

# Drought leaves ducks in decline

AP — Duck hunters will be asked to get up later, shoot fewer birds and pack up their gear several days earlier this season because of the drought and a decline of ducks and wetland habitats.

The aim of new federal guidelines, which also would suspend a point system used by several states, is to cut the number of ducks killed — 9.4 million were shot down last year — by 25 percent.

"Hunting is not the cause of the current decline in duck numbers," U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Frank Dunkle said recently in unveiling the proposed regulations. "However, it is one influence that must be regulated when populations are low."

"The long-term health of waterfowl depends on our ability to protect and enhance the wetland habitats which sustain these creatures," he said.

The continuing drought in midcontinental North America has increased pressure on wetlands already in decline because of the spread of civilization and other factors.

Dunkle's announcement proposed guidelines for hunting seasons to be set by each state this fall. The framework is still open to public comment and will not become law until mid-September.

"It's been a terrible year for ducks," Fish and Wildlife spokesman Craig Reiben said. The projected fall flight of ducks in migration is 66 million — the second lowest on record. The service, in cooperation with Canadian wildlife officials, wants to build up migration to 100 million. Canada already has announced a scaled-back hunt.

There are an estimated 1.5 million duck hunters in the United States.

Dunkle, in proposing the regulations, went further than the recommendations of the agency's regulations committee and addressed some concerns expressed at a public hearing earlier in the week.

He indirectly endorsed a "national hunter restraint" program announced by the pro-hunting North American Wildlife Foundation which urged hunters to buy state licenses and fed-

eral duck stamps out shoot below their bag limits.

The duck stamps, Dunkle said, will help preserve duck breeding areas.

Dunkle did not heed pleas from Eastern and Southern states to be exempted from the hunt restrictions because birds along the Atlantic flyway migratory route are not expected to decline.

Several groups, including some representing duck hunters, have proposed a no-hunt season to help build up duck populations across the United States and Canada. Some accuse the government of not imposing it because it doesn't want to lose the revenue from duck stamps.

The proposed guidelines include an elimination of hunting before sunrise. The hunt traditionally begins a half-hour before sunup.

The point system, which would be eliminated across the country pending further study, had allowed hunters to shoot more of abundant species and fewer of those that are endangered.

Critics of the system say it tempts dishonest hunters to throw out less common birds so they can shoot more of those with lower point values.

The length of the season would be reduced from a maximum of 40 days to 30 days in most areas. It also would be cut back 25 percent in areas where it has been longer than 40 days.

Bag limits across the country would be reduced by one duck, generally to three per day.

Dunkle also proposed a limited season for pintail ducks, with a daily bag limit of one duck in its first seven days. After a break in the hunt, another limited hunt would be allowed in some areas, with a limit of two male pintails. The length of the second phase of the hunt would vary from state to state.

The special bonus seasons for teals and scaups would be suspended for 1988, and last year's limited ban on canvasbacks would become total.

The regular season could be set by states anytime between Oct. 8 and Jan. 8. Last year's closings ranged from Jan. 10 to Jan. 18, depending on the region.



## Major names among 250 show exhibitors

Some of the major manufacturers that will be represented at the Michigan Hunting and Sports Show:

Guns and Archery: Remington Arms, Darton Archery, Ben Pearson Archery and Oneida Archery.

Hunting Equipment: Redfield Scopes, Greenhead Game Calls, Sureshot Game Calls and Penn Woods Calls.

Boats and Motors: Ranger Bass

Boats, Sylvan, Alumacraft, Crestliner, Sea Nymph, Meyers boats, Skeeter, Smokercraft, Bluefin, Yamaha Wave Runner, Evinrude Outboards, Mercury Outboards, Force Outboards and Yamaha Outboards.

Campers: Prowler by Fleetwood, Jayco, Wilderness and Yellowstone.

ATVs: Honda, Yamaha, Suzuki and Kawasaki.

## BLUE FIN BOAT SHOW SPECIALS

BE ON THE WATER FOR A FULL SEASON OF BOATING FUN... ONLY \$199 DELIVERY ON MOST MODELS!

**7.9 FIXED RATE - 36 MONTHS 20% DOWN**

ALSO MANY OTHER FINANCING PLANS AVAILABLE

**JAN'S SPORT SHOP**

**19' Sportman 1900 A** 19-foot package that includes the most desirable comfort and convenience features: convertible top, dual sleeper seats, walk-thru windshield and swim platform. Complete with 85 hp Force outboard and galvanized trailer.

**NOW ONLY \$8395**

**17' Sportman 1700** An affordable boat that satisfies the needs of an entire family. Features include a convertible top, swim platform, dual sleeper seats and AM/FM cassette stereo. Complete with 50 hp electric-start Force engine and galvanized trailer.

**NOW ONLY \$6795**

7285 M-15  
GOODRICH, MI.  
(313) 636-2241  
or 636-7173

HOURS:  
MON. 9-9  
TUES. - FRI. 9-6  
SAT. 9-5  
SUN. CLOSED