

2020 Resident Waterfowl Hunter Survey Results

Study population: N=3,000 randomly selected resident waterfowl license holders (17 years of age or older); randomly selected from the pool of 2020 waterfowl license holders on September 10, 2020.

A single mailing of the survey sent to the selected study population during the administration of the survey.

There were 824 respondents to the survey; and; 92 undeliverable (e.g., the mailing address provided for the licensed hunter was undeliverable).

28 percent overall survey response rate.

PACIFIC FLYWAY – DUCKS AND GEESE

Response to: “For the Pacific Flyway in the western half of Montana, 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? “

Options...	Which do you MOST PREFER for the end of the waterfowl season in the Pacific Flyway?		
	Percent all respondents (N = 801)	Percent avid* waterfowler respondents (N = 221)	Percent casual* waterfowler respondents (N = 349)
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.	19.6	23.5	16.0
Don't split the season; allow it to end on Friday, January 15.	28.0	27.6	26.6
Open October 3 and run through October 23, reopen on November 9 and run through January 31.	18.6	20.8	16.9
Open October 3 and run through January 3, reopen on January 20 and run through January 31.	8.4	12.7	6.6
Other (see responses below)	3.7	4.5	3.2
No opinion	21.7	10.9	30.7

* Avid waterfowlers responded 4 or 5 to the following question: “On a scale from 1 (very casual) to 5 (very avid), how would you describe yourself as a waterfowl hunter?” Casual waterfowlers responded 1 or 2 to the same question.

Other responses from all respondents:

- Don't split season and run later; open later as well. Open later/end later. (7 responses)
- Open later, but end January 31. (3 responses)
- Open October 3, end on January 31. Do not split season. (2 responses)
- October 3 to January 20. (2 responses)

Only one response for each of the following...

- October 3-11; October 16-18; October 24-January 24.
- October 3 to January 20.
- October 3 to January 3.
- October 3-28; December 15 – February 28.
- October 10 – November 30; December 11 to January 31.
- October 21 to January 31.
- November 1 – January 10.
- Push back opener one month; no split; 105-day season.
- Please consider opening second or third Saturday.
- Start later; no closure until the end.
- May late day seasons preferred.
- Open season earlier.
- Open last week September to hunt Teal and close January 10 or January 1.
- Open September 15 and close after 105 days.
- September 26 to January 3; January 16-20.
- Start in September.
- Season only for geese extended to March 15.

CENTRAL FLYWAY – DUCKS IN ZONE 1

Response to: “Which of the following do you MOST PREFER for **Duck** season in **ZONE 1** of the **Central Flyway** in the eastern half of Montana?”

Options...	Which do you MOST PREFER for DUCK season in ZONE 1 of the Central Flyway?		
	Percent all respondents (N = 779)	Percent avid* waterfowler respondents (N = 215)	Percent casual* waterfowler respondents (N = 341)
The current season structure, which begins October 3 and runs through January 7.	38.5	38.1	38.4
Open October 3 and run through October 23, reopen on November 17 and run through January 31.	18.4	23.7	16.7
Open October 3 and run through January 3, reopen on January 28 and run through January 31.	5.6	8.8	4.1
Other (see responses below)	2.7	2.8	1.8
No opinion	34.8	26.5	39.0

* Avid waterfowlers responded 4 or 5 to the following question: “On a scale from 1 (very casual) to 5 (very avid), how would you describe yourself as a waterfowl hunter?” Casual waterfowlers responded 1 or 2 to the same question.

Other responses from all respondents:

- October 3 – January 31. (3 responses)
- Continuous season (start earlier, end earlier). (2 responses)
- October 3 – January 15. (2 responses)
- Open later and let it run through the end of January. (2 responses)

Only one response for each of the following...

- Open one week earlier; and end one week earlier.
- Open earlier.
- Push opener back one month, no split, and have a 105-day season.
- Last week September – January 7.
- No split season.
- October 1 – January 31.
- October 3 – January 3.
- October 15 – January 31.
- October 21 – January 21.
- October 22 – January 24.
- November 1 – January 10
- Open season later and let it run through the end of January.
- Should be consistent with Pacific Flyway.

