed from the fees, revenue, etc. from: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized by Section: \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ Code;

☐ f. Provides for savings to each affected unit of local government which will, at a minimum, offset any additional costs to each;

☐ g. Creates, eliminates, or changes the penalty for a new crime or infraction contained in \_\_\_\_\_

☐ 3. Annual Savings. (approximate)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ 4. No additional costs or savings. This regulation makes only technical, non-substantive or clarifying changes to current law regulations.

☒ 5. No fiscal impact exists. This regulation does not affect any local entity or program.

☐ 6. Other. Explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**ECONOMIC AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
(REGULATIONS AND ORDERS)**

STD. 399 (Rev. 10/2019)

**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT (CONTINUED)****B. FISCAL EFFECT ON STATE GOVERNMENT** *Indicate appropriate boxes 1 through 4 and attach calculations and assumptions of fiscal impact for the current year and two subsequent Fiscal Years.*☐ 1. Additional expenditures in the current State Fiscal Year. (Approximate)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

*It is anticipated that State agencies will:*☐ a. Absorb these additional costs within their existing budgets and resources.☐ b. Increase the currently authorized budget level for the \_\_\_\_\_ Fiscal Year☐ 2. Savings in the current State Fiscal Year. (Approximate)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

☒ 3. No fiscal impact exists. This regulation does not affect any State agency or program.☐ 4. Other. Explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**C. FISCAL EFFECT ON FEDERAL FUNDING OF STATE PROGRAMS** *Indicate appropriate boxes 1 through 4 and attach calculations and assumptions of fiscal impact for the current year and two subsequent Fiscal Years.*☐ 1. Additional expenditures in the current State Fiscal Year. (Approximate)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ 2. Savings in the current State Fiscal Year. (Approximate)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

☒ 3. No fiscal impact exists. This regulation does not affect any federally funded State agency or program.☐ 4. Other. Explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

FISCAL OFFICER SIGNATURE

DocuSigned by:  
  
6558B764C2D347D

DATE

11/9/2022

*The signature attests that the agency has completed the STD. 399 according to the instructions in SAM sections 6601-6616, and understands the impacts of the proposed rulemaking. State boards, offices, or departments not under an Agency Secretary must have the form signed by the highest ranking official in the organization.*

AGENCY SECRETARY

DocuSigned by:  
   
2405D99A8F5A48B

1/4/2023

DATE

12/5/2022

*Finance approval and signature is required when SAM sections 6601-6616 require completion of Fiscal Impact Statement in the STD. 399.*

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE PROGRAM BUDGET MANAGER



DATE

State of California  
Fish and Game Commission  
Initial Statement of Reasons for Regulatory Action

Amend Section 502  
Title 14, California Code of Regulations  
Re: Waterfowl, Migratory; American Coot and Common Moorhen (Common Gallinule)

I. Date of Initial Statement of Reasons: November 8, 2022

II. Dates and Locations of Scheduled Hearings

(a) Notice Hearing

Date: December 15, 2022

Location: San Diego, CA

(b) Discussion Hearing

Date: February 8, 2023

Location: Sacramento, CA

(c) Adoption Hearing

Date: April 19, 2023

Location: Fresno/Bakersfield, CA

III. Description of Regulatory Action

(a) Statement of Specific Purpose of Regulatory Change and Factual Basis for Determining that Regulation Change is Reasonably Necessary

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) annually establishes federal regulation frameworks (Frameworks) for migratory bird hunting. California shall set its waterfowl hunting regulations within the Frameworks. The Frameworks describe the earliest dates that waterfowl hunting seasons may open, the maximum number of days hunting can occur, the latest dates that hunting seasons must close, and the maximum daily bag limit. The proposed hunting season Frameworks for a given year are developed in the fall of the prior year for a majority of species and populations. For example, the breeding populations (including the California Breeding Population Survey) and habitat conditions observed in 2022 and the regulatory alternatives selected for the 2022 hunting season will be used to develop the Frameworks for the 2023-24 season.

States may make recommendations to change the Frameworks. These recommendations are made to the four regional Flyway councils in late summer (July, August or September). Flyway councils may elect to forward recommendations to the Service. The Service may elect to incorporate proposed changes in the Frameworks. The Service considers these and other recommendations at the Service's Regulation Committee public meeting held in September or October. Proposed season Frameworks are typically published in the Federal Register by mid-December and final Frameworks published by late February.

Section 355 of the Fish and Game Code authorizes the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) to adopt annual regulations pertaining to the hunting of migratory birds that conform with or further restrict the regulations prescribed by the Service pursuant to its

authority under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The Commission selects and establishes state regulations that specify hunting season dates and daily bag limits.

Current regulations in Section 502, Title 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR), provide definitions, hunting zone descriptions, season opening and closing dates, and daily bag and possession limits for hunting of waterfowl. The proposed Frameworks for the 2023-24 season were approved by the Flyway councils in August and at the Service's Regulations Committee meeting in October. The Frameworks allow for a liberal duck season which includes: a 107-day season; a 7 daily duck limit including 7 mallards but only 2 hen mallards, 1 pintail, 2 canvasback, 2 redheads, and 2 scaup (during an 86-day season); and closing no later than January 31. The duck daily bag limits and season length, as well as the season lengths for geese, are provided as ranges below, to allow the Commission flexibility in determining the final regulations.

A range of season length and bag limit (zero bag limit represents a closed season) are also provided for black brant. The range is necessary, as the black brant Framework cannot be determined until the Pacific Flyway Winter Brant Survey is conducted in January 2023. The black brant regulatory package is determined by the most current Winter Brant Survey, rather than the prior year survey. The proposed season length and bag limit will be updated per the Black Brant Harvest Strategy pending results of the January 2023 survey. See the Summary of Proposed Waterfowl Hunting Regulations for 2023-24 table in the Informative Digest/Policy Statement Overview for the range of season and bag limits.

Lastly, federal regulations provide that California's hunting regulations shall conform to those of Arizona in the Colorado River Zone and those of Oregon in the North Coast Special Management Area.

The Department-recommended changes to Section 502 are:

- 1) Increase the duck season length to 103 days in subsection 502(d)(2)(B) for the Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone, in subsection 502(d)(3)(B) for the Southern California Zone, and in subsection 502(d)(5)(B) for the Balance of State Zone.

The existing duck season length for the referenced zones is 102 days. Closing on January 31 and maintaining a traditional opening Saturday in late October results in an annual adjustment to the season length; from 102 to 103 days for the upcoming season. In prior rulemakings, the Commission adopted the latest possible closing date of January 31 rather than the historical closing day of the last Sunday in January. This annual adjustment also results in modifications to falconry-only seasons; no days would be available for the upcoming season if items 3 and 4 are not approved.

- 2) Increase the goose season length to 103 days in subsection 502(d)(2)(B) for the Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone and in subsection 502(d)(3)(B) for the Southern California Zone.

The existing goose season length for the referenced zones is 102 days. See item 1 above for the justification. This annual adjustment also results in modifications to falconry-only seasons; no days would be available for the upcoming season if items 3 and 4 are not approved.

- 3) Combine the Youth and Veterans and Active Military Personnel waterfowl hunting days in

subsections 502(e)(1)(B) and 502(f)(1)(B) for the Northeastern California, Southern San Joaquin Valley, Southern California and Balance of State zones.

The existing season dates for the Youth and Veteran and Active Military Personnel waterfowl hunting days for the referenced zone occur on separate weekends. Participation on these special hunt days tend to be low in all zones, based on public area hunt results. Given the low turnout, hunting areas will be able to accommodate both groups on the same weekend. In addition, goose hunting is closed during the Veteran Hunt Days in the Northeastern and Balance of State zones in existing regulations because all 107 days of goose hunting were allocated prior to the creation of this special hunt. Combining the Youth and Veteran special hunt days would promote more efficient operations on hunt areas, provide additional sanctuary prior to migration to northern breeding grounds, and allow Veteran and Active Military hunt participants the opportunity to hunt geese in addition to ducks in the Northeastern and Balance of State zones. Lastly, combining the special hunt days would free up two hunt days to be used for falconry-only season (see item 4).

- 4) Allow up to two days of falconry-only season in subsection 502(g)(1)(B) for the Northeastern California, Southern San Joaquin Valley, Southern California and Balance of State zones.

The existing regulation does not allow a falconry-only season because all available hunting days have been allocated. The length of the falconry-only season is contingent upon the number of days used for the general duck and goose seasons, in addition to the Youth and Veteran Hunt Days, as seasons cannot exceed 107 days. Combining the Youth and Veteran Hunt Days (see item 3) frees up two hunt days.

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

(b) Goals and Benefits of the Regulation

The goals and benefits of the regulations are to provide for the conservation and maintenance of sufficient waterfowl populations to ensure their continued existence, while providing for balanced hunting opportunity, consistent with Commission and Department policies.

(c) Authority and Reference Sections from Fish and Game Code for Regulation

Authority: Section(s) 265 and 355, Fish and Game Code

Reference: Section(s) 265, 355, and 356, Fish and Game Code

(d) Specific Technology or Equipment Required by Regulatory Change: None.

(e) Identification of Reports or Documents Supporting Regulation Change: None.

(f) Public Discussions of Proposed Regulations Prior to Notice Publication

This proposal was discussed at the Commission's Wildlife Resources Committee (WRC) meeting held on September 15, 2022, and a public scoping session will be held in late November 2022.

