



MONTANA FWP

October 2020

«FIRST» «LAST»

«ADDRESS»

«CITY», «STATE» «ZIP»

Dear Resident Montana Waterfowl Hunter,

We need your help!

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) is conducting a survey to better understand resident waterfowl hunters' preferences for waterfowl hunting seasons in Montana. You have been randomly selected for this survey, and we want to hear from YOU!

Please complete the enclosed survey and **return it as soon as possible using the pre-paid, self-addressed envelope provided**. Your participation is very important, and it should take no more than 5-7 minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire. This is a unique opportunity for you to provide information which will be used by FWP and the FWP Commission to help manage waterfowl hunting in Montana.

Participation is voluntary, and your responses to the survey will remain completely confidential. Your name and contact information will never in any way be released or associated with your responses in the reporting of survey results. The survey questionnaire has an identification number, so we can check your name off the mailing list when your survey is returned. If you have any questions about this survey, please feel free to contact Brian Wakeling by phone (406) 444-3940 or email brian.wakeling@mt.gov -or- Mike Lewis by phone at (406) 444-4308 or by email mlewis@mt.gov .

Thank you for your help.

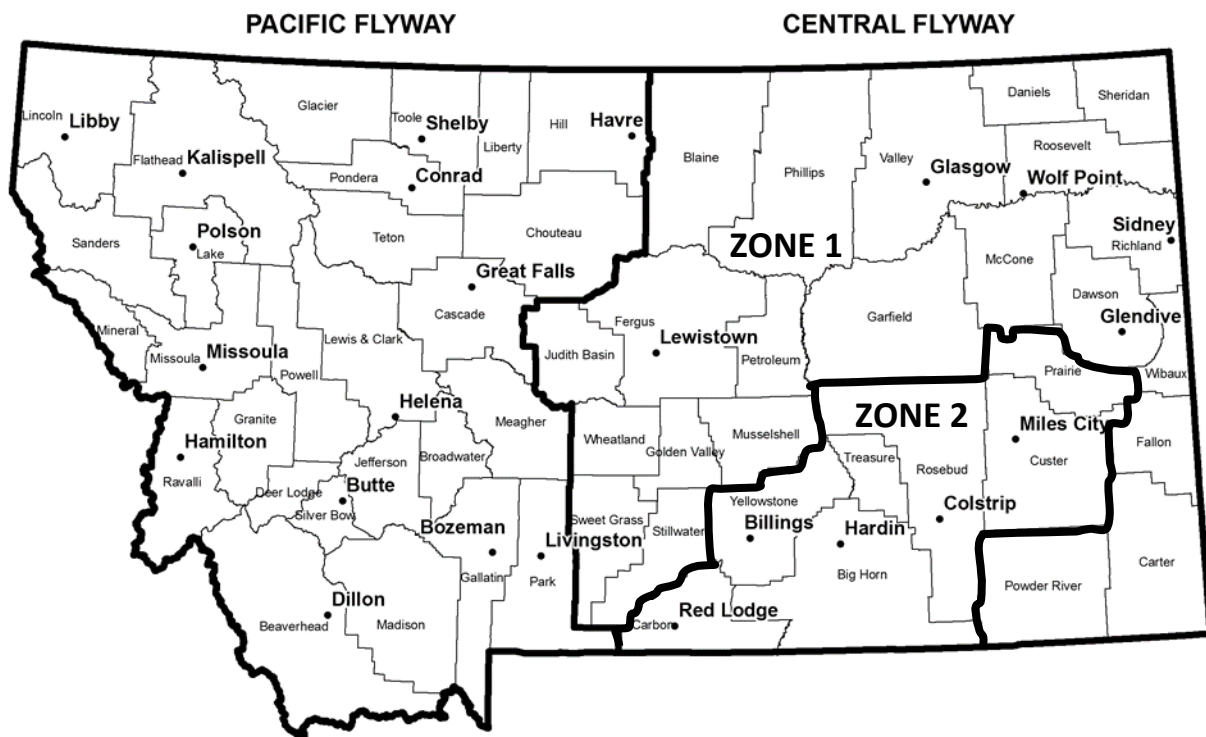
Sincerely,

Ken McDonald
Wildlife Division Administrator
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

How waterfowl hunting regulations are set...

Some ducks and geese migrate between the arctic in North America and Asia to South America and back every year. Because of this there are international treaties to protect migratory birds and define how waterfowl are managed. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 is between the U.S. and Canada, Mexico, Russia, and Japan. In the United States, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has the overall waterfowl management authority and sets a general framework for waterfowl hunting seasons that the individual states must follow. That framework establishes things like the earliest starting and latest ending dates; the total number of hunting days allowed between those dates; the maximum number of birds that can be taken by species and sex; how and when states can divide areas into different hunting zones and when zone boundaries can be changed, and if states can split the hunting season into different time periods. The individual states' regulations can be more restrictive than the federal frameworks, but they cannot be more liberal. In our state Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) sets waterfowl hunting regulations within the framework set by the USFWS.