CENTRAL FLYWAY – DUCKS IN ZONE 2

Response to: “Which of the following do you MOST PREFER for **Duck** season in **ZONE 2** of the **Central Flyway** in the eastern half of Montana?”

Options...	Which do you MOST PREFER for DUCK season in ZONE 2 of the Central Flyway?		
	Percent all respondents (N = 778)	Percent avid* waterfowler respondents (N = 214)	Percent casual* waterfowler respondents (N = 342)
The current season structure, which begins October 3 and runs through October 11, and then reopens on October 24 and runs through January 19.	14.5	20.1	10.8
Open October 3 and run through October 23, reopen on November 17 and run through January 31.	17.1	19.6	15.5
Open October 3 and run through January 3, reopen on January 28 and run through January 31.	4.0	6.1	3.2
Open October 3 and run through January 7. (Don't split the duck season.)	21.6	23.4	21.1
Other (see responses below)	2.6	2.3	2.0
No opinion	40.2	28.5	47.4

* Avid waterfowlers responded 4 or 5 to the following question: “On a scale from 1 (very casual) to 5 (very avid), how would you describe yourself as a waterfowl hunter?” Casual waterfowlers responded 1 or 2 to the same question.

Other responses from all respondents:

- October 3 – January 15. (2 responses)
- October 3 – January 31. No split. (2 responses)

Only one response for each of the following...

- Open a little earlier
- Continuous season starting and ending earlier.
- October 1 – January 31.
- October 3 – January 3.
- October 3 – January 15.
- October 3 – January 31, no split.
- October 15 – January 19.
- October 15 – February 12.
- October 21 – January 1.
- October 21 – January 31.
- October 22 – January 24, no split.
- November 1 – January 10.
- Open later and let in run through January.
- Push opener back one month, no split, and have a 105-day season.
- Don't split the season, start and end later.
- Same as rest of state.

CENTRAL FLYWAY – GEESE IN ZONE 1

Response to: “Which of the following do you MOST PREFER for the **Goose** season in **ZONE 1** of the **Central Flyway** in the eastern half of Montana?”

Options...	Which do you MOST PREFER for the GOOSE season in ZONE 1 of the Central Flyway?		
	Percent all respondents (N = 785)	Percent avid* waterfowler respondents (N = 217)	Percent casual* waterfowler respondents (N = 342)
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.	18.3	22.6	17.0
Open October 3 and run through October 23, reopen November 11 and run through January 31.	17.2	20.7	14.9
Open October 3 and run through January 6; reopen January 23 through January 31.	5.0	6.5	3.8
Open October 3 and run through January 15 (no split season).	25.0	23.0	25.4
Other (see responses below)	2.4	1.8	2.3
No opinion	32.1	25.3	36.5

* Avid waterfowlers responded 4 or 5 to the following question: “On a scale from 1 (very casual) to 5 (very avid), how would you describe yourself as a waterfowl hunter?” Casual waterfowlers responded 1 or 2 to the same question.

Other responses from all respondents:

- October 3 – January 31, no split. (3 responses)
- Same as in Zone 2. (2 responses)

Only one response for each of the following...

- Don't split the season; start later and end later.
- Open season late and let it run through end of January.
- Extend to March 15.
- Last week September through January 10.
- No split; run through January 31.
- October 1 – January 31.
- October 15 – January 31.
- October 19 – January 31; no split.
- October 21 – January 31.
- Open one week earlier; end one week earlier.
- Open two weeks earlier.
- Consider opening 2nd or 3rd Saturday.
- Push opener back one month, no split, still have a 105-day season.

CENTRAL FLYWAY – GEESE IN ZONE 2

Response to: “Which of the following do you MOST PREFER for the **Goose** season in **ZONE 2** of the **Central Flyway** in the eastern half of Montana?”

Options...	Which do you MOST PREFER for the GOOSE season in ZONE 2 of the Central Flyway?		
	Percent all respondents (N = 781)	Percent avid* waterfowler respondents (N = 217)	Percent casual* waterfowler respondents (N = 340)
The current season structure, which begins October 3 and runs through October 11, and then reopens October 24 and runs through January 27.	15.0	22.6	12.1
Open October 3 and run through Friday, January 15 (no split season).	22.4	21.2	20.6
Open October 3 and run through October 23, reopen November 9 and run through January 31.	17.9	22.1	16.5
Open October 3 and run through January 3, reopen January 20 and run through January 31.	4.4	5.5	4.7
Other (see responses below)	2.2	1.8	2.1
No opinion	38.2	26.7	44.1

* Avid waterfowlers responded 4 or 5 to the following question: “On a scale from 1 (very casual) to 5 (very avid), how would you describe yourself as a waterfowl hunter?” Casual waterfowlers responded 1 or 2 to the same question.