#### IV. Description of Reasonable Alternatives to Regulatory Action

##### (a) Alternatives to Regulation Change

No alternatives identified.

##### (b) No Change Alternative

The No Change Alternative would retain the 2022-23 regulations for the 2023-24 season which may place the state out of compliance with federal regulations. This alternative was rejected because in prior rulemakings, the Commission preferred the latest possible closing date of January 31 and maintaining a traditional opening Saturday in late October. This results in an annual adjustment to the season length; 103 days rather than 102 days for the 2023-24 season because of calendar progression. In addition, modifying the season length affects available days for falconry seasons, and must also be adjusted annually so as not to exceed 107 days.

#### V. Mitigation Measures Required by Regulatory Action

The proposed regulatory action will have no negative impact on the environment; therefore, no mitigation measures are needed.

#### VI. Impact of Regulatory Action

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 are expected to maintain a similar level of recreational waterfowl hunting opportunity for the public. Shifting days for general duck season affects available days for falconry-only seasons, which must also be adjusted annually so total season length does not exceed 107 days.

##### (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 2023-24 waterfowl hunting season dates and bag limits within the federal Frameworks. A total hunting season length of 107 days and shifts in days amongst the season types suggest that the number of hunter-days remains similar to that in previous years, with little to no impacts to jobs and/or

businesses that provide services to waterfowl hunters. The Commission anticipates that the proposed 2023-24 waterfowl hunting regulations provide benefit for the health and welfare of California residents by providing opportunity for outdoor activity. The Commission expects no benefits to worker safety but does expect benefit to the environment in that setting these regulations facilitates maintenance of sufficient waterfowl populations and their habitats while providing for the public's beneficial use and enjoyment. The most recent Service National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation for California estimated that migratory bird hunters contributed about \$169 million to the state economy during the 2011 migratory bird hunting season. However, minor variations in hunting regulations such as the ones proposed for waterfowl are, by themselves, unlikely to provide notable economic stimulus to the state. Businesses that support waterfowl hunting are generally small businesses employing a few individuals and, like all small businesses, are subject to failure for a variety of causes. The long-term intent of the proposed regulations is to sustainably manage waterfowl populations, and consequently, the long-term viability of the same small businesses.

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

The agency 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.

VII. Economic Impact Assessment

(a) Effects of the Regulation on the Creation or Elimination of Jobs Within the State

The proposed conformance to federal regulations is expected to maintain similar levels of hunting opportunity and activity as previous seasons such that little to no net impacts on the creation or elimination of jobs are anticipated within the state from the adoption of the proposed waterfowl hunting regulations for the 2023-24 season. The most recent Service National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation for California estimated that waterfowl hunters contributed about \$169,115,000 to businesses in California during the 2011 waterfowl hunting season. The proposed regulations in themselves should not affect the typical level of waterfowl hunting expenditures. Businesses within the state that provide goods and services to waterfowl hunters are generally small businesses employing few individuals and, like all small businesses, are subject to failure for a variety of causes. The long-term intent of the proposed regulations is to sustainably manage waterfowl populations, and consequently, the long-term viability of the same small businesses.

The 2011 National Survey is posted on the U.S. Census Bureau website

<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2014/demo/fhw11-nat.pdf>

and the 2011 National Survey of Fishing and Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation Report for California can be found at <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/fhwar/publications/2011/fhw11-ca.pdf>.

(b) Effects of the Regulation on the Creation of New Businesses or the Elimination of Existing Businesses Within the State

The proposed regulation is not anticipated to prompt the creation of new businesses or the elimination of existing businesses within the state. Minor variations in regulations pertaining to hunting are, by themselves, unlikely to stimulate the creation of new businesses or cause the elimination of existing businesses. The number of hunting trips and the economic contributions from the trips are not expected to change substantially.

(c) Effects of the Regulation on the Expansion of Businesses Currently Doing Business Within the State

The proposed minor variations in season lengths are, by themselves, unlikely to stimulate substantial expansion of businesses currently doing business in the state. The long-term intent of the proposed regulations is to sustainably manage waterfowl populations, and consequently, the long-term viability of various businesses that serve recreational waterfowl hunters.

(d) Benefits of the Regulation to the Health and Welfare of California Residents

Hunting is an outdoor activity that can provide several health and welfare benefits to California residents. Hunters and their families benefit from fresh game to eat, and from the benefits of outdoor recreation, including exercise. People who hunt have a special connection with the outdoors and an awareness of the relationships between wildlife, habitat and humans. With that awareness comes an understanding of the role humans play in being caretakers of the environment. Hunting is a tradition that is often passed from one generation to the next, creating a special bond between family members and friends.

(e) Benefits of the Regulation to Worker Safety

The regulations will not affect worker safety because they do not address working conditions.

(f) Benefits of the Regulation to the State's Environment

As set forth in Fish and Game Code Section 1801, it is the policy of the state to encourage the preservation, conservation, and maintenance of waterfowl resources for all citizens of the state. The objectives of this policy include, but are not limited to, maintenance of sufficient populations and their habitats, provide for beneficial use and enjoyment, to perpetuate the waterfowl resource for their intrinsic and ecological values, and to maintain diversified recreation use including sport hunting consistent with the status of this resource. Adoption of scientifically based waterfowl hunting regulations provides for the maintenance of sufficient waterfowl populations to ensure these objectives are met. Further, the fees that hunters pay for licenses and stamps fund wildlife conservation.

(g) Other Benefits of the Regulation

Hunting seasons provide an incentive for private landowners to maintain waterfowl habitat, mainly wetlands, that benefit waterfowl and other wetland dependent wildlife.

## **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 daily bag and possession limits for hunting of waterfowl. The proposed Frameworks for the 2023-24 season were approved by the four regional Flyway councils in August and at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service's) Regulations Committee meeting in October. The Frameworks allow for a liberal duck season which includes: a 107-day season; a 7 daily duck limit including 7 mallards but only 2 hen mallards, 1 pintail, 2 canvasback, 2 redheads, and 2 scaup (during an 86-day season); and closing no later than January 31. The duck daily bag limits and season length, as well as the season lengths for geese, are provided as ranges below, to allow the Commission flexibility in determining the final regulations.

A range of season length and bag limit (zero bag limit represents a closed season) are also provided for black brant. The range is necessary, as the black brant Framework cannot be determined until the Pacific Flyway Winter Brant Survey is conducted in January 2023. The black brant regulatory package is determined by the most current Winter Brant Survey, rather than the prior year survey. The proposed season length and bag limit will be updated per the Black Brant Harvest Strategy pending results of the January 2023 survey. See the Summary of Proposed Waterfowl Hunting Regulations for 2023-24 table, below.

Lastly, Federal regulations provide that California's hunting regulations shall conform to those of Arizona in the Colorado River Zone and those of Oregon in the North Coast Special Management Area.

The Department recommended changes to Section 502 are:

- 1) Increase the duck season length to 103 days in subsection 502(d)(2)(B) for the Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone, in subsection 502(d)(3)(B) for the Southern California Zone, and in subsection 502(d)(5)(B) for the Balance of State Zone.
- 2) Increase the goose season length to 103 days in subsection 502(d)(2)(B) for the Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone and in subsection 502(d)(3)(B) for the Southern California Zone.
- 3) Combine the Youth and Veterans and Active Military Personnel waterfowl hunting days in subsections 502(e)(1)(B) and 502(f)(1)(B) for the Northeastern California, Southern San Joaquin Valley, Southern California and Balance of State zones.
- 4) Allow up to two days of falconry-only season in subsection 502(g)(1)(B) for the Northeastern California, Southern San Joaquin Valley, Southern California and Balance of State zones.

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

### **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. Continued benefits to jobs and/or businesses

that provide services to waterfowl hunters will be realized with the continued adoption of waterfowl hunting seasons in 2023-24.

#### 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 2023-24

AREA	SPECIES	SEASONS	DAILY BAG & POSSESSION LIMITS
Statewide	Coots & Moorhens (Gallinules)	Concurrent w/duck season	25/day. 75 in possession
Northeastern Zone	Ducks	No longer than 103 days	[4-7]/day, which may include: [3-7] mallards no more than [1-2] females. 1 pintail, 2 canvasback, 2 redheads. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Northeastern Zone <i>Season may be split for Scaup</i>	Scaup	No longer than 86 days	2 scaup. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Northeastern Zone <i>Season may be split for Dark and White geese</i>	Geese	No longer than 105 days except for Canada geese which cannot exceed 100 days or beyond Jan 14	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	Ducks	No longer than 103 days	[4-7]/day, which may include: [3-7] mallards no more than [1-2] females. 1 pintail, 2 canvasback, 2 redheads. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone <i>Season may be split for Scaup</i>	Scaup	No longer than 86 days	2 scaup. Possession limit triple the daily bag.

AREA	SPECIES	SEASONS	DAILY BAG & POSSESSION LIMITS
Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone	Geese	No longer than 103 days	30/day, which may include: 20 white geese, 10 dark geese. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Southern California Zone	Ducks	No longer than 103 days	[4-7]/day, which may include: [3-7] mallards no more than [1-2] females. 1 pintail, 2 canvasback, 2 redheads. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Southern California Zone <i>Season may be split for Scaup</i>	Scaup	No longer than 86 days	2 scaup. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Southern California Zone	Geese	No longer than 103 days	23/day, which may include: 20 white geese, 3 dark geese. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Colorado River Zone	Ducks	No longer than 101 days	7/day, which may include: 7 mallards no more than 2 females or Mexican ducks. 1 pintail, 2 canvasback, 2 redheads. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Colorado River Zone <i>Season may be split for Scaup</i>	Scaup	No longer than 86 days	2 scaup. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Colorado River Zone	Geese	No longer than 101 days	24/day, up to 20 white geese, up to 4 dark geese. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Balance of State Zone	Ducks	No longer than 103 days	[4-7]/day, which may include: [3-7] mallards no more than [1-2] females. 1 pintail, 2 canvasback, 2 redheads. Possession limit triple the daily bag.

