

Staff Summary for April 16-17, 2025

9. Waterfowl Hunting**Today's Item**Information ☐Action ☒

Consider adopting proposed amendments to waterfowl hunting regulations and taking final action under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| • Wildlife Resources Committee vetting | September 12, 2024; WRC |
| • Notice hearing | December 11-12, 2024 |
| • Discussion hearing | February 12-13, 2025 |
| • Today's adoption hearing | April 16-17, 2025 |

Background

The Commission proposes amendments to migratory waterfowl regulations to ensure consistency between state and federal regulations, as described in the staff summary for the December 2024 notice hearing (exhibits 1 and 2). The proposed amendments are in response to a request from the Department and include ranges for seasons and bag limits to allow for a selection at today's hearing in response to the federally-proposed season frameworks. Today the Department will present its recommendations for the 2025-2026 waterfowl seasons based on public comment and the federal waterfowl framework (Exhibit 7).

Updates Since the February Meeting

The Commission published a notice of changes to the proposed regulatory language on March 18, 2025. Only one edit was made to the proposed language to correct an error that was discovered after the language was published in the California Regulatory Notice Register on January 10, 2025.

The edit was made in subsection 502(d) Geese Late Season. The originally proposed language read "Season will be no longer than 5 days and closing no later than March 10." The "5 days" was an error. The proposed language now reads, "Season will be no longer than 34 days and closing no later than March 10". This change is necessary to reflect the correct number of days in the late goose hunting season.

California Environmental Quality Act

The Department prepared a draft environmental document consistent with the Commission's CEQA certified regulatory program. Commission staff evaluated the draft document and determined that the document reflects the independent judgment of the Commission. Staff submitted the environmental document for public comment (State Clearinghouse No. 2025010115, available at [CEQAnet.opr.ca.gov](https://ceqa.net.opr.ca.gov)). A final environmental document, updated to reflect public comment, will be included in the Commission's supplemental handouts for this meeting.

Staff Summary for April 16-17, 2025

Significant Public Comments

1. The California Waterfowl Association urges the Commission to support suggested dates for various waterfowl seasons and hunts to ensure five days of rest prior to the youth hunt to ensure a quality hunting experience for youth participants. Additionally, the association recommends increasing the pintail daily limit to three birds which will create additional hunting opportunities. (Exhibit 8)
2. Two commenters share disappointment that the veterans weekend was combined with the 2024-2025 late goose season, stating the action diminished the respect for veterans and their service and resulted in less days for the veterans hunt (Exhibit 9).

Recommendation

Commission staff: Certify the final environmental document, adopt the proposed project, and adopt the proposed waterfowl hunting regulation amendments as presented by the Department today.

Department: Adopt the proposed waterfowl hunting regulation amendments as presented in the amended ISOR and amended proposed regulatory language selecting from the noticed ranges as recommended by the Department.

Exhibits

1. [Staff summary for December 11-12, 2024 Commission meeting, Agenda Item 13 \(for background purposes only\).](#)
2. [Staff summary for February 12-13, 2025 Commission meeting, Agenda item 10 \(for background purposes only\).](#)
3. [ISOR](#)
4. [Amended proposed regulatory language](#)
5. [Memo in lieu of a pre-adoption statement of reasons, received April 8, 2025](#)
6. [Economic and fiscal impact statement \(STD. 399\)](#)
7. [Department presentation](#)
8. [Letter from Mark Hennelly, Vice President of Advocacy, California Waterfowl Association, received February 28, 2025](#)
9. [Emails from Robert Hughes and William Peacock, received March 6, 2025 and March 16, 2025](#)

Motion

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission finds the environmental document reflects the independent judgment of the Commission, certifies the final environmental document, adopts the proposed project, and adopts the staff recommendations to amend Section 502, regarding migratory waterfowl hunting regulations for the 2025-2026 seasons.

Staff Summary for December 11-12, 2024
(For background purposes only)

13. Waterfowl Hunting

Today's Item

Information ☐

Action ☒

Consider authorizing publication of notice of intent to amend waterfowl hunting regulations.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| • Wildlife Resources Committee vetting | September 12, 2024; WRC |
| • Today notice hearing | December 11-12, 2024 |
| • Discussion hearing | February 12-13, 2025 |
| • Adoption hearing | April 16-17, 2025 |

Background

The Department requests changes to migratory waterfowl regulations, as described in the draft initial statement of reasons (ISOR) and draft proposed regulatory language (exhibits 2 and 3), to comply with proposed frameworks for the 2025-2026 hunting seasons, as approved by the four regional flyway councils in August 2024 and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Regulation Committee in November 2024. Federally-proposed season frameworks are typically published in the Federal Register by mid-December and final frameworks published by late February of the following year.

While the flyway councils and USFWS process for updating federal regulations overlaps with the Commission's state process, USFWS has provided its proposals to each state to help ensure consistency between state and federal regulations.

The proposed changes include:

- duck season lengths between 99 and 103 days for the Southern San Joaquin Valley, Southern California, and Balance of State zones
- goose regular season lengths between 99 and 103 days for the Southern San Joaquin Valley, and Southern California zones; and between 99 and 100 days for the Balance of State Zone
- increase the pintail daily bag limit to 3 in all zones
- swapping the timing of Youth Hunt Days with the Veterans and Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Days (VAMP Days) for the Southern San Joaquin Valley, Southern California and Balance of State zones
- up to four days of falconry-only season for the Southern San Joaquin Valley, Southern California and Balance of State zones.

Staff Summary for December 11-12, 2024

(For background purposes only)

Significant Public Comments

1. A hunter requests the Commission maintain the January 31 season end date and prioritize the regular season, then youth hunts, then veteran hunts (Exhibit 6).

Recommendation

Commission staff: Authorize publication of a notice of intent to amend regulations as recommended by the Department.

Committee: Authorize publication of a notice of intent to amend regulations as recommended by the Department.

Department: Authorize publication of a notice of intent to amend regulations as described in the draft ISOR and draft proposed regulatory language.

Exhibits

1. Department memo, received November 22, 2024
2. Draft migratory waterfowl ISOR
3. Draft proposed regulatory language
4. Draft economic and fiscal impact statement (STD 399)
5. Department presentation
6. Email from Christopher Godwin, dated November 30, 2024

Motion

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission authorizes publication of a notice of its intent to amend Section 502 related to waterfowl hunting regulations.