Other responses from all respondents:

- October 3 – January 31, no split. (3 responses)

Only one response for each of the following...

- Continuous later season.
- Don’t split season; start later and end later.
- Extend.
- Move opening to October 15 and add extra days at end of season.
- No split; run through January 31.
- October 1 – January 31.
- October 15 – January 15.
- October 19 – January 31; no split.
- October 21 -January 31.
- October 24 – February 20.
- November 1 – January 10.
- Open season late and let it run through the end of January.
- Push opener back one month, no split, and still have a 105-day season.
- Should be the same as the rest of the state.

Response to: "On a scale from 1 (very casual) to 5 (very avid), how would you describe yourself as a waterfowl hunter?"

(I am a very casual waterfowl hunter)	1	26.7 percent
	2	16.4 percent
	3	28.1 percent
	4	16.4 percent
(I am a very avid waterfowl hunter)	5	11.0 percent

Response to: "How many **YEARS** have you hunted waterfowl in Montana?"

Mean = 22 years
Median = 18 years

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	59	7.2	7.3	7.3
	2	40	4.9	5.0	12.3
	3	47	5.7	5.8	18.1
	4	22	2.7	2.7	20.8
	5	34	4.1	4.2	25.0
	6	17	2.1	2.1	27.1
	7	16	1.9	2.0	29.1
	8	11	1.3	1.4	30.5
	9	7	.8	.9	31.4
	10	47	5.7	5.8	37.2
	11	6	.7	.7	37.9
	12	10	1.2	1.2	39.2
	13	6	.7	.7	39.9
	14	13	1.6	1.6	41.5
	15	38	4.6	4.7	46.2
	16	9	1.1	1.1	47.3
	17	10	1.2	1.2	48.6
	18	14	1.7	1.7	50.3
	19	6	.7	.7	51.1
	20	56	6.8	6.9	58.0
	21	2	.2	.2	58.2
	22	5	.6	.6	58.9
	23	6	.7	.7	59.6
	24	8	1.0	1.0	60.6
	25	26	3.2	3.2	63.8
	26	5	.6	.6	64.4
	27	5	.6	.6	65.1
	28	4	.5	.5	65.6
	29	2	.2	.2	65.8
	30	42	5.1	5.2	71.0

31	1	.1	.1	71.1
32	2	.2	.2	71.4
33	4	.5	.5	71.9
34	4	.5	.5	72.4
35	15	1.8	1.9	74.2
36	6	.7	.7	75.0
37	3	.4	.4	75.3
38	5	.6	.6	76.0
39	2	.2	.2	76.2
40	34	4.1	4.2	80.4
41	3	.4	.4	80.8
42	11	1.3	1.4	82.2
43	2	.2	.2	82.4
44	8	1.0	1.0	83.4
45	22	2.7	2.7	86.1
46	8	1.0	1.0	87.1
48	5	.6	.6	87.7
49	5	.6	.6	88.4
50	37	4.5	4.6	92.9
51	4	.5	.5	93.4
52	5	.6	.6	94.1
53	4	.5	.5	94.5
54	5	.6	.6	95.2
55	9	1.1	1.1	96.3
56	3	.4	.4	96.7
57	2	.2	.2	96.9
58	2	.2	.2	97.1
59	1	.1	.1	97.3
60	14	1.7	1.7	99.0
61	2	.2	.2	99.3
62	1	.1	.1	99.4
65	2	.2	.2	99.6
66	1	.1	.1	99.8
67	1	.1	.1	99.9
72	1	.1	.1	100.0
Total	807	97.9	100.0	
Missing	99	17	2.1	
Total	824	100.0		

Verbatim response to: “Any additional comments you may have regarding the waterfowl hunting seasons in Montana are more than welcome.”