AREA	SPECIES	SEASONS	DAILY BAG & POSSESSION LIMITS
Balance of State Zone <i>Season may be split for Scaup</i>	Scaup	No longer than 86 days	2 scaup. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Balance of State Zone <i>Season may be split for Dark and White Geese.</i>	Geese	Early Season: 3 days (Canada goose only) Regular Season: no longer than 100 days Late Season: Canada geese 2 days and white-fronted and white geese 5 days	30/day, which may include: 20 white geese, 10 dark geese. Possession limit triple the daily bag.

#### SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS

AREA	SPECIES	SEASON	DAILY BAG & POSSESSION LIMITS
North Coast <i>Season may be split</i>	All Canada Geese	No longer than 105 days except for Large Canada geese which cannot exceed 100 days or extend beyond the last Sunday in Jan	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	Dark and white geese	105 days except for Canada geese which cannot exceed 100 days or extend beyond Jan 14	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	No longer than 37 days and closing no later than Dec 14.	[0-2]/day. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Balance of State Brant	Black Brant	No longer than 37 days and closing no later than Dec 15.	[0-2]/day. Possession limit triple the daily bag.

AREA	SPECIES	SEASON	DAILY BAG & POSSESSION LIMITS
Imperial County <i>Season may be split</i>	White Geese	No longer than 105 days	20/day. Possession limit triple the daily bag.

YOUTH WATERFOWL HUNTING DAYS (NOTE: To participate in these Youth Waterfowl Hunts, youth must be accompanied by a non-hunting adult 18 years of age or older. Federal regulations require that hunters must be 17 years of age or younger.)

AREA	SPECIES	SEASON	DAILY BAG & POSSESSION LIMITS
Northeastern Zone	Same as regular season	No longer than 2 days occurring fourteen days before the opening of waterfowl season or after the duck season.	Same as regular season
Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone	Same as regular season	The first Saturday in February extending for 2 days.	Same as regular season
Southern California Zone	Same as regular season	The first Saturday in February extending for 2 days.	Same as regular season
Colorado River Zone	Same as regular season	The first Saturday in February extending for 2 days.	Same as regular season
Balance of State Zone	Same as regular season	The first Saturday in February extending for 2 days.	Same as regular season

Veterans and Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Days (NOTE: Veterans (as defined in Section 101 of Title 38, United States Code) and members of the Armed Forces on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves on active duty (other than training), may participate.

AREA	SPECIES	SEASON	DAILY BAG & POSSESSION LIMITS
Northeastern Zone	Ducks, Coots, and Moorhens, [Geese]	No longer than 2 days.	Same as regular season
Balance of State Zone	Ducks, Coots, and Moorhens	No longer than 2 days.	Same as regular season
Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone	Same as regular season	No longer than 2 days.	Same as regular season

AREA	SPECIES	SEASON	DAILY BAG & POSSESSION LIMITS
Southern California Zone	Same as regular season	No longer than 2 days.	Same as regular season

#### FALCONRY

AREA	SPECIES	SEASON	DAILY BAG & POSSESSION LIMITS
Northeastern Zone	Same as regular season	No longer than 107 days.	3/day. Possession limit 9
Balance of State Zone	Same as regular season	No longer than 107 days.	3/day. Possession limit 9
Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone	Ducks, Coots, and Moorhens	No longer than 107 days.	3/day. Possession limit 9
Southern California Zone	Same as regular season	No longer than 107 days.	3/day. Possession limit 9
Colorado River Zone	Ducks, Coots, and Moorhens	No longer than 107 days.	3/day. Possession limit 9

# Proposed Regulatory Language

Section 502, Title 14 CCR, is amended to read:

## **§502. Waterfowl, Migratory; American Coot and Common Moorhen (Common Gallinule).**

*[No changes to subsections (a) through (b)]*

(c) Seasons and Bag and Possession Limits for American Coots, and Common Moorhens.

(1) Statewide Provisions.

<i>(A) Species</i>	<i>(B) Season</i>	<i>(C) Daily Bag and Possession Limits</i>
American Coot and Common Moorhen	Concurrent with duck season(s)	Daily bag limit: 25, either all of one species or a mixture of these species.  Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.

(d) Seasons and Bag and Possession Limits for Ducks and Geese by Zone.

(1) Northeastern California Zone (NOTE: SEE SUBSECTION 502(d)(6) BELOW FOR SPECIAL SEASONS AND CLOSURES.)

<i>(A) Species</i>	<i>(B) Season</i>	<i>(C) Daily Bag and Possession Limits</i>
Ducks (including Merganser s)	<del>From the first Saturday in October extending for 103 days.</del> <del>Scaup: from the first Saturday in October extending for a period of 58 days and from the third Thursday in December extending for a period of 28 days.</del> <u>[Opening no earlier than the first Saturday in October and closing no later than January 31. Season may be split into two segments and no longer than 103 days except for scaup season can be no longer than 86 days.]</u>	Daily bag limit: <del>7</del> <u>[4-7]</u> Daily bag limit may include: • <del>7</del> <u>[3-7]</u> mallards, but not more than <del>2</del> <u>[1-2]</u> females. • 1 pintail (either sex). • 2 canvasback (either sex). • 2 redheads (either sex). • 2 scaup (either sex).  Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.

(A) Species	(B) Season	(C) Daily Bag and Possession Limits
Geese	<p>Regular Season:  <del>Small and Large Canada Geese: from the first Saturday in October extending for 100 days.</del>  <u>[Opening no earlier than the first Saturday in October and closing no later than January 14. Season will be no longer than 100 days.]</u></p> <p>White-fronted and white geese <del>from the first Saturday in October extending for a period of 58 days and from the last Saturday in December extending for a period of 14 days.</del>  <u>[Opening no earlier than the first Saturday in October and closing no later than January 31. Season may be split into two segments and no longer than 100 days.]</u></p> <p>Late Season: <del>White-fronted and white geese from February 6 extending for 33 days.</del>  <u>[Season will be no longer than 38 days and closing no later than March 10.]</u></p> <p>During the Late Season, hunting is only permitted on Type C wildlife areas listed in sections 550-552, navigable waters, and private lands with the permission of the landowner under provisions of Section 2016, Fish and Game Code.</p> <p>Hunting is prohibited on Type A and Type B wildlife areas, the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge Complex, the Modoc National Wildlife Refuge, and any waters which are on, encompassed by, bounded over, flow over, flow through, or are adjacent to any Type A and Type B wildlife areas, the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge Complex, or the Modoc National Wildlife Refuge.</p>	<p>Daily bag limit: 30  Daily bag limit may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 white geese.</li> <li>• 10 dark geese but not more than 2 Large Canada geese (see definitions: 502(a)).</li> </ul> <p>Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.</p>

(2) Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone (NOTE: SEE SUBSECTION 502(d)(6) BELOW FOR SPECIAL SEASONS AND CLOSURES.)

(A) Species	(B) Season	(C) Daily Bag and Possession Limits
Ducks (including Mergansers)	<del>From the fourth Saturday in October extending for 102 days.</del> Scaup: from November 7 extending for 86 days. <u>[Opening no earlier than the third Saturday in October and closing no later than January 31. Season may be split into two segments and no longer than 103 days except for scaup season can be no longer than 86 days.]</u>	Daily bag limit: <del>7</del> <u>[4-7]</u> Daily bag limit may include: • <del>7</del> <u>[3-7]</u> mallards, but not more than 2 <u>[1-2]</u> females. • 1 pintail (either sex). • 2 canvasback (either sex). • 2 redheads (either sex). • 2 scaup (either sex).  Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.
Geese	<del>From the fourth Saturday in October extending for 102 days.</del> <u>[Opening no earlier than the third Saturday in October and closing no later than January 31. Season will be no longer than 103 days.]</u>	Daily bag limit: 30 Daily bag limit may include: • 20 white geese. • 10 dark geese (see definitions: 502(a)).  Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.

(3) Southern California Zone (NOTE: SEE SUBSECTION 502(d)(6) BELOW FOR SPECIAL SEASONS AND CLOSURES.)

(A) Species	(B) Season	(C) Daily Bag and Possession Limits
Ducks (including Mergansers)	<del>From the fourth Saturday in October extending for 102 days.</del> Scaup: from November 7 extending for 86 days. <u>[Opening no earlier than the third Saturday in October and closing no later than January 31. Season may be split into two segments and no longer than 103 days except for scaup season can be no longer than 86 days.]</u>	Daily bag limit: <del>7</del> <u>[4-7]</u> Daily bag limit may include: • <del>7</del> <u>[3-7]</u> mallards, but not more than 2 <u>[1-2]</u> females. • 1 pintail (either sex). • 2 canvasback (either sex). • 2 redheads (either sex). • 2 scaup (either sex).  Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.