Staff Summary for February 12-13, 2025
(For background purposes only)

10. Waterfowl Hunting

Today's Item

Information ☒

Action ☐

Discuss proposed amendments to waterfowl hunting regulations.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| • Wildlife Resources Committee vetting | September 12, 2024; WRC |
| • Notice hearing | December 11-12, 2024 |
| • Today's discussion hearing | February 12-13, 2025 |
| • Adoption hearing | April 16-17, 2025 |

Background

The Department requests changes to migratory waterfowl regulations to ensure consistency between state and federal regulations, as described in the staff summary for the December 2024 notice hearing (Exhibit 1).

Updates since last meeting

The notice of proposed changes in regulations was published on January 10, 2025. The federally-proposed season frameworks were published on January 21, 2025 instead of mid-December 2024 as staff originally anticipated.

At today's meeting, the Department will provide a verbal update on the black brant survey, proposed season length, and bag limit, and provide a presentation on the waterfowl season structure.

Significant Public Comments

1. A parent of a youth hunter advocates for the exchange of youth and veteran hunt dates for the 2025-26 season (Exhibit 6).
2. The Delta Waterfowl Foundation supports increasing the pintail daily bag limit to three in all zones (Exhibit 7).

Recommendation (N/A)

Exhibits

1. Staff summary for Agenda Item 13, December 1-12, 2024 Commission meeting (*for background purposes only*)
2. Department memo, received November 22, 2024
3. Migratory waterfowl initial statement of reasons, dated December 31, 2024
4. Proposed regulatory language
5. Department presentation
6. Email from Jim Lenardon, dated January 13, 2025
7. Email from Christopher Hoon, Manager of Government Affairs – Pacific Flyway, Delta Waterfowl Foundation, dated January 22, 2025

Staff Summary for February 12-13, 2025
(For background purposes only)

Motion (N/A)

State of California
Fish and Game Commission
Amended 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: December 31, 2024

II. Date of Amended Initial Statement of Reasons: March 11, 2025

III. Dates and Locations of Scheduled Hearings

(a) Notice Hearing

Date: December 12, 2024

Location: Sacramento, CA

(b) Discussion Hearing

Date: February 12, 2025

Location: Sacramento, CA

(c) Adoption Hearing

Date: April 16, 2025

Location: Sacramento, CA

IV. Description of Regulatory Action

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

Unless otherwise specified, all section references in this document are to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR). Changes in the Initial Statement of Reasons since the publication on January 10, 2025 are designated by underline and strikeout.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) annually establishes federal regulation frameworks (Frameworks) for migratory bird hunting. California sets 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 population (including the California Breeding Population Survey) and habitat conditions observed in 2024 and the regulatory alternatives selected for the 2024 hunting season are used to develop the Frameworks for the 2025-26 season.

States may make recommendations to change the Frameworks. Recommendations are made to the four Flyway councils in late summer (August or September). Flyway councils review, and elect to approve and forward to the Service. The Service considers recommendations at the

Service's Regulation Committee public meeting held in November. 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, and 2024-25 season opening and closing dates, and daily bag and possession limits for hunting of waterfowl. The proposed Frameworks for the 2025-26 season were approved by the Flyway councils in August and will be considered at the Service's Regulations Committee meeting in November. 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, 3 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 limits (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 Fall Brant Survey is conducted in October 2024. The black brant regulatory package is determined by the most current Fall 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 fall 2024 survey by the February 2025 Commission meeting. See the Summary of Proposed Waterfowl Hunting Regulations for 2025-26 table below for the range of season and bag limits.

Lastly, federal regulations provide that California's hunting regulations should 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) Provide a range of duck season lengths between 99 and 103 days in subsection 502(d)(2)(B) for the Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone, subsection 502(d)(3)(B) for the Southern California Zone, and subsection 502(d)(5)(B) for the Balance of State Zone

The existing duck season length for the referenced zones is 98 days. This proposal provides a range of season dates for consideration. In prior rulemakings based on public input, the Commission adopted the latest possible closing date of January 31 and the traditional opening Saturday in late October, which necessitated an annual adjustment to the season length. Duck season length selection determines the available days for falconry-only seasons. A specific recommendation will be made after public input and discussion.

- 2) Provide a range of season lengths for the goose regular season between 99 and 103 days in subsection 502(d)(2)(B) for the Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone, and subsection 502(d)(3)(B) for the Southern California Zone; and between 99 and 100 days in subsection 502(d)(5)(B) for the Balance of State Zone.

The existing regular season length for is 98 days in the Southern San Joaquin Valley, Southern California and Balance of State zones. See item 1 above for the justification. Goose season length selection determines the available days for falconry-only seasons.

- 3) Increase the pintail daily bag limit in all zones, subsections 502(d)(1 through 5)(C) to 3.

The existing regulation allows a daily bag limit of 1 pintail based on the prior harvest strategy, developed in 2010. The Frameworks now allow a daily bag limit of 3 based on the new pintail harvest strategy adopted in October 2024. The new strategy uses an integrated population model that considers breeding population size, banding data, and harvest estimates to calculate a fall flight. The harvest strategy seeks a balance of objectives by conserving pintail in perpetuity, providing hunting when the observed breeding population is above 1.2 millions birds; and allowing a liberal season length with a 3-bird bag limit when the population size and expected fall flight are large enough to support the estimated harvest (the prior strategy did not allow a 3-bird bag limit). Allowing a 3-bird daily bag limit as a regulatory option has been a long standing goal of both the Department and the Pacific Flyway Council.

The strategy is on an interim basis until three 3-bird seasons have been experienced, which could take five to six years. The review of the interim phase by all flyways and the Service will include evaluation of the integrated population model (ensuring parameters remained stable), harvest models, and regulatory package performance metrics.

- 4) Consider swapping the timing of Youth Hunt Days in subsections 502(e)(1)(B)2., 3., and 5. with the Veterans and Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Days (VAMP Days) in subsections 502(f)(1)(B)2. through 4. for the Southern San Joaquin Valley, Southern California and Balance of State zones.

Currently, the Youth Hunting Days occur the Saturday following the close of waterfowl season and VAMP Days the following weekend. Some members of the public are concerned that when the waterfowl season closes within a few days of the Youth Hunting Days the hunting experience is reduced. Swapping the timing may allow extra hunting days for the general public while minimizing disturbance to the Youth Hunting Day experience. This option would eliminate goose hunting during the VAMP Days in the Balance of State Zone.

- 5) Allow up to four days of falconry-only season in subsections 502(g)(1)(B)2. through 4. for the Southern San Joaquin Valley, Southern California and Balance of State zones.

