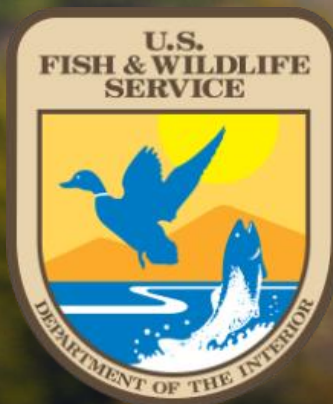


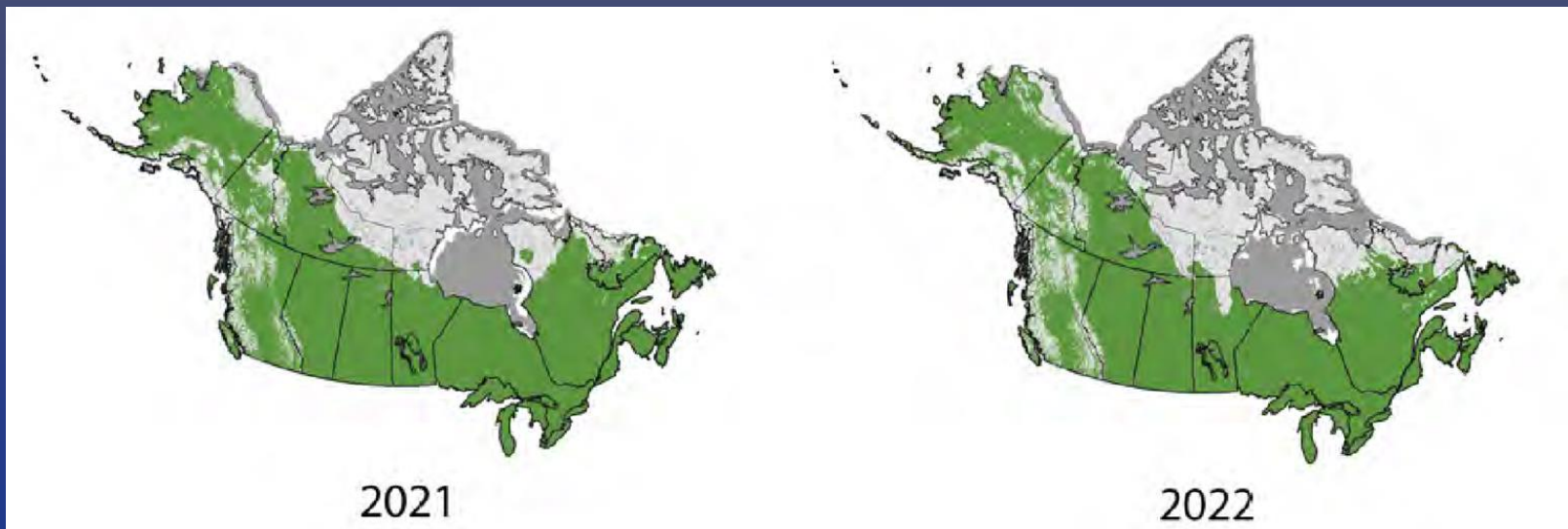
Migratory Game Bird Status and Proposed Hunting Seasons for 2023-24



2022 Habitat Conditions



- Surveys and annual pre-season waterfowl banding efforts were conducted normally as COVID-19 related travel restrictions were lifted.
- Snow and ice cover maps from satellite photography show similar coverage in 2021 and 2022 leading to generally average spring weather across the arctic/sub-arctic.





Eastern Survey Area Population Estimates



2022 Breeding Ducks in the Eastern Survey Area (millions)

Species	2022	2019	% Change from 2019	% Change from LTA
Mallard	1.2	1.03	+15%	-3%
Black Duck	0.8	0.72	similar	similar (1998-2019 avg)
Wood Duck*	1.0	1.02	similar	similar
Green-winged Teal	0.32	0.34	+7	-10%
Ring-necked Duck	0.64	0.71	-11%	similar
Common Goldeneye	0.71	0.50	+23%	similar

* Wood Duck estimate from AFBWS and BBS

Multi-Stock Harvest Management Recommendation



Federal Framework for the 2023-24 Atlantic Flyway regular duck season is the liberal regulatory alternative (60 days/6 birds).

