

ORDER OF THE STATE OF WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD  
AMENDING AND REPEALING AND RECREATING RULES

The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board proposes an order to amend NR 10.01(1)(v) and 10.06(5); and to repeal and recreate NR 10.01(1)(b), (g), (h) and (u) relating to the 2008 migratory game bird seasons and waterfowl hunting zones.

WM-17-08

Analysis Prepared by the Department of Natural Resources

**Statutes Interpreted and Explanation of Agency Authority:** In promulgating this rule, ss. 29.014, 29.041 and 29.885, Stats., have been interpreted as allowing the department the authority to establish the migratory game bird seasons within the state as well as on and in all waters bordering the state and establish the two-day youth waterfowl hunt.

**Statutory Authority and Explanation of Agency Authority:** Statutes that authorize the promulgation of this rule order include ss. 29.014 and 227.11, Stats. These sections grant rule making authority to the department to establish and maintain open and closed seasons for hunting and provide that all rules promulgated under this authority are subject to review under ch. 227, Stats. In addition, s. 29.041, Stats., authorizes the department to promulgate rules that regulate hunting on and in all interstate boundary waters and s. 29.197, Stats., and authorizes the establishment of special hunts.

**Related Statute or Rule:** This rule order establishes the season length and bag limits for the Wisconsin migratory game bird seasons. Each year similar or identical emergency and permanent rule packages are promulgated. This process is necessary to have the seasons in place for the fall hunting season while following the federal and state rule procedures.

**Plain Language Analysis:** This rule order establishes the season length and bag limits for the 2008 Wisconsin migratory game bird seasons. For ducks, the state is divided into two zones each with 60-day seasons. The season begins at 9:00 a.m. September 27 and continues for 60 consecutive days in the north, closing on November 25. In the South, the season begins at 9:00 a.m. on October 4 and continues through October 12, followed by a 5-day split, and then reopens on October 18 and continues through December 7. The special season for hunters age 12 through 15 will occur on September 20 and 21.

The daily bag limit is 6 ducks including no more than: 4 mallards, of which only one may be a hen, one black duck, one pintail, 3 wood ducks and 2 redheads. The daily bag limit may include 1 scaup except that from Oct. 18 to Nov. 6 in the north zone and Nov. 1 to Nov. 20 in the south zone the daily bag may include 2 scaup.

The USFWS has reduced the daily bag limit on scaup from 2 for the entire season to 1 for a portion of the season in response to a declining population trend from the 1970's until about 2001. Scaup are, however, still the third most abundant duck in continental surveys at 3.7 million. The Mississippi Flyway was given a scaup season of 60 days with 40 days at a 1 bird daily bag and 20 days at a 2 bird daily bag. Wisconsin had the option to pick where the 20 days with a 2 bird bag fall during the season.

This rule order does not allow the harvest of canvasback ducks which is a stipulation of the federal framework. The season closure is in response to a decrease in the canvasback breeding population. The reason for this decrease remains unanswered but may be due to over-flight to non-breeding areas because of dry conditions in the prairie region. The canvasback harvest in 2007 (125,000 nationwide) was only one-third of the number of birds that were projected could be safely harvested.

For Canada geese, the state is apportioned into 3 goose hunting zones: Horicon, Collins and Exterior. Other special goose management subzones within the Exterior Zone include Brown County, Burnett County, Rock Prairie and the Mississippi River. Season lengths are: Collins Zone - 67 days (three hunting periods, September 16 – October 5, October 6 – 26, October 27 – November 21); Horicon Zone - 92 days (2 hunting periods, first period beginning September 16 and the second on November 3); Exterior Zone in the northern duck zone - 85 days (Sept. 20 – Dec. 13); Exterior Zone in the southern duck zone – 85 days (Sept. 20 – Oct. 12 and Oct. 18 – Dec. 18) and Mississippi River subzone - 85 days (Oct. 4 – Oct. 12 and Oct. 18 – Jan. 1). The Burnett County subzone is closed to Canada goose hunting. The statewide daily bag limit for Canada geese in all zones is 2 birds per day during the open seasons within the zones.

This rule order adds ten days to the mourning dove season so that it extends to November 9 which is consistent with a new opportunity offered in the federal hunting season framework.

Finally, this rule corrects an inconsistency between the section that establishes shooting hours and the section that establishes when the hunting season begins. Both should indicate a 9:00 a.m. start on the first day of the duck season but the section on shooting hours incorrectly describes a 12:00 noon start.