The existing regulation allows a five day falconry-only season. 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.

Summary of Proposed Waterfowl Hunting Regulations for 2025-26

AREA	SPECIES	SEASONS	DAILY BAG & POSSESSION LIMITS
Statewide	Coots & Moorhens (Gallinules)	Concurrent w/duck season	25/day. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Northeastern Zone <i>Season may be split</i>	Ducks	No longer than 103 days	[4-7]/day, which may include: [3-7] mallards no more than [1-2] females. 3 pintail, 2 canvasback, 2 redheads. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Northeastern Zone <i>Season may be split</i>	Scaup	No longer than 86 days	2 scaup. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Northeastern Zone <i>Season may be split</i>	Geese	No longer than 105 days except for Canada geese which cannot exceed 100 days or beyond Jan 11	30/day, which may include: 20 white geese, 10 dark geese, no more than 2 Large Canada geese. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone <i>Season may be split</i>	Ducks	No longer than 103 days	[4-7]/day, which may include: [3-7] mallards no more than [1-2] females. 3 pintail, 2 canvasback, 2 redheads. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone <i>Season may be split</i>	Scaup	No longer than 86 days	2 scaup. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
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.

AREA	SPECIES	SEASONS	DAILY BAG & POSSESSION LIMITS
Southern California Zone <i>Season may be split</i>	Ducks	No longer than 103 days	[4-7]/day, which may include: [3-7] mallards no more than [1-2] females. 3 pintail, 2 canvasback, 2 redheads. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Southern California Zone <i>Season may be split</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	From Oct. 23 for 101 days.	7/day, which may include: 7 mallards no more than 2 females or Mexican ducks. 3 pintail, 2 canvasback, 2 redheads. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Colorado River Zone	Scaup	From Nov. 7 for 86 days.	2 scaup. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
	Geese	From Oct. 23 for 101 days.	25/day, up to 20 white geese, up to 5 dark geese. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Balance of State Zone <i>Season may be split</i>	Ducks	No longer than 103 days	[4-7]/day, which may include: [3-7] mallards no more than [1-2] females. 3 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</i>	Scaup	No longer than 86 days	2 scaup. Possession limit triple the daily bag.
Balance of State Zone <i>Season may be split</i>	Geese	Early Season: 3 days (Canada goose only) Regular Season: no longer than 100 days Late Season: Canada geese no longer than 2 days and white-fronted and white geese no longer than 534 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 Jan 31	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 11	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 and during Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days	3/day. Possession limit triple the daily bag.

AREA	SPECIES	SEASON	DAILY BAG & POSSESSION LIMITS
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.
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	The Saturday fourteen days before the opening of waterfowl season extending for 2 days.	Same as regular season
Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone	Same as regular season	The [first or second] Saturday in February extending for 2 days.	Same as regular season
Southern California Zone	Same as regular season	The [first or second] 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

AREA	SPECIES	SEASON	DAILY BAG & POSSESSION LIMITS
Balance of State Zone	Same as regular season	The [first or second] 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	The Saturday following the closing of the regular duck season extending for 2 days.	Same as regular season
Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone	Same as regular season	The [first or second] Saturday in February extending for 2 days.	Same as regular season
Southern California Zone	Same as regular season	The [first or second] Saturday in February extending for 2 days.	Same as regular season
Balance of State Zone	Same as regular season	The [first or second] Saturday in February extending for 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

AREA	SPECIES	SEASON	DAILY BAG & POSSESSION LIMITS
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

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: Sections 265 and 355, Fish and Game Code

Reference: Sections 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 13, 2024, and a public scoping session will be held in November or December 2024.

V. Description of Reasonable Alternatives to Regulatory Action

(a) Alternatives to Regulation Change

No other alternatives were identified by or brought to the attention of Commission staff that would have the same desired regulatory effect.

(b) No Change Alternative

The No Change Alternative would retain the 2024-25 regulations for the 2025-26 season which may place the state out of compliance with federal regulations. Calendar progression necessitates modifying allowable hunting dates in regulatory language, including for falconry-only seasons, that are adjusted annually based on general season length selection. In addition, frameworks for black brant have not been established pending results of the Fall Brant Survey.

VI. Mitigation Measures Required by Regulatory Action

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

VII. 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 2025-26 waterfowl regulations are expected to maintain a similar level of recreational waterfowl hunting opportunity for the public and therefore the same levels of business competitiveness.

(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 2025-26 waterfowl hunting season dates and bag limits within the federal Frameworks. The total hunting season length is proposed to remain the same as the current (2024-25) 107 days, with only modifications to the season types (duck, goose or falconry-only); these modifications will have little to no impacts to jobs and/or businesses that provide services to waterfowl hunters. The Commission anticipates that the proposed 2025-26 waterfowl hunting regulations will provide benefits for the health and welfare of California residents by providing opportunity for outdoor activity. The Commission expects no benefits to worker safety as that is not a subject of the proposed regulation. The Commission does expect benefits 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.

(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.

VIII. 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 2025-26 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, perpetuate the waterfowl resource for their intrinsic and ecological values, and 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.

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.)~~ (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>From the first Saturday in October extending for 103 days.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><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. Scaup season can be no longer than 86 days.]</u></p>	<p>Daily bag limit: 7<u>[4-7]</u></p> <p>Daily bag limit may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7<u>[3-7]</u> mallards, but not more than 2<u>[1-2]</u> females. • 4<u>3</u> pintail (either sex). • 2 canvasback (either sex). • 2 redheads (either sex). • 2 scaup (either sex). <p>Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.</p>

(A) Species	(B) Season	(C) Daily Bag and Possession Limits
Geese	<p>Regular Season:</p> <p>Canada Geese: from the first Saturday in October extending for 100 days. <u>[Opening no earlier than the first Saturday in October and closing no later than January 11. Season will be no longer than 100 days.]</u></p> <p>White-fronted and white geese from the first Saturday in October extending for a period of 58 days and from January 3 extending for a period of 13 days. <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: White-fronted and white geese from February 5 extending for 34 days. <u>Season will be no longer than 5-34 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<u>550 through 552</u>, navigable waters, and private lands with the permission of the landowner under provisions of Section 2016, Fish and Game Code.</p> <p><u>During the Late Season, hunting</u> 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</p> <p>Daily bag limit may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 white geese. • 10 dark geese but not more than 2 Large Canada geese (see definitions: 502(a)). <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.~~) (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)	<p>From the fourth Saturday in October extending for 98 days.</p> <p>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. Scaup season can be no longer than 86 days.]</u></p>	<p>Daily bag limit: 7 <u>[4-7]</u></p> <p>Daily bag limit may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 <u>[3-7]</u> mallards, but not more than 2 <u>[1-2]</u> females. • 4-3 pintail (either sex). • 2 canvasback (either sex). • 2 redheads (either sex). • 2 scaup (either sex). <p>Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.</p>
Geese	<p>From the fourth Saturday in October extending for 98 days.</p> <p><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></p>	<p>Daily bag limit: 30</p> <p>Daily bag limit may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 white geese. • 10 dark geese (see definitions: 502(a)). <p>Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.</p>