Verbatim Comment
I don't understand why the break in season.
I don't hunt Central flyway. No preference on dates.
We should have spring snow & spec season.
I only hunt the Pacific Flyway so can't speak for the Central Flyway.
Libby area use to have good numbers of Geese/Ducks, freeze out #'s have dropped also! Low number of birds makes travel less of an option. I still support Ducks Unlimited!
I enjoy hunting ducks and geese. I just wish the regulations around ducks were simpler.
Where I hunt, duck season is almost non-existent after opening day until the middle of November until cold weather shows up. So those days are just wasted.
Not a fan of the split seasons as confusing and hard to plan around for most hunters and I would guess an enforcement nightmare.
I prefer existing seasons for where I hunt. A split season in Oct/Nov could eliminate my best hunting.
Spring goose hunt, please.
I don't hunt waterfowl until the end of big game season. Early season has obviously less bird #'s. If you want to kill move geese/duck extend the season later. A lot of guys I talk to have these same opinions. I typically only hunt Central Zone 2.
Please open the dove season on the 15th of August. Most of the doves have already headed south before the season opens on 9/1.
I enjoy hunting wood ducks, the current season in zone 2 doesn't allow for much, the birds are gone by the second opening.
It would sure be more convenient to keep the duck and goose seasons open & close on the same dates. I'm assuming that can't happen because of the migratory bird treaty act.
Hunting areas like the Bighorn Rive, it's necessary to have the season open as late as possible in Zone 2 of the Central Flyway.
Use research to determine those sustainable waterfowl harvest seasons to protect resource long term. This means assessing and implementing best hunting season dates that prioritize nesting, breeding, feeding adjustments to changing climatic conditions.
I would welcome more enforcement of regs. I regularly hear 6-shot salvos 10 mins before the legal shooting time. And find fresh beer cans in the waterfowl reproduction area on weekends.
Keep in mind crane & swan seasons.
Also asked 6-8 other people and they were in agreement on these dates. Run zone 1 & 2 at same time.
No split seasons I beg of you!
The fact is that the beginning of Oct is warm as was the case again this year. For the last several years good duck & goose hunting doesn't start until Christmas.
I do not hunt waterfowls very often. Usually buy a federal stamp in case I do get a chance to hunt waterfowls.
I am new to Montana, I have not yet hunted waterfowl, this will be my first season. I don't feel qualified to give an opinion without ever having participated.
Have an early Teal season.
I'd rather have a longer split season and start earlier/end later.
I have been hunting waterfowl a long time. It has become harder to find places to hunt because of losing access. The ___ Ranch is very helpful in this regard.
I think split seasons contribute to untended violations.
I only hunt Pac Flyway.
The current timing has us missing out on lots of local & early migrating birds. Teal numbers are excellent, but season is closed.

I have a problem with the current season schedule.
I think seasons are good as it is. They take in considerations when northern birds are down plus not running so late as to put undue pressure on wintering birds.
Shooting time till 1/2 hour after sunset.
I don't care for the split seasons but I do like a later season. Opening a week or two later in October would allow time for more migrating birds to arrive and then the season could be open later into January.
I only hunt Pacific Flyway.
I have largely hunted in the Pacific Flyway and prefer the current system to allow an additional weekend at the end of the season. My only comment about central flyway is that is ripe for confusion with so many different openings and closing of various species to zones.
Conforming to current dates because its easy. For the last several years there has been no snow goose hunting other than for a day. In the Pacific Flyway at freezeout... 20 bird limit?--Open a spring migration hunt as weather precludes the fall hunt.
With those warmer winters not pushing migration until later, keep the season open as late as possible.
Please consider an early season for "Resident" geese followed by a late season which would include migratory.
Try to keep things as is, if you have to change split season- I like the idea of extending at the end and not hunting opening of rifle season.
I love hunting waterfowl but hope seasons won't split easier to plan hunts with family and friends.
Change the time "end @ sunset" back to 1/2 hr after sunset because the birds don't fly till after sunset time. It used to be 1/2 hr after sunset so you could hunt in the evenings-you can't now.
Keep consistent/less confusing, give local dude any break.
Split season is ideal, gives birds a week of rest and makes final week as exciting as opening week.
The goose season in both flyway should be open longer because there are too many geese around making a mess of dock & golf courses.
Based on my years of waterfowl hunting, I feel that steel shot causes more cripples than with lead, despite a bit of peripheral poisoning due to ingesting lead pellets.
Goose limits for Canada geese should be increased especially in Montana portion of Pacific Flyway.
Agree w/ opening dates. Waterfowl populations appear to be stable.
The later the better, one week earlier wouldn't hurt either Sept 24th through Oct 15th for the early.
How about a spring consideration hunt for snow geese? I travel to other state to waterfowl hunt. That's why no opinion on your questions. Access pretty tough here in MT for good duck & goose hunting which limits the hunts here in MT. Especially during elk season.
I only hunt the Pacific Flyway so thought it only fair to speak for my area.
I feel the split seasons are confusing and serve no purpose.
I'm not sure why the split seasons but I like the split duck season in the Pacific Flyway. That last week can be really good.
I know a lot of waterfowl hunters that have wanted ducks and geese open the whole month of January. Most don't even start hunting waterfowl until after big game season.
Ban leasing hunting rights to property unless through licensed outfitters That is beginning to limit opportunities to hunt more than hunting seasons.
Pacific Flyway hunter only I prefer a continuous season.
I enjoy hunting northern birds late in season, but last two years due to mild weather they did not come down until after the season.
I only hunt ducks & like the January season.
Open Pacific season earlier to align with the Teal migration or have a separate teal season as they do in some of the central flyway states.
Please return the last half hour after sunset.