**Summary of, and Comparison with, Existing or Proposed Federal Regulations:** Under international treaty and Federal law, migratory game bird seasons are closed unless opened annually via the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) regulations process. As part of the Federal rule process, the FWS proposes a duck harvest-management objective that balances hunting opportunities with the desire to achieve waterfowl population goals identified in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). Under this harvest-management objective, the relative importance of hunting opportunity increases as duck populations approach the goals in the NAWMP. Thus, hunting opportunity would be maximized when the population is at or above goals. Additionally, while FWS believes that the NAWMP's population goals tend to exert a conservative influence on overall duck harvest-management, other factors such as habitat are considered.

In the past, the regular Canada goose season was based on the allowable Mississippi Valley Population (MVP) harvest and was determined based on the spring breeding population estimate obtained from an aerial survey of the MVP breeding range as prescribed by the Mississippi Flyway MVP management plan. However, because locally produced giant Canada geese now constitute a considerable portion of the harvest in all states that also harvest Mississippi Valley Population birds, the Mississippi Flyway Council is testing the use of a standard season framework for 5 years. Beginning in the fall of 2007 and continuing through 2011, season lengths and bag limits for each MVP harvest state will remain unchanged. Each state retains the flexibility to schedule the timing of their Canada goose season. In addition, if the MVP spring population numbers drop to a predetermined low level during the 5-year period, the stable season framework will be adjusted.

All proposed modifications included in this rule order are consistent with these parameters and guidelines which are annually established by the Fish and Wildlife Service in 50 CFR 20.

**Comparison with Rules in Adjacent States:** Since migratory bird species are managed under international treaty, each region of the country is organized in a specific geographic flyway which represents an individual migratory population of migratory game birds. Wisconsin along with Minnesota, Michigan, Illinois and Iowa are members of the Mississippi Flyway. Each year these states meet to discuss regulations and guidelines offered to the flyways by the FWS. The FWS regulations and guidelines apply to all states within the Flyway and, therefore, the regulations in the adjoining states closely resemble the rules established in this rule order, and only differ slightly based on hunter desires, habitat and population management goals. These variations fall within guidelines and sideboards established by the FWS.

**Summary of Factual Data and Analytical Methodologies:** For the regular duck season, a data based process called Adaptive Harvest Management is used annually by the USFWS and the Flyways to determine which of 3 framework alternatives best matches the current year's data on populations and habitat (data from the spring pond and duck survey). The option of a closed season is also possible if survey conditions indicated that this is necessary for the management of duck populations. The determination of which alternative is selected is based in part on the spring wetland conditions on the breeding grounds and the Mid-Continent Mallard population. These data come from the May Pond and Breeding Waterfowl Population Surveys conducted by the USFWS and Canadian Wildlife Service on traditional survey areas as well as surveys from select states, including Wisconsin.

Wisconsin's regular Canada goose season harvest consists of close to a 50:50 ratio between resident giant and MVP population Canada geese. As a result, the parameters of Wisconsin's regular goose seasons are guided by the Mississippi Flyway management plans for the MVP and giant Canada goose populations and approved by the Mississippi Flyway Council and the USFWS. The health of these populations was measured with spring breeding population surveys, survival data and harvest rates obtained from banding and production studies. The surveys and studies are conducted annually and are supported by the State of Wisconsin as part of the MFC. The result of this work is reviewed annually by the MFC committee and the USFWS to measure the impact of the stable season framework trial period.

The primary elements of Wisconsin's waterfowl regulatory process include conducting spring waterfowl surveys, participation in MFC meetings, commenting on federal proposals, and soliciting input from the public. The state process begins with Flyway meetings in February and March each year where staff provide input to the development of federal framework alternatives and requests related to the early seasons. In May and June, breeding waterfowl surveys and banding are conducted in support of the regulatory process.

In early July, staff conducted a public meeting to solicit input from interest groups, including representatives of the Conservation Congress Migratory Bird Committee. At this meeting staff provided the attendees with breeding status information and asked for any items that they wish the department to pursue at the MFC meeting in mid July. Department staff then attended the MFC Technical

and Council meetings. At this meeting staff were provided status information and the proposed framework alternative from the USFWS. Department staff then worked with the other states in our Flyway to discuss and develop proposals and recommendations that were voted upon by the MFC. Proposals that passed at the MFC meeting were forwarded to the USFWS for consideration by the Service Regulations Committee (SRC) at their meeting. The USFWS announced its final waterfowl season framework recommendation on August 1. Department staff summarized waterfowl status and regulation information for Wisconsin citizens and presented this information to the Migratory Committee of the Conservation Congress and at a public meeting (Post-Flyway Meeting) of interest groups and individuals in early August. Staff gathered public input at these meetings regarding citizen suggestions for the development of Wisconsin's waterfowl regulations given the federal framework. Public hearings were held in early August around the state to solicit additional input on the proposed annual waterfowl rule.