<i>(A) Species</i>	<i>(B) Season</i>	<i>(C) Daily Bag and Possession Limits</i>
Geese	<del>From the fourth Saturday in October extending for 102 days.</del> <u>[Opening no earlier than the third Saturday in October and closing no later than January 31. Season will be no longer than 103 days.]</u>	Daily bag limit: 23 Daily bag limit may include: • 20 white geese. • 3 dark geese (see definitions: 502(a)).  Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.

(4) Colorado River Zone (NOTE: SEE SUBSECTION 502(d)(6) BELOW FOR SPECIAL SEASONS AND CLOSURES.)

<i>(A) Species</i>	<i>(B) Season</i>	<i>(C) Daily Bag and Possession Limits</i>
Ducks (including Mergansers).	<del>From October 23 extending for 101 days.</del> <u>[No longer than 101 days].</u>  <del>Scaup: from November extending for 86 days.</del> <u>[No longer than 86 days].</u>	Daily bag limit: 7 Daily bag limit may include: • 7 mallards, but not more than 2 females or Mexican-like ducks. • 1 pintail (either sex). • 2 canvasback (either sex). • 2 redheads (either sex). • 2 scaup (either sex).  Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.
Geese	<del>From October 23 extending for 101 days.</del> <u>[No longer than 101 days].</u>	Daily bag limit: 24 Daily bag limit may include: • 20 white geese. • 4 dark geese (see definitions: 502(a)).  Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.

(5) Balance of State Zone (NOTE: SEE SUBSECTION 502(d)(6) BELOW FOR SPECIAL SEASONS AND CLOSURES.)

<i>(A) Species</i>	<i>(B) Season</i>	<i>(C) Daily Bag and Possession Limits</i>
Ducks (including Mergansers).	<p><del>From the fourth Saturday in October extending for 102 days.</del></p> <p><del>Scaup: from November 7 extending for 86 days.</del></p> <p><u>[Opening no earlier than the third Saturday in October and closing no later than January 31. Season may be split into two segments and no longer than 103 days except for scaup season can be no longer than 86 days.]</u></p>	<p>Daily bag limit: <del>7</del><u>[4-7]</u></p> <p>Daily bag limit may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del>7</del><u>[3-7]</u> mallards, but not more than 2 <u>[1-2]</u> females.</li> <li>• 1 pintail (either sex).</li> <li>• 2 canvasback (either sex).</li> <li>• 2 redheads (either sex).</li> <li>• 2 scaup (either sex).</li> </ul> <p>Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.</p>

(A) Species	(B) Season	(C) Daily Bag and Possession Limits
Geese	<p>Early Season: Large Canada geese only from the Saturday closest to October 1 for a period of 3 days EXCEPT in the North Coast Special Management Area where Large Canada geese are closed during the early season.</p> <p>Regular Season: Dark and white geese <u>opening no earlier than the third Saturday in October and closing no later than January 31.</u> <del>Season will be no longer than 100 days] from the fourth Saturday in October extending for 100 days</del> EXCEPT in the Sacramento Valley Special Management Area where the white-fronted goose season will close after December 21.</p> <p>Late Season: Canada geese from <u>opening after January 31 and closing no later than March 10.</u> <del>Season will be no longer than 2 days] the third Saturday in February extending for 2 days.</del></p> <p>White-fronted and white geese from <u>opening after January 31 and closing no later than March 10.</u> <del>Season will be no longer than 5 days] the third Saturday in February extending for a period of 5 days</del> EXCEPT in the Sacramento Valley Special Management Area where the white-fronted goose season is closed. During the Late Season, hunting is not permitted on wildlife areas listed in sections 550-552 EXCEPT on Type C wildlife areas in the North Central and Central regions.</p>	<p>Daily bag limit: 30 Daily bag limit may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 white geese.</li> <li>• 10 dark geese EXCEPT in the Sacramento Valley Special Management Area where only 3 may be white-fronted geese (see definitions: 502(a)).</li> </ul> <p>Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.</p>

(6) Special Management Areas (see descriptions in 502(b)(6))

	(A) Species	(B) Season	(C) Daily Bag and Possession Limits
1. North Coast	All Canada Geese	<del>From November 9 extending for a period of 84 days (Regular Season) and from February 18 extending for a period of 24 days (Late Season).</del> <u>[Season may be split and closing no later than March 10. Season will be no longer than 105 days.]</u> During the Late Season, hunting is only permitted on private lands with the permission of the landowner under provisions Section 2016, Fish and Game Code.	Daily bag limit: 10 Canada Geese of which only 1 may be a Large Canada goose (see definitions: 502(a)), EXCEPT during the Late Season, the bag limit on Large Canada geese is zero.  Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.
2. Humboldt Bay South Spit (West Side)	All Species	Closed during brant season	
3. Klamath Basin	Geese	<del>Small and Large Canada Geese</del> <u>[opening no earlier than the first Saturday in October and closing no later than January 14. Season will be no longer than 100 days]</u> <del>from the first Saturday in October extending for 100 days.</del>  White-fronted and white geese <u>[opening no earlier than the first Saturday in October and closing no later than January 31. Season will be no longer than 105 days]</u> <del>from the first Saturday in October extending for 105 days.</del>	Daily bag limit: 30 Daily bag limit may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 white geese.</li> <li>• 10 dark geese but not more than 2 Large Canada geese (see definitions: 502(a)).</li> </ul> Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.

	<i>(A) Species</i>	<i>(B) Season</i>	<i>(C) Daily Bag and Possession Limits</i>
4. Sacramento Valley	White-Fronted Geese	Open concurrently with the goose season through December 21, and during Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days.	Daily bag limit: 3 white-fronted geese.  Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.
5. Morro Bay	All species	Open in designated area only from the opening day of brant season through the remainder of waterfowl season.	
6. Martis Creek Lake	All species	Closed until November 16.	
7. Northern Brant	Black Brant	<del>From November 8 extending for 37 days.</del> <u>[Season will be between 0 and 37 days, closing no later than December 14.]</u>	Daily bag limit: 2 <u>[0-2]</u>  Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.
8. Balance of State Brant	Black Brant	<del>From November 9 extending for 37 days.</del> <u>[Season will be between 0 and 37 days, closing no later than December 15.]</u>	Daily bag limit: 2 <u>[0-2]</u>  Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.
9. Imperial County	White Geese	<del>From November 5 extending for a period of 88 days (Regular Season) and February 1-3, 2023, February 6-10, 2023 and February 13-21, 2023 (Late Season).</del> <u>[Season may be split and closing no later than March 10. Season will be no longer than 105 days.]</u> During the Late Season, hunting is only permitted on private lands with the permission of the landowner under provisions of Section 2016, Fish and Game Code.	Daily bag limit: 20  Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.

(e) Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days Regulations (NOTE: To participate in these Youth Waterfowl Hunts, youth must be accompanied by a non-hunting adult 18 years of age or older. Federal regulations require that hunters must be 17 years of age or younger.)

(1) Statewide Provisions.

<i>(A) Species</i>	<i>(B) Season</i>	<i>(C) Daily Bag Limit</i>
Ducks (including Mergansers), American Coot, Common Moorhen, Black Brant, Geese	<p>1. Northeastern California Zone: <del>The Saturday fourteen days before the opening of waterfowl season extending for 2 days.</del> <u>[No longer than 2 days, occurring fourteen days before the opening of waterfowl season or after the duck season.]</u></p> <p>2. Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone: The first Saturday in February extending for 2 days.</p> <p>3. Southern California Zone: The first Saturday in February extending for 2 days.</p> <p>4. Colorado River Zone: The Saturday following the closing of waterfowl season extending for 2 days.</p> <p>5. Balance of State Zone: The first Saturday in February extending for 2 days.</p>	Same as regular season.

(f) Veterans and Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Days Regulations.  
 NOTE: Veterans (as defined in Section 101 of Title 38, United States Code) and members of the Armed Forces on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves on active duty (other than training), may participate. Persons participating in this special hunt must possess and present upon demand verification of eligibility to participate in this hunt. Verification includes: Veteran's ID Card, or Military ID Card for active duty, or a State-issued driver's license or Identification Card with Veteran Designation.

(1) Statewide Provisions.

(A) Species	(B) Season	(C) Daily Bag Limit
Ducks (including Mergansers), Geese, American Coot, Common Moorhen	<p>1. Northeastern California Zone: <del>The Saturday following the closing of the regular duck season extending for 2 days.</del> <u>[No longer than 2 days, occurring fourteen days before the opening of waterfowl season or after the duck season.]</u> Goose hunting in this zone is not permitted during these days.</p> <p>2. Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone: <del>The second Saturday in February extending for 2 days.</del> <u>[No longer than 2 days.]</u></p> <p>3. Southern California Zone: <del>The second Saturday in February extending for 2 days.</del> <u>[No longer than 2 days.]</u></p> <p>4. Balance of State Zone: <del>The second Saturday in February extending for 2 days.</del> <u>[No longer than 2 days.]</u> Goose hunting in this zone is not permitted during these days.</p>	Same as regular season.

(g) Falconry Take of Ducks (including Mergansers), Geese, American Coots, and Common Moorhens.

(1) Statewide Provisions.