Early teal season, early goose damage season in Pacific Flyway which is allowed under Fed regs.
We should be allowed a more liberal limit on dark geese, less on ducks. There are a lot more geese than 30 years ago & a lot less mallards.
Very few geese in zone 2 during late Oct & early Nov. No reason to have goose season open before the migrants come down.
I think having a more continuous season allows for more opportunities before freeze up.
Season as is for Pacific Flyway has always worked well so I've got no reason to offer any change ideas.
I hunt late season mallards with the warmer climate would prefer seasons running further into Jan for ducks and geese.
Good job with the waterfowls.
Dove season for northern Montana should open the middle of August. Our abundance of Doves in August seems to evaporate in early September with the first cold front. Thanks for listening.
How about sandhill cranes in Ravalli County.
A Teal season Sept 20-Oct 3.
I don't goose hunt if I see one within range on the Missouri River, I will take a shot but only if I am certain the goose is within a kill range of 25-40 yards.
Raise Pacific Flyway gees from 4 to 5 like Central Flyway & implement 20 special drawing sandhill Crane tags for Cascade County. I have been seeing in the last 10 years 500 up to 800 from mid Sept-Nov. I understand a lot of greater came through this area but there are more lesser than greater.
For Canada geese I think that having a 5 bird limit in the Pacific Flyway on the east side of the Rocky Mtns would be good because the bird population has soared and is way too high for the area.
I always enjoy any days, I'm sitting over my decoys hunting waterfowl.
I grew up in North Central ND so I just wish there were more ducks & geese.
Over the past 3 years running a season to Jan 31 would increase hunter success exponentially. Birds have been migrating late and numbers are high right after the seasons close.
Thanks FWP for all of your time and effort. We appreciate it.
I typically only hunt the Pacific Flyway, but in my opinion the duck hunting is significantly better at the end of the season than mid-season. Taking a break in early November seems ideal to me.
Get rid of river waterfowl hunting closure on the Yellowstone River in Rosebud Treasure Counties.
Change hunting hours to 1/2 hr before sunrise and to 1/2 hr after sunset.
The youth weekend has affected opening day for sure. But I understand its importance, so its ok.
Split seasons run isle of good hunting as waterfowl arrives while season is closed.
I buy a tag to be legal. Don't target waterfowl.
There seems to be a great number of resident geese in Montana. I see them frequently between Helena and Great Falls. Is there a way to increase access and harvest? Perhaps some sort of block management access plan or FWP blinds on fields or streams are possible.
Keeping the ponds full on the Canyon Ferry WMA would be very much appreciated during the hunting season.
Need to band more local birds and get the youth involved in this program.
I would like to see a spring snow goose season in the Pacific Flyway. A 7 day season.
I can remember one time line of duck & geese season.
I would like to see the season in zone 1 pushed back in to January as far as possible.
I think that having different season structures throughout the state creates confusion and potential law breaking by people who aren't law breakers.
Split seasons are hard to keep track of.
Can the season be able to be changed (extended/shortened) due to migration & weather on a yearly basis, not a fan of the split season.