Traditional Survey Area Population Estimates



Species	2022	2019	% Change from 2019	% Change from LTA
Mallard	7.2	9.4	-23%	+19
Gadwall	2.7	3.3	-18%	+30%
American wigeon	2.1	2.8	-25%	-19%
Green-winged teal	2.2	3.2	-32%	similar
Blue-winged teal	6.5	5.4	+19%	+27%
Northern shoveler	3.0	3.6	-17%	+15
Northern pintail	1.8	2.3	-21%	-54%
Redhead	1.0	0.7	+35%	+36%
Canvasback	0.6	0.7	similar	similar
Scaup	3.6	3.6	similar	-28%



Eastern Mallards



- New harvest strategy approved that utilizes an Integrated Population Model.
- Liberal: 4/day (2 Hens) Moderate: 2/day (1 hen) Restrictive: 1/day Closed
- This strategy functions independently of Multi-stock AHM which determines the general duck season .
- Harvest strategy recommends a liberal mallard framework in 2023-24.

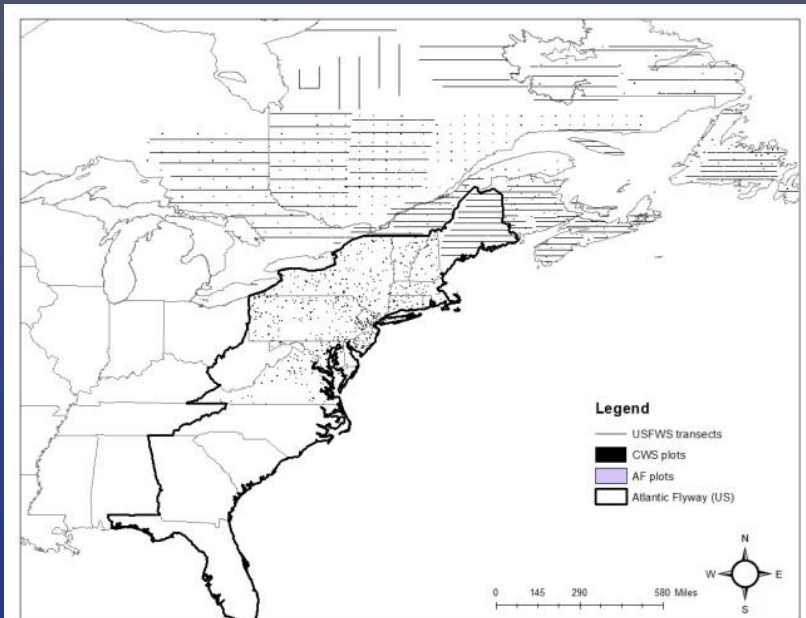
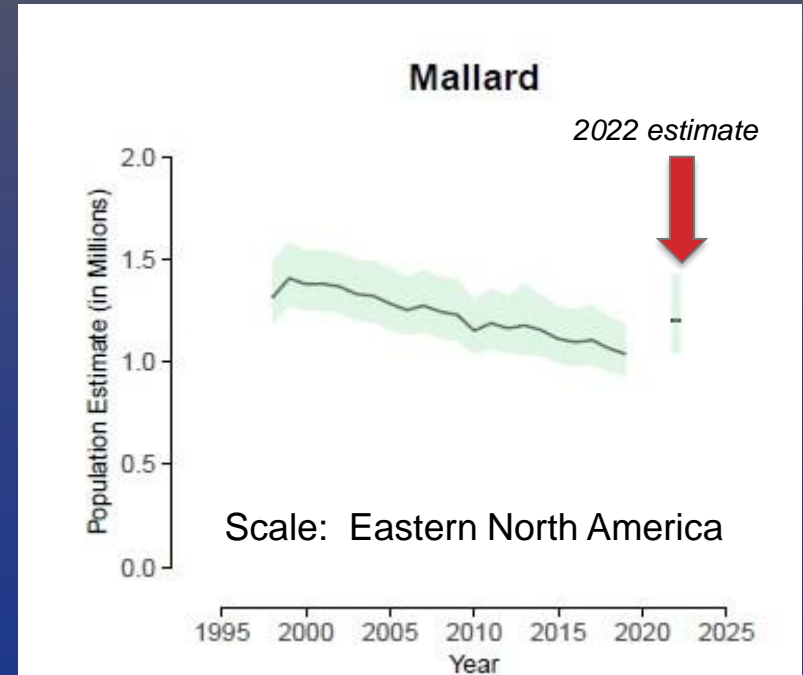


Figure 1. Map of eastern mallard range and surveys used to estimate population abundance.