Waterfowl are managed by way of administrative areas called flyways. There are four flyways in North America, and because they are all different in terms of hunter numbers and the ducks and geese that use them, each is managed separately with different season types and hunting limits. In Montana, there are parts of two flyways: (1) the Pacific Flyway in the western half of the state and (2) the Central Flyway in the eastern half (*see the map below*). The season frameworks established by the USFWS in the two flyways are often different from one another.



1. How many **YEARS** have you hunted waterfowl in Montana? _____ (years)
2. On a scale from 1 (very casual) to 5 (very avid), how would you describe yourself as a waterfowl hunter?
Circle only ONE number below.

(I am a very casual waterfowl hunter) 1 2 3 4 5 (I am a very avid waterfowl hunter)

Federal frameworks define the maximum length of the season depending on waterfowl abundance and reproduction. States have the flexibility within those frameworks to define open and closing dates. We have traditionally opened waterfowl seasons the Saturday nearest October 1. In Montana, we try to recommend seasons that allow a variety of hunting opportunities when good numbers of waterfowl are present, while considering fall migration patterns and the likelihood that wetlands may freeze over, which may limit opportunities to hunt waterfowl.

The remaining question in this survey focus on the waterfowl hunting seasons in the Pacific Flyway and the Central Flyway portions of Montana (*see the map on the back of the survey cover letter*). The four-month calendar (Oct. 2020 – Jan. 2021) below is provided to assist you in answering these questions.

October 2020							November 2020						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30					
December 2020							January 2021						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5						1	2
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30
							31						

(OVER)

Pacific Flyway – Ducks and Geese

3. For the Pacific Flyway in the western half of Montana (*see the map on the back of the survey cover letter*), some hunters have suggested that changing season dates may provide better access to waterfowl later in the season. Within the Pacific Flyway, the season for both ducks and geese may run for up to 105 days (with two additional days for youths). Which of the following do you MOST PREFER for the end of the waterfowl season in the Pacific Flyway? (**check only one below**; season dates are provided from the most recent year; routine calendar shifts will adjust dates annually)
- The current season structure, which begins October 3 and runs through January 10, and then reopens on January 16 and runs through January 20, allowing an additional weekend of hunting.
 - Don't split the season; allow it to end on Friday, January 15.
 - Open October 3 and run through October 23, reopen on November 9 and run through January 31.
 - Open October 3 and run through January 3, reopen on January 20 and run through January 31.
 - Other, please specify: _____
 - No opinion

Central Flyway – Ducks

4. Which of the following do you MOST PREFER for **Duck** season in **ZONE 1** of the **Central Flyway** (*see the map on back of the survey cover letter*) in the eastern half of Montana? (**check only one below**; season dates are provided from the most recent year; routine calendar shifts will adjust dates annually)
- The current season structure, which begins October 3 and runs through January 7.
 - Open October 3 and run through October 23, reopen on November 17 and run through January 31.
 - Open October 3 and run through January 3, reopen on January 28 and run through January 31.
 - Other, please specify: _____
 - No opinion
5. Which of the following do you MOST PREFER for **Duck** season in **ZONE 2** of the **Central Flyway** (*see the map on back of the survey cover letter*) in the eastern half of Montana? (**check only one below**; season dates are provided from the most recent year; routine calendar shifts will adjust dates annually)
- The current season structure, which begins October 3 and runs through October 11, and then reopens on October 24 and runs through January 19.
 - Open October 3 and run through October 23, reopen on November 17 and run through January 31.
 - Open October 3 and run through January 3, reopen on January 28 and run through January 31.
 - Open October 3 and run through January 7. (Don't split the duck season.)
 - Other, please specify: _____
 - No opinion

Central Flyway – Geese

6. Which of the following do you MOST PREFER for the **Goose** season in **ZONE 1** of the **Central Flyway** (*see the map on back of the survey cover letter*) in the eastern half of Montana? (**check only one below**; season dates are provided from the most recent year; routine calendar shifts will adjust dates annually)

The current season structure, which begins October 3 and runs through January 10, and then reopens on January 16 and runs through January 20, providing an additional weekend.

Open October 3 and run through October 23, reopen November 11 and run through January 31.

Open October 3 and run through January 6; reopen January 23 through January 31.

Open October 3 and run through January 15 (no split season).

Other, please specify: _____

No opinion

7. Which of the following do you MOST PREFER for the **Goose** season in **ZONE 2** of the **Central Flyway** (*see the map on back of the survey cover letter*) in the eastern half of Montana? (**check only one below**; season dates are provided from the most recent year; routine calendar shifts will adjust dates annually)

The current season structure, which begins October 3 and runs through October 11, and then reopens October 24 and runs through January 27.

Open October 3 and run through Friday, January 15 (no split season).

Open October 3 and run through October 23, reopen November 9 and run through January 31.

Open October 3 and run through January 3, reopen January 20 and run through January 31.

Other, please specify: _____

No opinion

8. Any additional comments you may have regarding the waterfowl hunting seasons in Montana are more than welcome.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Please return your completed survey using the enclosed postage paid envelope.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Human Dimensions Program
1420 East Sixth Avenue, P.O. Box 200701
Helena, Montana 59620-0701