In zone 2 open the season later but still end January 31. Youth hunt is very difficult because the ducks have no color, I suggest backing it up.
Additional consideration to spring snow goose season in eastern Montana should be given.
I prefer opportunities to hunt waterfowl late in the year after other hunting seasons have closed. It's often difficult to find time for all of the concurrent upland, big game and waterfowl hunting opportunities.
I primarily only hunt the Pacific Flyway. The current season structure is just fine w/ me.
It would be good to hunt limit the amount of private properties or acres a guide can hold. They come in and offer money to hunt places we used to hunt with a handshake. I'm not against this practice however, with more and more properties going this way it's providing monopolies for some guides with deep pockets. This hurts future hunting ops for the regular citizen not wanting to drive to hunt. Thanks for what you do.
Do most of my ducks, geese from Dec 15-Jan 15th extra time would be appreciated.
Keep the good work-all is well and working.
Split season are confusing. It would be nice if waterfowl season opened 1-2 weeks earlier, less interference w/ pheasant hunting etc.
Love your ideas and dedication to wildlife, thanks.
I hope we do not allow the Canada goose population to get so big we need a spring season also like snows.
The local duck & goose populations are small and are usually done being hunted by Oct 10-Then no birds until the migration Nov 5-Jan 31.
The later closing in the Pacific Flyway would allow more access t ducks coming from Canada.
In regard to question #2, I used to be extremely avid but life happens and I am less avid now. My answer is an average. I enjoy simple seasons, chopping up & mixing dates, zones, duck vs goose, Pacific vs Central can make for a complex beverage.
I love the idea of extending the season later. Not many ducks/geese early. More birds seem to be migrating later in the season especially after the season is closed. Would love to give up Oct 23-Nov 9 to be able to hunt the end of January. Been saying that for years. I appreciate you looking into this and hope you make the adjustment. Thank you.
Currently I appreciate the split season, as most of my waterfowl hunting occurs in the central flyway. This allows me to concentrate on big game early season & transition into waterfowl hunting later in the year.
It would be much simpler for everyone for 1 season for all.
The youth weekend is a cherished event. Thank you FWP for providing such a benefit to young hunters.
I think things work pretty well currently. If it ain't broke don't fix it.
No split seasons.
The state should recommend to the Flyway Council a daily possession limit of 6 ducks. Few hunters can ID waterfowl in the air or even in the hand. The sport is dying. 5 or 6 ducks in the bag and you go home. This would prevent pintails or have mallards from being stepped in the mud, keep everyone happy & legal & not harm contentious populations.
New waterfowler.
Keep it simple.
We have great goose & duck hunting state-If anything I would open the season a week or two earlier.
Don't really waterfowl hunt in Central Flyway.
The proposed dates I selected for the Pacific Flyway I have been dreaming about since USFWS went to a liberal bag Great idea FWP.
Thanks for asking, good luck with your survey. Thank you for your great work.
Open like upland bird (i.e., Sept 2 even if it falls on a weekday). Do the same with pheasant.
After reading through the waterfowl regulations, its disappointing to me that I can't use my machine gun, punt gun, poison or explosives to hunt ducks, I used to enjoy strafing flocks from my 50pw; n camel. There is an upper age limit beyond which I will have to pay for a Montana waterfowl permit. Alas, at age 80 it is comforting to know that in only 30 more years I won't have to pay this extra charge.