(A) Species	(B) Season	(C) Daily Bag and Possession Limits
Ducks (including Mergansers), Geese, American Coot and Common Moorhen	<p>1. Northeastern California Zone. <del>Open concurrently with duck season through January 11, 2023.</del> <u>[No longer than 107 days.]</u></p> <p>2. Balance of State Zone. <del>Open concurrently with duck season, February 4-5, 2023, February 18-19, 2023 and February 25, 2023</del> <u>[No longer than 107 days]</u> EXCEPT in the North Coast Special Management Area where the falconry season for geese runs concurrently with the season for Small Canada geese (see 502(d)(6)).</p> <p>3. Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone. <del>Open concurrently with duck season, February 4-5, 2023, February 18-19, 2023 and February 25, 2023</del> <u>[No longer than 107 days]</u> Goose hunting in this zone by means of falconry is not permitted.</p> <p>4. Southern California Zone. <del>Open concurrently with duck season, February 4-5, 2023, February 18-19, 2023 and February 25, 2023</del> <u>[No longer than 107 days]</u> EXCEPT in the Imperial County Special Management Area where the falconry season for geese runs concurrently with the season for white geese.</p> <p>5. Colorado River Zone. <del>Open concurrently with duck season and February 1-4, 2023.</del> <u>[No longer than 107 days]</u> Goose hunting in this zone by means of falconry is not permitted. Federal regulations require that California's hunting regulations conform to those of Arizona, where goose hunting by means of falconry is not permitted.</p>	<p>Daily bag limit: 3 Daily bag limit makeup: • Either all of 1 species or a mixture of species allowed for take.</p> <p>Possession limit: 9</p>

Note: Authority cited: Sections 265 and 355, Fish and Game Code.  
Reference: Sections 265, 355 and 356, Fish and Game Code.

# 2023-24 Section 502 Waterfowl Hunting Discussion Meeting



**Fish and Game Commission  
February 8, 2023  
Agenda Item 12**

**Melanie Weaver  
Waterfowl Coordinator  
Wildlife Branch**



# Youth and Veteran Hunt Days Consideration



- ❧ Not confident in placement of Veterans Day when implemented
  - ❧ Within season or up to 14 days prior/after
  - ❧ Can overlap Youth Hunt Days
- ❧ Only 107-day seasons for most geese/ducks
  - ❧ Geese closed during Vet Hunt Days in 2 zones
  - ❧ Could remove 2-days from regular/late season



# Youth and Veteran Hunt Days Consideration

- ❧ Area managers suggested combining at the end of 20/21 season
  - ❧ 2 years of participation data to make informed decision
- ❧ 2 years public use data indicated most areas can accommodate both groups
  - ❧ Average Saturday 55% capacity
  - ❧ Average Sunday 30% capacity



# Youth and Veteran Hunt Days Consideration



- ❧ Most areas do not fill, particularly on Sundays
- ❧ Closed to other uses to mid-Feb
- ❧ Access to habitat prior to migration/reduce disturbance
- ❧ Units flooded longer to accommodate extension(s)
- ❧ No habitat work before draw down
- ❧ Late season affects on local nesting duck concerns



# Options



- ❧ Combine each group on same day
  - ❧ Northeastern Zone
- ❧ Youth on Saturday/Veterans on Sunday, alternate
- ❧ Alternate between all Youth or all Veteran areas
- ❧ Split hunt area to separate Youth from Veterans
- ❧ No changes




**Re: Letter re Section 502 Waterfowl Regulations – request to modify hunting dates for 2023/24 season - in support of Aleutian Goose Working Group**

Emily Stackhouse <emily@thebuckeye.org>

Wed 12/28/2022 10:34 AM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

 1 attachments (257 KB)

Buckeye\_2022\_NorthCoastGoose\_AGWG\_support.pdf;

Good morning, Fish and Game Commission,

Please find the updated attached letter, sent on behalf of The Buckeye in support of the Aleutian Goose Working Group's recent request. The attached letter is updated to reflect the current letter submitted last week by the working group requesting the Commission to consider modifying the Aleutian goose hunting season dates in the North Coast Special Management Area.

Please disregard the previous letter from The Buckeye dated November 30, 2022, as the requested dates in the letter have been updated to reflect those requested by the AGWG. Please consider this letter submitted on December 28, 2022 in support of the request submitted by the AGWG dated December 16, 2022.

The Buckeye supports the requests of the Aleutian Goose Working Group.

Thank you,  
Emily

Emily Stackhouse, PhD  
The Buckeye - Executive Director  
530-526-2822

---

**From:** FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 7, 2022 3:38 PM

**To:** Emily Stackhouse <emily@thebuckeye.org>

**Subject:** Re: Requested Date Changes to the North Coast Special Management Area Goose Season

Good afternoon, Emily,

Thank you for contacting the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission). We appreciate your inquiry.

To pursue the changes you seek with the Commission, you may want to submit a [Petition for Regulation Change](#). The petition form and instructions for its completion can be found at the link provided.

It is recommended that you be familiar with the pertinent regulations regarding goose hunting and seasons. You can find the [California Code of Regulations](#) sections you may be interested in changing at the second link provided.

If your petition is accepted, it will be taken up by the Commission in a two-meeting process of receipt at its next available meeting and an initial action decision at the meeting following receipt.

Your original email will also be provided to the Commission in its supplemental materials for its meeting next week.

Thank you again for contacting the CA Fish and Game Commission. Have a great day!

Sincerely,

David H  
Commission Staff

---

**From:** Emily Stackhouse <emily@thebuckeye.org>

**Sent:** Friday, December 2, 2022 12:30 PM

**To:** FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

**Subject:** Requested Date Changes to the North Coast Special Management Area Goose Season

Good afternoon,

Please find the attached letter in support of the requested date changes to the North Coast Special Management Area Goose Season.

Thank you,  
Emily

Emily Stackhouse, PhD  
The Buckeye - Executive Director  
530-526-2822



December 28, 2022

President Samantha Murray  
California Fish and Game Commission  
P.O. Box 944209  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090  
[fgc@fgc.ca.gov](mailto:fgc@fgc.ca.gov)

Subject: Support for Aleutian Goose Working Group request to modify hunting season dates – Section 502 Waterfowl Regulations

Dear President Murray and Commissioners,

The Buckeye Conservancy requests a change to the North Coast Special Management Area goose season in support of the Aleutian Goose Working Group (AGWG) and other North Coast agricultural organizations and landowners. Please consider this letter submitted on December 28, 2022, in support of the request submitted by the AGWG dated December 16, 2022. We suggest that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) change the 2023/2024 North Coast Special Management Area goose season, as proposed by the AGWG. This request asks for **the Regular Season to start on the first Saturday in October and continue for 77 days and the Late Season to start 30 days before March 10. For example, in the 2023/24 hunting season this would be: Regular Season October 7 – December 22 (77 days); and Late Season February 8 – March 10 (30 days).**

The Buckeye Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that seeks to strengthen and promote sustainability and good stewardship of family-owned ranches, rangelands, and forests on California's North Coast. It is our mission to maintain working resource lands for future generations, and our members value maintaining open space and its importance to society.

We make this request to change the goose hunting season dates to increase hunting opportunities to harvest Aleutian geese in Humboldt County and to reduce agricultural depredation of grazing geese. By changing the season dates, hunting opportunities on both public and private lands before geese have migrated to the central valley on their fall migration will be increased. In 2019, the Aleutian goose population estimates were reported in the USFWS annual population report at 200k individuals, approximately 300% of the targeted population size.

The AGWG is an informal stakeholder group that was revived in the spring of 2022 in cooperation with CDFW. Led by local landowners, the mission of the AGWG is to "Work cooperatively to develop and implement management strategies acceptable on public and private lands on the North Coast so that the Aleutian Goose is an asset to the community." The AGWG was restarted in response to the economic hardship many farmers and landowners on the North Coast are experiencing due to grazing depredation by Aleutian geese.

In recent years, Aleutian geese continue to populate both Humboldt and Del Norte Counties in late September and are in high abundance until mid-December when the majority have migrated to the Central Valley. Large numbers of geese do not return to Humboldt County until the late spring goose season. Forage is limited in the fall for our livestock and during this



time, we experience costly losses to geese. This change would increase hunting opportunities for sportsmen in Humboldt and Del Norte counties, and effectively, decrease agricultural losses.

We appreciate the work CDFW has done toward managing this species and are grateful for the liberal limits and late goose season. Your continued work to limit wildlife-human conflict is welcomed to our rural businesses. Please consider amending the current goose season to continue these efforts.

Sincerely,

Emily Stackhouse, PhD  
Executive Director  
The Buckeye Conservancy

CC:

Director Charlton Bonham;  
Chief Deputy Director Valerie Termini;  
Deputy Director Chad Dibble;  
Melanie Weaver, CDFW;  
Jack L Rice, Western Resource Strategies LLC, AGWG;  
AGWG Participants


## Letter re Section 502 Waterfowl Regulations – request to modify hunting dates for 2023/24 season

Jack Rice [REDACTED] >

Thu 12/22/2022 12:02 PM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Cc: Jack Rice <[REDACTED]>; Weaver, Melanie@Wildlife <[REDACTED]>

 1 attachments (99 KB)

22-12-16 AGWG letter to FGC (dates).pdf;

Fish and Game Commission,

Please consider the attached letter, sent on behalf of several participants of the Aleutian Goose Working Group, requesting the Commission consider modifying the Aleutian goose hunting season dates in the North Coast Special Management Area.

Thank you.