(3) Southern California Zone (~~NOTE: SEE SUBSECTION 502(d)(6) BELOW FOR SPECIAL SEASONS AND CLOSURES.~~) (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)	<p>From the fourth Saturday in October extending for 98 days.</p> <p>Scaup: from November 7 extending for 86 days.</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. Scaup season can be no longer than 86 days.]</u></p>	<p>Daily bag limit: 7 <u>[4-7]</u></p> <p>Daily bag limit may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 <u>[3-7]</u> mallards, but not more than 2 <u>[1-2]</u> females. • 4-3 pintail (either sex). • 2 canvasback (either sex). • 2 redheads (either sex). • 2 scaup (either sex). <p>Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.</p>

(A) Species	(B) Season	(C) Daily Bag and Possession Limits
Geese	From the fourth Saturday in October extending for 98 days. <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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.)~~ (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).	From October 23 extending for 101 days. Scaup: from November 7 extending for 86 days.	Daily bag limit: 7 Daily bag limit may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 mallards, but not more than 2 females or Mexican ducks. • 4-3 pintail (either sex). • 2 canvasback (either sex). • 2 redheads (either sex). • 2 scaup (either sex). Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.
Geese	From October 23 extending for 101 days.	Daily bag limit: 25 Daily bag limit may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 white geese. • 5 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.~~) (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).	<p>From the fourth Saturday in October extending for 98 days.</p> <p>Scaup: from November 7 extending for 86 days.</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. Scaup season can be no longer than 86 days.]</u></p>	<p>Daily bag limit: 7<u>[4-7]</u></p> <p>Daily bag limit may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7<u>[3-7]</u> mallards, but not more than 2<u>[1-2]</u> females. • 4<u>3</u> pintail (either sex). • 2 canvasback (either sex). • 2 redheads (either sex). • 2 scaup (either sex). <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 <u>except</u> 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. Season will be no longer than 100 days.]</u> from the fourth Saturday in October extending for 98 days EXCEPT <u>except</u> in the Sacramento Valley Special Management Area where the white-fronted goose season will close after December 21.</p> <p>Late Season:</p> <p>Canada geese <u>[opening after January 31 and closing no later than March 10. Season will be no longer than 2 days.]</u> from the second Saturday in February extending for 2 days.</p> <p>White-fronted and white geese <u>[opening after January 31 and closing no later than March 10. Season will be no longer than 5 days.]</u> from the second Saturday in February extending for a period of 5 days EXCEPT <u>except</u> in the Sacramento Valley Special Management Area where the white-fronted goose season is closed.</p> <p>During the Late Season, hunting is not permitted on wildlife areas listed in sections 550-552 EXCEPT <u>550 through 552</u> <u>except</u> on Type C wildlife areas in the North Central and Central regions.</p>	<p>Daily bag limit: 30</p> <p>Daily bag limit may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 white geese. • 10 dark geese EXCEPT <u>except</u> in the Sacramento Valley Special Management Area where only 3 may be white-fronted geese (see definitions: 502(a)). <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	From October 5 extending for a period of 78 days (Regular Season) and from February 12 extending for a period of 27 days (Late Season). <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 <u>except</u> 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	Canada Geese from the first Saturday in October extending for 100 days. White-fronted and white geese from the first Saturday in October extending for 105 days.	Daily bag limit: 30 Daily bag limit may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 white geese. • 10 dark geese but not more than 2 Large Canada geese (see definitions: 502(a)). Possession limit: triple the daily bag limit.
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.

	(A) Species	(B) Season	(C) Daily Bag and Possession Limits
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	From November 18 extending for 27 days. <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	From November 19 extending for 27 days. <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	From November 4 extending for a period of 89 days (Regular Season) and February 3-9, 2025 and February 12-20, 2025 (Late Season). <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:~~ 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	1. Northeastern California Zone: The Saturday fourteen days before the opening of waterfowl season extending for 2 days. 2. Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone: The <u>[first or second]</u> first Saturday in February extending for 2 days. 3. Southern California Zone: The <u>[first or second]</u> first Saturday in February extending for 2 days. 4. Colorado River Zone: The <u>first</u> second Saturday in February extending for 2 days. 5. Balance of State Zone: The <u>[first or second]</u> first Saturday in February extending for 2 days.	Same as regular season.

(f) Veterans and Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Days Regulations.

NOTE: 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.

<i>(A) Species</i>	<i>(B) Season</i>	<i>(C) Daily Bag Limit</i>
Ducks (including Mergansers), Geese, American Coot, Common Moorhen	<p>1. Northeastern California Zone: The Saturday following the closing of the regular duck season extending for 2 days. Goose hunting in this zone is not permitted during these days.</p> <p>2. Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone: The <u>[first or second]</u> second Saturday in February extending for 2 days.</p> <p>3. Southern California Zone: The <u>[first or second]</u> second Saturday in February extending for 2 days.</p> <p>4. Balance of State Zone: The <u>[first or second]</u> second Saturday in February extending for 2 days. <u>[Goose hunting in this zone is not permitted during these days.]</u></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. Open concurrently with duck season through January 15, 2025. [No longer than 107 days.]</p> <p>2. Balance of State Zone. Open concurrently with duck season, February 1-2, 2025 and February 15-19, 2025. [No longer than 107 days.] EXCEPT <u>except</u> in the North Coast Special Management Area where the falconry season for geese runs concurrently with the season for Canada geese (see 502(d)(6)).</p> <p>3. Southern San Joaquin Valley Zone. Open concurrently with duck season, February 1-2, 2025 and February 15-19, 2025. [No longer than 107 days.] Goose hunting in this zone by means of falconry is not permitted.</p> <p>4. Southern California Zone. Open concurrently with duck season, February 1-2, 2025 and February 15-19, 2025. [No longer than 107 days.] EXCEPT <u>except</u> in the Imperial County Special Management Area where the falconry season for geese runs concurrently with the season for white geese.</p>	<p>Daily bag limit: 3</p> <p>Daily bag limit makeup:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either all of 1 species or a mixture of species allowed for take. <p>Possession limit: 9</p>
	<p>5. Colorado River Zone. Open concurrently with duck season and February 1-4, 2026-2025. Goose hunting in this zone by means of falconry is not permitted. Federal regulations <u>require provide</u> that California's hunting regulations <u>should</u> conform to those of Arizona, where goose hunting by means of falconry is not permitted.</p>	