The fact that we do not have a spring snow goose season is an epic and tragic failure. Do better.
Scaup season should end the same time as other ducks.
I wish that the state would take over Benton Lake from the Feds. Currently it is managed more for tourists than for hunters. It used to be a great place to hunt.
Lots of dark (Canada) geese in Pacific flyway. Consider a 5-bird limit instead of 4?
I think the bag/possession limits should be increased. Many states south of here you can shoot way more ducks & geese & have no possession limits. (ducks & geese in freezers) shouldn't count against possession limits. Still have field limits.
Pacific & Central Flyway would be better served opening Oct 3 run through Oct 23, reopen 11/9 - 1/31.
You guys do a good job. I am happy with current seasons & regulations.
If it isn't broken, don't fix it.
I hunt the Pacific Flyway every year mostly freezeout.
I moved to Montana for outdoor recreation for my wife & I and future children. I really like the idea of stopping season during deer/elk and then running it later into January. More time to hunt during the year is always better.
FWP continues, as evidence by this survey, to set the gold standard for state wildlife agencies. Thank you.
Later in season-less hunters out...Gives opportunities to go out. Thank you.
As a big game hunter, placing the split in the season in Oct/Nov and running the length of January would greatly increase my waterfowl hunting definitely.
With the abundance of ducks & geese, I prefer the longest season possible, with same dates ducks & geese. I like reducing hunter conflicts of Big Game season opening (10/24) by not allowing waterfowl hunting 10/24-11/8.
I would prefer a long split after the first 2 weeks of the season if it means we can hunt later in the season.
Climate warming has caused many fewer opportunities with traditional seasons.
The majority of the "Northern" Canadian geese seem to arrive after closure.
Please don't split the season in Oct/Nov.
I am in favor of any changes that allow us to hunt until the end of January. Thank you.
Let's do our best to uncomplicate the season!
Thought it be fun to give it a try.
FWP wastes too much time and money.
Open Dove season 2 weeks earlier (Yes I know).
Keeping it simple would be a help for some hunter: (no split season); but probably reduces opportunity. In 30 years or so; I've only been to the Central 2-3 times. Note: My experience is mostly in Pacific Flyway & Flathead Valley. Ponds & lakes freeze up early and rivers are all that's left, unless field hunting for geese. Weather drives our hunting season; sometimes the seasons are not consistent w/ the weather. Unfortunately, FWP & USFWS, don't change our weather, darn, maybe global climate change will keep water "open" longer in the future?
I previously hunt Pacific Flyway.
We only hunt the Pacific Flyway & therefore we do not have opinions in zone 1 or 2 of central flyway. Thanks for all you do.
Please implement an early goose and or teal season in September similar to other states.
When I was younger I was very avid!
I hunt western Mont, Pacific Flyway-pot holes freeze up quickly. Maybe open season mid Sept to duck hunting.
I feel the bulk of migratory waterfowl pass through our state later in the season. Our winters seem to be getting later, thus later pushes of birds. I feel the season should adjust accordingly.
Suggest early season teal in September suggest spring snow goose season Feb/Mar.
Just keep up the great work and do what will help for all hunters.

Zone 2 early are locals-later geese from stock ponds & lakes. Later Canada geese migrating-I'm older now & don't get out as much sure appreciate the opportunity just the same.
I only hunt in the Pacific Flyway. Current season structure for ducks and geese is my preference.
I suggest working with USFWS to push back opening day by 1-2 weeks. Climate change/warmer weather seems to delay migration from the norms that were in place when the dates were establish. Base it on science, not history.
1) Good job managing waterfowl-Thanks 2) Don't split season-it's too confusing. 3) Hate to say it out loud-Keep working w/Feds for GREAT opportunities like Lee Metcalf in Stevensville MT. More than you want: I grew up hunting ducks & geese in the heart of Central Flyway (WI). I was able to teach my son and others the same skills w/places like Lee Metcalf.
Keep up the great work & thank you for asking.
Stop dividing season dates (confusion) Partial freeze up to help congregate birds (better hunting), but shorter season for birds. Keep bag to moderate limit. Running season-start takes pressure off birds as other season for game starts, spreads pressure on multiple species.
More liberal harvest of geese.
I do not know enough about managing species during hunting to answer these questions. What is best for birds so they will not be killed off and we can still hunt.
I am not very happy with the zone structure. Zone 1 needs a later duck season.
Why do you not have it longer until the end of January.
The way you have it now is good. Problem running into January on ducks is frozen over rivers & lakes. No complaints.
The Northern half of zone 1 (North of Missouri River) should open the last weekend of September. Those of us who jump shoot off the reservoir dams encounter ice on the water, especially between the Milk River and the Canadian border early in the season.
I like the current seasons in Montana. It provides plenty of opportunity. I also believe we have more than enough of private leases & guide opportunities in hunting & fishing. Please do not let guides be so influential on regs & seasons- limiting hunters/fishers that want to do it on their own!!
The ducks (mallards) are migrating thru zone 2 later every year. They come to the Bighorn River about Jan 10 last year.
They are ok with me, no split season, give the birds a break.
If you split the goose season (Pacific Flyway) run it thru Jan. Because the Northern flights come down late (pending weather) and the local geese do not leave and the numbers keep increasing yearly. This cause damage to property (golf course, parks, recreation (in town) areas, and farmers crops. Most farmers welcome you on their land for goose hunters, when they do not allow other hunting. If you do not split the season then run it thru till Jan 31th. Many of my goose hunting friends are of the same opinion as I expressed. Thank you.
More liberal limits- 4 to 6 geese.
I appreciate considering ending on a weekend-Thanks for options!
Ducks migrate much later than years past.
I believe not splitting will lead to less confusion overall.
I prefer the option of hunting later into January as solid bird movement seems to be occurring at that time..
Spit season is dumb
If there is a split season enacted FWP better make sure that proper communication is sent out to all MT hunters!
I have noticed that we have a habit of growing up teal and especially sandhill cranes here, for other states to hunt, which we never a chance at!
There seems to be a tremendous amount of birds in the Pacific Flyway in late January. Extending these dates seem reasonable.

