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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Upcoming Waterfowl Hunting Seasons Feature Federal Stamp Changes, New Regulations**

(Juneau) – Waterfowl hunting seasons open September 1 over much of Alaska, and as duck and goose hunters prepare to step into the marshes there are a few things they need to know – including some important regulations changes.

#### **Who Needs a Federal or State Duck Stamps?**

Alaska waterfowl hunters will be affected this season by recent amendments to the federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act. The amendments raise the price of federal waterfowl stamps from \$15 to \$25 and redefine which hunters must have a federal stamp to hunt waterfowl in Alaska.

Under the amendments, the following Alaska residents are not required to purchase federal waterfowl stamps:

- 1) Permanent rural residents of an “included area.”
- 2) Permanent rural residents who are eligible for subsistence under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).

“Included areas” are those areas where spring/summer migratory bird subsistence harvest is currently legal. Included areas and subsistence harvest regulations can be found at:

<http://www.fws.gov/alaska/ambcc/Regulations.htm>.

For questions or clarifications, please contact the USFWS Office of Law Enforcement at (907) 786-3311.

The federal amendments have no bearing on the Alaska state waterfowl stamp or hunting license requirements. Waterfowl hunters in Alaska must have a signed \$5 Alaska state waterfowl stamp in possession while hunting waterfowl anywhere in the state unless you are an Alaska resident who qualifies for exemption based on age, income, or veteran’s disability. Details can be found in the state waterfowl hunting regulations online or the regulations booklet.

#### **State Regulations Changes**

In state regulations news, bag limits for white-fronted geese in Game Management Unit 18 (the Yukon-Kuskokwim region) will increase to 10 birds per day, 30 in possession. Pacific white-fronted goose numbers are almost twice the Pacific Flyway management objective of 300,000 birds. Most of the population nests in Game Management Unit 18.

Possession limits for Canada geese in all of Game Management Unit 6 (except Middleton Island) are now three times the daily bag. This includes the Copper River Delta and Prince William Sound. The bag limit for Canada geese remains four birds per day. Middleton Island regulations remain unchanged. Breeding surveys indicate the region's total population of dusky Canada geese has increased to 17,699 birds. This is the highest population estimate since 1986.

### **Palmer Hay Flats Hunters Take Note**

Southcentral Alaska hunters who plan to visit the popular Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge near Wasilla should be aware of a regional restriction to ATV use on the Cottonwood Creek ATV trail. All but the first mile of the ATV trail will remain closed to motorized vehicles through the fall season as the Alaska Department of Fish and Game works to protect wetlands and mitigate damage caused by expanding tidal guts and ATVs. The closure will affect waterfowl hunters and other recreationists who use ATVs to access remote portions of the refuge via the 6.5-mile-long trail.

### **Hunters, Keep it Clean!**

In addition to these regulations changes, waterfowl hunters are reminded that several strains of avian influenza have been detected this year in waterfowl in the Lower 48. None of these strains has been transmitted to people. Although highly pathogenic avian flu has not been detected in Alaska, hunters should be aware that wildlife can carry pathogens of many kinds. As always, waterfowl hunters are advised to practice routine hygiene when handling, cleaning and cooking wild game. The Department of Fish and Game recommends the following:

- Do not handle or eat obviously sick game.
- Wear rubber or disposable latex gloves while handling and cleaning game.
- Wash hands and thoroughly clean knives, equipment and surfaces that come into contact with game.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke while handling animals.
- All game should be thoroughly cooked (meat internal temperature of 165 °F).

Monitoring for avian flu is ongoing in Alaska and early-season waterfowl hunters in the Cook Inlet region may encounter field technicians seeking samples. For more information, contact ADF&G Wildlife Health and Disease Surveillance Program, phone: (907) 328-8354, or email: [dfg.dwc.vet@alaska.gov](mailto:dfg.dwc.vet@alaska.gov)

The Alaska 2015-2016 Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations Summary is scheduled to be available online August 25 at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/wildliferegulations/pdfs/waterfowl.pdf>

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