Jack

--

Jack L Rice

Western Resource Strategies LLC

M: [REDACTED]

December 16, 2022

**California Fish and Game Commission**

P.O. Box 944209

Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

[fgc@fgc.ca.gov](mailto:fgc@fgc.ca.gov) (submitted via email)

***Re: Section 502 Waterfowl Regulations – request to modify hunting dates for 2023/24 season***

Dear President Murray and Commissioners,

The undersigned participants of the Aleutian Goose Working Group request the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) consider modifying the Aleutian goose hunting season dates in the North Coast Special Management Area as described below. We believe the proposed changes will increase hunting opportunities and increase opportunities for farmers and ranchers to manage the impacts of Aleutian goose depredation.

The Aleutian Goose Working Group (AGWG) is an informal stakeholder process that was recently revived in cooperation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Led by local landowners, the mission of the AGWG is to “Work cooperatively to develop and implement management strategies acceptable on public and private lands on the North Coast so that the Aleutian Goose is an asset to the community.”

The AGWG was restarted primarily in response to the substantial economic hardship Aleutian goose grazing depredation is causing many farms and ranches on the North Coast. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Aleutian Cackling Goose Mark-resight Data Assessment, 2022 estimated the population as of January 2022 to be 215,236 (SE = 28,974, 95% CI = 158,447–272,026). While this is an encouraging story of successful recovery and conservation, when the population is approximately 300% of the targeted population size, there are externalities that can best be managed by working together.

Recognizing the prior AGWG’s successes, participants of the revived working group have gathered three times over the past few months to learn and discuss practices and policies to help address this issue. These topics included the structure and successes of the first AGWG, Aleutian goose population conditions and trends, economic impacts of depredation on farms and ranches, hazing methods, hunting opportunities and seasons, managing public land to improve habitat, and regulatory options and tools.

These discussions resulted in a general agreement that modifying hunting season dates was a good first step to reducing some depredation challenges on private land. CDFW staff provided guidance on the regulatory opportunities and constraints of migratory bird hunting seasons, and also developed several season scenarios for the group to discuss.

After further discussion, the AGWG reached a consensus to request that the Commission consider modifying hunting season dates for the Aleutian goose in the North Coast Special Management Area as follows:

**The Regular Season to start on the first Saturday in October and continue for 77 days and the Late Season to start 30 days before March 10. For example, in the 2023/24 hunting season this would be: Regular Season October 7 – December 22 (77 days); and Late Season February 8 – March 10 (30 days).**

AGWG participants believe these season dates will provide increased hunting opportunities while also reducing the effects of Aleutian goose grazing on farms and ranches.

These changes are proposed based on the recent experience of our community. Over the past few years, Aleutian geese arrive in both Humboldt and Del Norte Counties in early-October where they remain in relatively high abundance until mid-December. Many geese leave at that time and do not return in large numbers until after the close of the regular duck and goose season in January. The effect of the proposed season shift would be to exchange approximately six weeks of hunting in December and January for six weeks of goose hunting when geese are in greater abundance on the North Coast. This would increase hunting opportunities in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties while potentially managing goose populations and reducing depredation occurrences for farmers and ranchers.

If the Commission modifies the season, the AGWG intends to work with CDFW, UC Cooperative Extension, and California Waterfowl Association to understand how well the new season works for landowners, hunters, and other stakeholders. This will provide the opportunity for the community to reassess hunting dates and work together to make further recommendations, if needed.

Recognizing that CDFW's SHARE program—which provides financial incentives to private landowners to open their properties for public hunting opportunity—is not directly within the jurisdiction of the Commission, the AGWG encourages the Commission to take such action as may be appropriate to encourage SHARE program opportunities to hunt Aleutian geese. SHARE Program participation was supposed to be a component of the Aleutian goose hunt when it was first extended by the Commission beyond the regular season to help ensure some public hunting opportunity outside the regular season. While there were SHARE Program hunting opportunities for the first few years of the extended hunt, declining landowner participation ended the Program's implementation. New funding sources for the SHARE will help address this limitation, but we also encourage the Commission to continue supporting the SHARE program where feasible.

We greatly appreciate the state and federal participants for their time and patience helping the working group understand the management options available for our special management area. As the AGWG moves forward, this continuing collaboration will be essential to identifying and implementing the best management options available.

Thank you very much for considering this request. Please reach out to Jack Rice at [REDACTED] for more information about the AGWG or this request.

Sincerely,

*Individuals and organizations listed below requested via email to be added as signatories to this letter.*

**Peter Busman**

Landowner & Goose Grazier

**Dr. Kenneth O. Fulgham, PhD**

Emeritus Professor of Rangeland Resource  
Sciences  
RANGE DR Consulting

**Joseph Alexandre**

President  
Humboldt County Farm Bureau

**Zach Cahill**

Cahill Dairy, Inc.

**Jeffery W Stackhouse**

Livestock & Natural Resources Advisor  
Humboldt and Del Norte Counties  
University of California Cooperative Extension

**Helen Ferguson**

Rancher, Del Norte County

**Cc:**

**Melanie Weaver**

California Department of Fish & Wildlife

**AGWG Participants**

**Jessica Phillips**

President  
Lake Earl Grange Environmental Policy and  
Procedure Committee

**Jeff Reed**

Del Norte Waterfowlers

**Dean Hunt**

Rancher, Humboldt County

**Emily Stackhouse**

The Buckeye - Executive Director

**Fred & Sandra Hanks**

Rancher, Humboldt County

**Jay Russ**

Rancher, Humboldt County

**Sue Hunt**


President  
Humboldt-Del Norte Cattlemen's Association

## Aleutian Goose Hunting Season Change

Del Norte Farm Bureau <delnortefarmbureau@gmail.com>

Tue 12/27/2022 10:39 AM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

 1 attachments (220 KB)

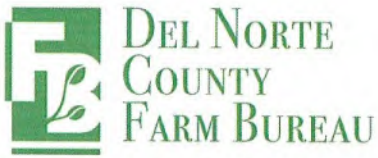
2023 -2025 Season Change LOS.PDF;

Dear Commissioners,

The Del Norte County Farm Bureau has attached below a letter of support for the changing of the Aleutian goose hunting season in Humboldt and Del Norte County.

Thank you,

Rob Miller



241 W First St., Suite B, Smith River, CA 95567  
(707) 951-0400 DelNorteFarmBureau@charter.net

December 21, 2022

Fish and Game Commission  
fgc@fgc.ca.gov

RE: 2023-2025 2 Year Trial Aleutian Geese Season Change

Dear Commission,

The Del Norte County Farm Bureau has surveyed hunters and landowners' members here. The consensus is to support changing the current goose hunting season dates.

The proposed start is the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in October and runs until December 15 (77 days). The second half of the season is to finish March 10 and start 30 days prior.

Our members also want to be on record supporting this change to be a trial for two years. We are concerned that after spending, originally, thousands of dollars hazing the geese off our pastures, this change in hunting season does not move more geese back here.

The original goal of the population was 60,000. Now the population has exploded to 250-300,000 with no management plan. The private landowners are being exploited with almost no resources.

Please generate an Aleutian Goose Management Plan.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rob Miller', written over the typed name and title.

Rob Miller  
President


## Aleutian Goose letter

Jaclyn M Bennett [REDACTED] >

Fri 12/16/2022 10:40 AM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Cc: Jeffery W Stackhouse [REDACTED] >;Weaver, Melanie@Wildlife  
<[REDACTED]>

 1 attachments (238 KB)

2022 Aleutian Goose hunting date proposal changes.pdf;

Attached is a letter from the Del Norte Fish and Game Advisory Commission.

Have a good day,  
Jacki Bennett  
Del Norte Fish and Game Advisory Commission  
707-464-4711



# COUNTY OF DEL NORTE

## Fish and Game Advisory Commission

*Advisory body to the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors on fish, wildlife, recreation, and natural resource issues*

**981 H Street**

December 13, 2022

Jimmy Faulkner  
Chairman

Rob Miller  
Vice-Chairman

District 1:  
Jimmy Faulkner

District 2:  
Rob Miller

District 3:  
Michael Coopman

District 4:  
Helen Ferguson  
Jaytuk Steinruck

District 5:  
Kendell Smith  
Job Silva  
Secretary:  
Jacki Bennett

California Fish and Game Commission  
P.O. Box 944209  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090  
[fgc@fgc.ca.gov](mailto:fgc@fgc.ca.gov)

Re: Aleutian Goose hunting season date changes

Dear President Murray and Commissioners,

The Del Norte Fish and Game Commission (DNFGC) is requesting the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) consider modifying the Aleutian goose hunting season in the North Coast Special Management Area. The dates we would like the Commission to consider are:

**The Regular Season to start on the first Saturday in October and continue for 77 days and the Late Season to start 30 days before March 10. For example, in the 2023/24 hunting season this would be: Regular Season October 7 - December 22 (62 days); and Late Season February 10 - March 10 (30 days).**

The DNFGC believes this alternative provides the best compromise to reduce goose depredation on privately owned pasture land and better hunting opportunity within the 107-day season structure. The current season for the North Coast from November 9 to January 31 and February 18 to March 10 is generally a time period when there is not high geese abundance in Del Norte County.

The DNFGC would also requests the Commission encourage local California Department of Fish and Wildlife staff to enhance goose habitat within the Lake Earl Wildlife Area. Currently, there is no public land in Del Norte County that provides substantial forage opportunity for geese. As a consequence, foraging opportunities for geese in Del Norte County are primarily confined to private land.