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

Memorandum

Date: April 3, 2025

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

From: Charlton H. Bonham
Director

Subject: **Agenda Item for April 16-17, 2025, Fish and Game Commission Meeting**
Re: Preadoption Statement of Reasons to Amend Section 502, Title 14, CCR, Waterfowl, Migratory, American Coot and Common Moorhen

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) has prepared this memorandum in lieu of a Preadoption Statement of Reasons to update the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) and the public. There have been no substantive comments received, amendments to the regulatory text, or additional information gathered for this rulemaking.

Public comments received during the public comment period are summarized and responded to below.

- **January 13, 2025 – Jim Lenardon (written comment)**

Recommends swapping the Youth Hunt Days with that of the Veteran/Active Military Hunt Days.

Response: The recommendation is supported by the Department.

- **January 22, 2025 – Christopher Hoon/Delta Waterfowl (written comment)**

Recommends the Commission adopt the pintail daily bag limit of 3, per the newly adopted harvest strategy.

Response: The recommendation is supported by the Department.

- **February 1, 2025 – Shawn Finato, February 4, 2025 Bryce Iden (written comment)**

Recommends the Youth Hunt Days to occur 5-7 days after the close of the regular season.

Response: The recommendation is supported by the Department.

- **February 12, 2025 – Russell Raley (written comment)**

Recommends no change to the timing of the Youth and Veteran/Active Military Hunt Days.

Response: Noted. Given public support and the Commission direction of maximizing the latest closing day and season length in prior rule makings, the Department is recommending to swap the timing of the special hunt days to ensure rest days (nonhunted) prior to the Youth Hunt Days.

- **February 15, 2025 – Robert Hughes (written comment)**

Recommends moving the Late Goose Season in the Balance of State Zone back to the third weekend in February, so as not combined with the Veteran Hunt Days.

Response: The recommendation is supported by the Department.

- **February 28, 2025 – Mark Hennelly/California Waterfowl Association (written comment)**

Recommends the following season structure including support for increasing the pintail daily bag limit to 3 and swapping the Youth Hunt Days with that of the Veteran/Active Military Hunt Days:

Balance of State, Southern San Joaquin, Southern California zones

Ducks October 18 – January 28

Geese October 18 – January 28 (January 25 in Balance of State Zone)

Veteran/Active Military Hunt Days January 31 – February 1

Youth Hunt Days February 7 – 8

Late Goose Season February 14 -18 (Balance of State Zone)

Response: The recommendation is supported by the Department.

- **March 1, 2025 – Chris Stack (written comment)**

Recommends the Late Goose Season in the Northeastern Zone remain 34 days rather than 5 days as indicated in the regulatory text.

Response: The recommendation is supported by the Department; the 5 days in the regulatory text was a typographical error.

The originally proposed late goose season in subsection 502(d)(1)(B) is revised to read:

Late Season: White-fronted and white geese from February 5 extending for 34 days. [Season will be no longer than 5 34 days and closing no later than March 10.]

Melissa Miller-Henson, Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission
April 3, 2025
Page 3

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Scott Gardner, Wildlife Branch Chief, at Scott.Gardner@wildlife.ca.gov. Senior Environmental Scientist Melanie Weaver, is the Department's point of contact at Melanie.Weaver@wildlife.ca.gov.

cc: Chad Dibble, Deputy Director
Wildlife and Fisheries Division

Scott Gardner, Branch Chief
Wildlife Branch

Melanie Weaver, Waterfowl Coordinator
Wildlife Branch

Ona Alminas, Env. Program Manager
Regulations Unit

Mike Randall, Analyst
Regulations Unit

Ari Cornman, Wildlife Advisor
California Fish and Game Commission

David Thesell, Program Manager
California Fish and Game Commission

Jenn Bacon, CESA Analyst
California Fish and Game Commission

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

STD. 399 (Rev. 10/2019)

ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

DEPARTMENT NAME California Fish and Game Commission	CONTACT PERSON David Thesell	EMAIL ADDRESS fgc@fgc.ca.gov	TELEPHONE NUMBER 916 902-9291
DESCRIPTIVE TITLE FROM NOTICE REGISTER OR FORM 400 Add Sections 679.1 et seq. 679.9, Title 14, CCR, Re: Possession of Wildlife and Wildlife Rehabilitation			NOTICE FILE NUMBER Z

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> h. None of the above (Explain below): |

No new compliance costs necessarily incurred

*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 California Fish and Game Commission estimates that the economic impact of this regulation (which includes the fiscal impact) is:

(Agency/Department)

- ☒ Below \$10 million
- ☐ Between \$10 and \$25 million
- ☐ Between \$25 and \$50 million
- ☐ Over \$50 million *[If the economic impact is over \$50 million, agencies are required to submit a Standardized Regulatory Impact Assessment as specified in Government Code Section 11346.3(c)]*

3. Enter the total number of businesses impacted: 80Describe the types of businesses (Include nonprofits): Nonprofit wildlife rehabilitation facilities and supporting satellite facilitiesEnter the number or percentage of total businesses impacted that are small businesses: 100%4. Enter the number of businesses that will be created: 0 eliminated: 0Explain: Regulatory amendments are to clarify and codify facility standards that are already widely practiced.

5. Indicate the geographic extent of impacts: ☒ Statewide

☐ Local or regional (List areas): _____

6. Enter the number of jobs created: 0 and eliminated: 0Describe the types of jobs or occupations impacted: N/A; No change induced for labor demand or jobs to meet standards that are already widely practiced.

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? \$ 14,000
- a. Initial costs for a small business: \$ 1,000 Annual ongoing costs: \$ 0 Years: 1
- b. Initial costs for a typical business: \$ 0 Annual ongoing costs: \$ 0 Years: 1
- c. Initial costs for an individual: \$ 500 Annual ongoing costs: \$ 0 Years: 1
- d. Describe other economic costs that may occur: No new costs for typical businesses as most already meet standards. Appox. 5% of primary rehabilitation & satellite facilities may spend from \$500-\$1,000 in initial costs (see Addendum).