2022 Atlantic Population Canada Goose Monitoring



- Breeding Pair Survey conducted normally in mid-June.
 - No surveys in 2020 or 2021.
- Pre-season Banding
 - Not conducted in 2020 or 2021 due to COVID.
 - Conducted in 2022 (3,098 birds banded).
 - 103 GPS/GSM solar powered neck collars deployed.
 - Weather based model predicted average productivity, which was confirmed by banding crews in sub-arctic Quebec.



Changes in Atlantic Population Canada Goose Management Strategies



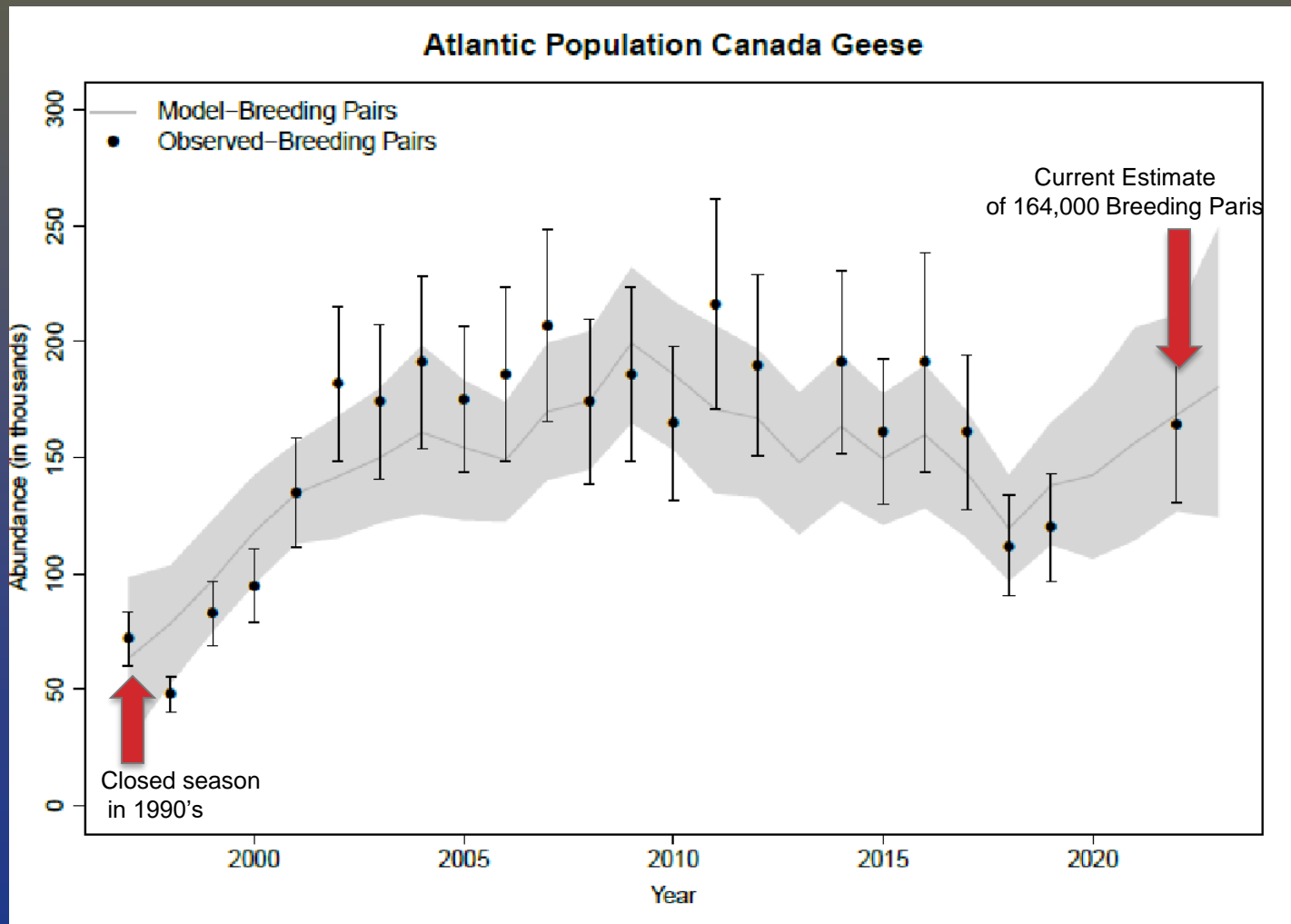
- The 3 year running average of the pair estimate to determine the hunt package was replaced by an Integrated Population Model (IPM) in 2021.
- The IPM makes better use of all the available data on AP Canada geese and is capable of predicting the population status.
- This modeled prediction allows for a quicker response to population change under the current regulatory system.
- Revised AP Canada Goose Harvest Strategy is more conservative in all packages and requires a bag limit of 1 per day in all U.S. AP hunt zones when the restrictive package is recommended.