Regards,

Jimmy Faulkner  
Del Norte County Fish and Game Commission Chair

## North Coast Waterfowl Special Management Area Season Change Support Letter: Humboldt County Fish and Game Commission


Jeffery W Stackhouse <[REDACTED]>

Fri 12/16/2022 10:56 AM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>; Weaver, Melanie@Wildlife <[REDACTED]>

Cc: Nancy Kaytis-Slocum <[REDACTED]>; FG Ted Romo

<[REDACTED]> <[REDACTED]> <[REDACTED]>; Brad  
<[REDACTED]>

 1 attachments (139 KB)

2022\_HumCo\_FishAndGameCommission\_GooseSeasonChangeSupportLetter\_12\_16\_22.pdf;

Good afternoon Melissa and Melanie-

Please see attached letter from the Humboldt County Fish and Game Commission supporting a goose season change on the North Coast.

With appreciation,

Jeff

Jeffery Stackhouse  
Aleutian Goose Sub-Committee, Chair

I hope you all have a wonderful holiday season!

**Jeffery W Stackhouse**

Livestock & Natural Resources Advisor- Humboldt/Del Norte

University of California Cooperative Extension

5630 S. Broadway, Eureka, CA 95503

phone 707-445-7351, fax 707-444-9334

[REDACTED]

*University of California Cooperative Extension: Practical. Connected. Trusted*

December 16, 2022

President Samantha Murray  
California Fish and Game Commission  
P.O. Box 944209  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 653-4899  
[fgc@fgc.ca.gov](mailto:fgc@fgc.ca.gov)

Dear President Murry and Commissioners,

The Humboldt County Fish and Game Commission would like to suggest a change to the 2023/2024 waterfowl season. Specifically, we would like to see a change in the current North Coast Special Management Area goose season. The purposed changes below are suggested to increase hunter opportunity to harvest Aleutian geese (*Branta canadensis moffitti*) in Humboldt County and to reduce the negative impacts the Aleutian goose population has on agricultural businesses on the North Coast.

The Aleutian Goose Working Group (hereafter AGWG; a loosely organized group of landowners, hunters, agency personnel, and local Fish and Game Commissioners) recently reformed the spring of 2022 after extensive goose grazing on some local ranches caused substantial economic hardship for those businesses. Largely driven by landowner motivation to see timely change, the AGWG held several meetings throughout 2022 to better understand the current population status, historic successes of the working group, hazing and hunting options, and legislative opportunities to change the negative impacts of this public resource on local agriculture. After much learning and discussion, the group came to the consensus that changing the hunting season was a good first step to reducing some depredation challenges on private land and as the Humboldt County Fish and Game Commission, we wish to support these local efforts.

After providing the AGWG and members of the Humboldt County Fish and Game Advisory Commission with the understanding that there is only a limited amount of hunt days to be had, and that the season may not extend past March 10<sup>th</sup>, CDFW's Waterfowl Biologist Melanie Weaver offered to assist the group in identifying a sweet of six different split-season options. After discussion, the Humboldt County Fish and Game Advisory Commission has voted to provide four recommendations (below) to the CDFW Commission. The four suggestions are aimed to reduce negative impacts of Aleutian goose grazing on agricultural lands, provide maximum opportunity for local hunters to recreate and provide for their families, and protect other waterfowl species of local concern.

1. We support moving the opening day of goose season forward in the fall, creating a split season to maximize harvest and hazing of geese when they occur in high abundance in Humboldt County.
2. We support maintaining an adaptive management strategy to maximize the total waterfowl hunt days as possible to fit within local Aleutian goose migratory patterns and to change hunting seasons to match the changing migratory patterns of the Aleutian goose (*Branta hutchinsii leucopareia*).

3. We support reducing hunt days for our local, relatively small population of Western Canada Geese in the later part of the waterfowl season when they have paired and are particularly vulnerable to hunting.
4. We support all efforts that CDFW can do to create as much public access to hunt Aleutian geese as possible.

In summary, the Aleutian goose population estimates for 2022 were reported in the USFWS annual population report to be between 158,447 and 272,026 individuals, 359% of the 60k targeted population size. The last few years Aleutian geese continue to populate Humboldt County early-October, are in relatively high abundance until mid-December, and do not return in large numbers until after the close of the regular duck and goose season in January. So effectively, with this proposed season shift, we would be exchanging approximately six weeks of hunting in December and January for six weeks of goose hunting when geese are in greater abundance on the North Coast earlier in the fall and later in the spring. This would increase hunting opportunities in Humboldt County while potentially reducing goose populations and hence reducing depredation occurrences for agriculturists.

We greatly appreciate the state and federal partners for all their work returning this population to healthy numbers. We also appreciate the state and federal partners for their time and patience getting our group up to speed on what our management options are for our special management area. We encourage CDFW's continued support of adaptive management as this species continues to shift its migratory patterns and subsequent depredation impacts and hunting opportunities.

Sincerely,

John Clark, Chair  
Humboldt County Fish and Game Commission

## Waterfowl Regulations

Tymeson, Chris <CTymeson@SCIFirstForHunters.org>

Thu 01/26/2023 04:03 PM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Please find attached the comments of Sven Lindquist, SCI President, on the proposed changes to Section 502 of Title 14, related to **waterfowl** seasons for 23-24.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if there are questions.

Sincerely,  
Chris Tymeson



Christopher J. Tymeson, J.D.  
State and Local Liaison  
Mobile: 785 640 1946  
[ctymeson@SCIfirstforhunters.org](mailto:ctymeson@SCIfirstforhunters.org)  
[safariclub.org](http://safariclub.org) | [safariclubfoundation.org](http://safariclubfoundation.org)



**Confidentiality Notice** This e-mail message, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s) and may contain confidential and privileged information. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure, or distribution is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply e-mail and destroy all copies of the original message.



25 January 2023

California Fish and Game Commission  
Samantha Murray, President  
C/O [FGC@fgc.ca.gov](mailto:FGC@fgc.ca.gov)  
715 P Street, 16th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Section 502 of Title 14, California Code of Regulations  
Waterfowl Seasons**

Dear Commissioners and Executive Director Miller-Henson:

On behalf of Safari Club International, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Department's proposed changes to Section 502 of Title 14, California Code of Regulations, regarding waterfowl seasons.

Given that the 2023-24 Federal Frameworks allow for a liberal duck and goose season in the Pacific flyway, SCI appreciates the approach of the Department and Commission in recommending utilizing all of the days possible under the frameworks for waterfowl hunters. We would like to note however that combining the veteran and active military days allowance with the youth hunting opportunity days may result in diminished youth opportunity through increased competition for the same resource, particularly so on public lands.

SCI believes that sound science-based conservation involving hunting as the primary management tool, while maximizing opportunities for all huntable species is necessary to the long-term health of wildlife. Hunters have long paid the way for conservation, both game and non-game wildlife, and maximizing opportunity for hunting is also key to long-term funding for all conservation. In short, hunting benefits wildlife conservation. In California, the latest numbers show that the state's hunters spent \$1.36 billion on hunting related purchases, support over 16,100 jobs, contribute \$1.2 billion to the state's GDP, and provide \$140 million in state and local taxes.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to Section 502 of Title 14, of the California Code of Regulations. SCI is dedicated to protecting the freedom to hunt and we appreciate the continued partnership with the CDFW and the Commission.



Sincerely,

Sven Lindquist  
President  
Safari Club International

## Jr and Vet hunts

Mike Kerley <[REDACTED]>

Wed 01/25/2023 04:45 AM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Good morning,

Just my thoughts on junior and veteran hunts. I'm a believer that combining both together is a smart move. I know we will get slack on this but my reasoning behind this is the season is too long. These birds are paring up and are quite stupid to be honest. You shoot the hen the drake comes right back into you. It's just my thought on this and I believe putting both together they will still have a quality hunt.

Best

Mike Kerley

*Mike Kerley*

**Kerley's Sporting Adventures**

"Can't fly on one wing"

[REDACTED]  
www.kerleysadventures.com

Subscribe to our newsletter: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

*Mike Kerley*

**Kerley's Sporting Adventures**

"Can't fly on one wing"

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Subscribe to our newsletter: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## COMMENTS: Feb 8th Agenda - Combining Youth/Vet Waterfowl Hunts - OPPOSE

Richard Schussel <[REDACTED]>

Wed 01/25/2023 10:58 AM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

Cc: Mark Hennelly <[REDACTED]>

Members of the Commission,  
Mark Hennelly CWA,

I **OPPOSE** the CADFW recommendation to combine the Youth and Veteran Waterfowl hunts...which I understand will be discussed at your Feb 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, under Agenda item 12.