2. If multiple industries are impacted, enter the share of total costs for each industry: N/A

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. \$ N/A

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: CA Fish and Game Commission has authority to regulate wildlife rehabilitation facilities within the state.

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

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: Sets site-specific conditions to protect native wildlife, agriculture interests, animal welfare, health & welfare of CA residents, and worker safety with enhanced biosecurity protocols, improved caging requirements, and protocols for animals suspected to have a communicable disease (see Addendum).

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

Explain: CA Fish and Game Commission has authority to regulate wildlife rehabilitation facilities within the state.

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

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

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: There are no other alternatives to consider that would meet the program objectives.

**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: \$ best practices* Cost: \$ 14,000

Alternative 1: Benefit: \$ N/A Cost: \$ N/A

Alternative 2: Benefit: \$ N/A Cost: \$ N/A

3. Briefly discuss any quantification issues that are relevant to a comparison of estimated costs and benefits for this regulation or alternatives: *The proposed regulations are to clarify and codify wildlife rehab. best practices and facility standards that are already widely implemented to ensure continued benefits. Costs are for enclosure improvements.

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 ☐ NO

Explain: In many instances, performance standards are specified without the requirement of particular means.

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: No effect on the level of investment in the State is anticipated.

The incentive for innovation in products, materials or processes: No effect on the incentive for innovation in products, materials, or processes is anticipated.

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: Benefits to the health and welfare of CA residents, worker safety, and the environment are anticipated.

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

STD. 399 (Rev. 10/2019)

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 See addendum**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:

 Dan Reagan


6558B761E2D347D

DATE

6/18/2024

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

 Melissa A. Miller-Henson Bryan Cash

7/25/2024

DATE

June 13, 2024

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

STD 399 Addendum

Repeal Section 679 and Add Sections 679.1, 679.2, 679.3, 679.4, 679.5, 679.6, 679.7, 679.8 and 679.9, and Chapters 2 and 3 of the Native Wildlife Rehabilitation 679 Regulations Manual Title 14, California Code of Regulations Regarding the Possession of Wildlife and Wildlife Rehabilitation

Economic Impact Statement

Background

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) currently oversees 80 permitted wildlife rehabilitators who operate wildlife rehabilitation facilities throughout the state. These facilities employ or involve approximately 3,000 staff and volunteers. Additionally, there are approximately 550 satellite facilities overseen by sub-permittees operating under a wildlife rehabilitation permit, which is valid for three years.

Section 679 of Title 14, California Code of Regulations underwent a minor regulatory change in 2007. However, several necessary changes were not addressed during that rulemaking process. The proposed regulations aim to establish current requirements for the care and possession of injured, orphaned, and diseased wildlife, address known deficiencies regarding facility operations, enclosures, humane care, and treatment standards and protect the animal welfare, safety, and well-being of rehabilitation animals.

Section A. Estimated Private Sector Cost Impacts

Question 1.

Answer b. Minor impacts to small businesses. 80 wildlife rehabilitation permit holders operate wildlife rehabilitation facilities throughout the state (more than half operate as nonprofit entities); approximately 550 satellite facilities operated by sub-permittees.

Many wildlife rehabilitation facilities currently meet or exceed the proposed requirements of this rulemaking. Extensive outreach and feedback have been incorporated into the crafting of these provisions to avoid undue cost impacts to affected private sector entities. For those few facilities that have not met all the specified standards, variances are available to permit additional time to upgrade. It is estimated that approximately 5% of wildlife rehabilitation facilities, including satellite facilities and home-based wildlife rehabilitators, will require minor improvements to their enclosures to meet the new requirements. It is estimated that 4 wildlife rehabilitation facilities will have to perform minor to moderate improvements to their enclosures at a cost of \$1,000 or less. It is estimated that approximately 28 satellite facilities will have to perform minor modifications to their enclosures at a cost of \$500 or less. The total estimated cost (statewide) is estimated to be \$14,000 or less. A wildlife rehabilitator, including permit holders, their designees and sub-permittees may submit a variance request for department approval of alternative enclosure sizes, design, or construction materials that differ from the proposed requirements at no cost (\$0).

Additionally, attention has been given to ensure that training requirements can be met at no cost or optional additional costs to wildlife rehabilitation staff. Training options have been expanded to include such options as monthly facility safety meetings. The proposed annual reports and triage plans have already been prepared by wildlife rehabilitation staff, but submittal to the Department will now be required.

Question 6. Number of jobs created and eliminated.

The Commission does not anticipate that the proposed regulation would induce any impact on the creation or elimination of jobs because the proposed regulatory action is not anticipated to stimulate or diminish demand for services related to wildlife rehabilitation as no new tasks are induced by the proposed regulatory action.

Section B. Estimated Costs

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

Compliance with the proposed regulation is expected to incur minimal to no new costs. Most businesses already adhere to the new standards. An estimated 5% of rehabilitation and satellite facilities may incur initial costs between \$500 and \$1,000. The total statewide cost of this regulation over its lifetime is estimated to be \$14,000 for businesses and individuals.

Section C. Estimated Benefits

Question 1. Briefly summarize the benefits of the regulation.

Anticipated benefits of the regulation include consistency with current wildlife rehabilitation standards: with the codification that California's wildlife rehabilitation practices align with the most current standards and scientifically-based requirements to: (1) protect animal welfare, native wildlife, human health and safety; (2) meet Department goals for conservation and management of native wildlife species; and (3) increase public awareness of the ethical standards maintained by wildlife rehabilitators in California.

While most wildlife rehabilitation facilities currently meet the proposed requirements, codifying best practices ensures that these facilities will continue to maintain current standards and scientifically based requirements for temporarily possessing and rehabilitating native wildlife for release back into the wild. The proposed changes allow the Department to require site-specific best practices to protect, native wildlife, agricultural interests, the state's environment, animal welfare, health and welfare of California residents, and worker safety. Additionally, best practices will include enhanced biosecurity protocols, improved caging requirements, and standardized reporting protocols for animals known or suspected to have a communicable disease.

This action will increase the efficiency and ability for public to get wildlife to rehabilitators (currently record keeping for satellite facilities and regulation/memorandum of understanding information is limited). Requiring an emergency action plan will prevent costly responses from having the state respond to facilities impacted by wildfires or storms.

Question 3. What are the total statewide benefits from this regulation over its lifetime?

The total statewide benefits of the proposed regulation are difficult to specify as the majority of regulated wildlife rehabilitation facilities are currently meeting the standards described in this action, such that the benefits are already in full effect. The proposed regulations are to ensure that these standards are codified and may be updated as needed to the latest best practices so as to perpetuate the benefits over time.