You should consider moving the youth hunt back an additional week. Often in Central Flyway the ducks are spoked up or gone on the opener due to Heavy pressure for the youth hunt.
I would like to see Rosebud & Treasure Counties be able to hunt or the Yellowstone River on a limited basis.
1. Close waterfowl when there are other upland & big game options & extend it when there's little less to hunt. And...2. Keep duck & goose seasons as similar as possible.
Split season are kind of a bad thing, you lose a lot of guys that are casual hunters with that break. Keep the momentum going of the hunting season.
Teal season would be nice.
Access is more important than dates.
Our weather makes planning difficult. Thank you for your efforts!
Early duck hunting is poor in zone 2 until the northern ducks arrive. I like the early closure & reopening in November closer to the ducks/geese arrivals. Hunting is poor from Oct 10 to November 9-10 or so.
The longer we can go into the following year the better.
Stop running Townsend hunting w/the youth early season always there & screw up other people's hunting by moving it around to other places. Share the wealth.
The number in western Montana are down from when I hunted bird in the 70's. I feel the west of the divide Pacific season should be shorter.
Thanks for asking for hunters' input!
I'm not a fan of keeping track of split seasons, but if it's going to be done, it might as well be while most people are chasing deer and elk.
I'm in favor of a longer season and don't mind the break in waterfowl hunting during the general. All waterfowl seasons should align to avoid confusion in regulations. Keep it simple!
I live in zone 1 We usually are froze up by Nov so if you ran a split season we would not have the same opportunity we do now.
Based on lack of knowledge I have no opinion. If another survey in my place is desired please void this and send out to another hunter.
Plenty of geese, not enough ducks!
There are already enough confusing or at least plenty of regs. Splitting seasons, though well intentions is just another way for sportsman to run above the law. I vote for simplicity!
Last year very few ducks were down in zone 1 through the season. Ducks came down heavily after the season closed. I know the weather is unpredictable, but a later closure date of January 31st would cover the late arrivals. Thank you.
Please do not split the seasons-this confuses everything.
Longer the season the more revenue for businesses.
Don't fix something that isn't broken.
The limit of geese in Central Flyway zone 1 & 2 bird numbers are way up, need to up the limit.
I think MT FW&P has done a good job on all fronts-appropriately evaluating-and continuing to assess appropriate seasons-balancing nature's reality against the new-ending challenges of dealing with the public. Thank you.
Many places in Pacific Region freeze over by the 1st & Teal & such have migrated on by opening weekend at least in areas we hunt. Thank you.
I have never hunted waterfowl I just by tags.
No need to change a good system.
If could change and make it 120 days.
More public hunting areas in the Bitterroot Valley & Lee Metcalf. More jump shooting areas for ducks & geese. Thanks.
Don't make things difficult with opening & reopening. Set open date & close date pretty simple.
Excellent survey- keep up the good work! Thanks.

I strongly oppose the current split season dates in the Pacific Flyway.

I only hunt Pacific Flyway so that's why I had no opinion on others.

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