Reasons to OPPOSE:

1. These 2 hunts were specifically created, to provide a special and unique hunt for each group.
2. Combining these groups into one much larger group of hunters...with children competing with adults, is on its face, not a good idea.
3. Junior Hunters should be given the opportunity for the best locations possible on our public and private lands...to assist the department's efforts to recruit and retain new hunters. Especially in our 'free roam' areas, as children and their adult mentors end up 'competing' for better spots, against adults who can more easily and quickly get to those locations in the dark than a dad and his child.
4. CADFW's has even agreed with item 3 above. Their own website states: "**Licensed hunters 17 and younger get a weekend of waterfowling all to themselves without having to compete with adults for birds or places to hunt.**" (ref: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/News/february-offers-special-waterfowl-opportunities-for-kids-veterans-and-goose-hunters>)
5. If combined, you could have a Veteran and his/her junior hunting together. The adult would be shooting too, when the youth hunts were specifically set up so an adult can/would put all Attention on the younger hunter. To be there to assisting them in learning how to hunt.
6. There has been no data that shows hunting into mid Feb will negatively impact future waterfowl populations.
7. The **Federal Framework** even **ALLOWS for hunts into the mid Feb** timeframe. It states:
  - i. Special Youth and Veterans—Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Days

Outside Dates and Season Lengths:

States may select 2 days per duck-hunting zone, designated as "Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days," and 2 days per duck-hunting zone, designated as "Veterans and Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Days," in addition to their regular duck seasons. The days may be held concurrently or may be nonconsecutive. The Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days must be held outside any regular duck season on weekends, holidays, or other non-school days when youth hunters would have the maximum opportunity to participate. **Both sets of days may be held up to 14 days before or after any regular duck-season frameworks or within any split of a regular duck season, or within any other open season on migratory birds.**

8. CADFW documents for this change show there is NO real financial impacts gained by combining these groups into one hunt weekend

A quick poll of hunters online shows the VAST majority do not want to see these groups combined. It will not enhance their hunt opportunity, it will decrease them. And the atmosphere/environment surrounding the exiting youth/junior hunts will be degraded.

I ask the commission to **NOT APPROVE the combining** of these 2 very special hunt opportunities. **Each of these hunter groups DESERVE SPECIAL TREATMENT of their own.**

Thank you

Richard Schussel  
Pleasanton, CA

59 Year CA Duck Hunter  
CWA Life Member  
CWA Public Lands Hunter Committee Member  
Delta Waterfowl Member  
DU Member

## Combining Youth and Veteran Waterfowl Hunt Weekends

AJ cecchetti <[REDACTED]>

Thu 01/26/2023 12:25 PM

To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>

To Whom it May Concern at the Fish & Game Commission-

It has come to my attention that there is talk of combining the post season Youth Hunts and veteran hunts for waterfowl hunting in this State. I can't seem to understand the reason behind this as it seems the negatives far outweigh any sort of positives.

Combining the youth and veteran hunt days does a few things:

- Reduction of opportunity to go hunting
  - Combining into one weekend limits availability of both youth and veteran households
- Removes the number of days for both parties to go hunting or take others, such as first timers or someone going for the first time in a long time.
  - Veterans with youth of their own will be forced to choose between a veteran hunting or their own children where before, there was not a decision and more opportunities to take multiple individuals (households with 3+ youth hunters, veterans with multiple friends/family that are also veterans).
  - What used to be four days will now be two days for both veterans and youths to accompany one another as non-shooters.
- Reservation drawing odds will drastically be affected.
  - I compiled data from last season to show how some properties will have draw odds that will be significantly affected negatively for both Juniors and Veterans to draw a reservation.
  - Disabled sites will DRASTICALLY be affected for both Youth and Vets with change of drawing odds...
  - Popular refuges will have draw odds that will be negatively affected which will also make it harder for families to plan and "play the game" of getting on at certain refuges.

It seems that the goal of the veteran and youth hunt weekends is provide opportunity to first timers, created lasting memories, recruit new hunters with a quality hunt, or just pay back the men and women who have served our country. I'm 38 with three kids, aged 9,5, and 2. My 9 year old got his license last year just like I did at 9 years old. I remember my first hunts with my father which were junior pheasant hunts put on by the state. The opportunity and quality of the hunt created memories that I still cherish today. These hunts also created an individual that has bought hunting licenses ever since, has spanned out into other game, and am not trying to do the same for my children.

Reducing the chance to draw areas, reducing the available days and increased pressure with more individuals hunting in a shorter amount of time seems to go against why the veteran and youth hunting weekends were set up in the first place.

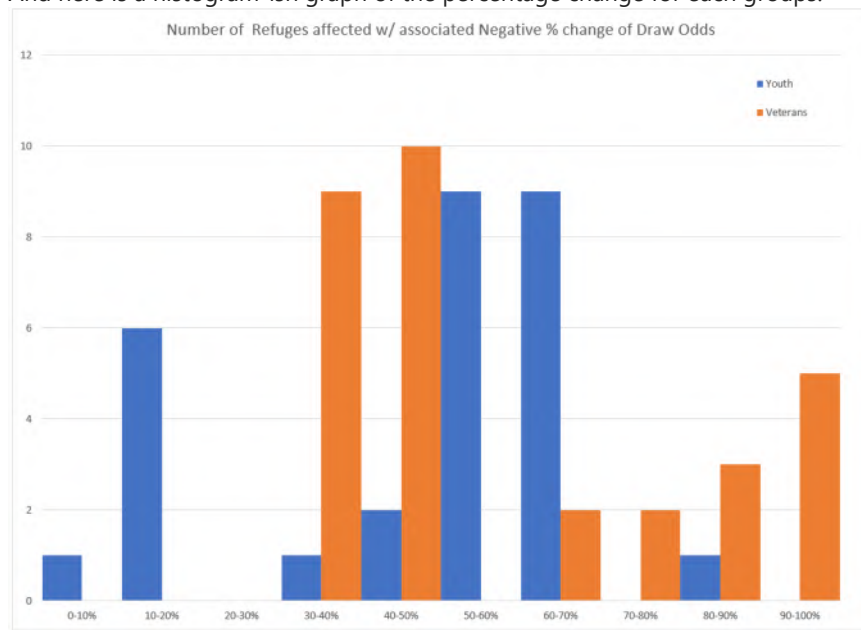
Here's the compiled data from last year:

2021-2022	Youth		Vets		Same number drawn for both weekends?	% chance to Draw		New Percent Chance of Drawing	% chance change	
	Apps	Drawn	Apps	Drawn		Youth	Vet		Youth	Vet
Bear Creek	156	6	120	6	Y	4%	5%	2%	-57%	-43%
China Island	46	40	85	40	Y	87%	47%	31%	-35%	-65%
Colusa	1127	46	802	46	Y	4%	6%	2%	-58%	-42%
Colusa Disabled Site	4	4	53	4	Y	100%	8%	7%	-7%	-93%
Delevan	1478	78	828	78	Y	5%	9%	3%	-64%	-36%
Delevan Disabled Site	2	2	51	6	-	100%	12%	11%	-11%	-96%
Freitas Boat North	18	18	50	30	-	100%	60%	44%	-44%	-74%
Freitas Boat South	11	11	39	20	-	100%	51%	40%	-40%	-78%
Gadwall Unit	253	28	174	28	Y	11%	16%	7%	-59%	-41%
Gadwall Unit Disabled Site	2	2	16	2	Y	100%	13%	11%	-11%	-89%
Gray Lodge	606	190	483	150	-	31%	31%	14%	-44%	-44%
Gray Lodge Disabled Site	2	2	33	6	-	100%	18%	17%	-17%	-94%
Grizzly Island	105	105	0	0	-	100%	-	-	-	-

Grizzly Island Disabled Site	0	0	0	0	Y	-	-	-	-	-
Kern	193	12	144	12	Y	6%	8%	4%	-57%	-43%
Kern Disabled Site	0	0	5	2	-	-	40%	40%	-	-
Kesterson	297	60	186	60	Y	20%	32%	12%	-61%	-39%
Kesterson Disabled Site	0	0	8	4	-	-	50%	50%	-	-
Little Dry Creek	1355	36	798	36	Y	3%	5%	2%	-63%	-37%
Little Dry Creek Disabled Site	4	4	40	6	-	100%	15%	14%	-14%	-91%
Los Banos	509	100	308	100	Y	20%	32%	12%	-62%	-38%
Los Banos Disabled Site	0	0	6	4	-	-	67%	67%	-	-
Mendota	258	198	226	200	-	77%	88%	41%	-54%	-47%
Mendota Disabled Site	2	2	12	12	-	100%	100%	86%	-86%	-86%
Merced	222	18	122	18	Y	8%	15%	5%	-65%	-35%
Merced Disabled Site	1	1	6	1	Y	100%	17%	14%	-14%	-86%
Sacramento	1372	118	839	118	Y	9%	14%	5%	-62%	-38%
Sacramento Disabled Site	4	4	46	8	-	100%	17%	16%	-16%	-92%
Salt Slough	246	44	132	44	Y	18%	33%	12%	-65%	-35%
Salt Slough Disabled Site	0	0	14	2	-	-	14%	14%	-	-
San Jacinto	301	50	199	50	Y	17%	25%	10%	-60%	-40%
San Jacinto Disabled Site	0	0	9	2	-	-	22%	22%	-	-
San Luis	245	90	164	90	Y	37%	55%	22%	-60%	-40%
Sutter	293	17	126	34	-	6%	27%	8%	FALSE	-30%
Sutter Disabled Site	2	1	4	2	-	50%	50%	33%	-67%	-67%
Volta	172	100	170	100	Y	58%	59%	29%	-50%	-50%
Wister	343	200	326	200	Y	58%	61%	30%	-51%	-49%
Wister Disabled Site	0	0	11	8	-	-	73%	73%	-	-
Yolo Bypass	690	70	556	70	Y	10%	13%	6%	-55%	-45%
Yolo Bypass Disabled Site	0	0	30	4	-	-	13%	13%	-	-

... for the reservation quota, I used the larger of the numbers.

And here is a histogram-ish graph of the percentage change for each groups:



I thank you for your time and please reach out if there is any clarification needed. I am hoping to watch the FGC meeting online, is there a link I can get for that? Any type of registration process?

Best Regards,  
AJ Cecchetti