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

The Commission does not anticipate that the proposed regulation would induce any impacts on the expansion of businesses currently doing business within the state.

Fiscal Impact Statement

Section A. Fiscal Effect on Local Government

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

Section B. Fiscal Impact on State Government

Answer 3. No fiscal impact exists. This regulation does not affect any State agency or program. No change in costs or savings to state agencies is expected as a direct result of the proposed amendments to Section 679. The Department currently oversees 80 wildlife rehabilitation facilities and approximately 550 satellite facilities each year. The Department has estimated that the specification of standards for wildlife rehabilitation facilities, improved oversight, and support to permittees throughout the state by the Department's Native Wildlife Rehabilitation Program will not change costs for staff time or materials. The Department's Wildlife Health Laboratory program costs will remain unchanged and within currently existing budgets and resources.

Answer 4. Other. Explain: Per California Fish and Game Code Section 713, the fees charged by the Department and printed on application forms will be updated to the most current year fee amounts. The change in fee amount is not a result of this rulemaking, but due to Fish and Game Code Section 713, which directs the Department to adjust fees consistent with the implicit price deflator for state government each year. The fees have been continuously adjusted by the Department's License and Revenue Branch. This action will update the fee amount shown on the forms to the most current year's fee.

Section C. Fiscal Effect on Federal Funding of State Programs

Answer 3. No fiscal impact exists. This regulation does not affect any federally funded State agency or program.



2025-26 SECTION 502 WATERFOWL HUNTING

Adoption Meeting

PRESENTATION TO THE CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME COMMISSION

April 16, 2025
Melanie Weaver
Wildlife Branch



Overview

Federal Frameworks

No change except:
Pintail daily bag increase
Brant season length decrease

Department Recommendation



Summary of Department Recommendation

- Increase duck and goose season length in most zones from 98 to 103 days
- Increase pintail daily bag limit from 1 to 3
- Brant season length decreased from 27 to 16 days
- Swap Veteran Hunt Days with Youth Hunt Days in most zones
- No Falconry-only season in most zones



Duck Season Recommendation

Northeastern Zone

- Regular Season: Oct 4 – Jan 14
- Scaup: Oct 4 – Nov 30 & Dec 18 – Jan 14

Bal of State, So San Joaquin Valley, So CA zones

- Regular Season: Oct 18 – Jan 28 (103 days)
- Scaup: Nov 4 – Jan 28

Colorado River Zone

- Regular Season: Oct 23 – Jan 31
- Scaup: Nov 7 – Jan 31

7 ducks/7 mallards (2 hens)/3 pintail/ 2 scaup, canvasback,
redhead

Balance of State Zone – Goose Season Recommendation

Early Season Canada geese

- Sept 27 – 29

Regular Season

- Oct 18 – Jan 25 (100 days)

Late Season

- Canada geese: Feb 14 – 15
- White & white-fronted geese: Feb 14 – 18

30/day: 20 white/10 dark geese



Northeastern Zone Goose Recommendation

Regular Season

- Canada geese: Oct 4 – Jan 11
- White & white-fronted geese: Oct 4 – Nov 30 & Jan 2 – 14

Late Season

- White & white-fronted geese: Feb 5 – Mar 10

30/day: 20 white/10 dark geese, no more than 2 Large
Canada geese

Goose Season Recommendation Continued

So San Joaquin Valley and So CA zones

- Oct 18 – Jan 28 (103 days)
- 30/day: 20 white/10 dark geese in S.S.J. Valley Zone
- 3 dark geese in So CA Zone

Colorado River Zone

- Oct 23 – Jan 31
- 25/day: up to 20 white/5 dark geese

Brant Season Recommendation

Northern Brant

- Nov 29 – Dec 14 (16 days)

Balance of State Brant

- Nov 30 – Dec 15 (16 days)



Special Management Area Recommendation

North Coast

- Regular Season: Oct 4 – Dec 20
- Late Season: Feb 12 – Mar 10

Klamath Basin

- Canada Goose: Oct 4 – Jan 11
- White & white-fronted Geese: Oct 4 – Jan 16

Sac Valley

- Oct 18 – Dec 21

Imperial County

- Regular Season: Nov 1 – Jan 28
- Late Season: Jan 31 – Feb 6, Feb 12- 20



Youth & Veteran Hunt Days Recommendation

Youth Hunt Days

- NE Zone: Sept 20 – 21
- Other zones: Feb 7 – 8

Veteran Hunt Days

- NE Zone: Jan 17 – 18
- All other zones: Jan 31 – Feb 1



Falconry-Only Recommendation

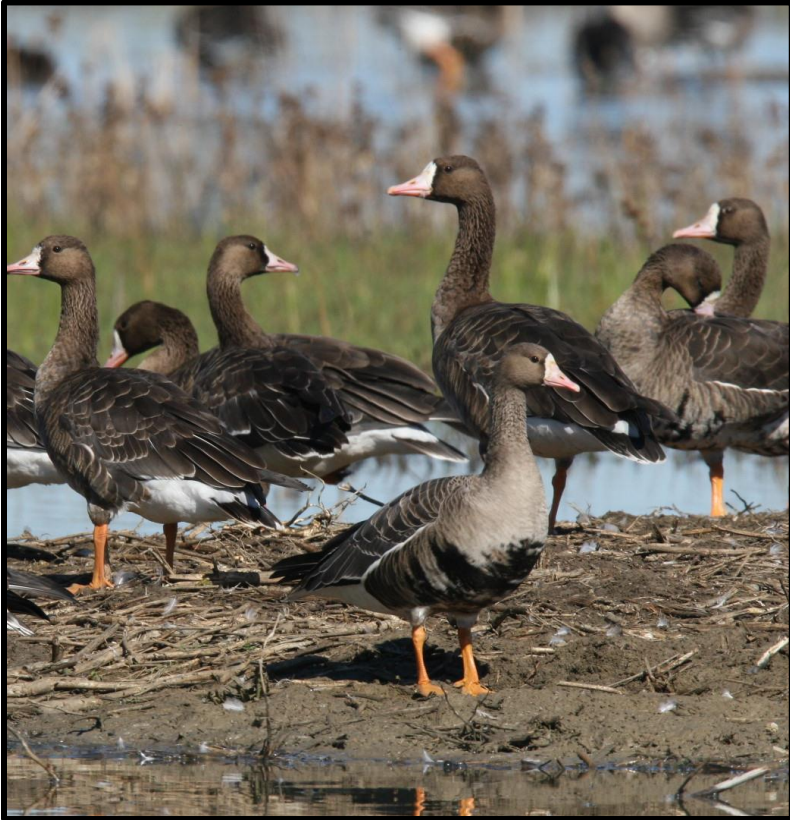
Northeastern Zone: None

Balance of State, So San Joaquin Valley & So CA zones:
None

Colorado River Zone: Feb 1 – 4



Questions | Contact



Melanie Weaver
Waterfowl Coordinator
Wildlife Branch/Game Programs
Waterfowlmgmt@wildlife.ca.gov