**Analysis and Supporting Documents Used to Determine Effect on Small Business or in Preparation of Economic Impact Report:** These rules, and the legislation which grants the department rule making authority, do not have a significant fiscal effect on the private sector or small businesses. Additionally, no significant costs are associated with compliance to these rules.

**Effects on Small Businesses:** These rules are applicable to individual sportspersons and impose no compliance or reporting requirements for small businesses, nor are any design or operational standards contained in the rule.

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**Section 1. NR 10.01(1)(b), (g), (h) and (u) are repealed and recreated to read:**

Kind of Animal	Locality	Open season (all dates inclusive)	Daily Bag Limit	Possession Limit
NR 10.01(1)(b) <i>All species of wild duck</i>	Entire state	As established by zone	As established by season and zone	Double the daily bag limit through the entire season, except opening day when it is the same as the daily bag limit.
	Northern zone as established in s. NR 10.32	Sept. 27 at 9:00 a.m. – Nov. 25	6 ducks to include not more than 4 mallards of which only one may be a hen mallard, one black duck, one pintail, 0 canvasback, 2 redheads and 3 wood ducks. The daily bag limit may include one scaup except during the period beginning on Oct. 18 and continuing through Nov. 6 when the bag limit may include 2 scaup. In addition, 5 mergansers to include not more than 2 hooded mergansers.	

Southern zone as established in s. NR 10.32	Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. – Oct. 12 and Oct. 18 – Dec. 7	6 ducks to include not more than 4 mallards of which only one may be a hen mallard, one black duck, one pintail, 0 canvasback, 2 redheads, and 3 wood ducks. The daily bag limit may include one scaup except during the period beginning on Nov. 1 and continuing through November 20 when the bag limit may include 2 scaup. In addition, 5 mergansers to include not more than 2 hooded mergansers.
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Section 1. Continued.

Kind of Animal	Locality	Open season (all dates inclusive)	Daily Bag Limit	Possession Limit
NR 10.01(1)(g) <i>Geese</i> 1. Canada geese and its subspecies	a. Entire state	Sept. 1 — Sept. 15	5	10
	b. All that part of the exterior zone lying within the northern zone established in s. NR 10.32 except for the subzones described in subd. 1.c. and d.	Sept. 20 – Sept. 26 and Sept. 27 at 9:00 a.m. – Dec. 13	2	4
	c. All that part of the Brown County subzone lying within the northern zone established in s. NR 10.32.	Sept. 20 – Sept. 26 and Sept. 27 at 9:00 a.m. – Dec. 13	2	4
	d. Burnett County subzone	None	None	None
	e. All that part of the exterior zone lying within the southern zone established in s. NR 10.32 except for the zones and subzones described in subd. 1. f. to j.	Sept. 20 – Oct. 3 and Oct 4 at 9:00 a.m. - Oct. 12 and Oct. 18 - Dec. 18	2	4
	f. All that part of the Brown County subzone lying within the southern zone established in s. NR 10.32.	Sept. 20 – Oct. 3 and Oct 4 at 9:00 a.m. - Oct. 12 and Oct. 18 - Dec. 18	2	4

**Section 1. Continued.**

Kind of Animal	Locality	Open season (all dates inclusive)	Daily Bag Limit	Possession Limit
	g. Horicon zone	Two permit periods		6 (equivalent to the prescribed number of carcass tags)
		Sept. 16 – Oct. 3 and Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. – Nov. 2	2	
		Nov. 3 – Dec. 16	2	
	h. Collins zone	Three permit periods:		6 (equivalent to the prescribed number of carcass tags)
		Sept. 16 – Oct. 3 and Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. – Oct. 5	2	
		Oct. 6 – Oct 26	2	
		Oct. 27 – Nov. 21	2	
	i. Rock Prairie subzone	Sept. 20 – Oct. 3 and Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. - Oct. 12 and Oct. 18 - Dec. 18	2	4
	j. Mississippi River subzone	Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. – Oct. 12 and Oct. 18 – Jan. 1	2	4

Note: Season dates listed in this subdivision may be closed early when the harvest may exceed the level authorized, according to the procedure in s. NR 10.125(6).