Atlantic Population Canada Goose Harvest Strategy



Population Thresholds (Breeding Pairs)	Harvest Package	Target Adult Harvest Rate	Packages for Chesapeake Region AP Areas	Packages for Mid-Atlantic and New England Region AP Areas
> 160,000	Liberal	7%	45 days and 2 geese/day	45 days and 3 geese/day
$\leq 160,00$ and $> 125,000$	Moderate	5%	30 days and 2 geese/day	30 days and 3 geese/day
$\leq 125,000$ and $\geq 60,000$	Restrictive	3%	30 days and 1 goose/day	30 days and 1 goose/day
< 60,000	Closed	0%	Closed	Closed

Atlantic Population Canada Goose Breeding Pair Estimates



AP Canada Goose Pair Estimates and Hunting Implications



- AP CAGO Breeding Pair Data

- 2022 - 164,000 pairs

- 2021 - No survey

- 2020 - No Survey

- 2019 - 120,000 pairs

- 2018 - 112,000 pairs

- In 2021 AFC recommended keeping restrictive seasons for 2022-2023 although the harvest plan called for a moderate (30 day/2 bird per day) package. This maintained a conservative harvest strategy in the 2022-23 season to allow for potential population growth.
- In 2022 the AFC recommended the liberal package (45 days/ 2 bird per day) for 2023-24 based on a predicted breeding pair estimate of 180,500 in 2023.

Notes Relevant to Season Selection Process:



- MD DNR's Migratory Game Bird Hunting Season proposals must remain within guidelines provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Federal Frameworks.
- MD DNR does not have the authority to legalize Sunday Hunting for Migratory Game Birds. That authority rests with the Maryland General Assembly.
- DNR will collect public comment (from the online forum, email, mail, telephone, etc.) for review by the Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee and Wildlife Advisory Commission.
- Adjustments to seasons and bag limits will be considered at this time.
- Final season selections will be forwarded to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service by April 15.

“Regular” Duck Hunting Season



Federal Framework:

60-day season between Saturday nearest Sept. 24 and January 31 with a daily bag limit of 6 ducks (species restrictions).

Eastern Duck Zone	Western Duck Zone
Oct. 14, 2023 – Oct. 21, 2023	Sept. 30, 2023 – Oct. 14, 2023
Nov. 11, 2023 – Nov. 24, 2023	Nov. 18, 2023 – Nov. 24, 2023
Dec. 15, 2023 – Jan. 31, 2024	Dec. 15, 2023 – Jan. 31, 2024

Daily Bag Limit:

6 per day (including mergansers) but no more than 4 sea ducks (3 long-tailed ducks, 3 scoters, 3 eiders), 4 mallards (2 hens), 3 wood ducks, 1 pintail, 2 redheads, 1 scaup*, 2 canvasbacks, 2 black ducks (during black duck season), 1 mottled duck, and 1 fulvous tree duck.