February 26, 2025

Ms. Erika Zavaleta, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: 2025/26 Waterfowl Seasons and Bag Limits Recommendations

Dear President Zavaleta:

The California Waterfowl Association respectfully urges you to support the following recommendations for the 2025/26 waterfowl seasons and bag limits at your April 2025 adoption meeting.

1. In the Balance of State (BOS), Southern San Joaquin (SSJ) and Southern California (SOCAL) Zones:

Ducks and Geese Open on 3rd Saturday in Oct. (Oct. 18)

Goose Season Closes Last Sunday in January (Jan. 25) in BOS Zone and Last Wednesday in January (Jan. 28) in SSJ and SOCAL Zones

Duck Season Closes Last Wednesday in January (Jan. 28)

Youth Hunt – Feb. 7 and Feb. 8

Veterans/Active Military Hunt – Jan. 31, Feb. 1

Late Goose Season (BOS Zone) – Feb. 14-18

This recommendation ensures 5 days of rest (i.e. no hunting) prior to the youth hunt, which will help ensure a quality hunting experience for youth participants. It also maximizes the number of days available for duck and goose hunting during the regular season, which our CWA hunter surveys have consistently supported over the years.

2. Increase the pintail bag limit to 3 birds per day

Increasing the pintail daily limit to 3 birds will result in additional hunting opportunity, especially in flooded rice fields and other open water habitats preferred by pintail. As you are aware, the pintail

limit has been stuck at 1-2 birds per day since 1998. The new adaptive harvest management strategy indicated the 3-bird daily bag limit as appropriate for the 2025/26 season, and allowed by the federal frameworks.

As to the other waterfowl zones (i.e. Northeast and Colorado River Zones) and bag limits for waterfowl species other than pintail, please note that, while the Department of Fish and Wildlife's (Department) 2025/26 proposal is not yet available, we also support seasons and bag limits similar to what was included in the Department's 2024/25 proposal and ultimately adopted by the Fish and Game Commission last April.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Mark Hennelly, Vice President of Advocacy
California Waterfowl Association

CC: Ms. Samantha Murray, Vice President, California Fish and Game Commission
Mr. Eric Sklar, Member, California Fish and Game Commission
Mr. Darius Anderson, Member, California Fish and Game Commission
Ms. Jacque Hostler-Carmesin, Member, California Fish and Game Commission
Ms. Melanie Weaver, Waterfowl Coordinator, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

From: Bob H. [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 6, 2025 1:55 PM
To: FGC
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: 2025-2026 Waterfowl Season Dates - Balance of State- Veterans Weekend

2025-2026 Waterfowl Season Dates - Balance of State- Veterans Weekend

I and other veterans were very disappointed that the Veterans Weekend Hunt was combined with Late Goose Season for 2024-2025. This action greatly diminished the respect for Veterans and their recognition for service. The combining of the Veteran Weekend with Late Goose Season resulted in two (2) less days for Veterans to hunt in the Waterfowl season due to the fact that the dedicated Veteran Weekend was lost when combined with Late Goose season.

In addition, since the regular season ended on a Friday the last 2 days of the regular season were essentially available only to private duck club members since all Type A refuges were closed.

Since there were non veterans out shooting geese on Veterans weekend it was no longer a Veterans only hunt. The Veterans lost the additional late goose as a separate hunt. The youth, Veteran weekend and late goose should all be separate and moved back another week and not combined with anything.

In light of the above the dates below are recommended for the 2025-2026 Balance of State Waterfowl Season

Balance of State Regular Season Saturday October 18, 2025 - Saturday January 24, 2026 98 days
Youth Weekend January 31, 2025 February 1, 2026 2 days
Late Goose February 7-10, 2026 Saturday - Wednesday 5 days
Veterans/Active Military Weekend February 14-15, 2026 2 days
Total 107 Days

Pintail - 3 per day 1 hen limit.

Combining Veterans Weekend with anything else greatly diminishes the importance and recognition of Veterans Weekend.

Other Veterans that I know and hunt with agree that Veterans Waterfowl weekend should remain separate and not combined with anything else for the 2025-2026 Waterfowl Season.

Regards,

Robert C. Hughes

Navy Veteran

From: Brian Peacock [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, March 16, 2025 10:31 AM
To: FGC
Subject: Proposed Changes to the Youth and Veteran's Hunts for 2025-26 Waterfowl Season

To Whom it may concern at the Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission:

I am writing in response to an article I recently read in which the DFG Commission is proposing to change the dates of the February Youth Hunt with the dates of the February Veteran's Hunt.

As a Veteran who served his country for over 9 years, in both peace time and war time, I find this proposal insulting and discriminating. I always felt that this premium hunt was something that I had earned for protecting the rights of all Americans.

I understand that it is important to get the youth involved in the hunting activities but I don't think this is the correct way of doing it. If the proposal is passed as written it will make the Veterans seem as if their service wasn't appreciated. The Veteran's Hunt is an excellent hunt because of the 5 days of rest the birds get. It is a hunt that I looked forward to because of this 5 days of rest. The last two Veteran's Hunts have been limited due to flooding but the others that I have participated in were very good hunts.

The proposal could have been written in a manner in which both the Youth Hunt and the Veteran's Hunt could have taken place on the same weekend after the birds have been resting for 5 days. I'm surprised that this didn't occur to the writers of this proposal. I hunt the 6 northern Sacramento Valley refuges (Colusa, Delevan, Howard Slough, Llano Seco, Little Dry Creek and Sacramento). Why can't several of the refuges be open to the Youth Hunt and several of the refuges be open to the Veteran's Hunt? This would have been a better proposal and not discriminating against any particular group. Both the Youth and the Veteran's would have an opportunity to enjoy an excellent hunt. It would probably be more cost effective too by having the refuges being staffed on just one weekend instead of two.

Thank you for your time,

William B Peacock

