

2018 Public Input

Over the years, the Department has used various methods to engage migratory bird hunters in season decisions and learn about their season and hunting preferences. These hunters have a wide range of practices and preferences, some of which result in opposing views on various season parameters. However, hunting groups and individuals have been very engaged and over time have helped the Department develop compromises and produce a season structure which has strong majority support. A total of 712 individuals offered comments on the waterfowl hunting seasons since September in addition to the Wisconsin Conservation Congress Migratory Committee and several waterfowl groups. The following tools were used to involve interested parties in the rule making process.

- **Mail survey – winter 2017-18.** Following the 2017 waterfowl season a scientifically designed survey was mailed out to a random selection of 3000 Wisconsin waterfowl hunters as we have done every other year for the last several years. This survey provided information on waterfowl hunter experiences, input on hunting seasons and the 2018 duck zone configuration.
- **Rule process information** - Beginning in January 2018 we issued preliminary information and instructions on how the public could provide input to the regulation setting process through press releases, the Department website and direct mailings to waterfowl groups. Over 240,000 people received a GovDelivery email notices about us accepting public input on the 2018 migratory bird hunting seasons. Around 20,000 people are specifically signed up to receive emails about migratory bird news.
- **Telephone, email and written comment.** Public comments and questions began coming in during September after the Early Teal season closed and then after the regular season closed through telephone calls and emails. These were accepted through March 16.
- **February 12, Staff attended the Mead Hunters Meeting** which is an annual waterfowl meeting where mead staff present property level information and we presented information and received input on the 2018 season.
- **February 13, Staff attended the La Crosse County Conservation Alliance** annual waterfowl meeting to present information and received input primarily on the Mississippi River Zone season. About 15 waterfowl hunters were in attendance.
- **February 10, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation. Stevens Point.** Meeting was held to present the population status and season structure options with the waterfowl committee of the federation. Several conservation organizations or individuals were present, the groups represented were: Wisconsin Wildlife Federation (WWF), Wisconsin Waterfowl Association (WWA), La Crosse County Conservation Alliance (LCCA), Challenge the Outdoors, Green Bay Duck Hunters (GBDH), Burlington Conservation Club, and Black Slough Conservation Club (BSCC).
- **March 3, – Migratory Committee of the Conservation Congress. Stevens Point.** Staff presented information on the status of waterfowl and potential season structures. The committee made suggestions for the hunting season proposal and voted on all aspects. The committee had about 20 members present.
- **March 7, – Waterfowl presentation Facebook Live event.** Staff presented information on status of waterfowl and season proposals for the 2018 season. The video was viewed by roughly 15,400 people.
- **March 10 – Wisconsin Waterfowl Hunters Conference Special Sessions. Wausau.** Presentations and special breakout sessions were held to present the population status and proposed season structure with conference attendees. The conference had about 125 in attendance while about 45 people participated in the breakout discussions.
- **March 12-15, Public Hearings.** Four public hearings were held around the state and 123 people attended overall. Attendees were presented with population status information and the

proposed waterfowl rules. Following a period for clarifying questions, individuals could make oral testimony or provide written comments.

- **LaCrosse** - 14 people attended, 7 gave oral testimony
- **Rice Lake** - 30 people attended, 12 gave oral testimony
- **Appleton** – 33 people attended, 7 gave oral testimony
- **Pewaukee** – 46 people attended, 5 gave oral testimony

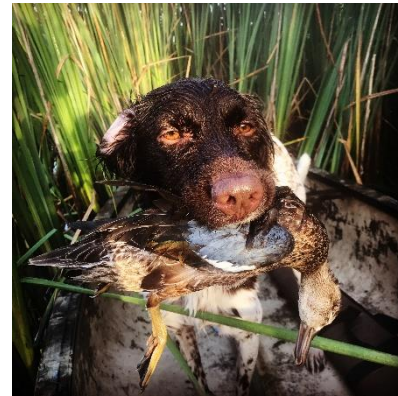
Public input Summary:

Hearing attendance and public input volume was above 2017 and prior years with a total of 712 individual comments and several statewide or local conservation groups representing thousands of members submitting comment. We saw nearly a 400% increase in public comments. 86% of the people who commented had not commented on the waterfowl season in the last 5 years. Because of rounding, percentages may not all add up to 100 percent.

Early Season Input Summary

Early Teal Season		
Yes	371	70%
NO	162	30%

Early Teal season length		
7 day	274	71%
14+ days	57	15%
9 days	24	6%
5 days	8	2%



Early Goose		
5 Canada Geese	444	91%
Add snow and dark geese	14	3%
No season	7	1%
longer	10	2%

Youth Hunt		
Sep 15-16	422	88%
One day	7	1%
move later	8	2%
Eliminate	37	8%

Duck Bag Input Summary

Duck bag		
6 ducks as proposed	443	94%
Reduce Wood duck bag	22	5%
Reduce total bag	5	1%

Hen mallard		
1 hen mallard	436	92%
2 hen mallard	31	7%
0 hen mallard	5	1%

Black Duck		
1 Black duck	453	97%
2 black duck	11	2%



Zone Structure Input Summary

North Zone Start		
Start Saturday nearest Oct 1	418	76%
Start Saturday nearest Sept 24	75	14%
Start Saturday nearest Oct 8 or later	26	5%
North Split		
Yes	64	13%
No	423	86%
South Zone Start		
Start Saturday nearest Oct 1	399	72%
Start Saturday nearest Sept 24	9	2%
Start Saturday nearest Oct 8 or later	129	23%
South Zone Split		
Yes 5 days	419	87%
Yes but Longer	55	11%
No	10	2%
Mississippi River Zone Start		
Start Saturday nearest Oct 1	406	85%
Start Saturday nearest Sept 24	12	3%
Start Saturday nearest Oct 8 or later	42	9%
Mississippi River Zone Split		
Yes 7 day	391	88%
Yes shorter	8	2%
Yes longer	29	7%
No	1	0%

Exterior Canada Goose Input Summary

Canada Goose Bag		
3 Canada Geese	528	97%
2 Canada Geese	8	1%
Different	11	2%



North Zone Canada Goose splits		
No split	369	94%
yes have a split	15	4%
Different	7	2%
South Zone Canada Goose Season		
1 split	136	39%
2 splits	205	58%
Different	10	3%
Mississippi River Zone Canada Goose Season		
1 split	326	96%
different	12	4%

Elimination of the Horicon Goose Zone		
Eliminate	477	97%
Keep	13	3%

Note from Taylor Finger – Migratory Game Bird Ecologist,

First and foremost, I would like to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to everyone that participated in the public input process for setting the 2018 migratory bird season structure. We reached out using some different avenues this year including social media and it resulted in a nearly 400% increase in comments received compared to 2017! We use several methods to gather feedback from hunters each year and we intend to continue improving how we gather that input moving forward. Every comment was reviewed and used when we set the 2018 waterfowl season structure and we did our best based on the information we received to set the seasons to benefit the majority of Wisconsin’s waterfowl hunters. As I said I want to say thank you to everyone that took the time and effort to make sure your voice was heard and good luck this fall, hopefully I will see you out there!”