- *Scaup hybrid season: Daily bag limit is 1 except between Jan.8, 2024 and Jan. 31, 2024 when 2 scaup per day may be harvested.*

Youth/Military Waterfowl Hunting Days

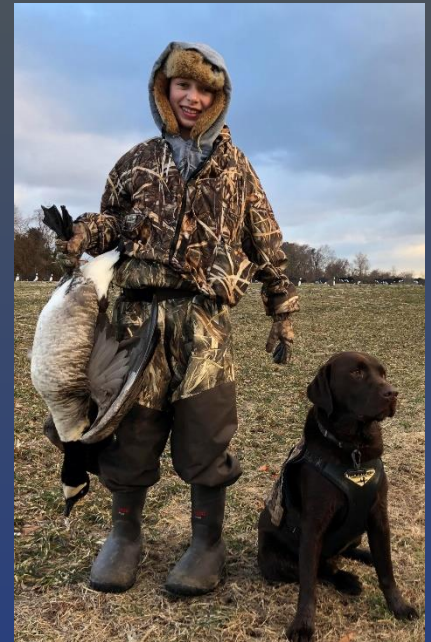


Federal Framework: States can hold 2 youth/military personnel days outside of regular duck season but within 14 days of the end framework dates (Sept. 21 and Jan. 31). Must be on weekends, holidays, or other non-school days.

Proposed Dates: Nov. 4, 2023 and Feb. 3, 2024

Daily Bag Limit: 6 ducks (certain species bag restrictions), 2 Canada geese in the AP Zone or 5 Canada geese in the late RP Zone, 1 brant, 25 light geese, 2 scaup and 15 coots.

Requirements: Youth hunter must be 16 years of age or younger and accompanied by an unarmed adult at least 21 years old. The adult may assist in calling, setting decoys, and retrieving downed birds. Military veterans (as defined in Section 101 of title 38, United States Code) of any age and members of the armed forces on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves on Active duty (other than for training) can participate in these two hunt days.



Atlantic Population (AP) Canada Goose Hunting Season



Federal Framework

A 45-day season may be held between Nov. 15 and Feb. 5 with a 2 bird daily bag limit. The season may be divided into no more than 2 segments.

Proposed Season and Bag Limit:

Nov. 21, 2023 – Nov. 24, 2023

Dec. 15, 2023 – Jan. 31, 2024

Daily Bag Limit: 2 per day

AF Resident Population Canada Goose Hunting Season

(AFRP Zone)



Federal Framework:

80-day season between Nov. 15 and Mar. 10

Daily Bag Limit: 5 per day

Proposed Season and Bag Limit:

Nov. 18, 2023 - Nov. 24, 2023

Dec. 11, 2023 - Mar. 5, 2024

Daily Bag Limit: 5 per day

Atlantic Brant Hunting Season



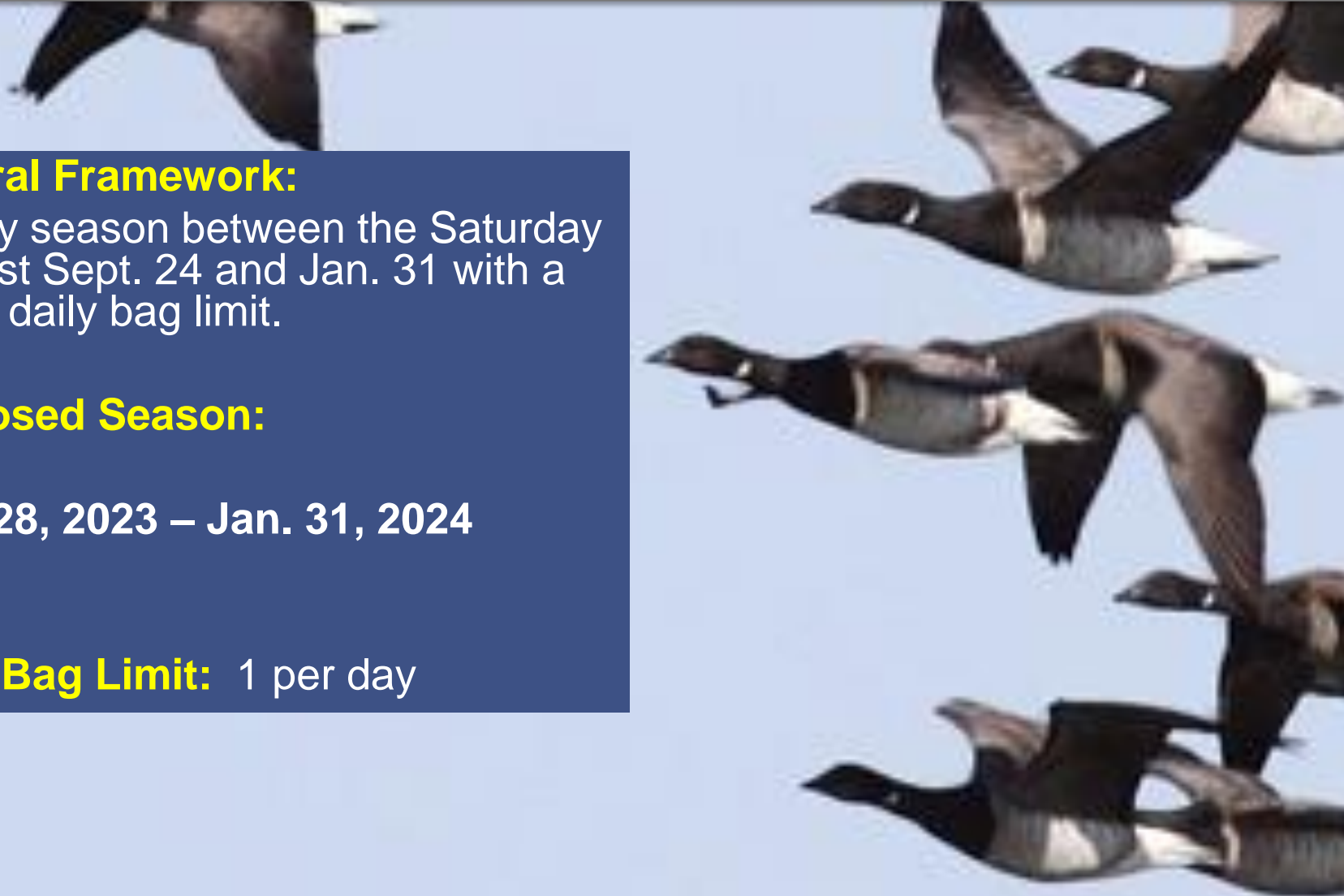
Federal Framework:

30-day season between the Saturday nearest Sept. 24 and Jan. 31 with a 1-bird daily bag limit.

Proposed Season:

Dec. 28, 2023 – Jan. 31, 2024

Daily Bag Limit: 1 per day



Light Goose Hunting Season



Federal Framework:

107-day season between Oct. 1 and Mar. 10 with a 25-bird daily bag limit and no possession limit.

Proposed Season:

Oct. 1, 2023 - Nov. 24, 2023

Dec. 11, 2023 - Jan. 31, 2024

Feb. 3, 2023

Daily Bag Limit: 25 per day
No Possession Limit



Light Goose Conservation Order Hunting Season



Federal Framework:

Federal Framework: The Conservation Order allows extended shooting hours for light geese (one-half hour after sunset) and imposes no daily bag limits for light geese. The CO may only open when all waterfowl (including light goose) and crane hunting seasons (excluding falconry) are closed.

Proposed Season:

Nov. 27, 2023 - Dec. 9, 2023

Feb. 1, 2024 - Feb. 2, 2024

Feb. 5, 2024 - April 15, 2024

Daily Bag Limit: No bag limit
No possession limit



Mourning Dove Season



Federal Framework

States may select a 90 day season between Sept. 1 – Jan. 31 with 15 birds/day. There can be no more than 3 season segments.

Proposed Season:

Sept. 1, 2023 – Oct. 14, 2023

Oct. 21, 2023 – Nov. 24, 2023

Dec. 16, 2023 – Jan. 10, 2024

Daily Bag Limit: 15 birds/day



Woodcock Season



Federal Framework:

Federal Framework: States may select a 45-day season between October 1 and January 31 with a 3-bird daily bag limit. States may split their seasons into two segments.

Proposed Season:

Oct. 19, 2023 – Nov. 24, 2023

Jan. 6, 2024 – Jan. 20, 2024

Daily Bag Limit: 3 birds/day