2. Snow or blue and Ross' geese	Entire state	As established by zone	20	40
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**Section 1. Continued.**

Kind of Animal	Locality	Open season (all dates inclusive)	Daily Bag Limit	Possession Limit
	a. All that part of the exterior zone lying within the northern zone established in s. NR 10.32 except for the subzones described in subd. 2.b. and c.	Sept. 20 – Sept. 26 and Sept. 27 at 9:00 a.m. – Dec. 13		
	b. All that part of the Brown County subzone lying within the northern zone established in s. NR 10.32.	Sept. 20 – Sept. 26 and Sept. 27 at 9:00 a.m. – Dec. 13		
	c. Burnett County subzone	Sept. 20 – Sept. 26 and Sept. 27 at 9:00 a.m. – Dec. 13		
	d. All that part of the exterior zone lying within the southern zone established in s. NR 10.32 except for the zones and subzones described in subd. 2. e. to i.	Sept. 20 – Oct. 3 and Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. - Oct. 12 and Oct. 18 - Dec. 18		
	e. All that part of the Brown County subzone lying within the southern zone established in s. NR 10.32	Sept. 20 – Oct. 3 and Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. - Oct. 12 and Oct. 18 - Dec. 18		
	f. Horicon zone	Sept. 16 – Oct. 3 and Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. – Dec. 16		
	g. Collins zone	Sept. 16 – Oct. 3 and Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. – Nov. 21		
	h. Rock Prairie subzone	Sept. 20 – Oct. 3 and Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. - Oct. 12 and Oct. 18 - Dec. 18		
	i. Mississippi river subzone	Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. – Oct. 12 and Oct. 18 – Jan. 1		

**Section 1. Continued.**

Kind of Animal	Locality	Open season (all dates inclusive)	Daily Bag Limit	Possession Limit
3. All other geese	Entire state	As established by zone	1 white-fronted goose	2 white-fronted geese
	a. All that part of the exterior zone lying within the northern zone established in s. NR 10.32 except for the subzones described in subd. 3.b. and c.	Sept. 20 – Sept. 26 and Sept. 27 at 9:00 a.m. – Dec. 13		
	b. All that part of the Brown County subzone lying within the northern zone established in s. NR 10.32	Sept. 20 – Sept. 26 and Sept. 27 at 9:00 a.m. – Dec. 13		
	c. Burnett County subzone	Sept. 20 – Sept. 26 and Sept. 27 at 9:00 a.m. – Dec. 13		
	d. All that part of the exterior zone lying within the southern zone established in s. NR 10.32 except for the zones and subzones described in this subd. 3.e. to i.	Sept. 20 – Oct. 3 and Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. - Oct. 12 and Oct. 18 - Dec. 18		
	e. All that part of the Brown County subzone lying within the southern zone established in s. NR 10.32	Sept. 20 – Oct. 3 and Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. - Oct. 12 and Oct. 18 - Dec. 18		
	f. Horicon zone	Sept. 22 – Oct. 3 and Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. – Dec. 16		
	g. Collins zone	Sept. 16 – Oct. 3 and Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. – Nov. 21		
	h. Rock Prairie subzone	Sept. 20 – Oct. 3 and Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. - Oct. 12 and Oct. 18 - Dec. 18		

Section 1. Continued.

Kind of Animal	Locality	Open season (all dates inclusive)	Daily Bag Limit	Possession Limit
	i. Mississippi River subzone	Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. – Oct. 12 and Oct. 18 – Jan. 1		
4. Brant	Entire state	As established by zone	1	2
	a. All that part of the exterior zone lying within the northern zone established in s. NR 10.32 except for the subzone described in subd. 3.b. and c.	Sept. 20 – Sept. 26 and Sept. 27 at 9:00 a.m. – Dec. 13		
	b. All that part of the Brown County subzone lying within the northern zone established in s. NR 10.32	Sept. 20 – Sept. 26 and Sept. 27 at 9:00 a.m. – Dec. 13		
	c. Burnett County subzone	Sept. 20 – Sept. 26 and Sept. 27 at 9:00 a.m. – Dec. 13		
	d. All that part of the exterior zone lying within the southern zone established in s. NR 10.32 except for the zones and subzones described in subd. 3. e. to i.	Sept. 20 – Oct. 3 and Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. - Oct. 12 and Oct. 18 - Dec. 18		
	e. All that part of the Brown County subzone lying within the southern zone established in s. NR 10.32	Sept. 20 – Oct. 3 and Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. - Oct. 12 and Oct. 18 - Dec. 18		
	f. Horicon zone	Sept. 16 – Oct. 3 and Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. – Dec. 16		
	g. Collins zone	Sept. 16 – Oct. 3 and Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. – Nov. 21		
	h. Rock Prairie subzone	Sept. 20 – Oct. 3 and Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. - Oct. 12 and Oct. 18 - Dec. 18		
	i. Mississippi River subzone	Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. – Oct. 12 and Oct. 18 – Jan. 1		

