

Waterfowl Hunting Zones and Splits

Considerations for 2012-2015 Seasons



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Zone/Split Season Guidelines:

- Zones and Split Seasons can only be changed at 5 year intervals.
- The selection this year will be used for the next 4 duck hunting seasons (2012-2015).
- A decision is needed by June 1, 2012

Zones and Splits Options

Prior to 2012:

- Two zones with the option for split seasons in one or both zones.
- Three zones with straight seasons (no splits).
- No zones with up to 2 season splits (3 season segments)

New Options Starting in 2011 and 2012:

- 4 zones with straight seasons (no splits).
- 3 zones with the option for split seasons in any of those zones

General Issues to Consider

- Potential hunting season length over the next 5 years is 60, 45 or 30 days.
- Duck seasons “must” be open during the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s holidays.
- Which option will provide the greatest flexibility?
- What are we trying to accomplish, and what will be required for evaluation?

Specific Considerations

Current 2 zones with split seasons:

- This arrangement has been used for 30 years and is familiar to hunters.
- Allows hunters to hunt in both zones, thereby increasing hunting opportunities.
- Flexibility in setting season dates.

Specific Considerations

3 zones with split seasons:

- Additional opportunity to hunt different zones.
- Additional flexibility in setting season dates.
- Statement of objectives and study plan with methods to monitor and evaluate.

Specific Considerations

No zones with 2 splits (3 season segments):

- Three opening days versus 2, but same total number of weekends (10) and 1 of those opening days might not be on a weekend.
- 2 rest periods versus one.
- The opportunity to move across zones is eliminated.
- Less flexibility if season length is reduced.

Recent Hunter-Opinion Data

2010 Hunter Opinion Survey: Random Mail-out Sample

- 34% favored 2 zones with split seasons.
- 17% favored new North and South zones with split seasons.
- 30% favored no zones with 2 splits (3 season segments).
- 20% had no opinion or didn't care.

2010 Hunter Opinion Survey: Internet Sample

- 36% favored 2 zones with split seasons.
- 23% favored new North and South zones with split seasons.
- 28% favored no zones with 2 splits (3 season segments).
- 13% had no opinion or didn't care.

(Both surveys had about 900 respondents)

Recent Hunter-Opinion Data

2011 Internet Solicitation: 61 contacts

- 54% favored 2 zones with split seasons.
- 33% favored no zones with 2 splits (3 season segments).
- 11% favored 3 zones with split seasons.
- 2% favored no zones with split seasons.

Recent Hunter-Opinion Data

2011 Game Harvest Survey: 956 contacts

- 35% favored 2 zones with split seasons.
- 10% favored North and South zones w/ splits
- 22% favored no zones with 2 splits (3 season segments).
- 2% favored 3 zones with split seasons.
- 3% favored 4 zones with straight seasons.
- 28% had no opinion

General Conclusions

- Majority support for 2 zones with split seasons.
- Strong support for No zones with 2 splits (3 season segments).
- Little support for 3 zones with split seasons.
- Large proportion of “No Opinion” in random samples.

Why?

2010 Hunter Opinion Survey

Only 13% of the Random Mail-out respondents and
Only 24% of the Internet respondents reported
hunting in more than 1 zone.

So, about 80% of waterfowl
hunters in Louisiana utilize only 1
zone!

Consequently, the number of zones and the zone boundaries are probably **NOT** as important to the vast majority of Louisiana duck hunters compared to the season dates within each zone.

2012 Waterfowl Hunter Opinion Survey

- Single mail-out to 1,600 selected hunters in each of 4 regions.
- Same survey will be web-enabled so all can participate.
- Questions about zone options, boundaries and season dates.
- Data will be summarized by region to match zone preferences with preferred season dates.
- Additional information on satisfaction with prior zones/splits, satisfaction with the 2011 season, and some questions about Catahoula Lake.



Thanks very much for your participation!