**Section 1. Continued.**

Kind of Animal	Locality	Open season (all dates inclusive)	Daily Bag Limit	Possession Limit
NR 10.01(1)(h) <i>Mourning dove</i>	a. Entire state	Sept. 1 — Nov. 9	15	30

NR 10.01(1)(u) *Falconry special season*. Any person possessing a valid falconry permit and hunting license shall be restricted to the following migratory game bird seasons:

Kind of Animal	Locality	Open season (all dates inclusive)	Daily Bag Limit	Possession Limit
1. All species of wild ducks, mergansers and coots	Northern zone as established in s. NR 10.32	Sept. 20 – Sept. 21, Sept. 27 at 9:00 a.m. – Nov. 25 and Jan. 9 – Feb. 22	3 in aggregate with those species listed under subd. 2.	6 in aggregate with those species listed under subd. 2 .
	Southern zone as established in s. NR 10.32	Sept. 20 – Sept. 21, Oct. 4 at 9:00 a.m. – Oct. 12, Oct. 18 – Dec. 7 and Jan. 9 – Feb. 22	3 in aggregate with those species listed under subd. 2.	6 in aggregate with those species listed under subd. 2.
2. Gallinules, Sora rail, Virginia rail, common snipe and woodcock	Entire state	Sept. 1 – Dec. 16	3 in aggregate with those species listed under subd. 1.	6 in aggregate with those species listed under subd. 1.
3. Geese	Within the zones and subzones established in s. NR 10.31	Concurrent with the open season for geese established in par. (g) for each zone or subzone	As established in par. (g) for each zone or subzone	As established in par. (g) for each zone or subzone

**Section 2. NR 10.01(1)(v) is amended to read:**

NR 10.01(1)(v) *Special youth waterfowl hunt event*. Persons 12 years of age or older but under 16 years of age who possess a certificate of accomplishment under s. 29.591, Stats., or its equivalent from another state or province, may hunt all species of wild duck, mergansers, geese, coots, and moorhens for 2 consecutive days starting on September ~~15~~ 20. Approvals under ch. 29, Stats., are not required pursuant to s. 29.197 (1), Stats., except for registration in the harvest information program under s. NR 10.12 (11) and a Canada goose hunting permit for the season or zone where goose hunting, as listed in par. (g) 1., if hunting Canada geese. Daily bag limits are those described under pars. (b), (c) and (g), except that the daily bag limit for the zone or sub zone being hunted as listed in par. (g)1.a. to j., on that date shall apply to Canada geese, and all other waterfowl hunting regulations apply. Hunters shall be accompanied by an adult 18 years of age or older. One adult may not accompany more than 2 hunters.

**Section 3. NR 10.06(5) is amended to read:**

NR 10.06(5) HUNTING HOURS. Hunting hours for bear, bow deer, deer with firearms, elk and small game are 30 minutes before sunrise through 20 minutes after sunset. Hunting hours for migratory game birds are 30 minutes before sunrise to sunset. All waterfowl hunting starts at ~~12:00 noon~~ 9:00 a.m. on the first day of the duck hunting season established in s. NR 10.01 (1) (b). The department shall establish the specific opening and closing times annually in the hunting regulations pamphlets. Opening and closing times for zone A southern and northern areas shall be based on astronomical data collected by the U.S. naval observatory, Washington D.C., 20392-5420 for Sheboygan, Wisconsin and Powers, Michigan, respectively. The hunting hours for the other zones shall be obtained by adding minutes to the Zone A a.m. and p.m. columns as follows:

Zone Adjustment

- B Add 4 minutes
- C Add 8 minutes
- D Add 12 minutes
- E Add 16 minutes
- F Add 20 minutes

**Section 4. EFFECTIVE DATE.** The rules shall take effect on the first day of the month following publication in the Wisconsin administrative register as provided in s. 227.22(2)(intro.).

**Section 5. BOARD ADOPTION.** This rule was approved and adopted by the State of Wisconsin Natural Resources Board on August 13, 2008.

Dated at Madison, Wisconsin \_\_\_\_\_.

STATE OF WISCONSIN  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew J. Frank, Secretary

(SEAL)