



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 8, 2020

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Illinois DNR Announces Five-Year Waterfowl Seasons Plan for 2021-2025

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has selected season dates and submitted waterfowl hunting zone lines for 2021-2025 to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The 2021-2025 hunting seasons regulations were developed based on a thorough review of scientific information and input from waterfowl hunters and are intended to provide the most opportunity for hunters while protecting waterfowl resources.

“Illinois is a large and diverse state that is 400 miles long from north to south and is home to waterfowl hunters with diverse opinions who pursue many different species of waterfowl in different habitats using a variety of methods,” said Randy Smith, program manager, IDNR Wetland Wildlife. “Federal rules on waterfowl season structures and the variable nature of waterfowl migration patterns necessitate Illinois regulations represent a compromise among hunter opinions and hunting styles. Selected regulations may not represent exactly what individual hunters or groups of hunters prefer, but hopefully offer some opportunity for all hunters and hunting styles.”

USFWS regulations require states to establish zone lines for a five-year time period, and the USFWS establishes the frameworks within which states must select their regulations. (The Illinois 2021-2025 zone lines submitted to the USFWS can be found below).

Illinois’ dates for the upcoming 2020-21 waterfowl seasons, established in 2015, can be found on the IDNR website at:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/hunting/waterfowl/Documents/WaterfowlZonesDatesFinal20162020.pdf>

For the 2021-2025 seasons in Illinois, waterfowl hunting zone lines have not changed from previous years. In reviewing biological data including waterfowl abundance and hunter harvest, as well as preferences expressed in hunter surveys, IDNR opted to make no changes to zone boundaries. More than 88 percent of hunters surveyed indicated the county they hunted most was in the correct waterfowl zone, and hunter attitudes regarding two proposed zone line changes were divided.

IDNR also did not adopt the use of a split season due to USFWS frameworks that would require Illinois to reduce the number of zones used from four to three.

Later dates to begin duck and goose hunting seasons in Illinois were adopted for 2021-2025. Hunter surveys showed that later dates were preferred in each zone. Those preferences were balanced with biological data to avoid mismatches of season timing and peak waterfowl abundance, average freeze up dates, or conflicts with other hunting seasons such as the first firearm deer season. In general, season dates are similar to those used in previous years, but trend later, such as the opening date in 2023 in the Central Zone of Oct. 28 rather than Oct. 21.

A map of zone lines for the 2021-2025 seasons, as well as dates for each zone, can be found on the following page.



Waterfowl Zone Lines and Season Dates 2021 - 2025

Duck Season Dates

North Zone

- 2021: Oct 23 – Dec 21
- 2022: Oct 22 – Dec 20
- 2023: Oct 21 – Dec 19
- 2024: Oct 19 – Dec 17
- 2025: Oct 18 – Dec 16

Central Zone

- 2021: Oct 30 – Dec 28
- 2022: Oct 29 – Dec 27
- 2023: Oct 28 – Dec 26
- 2024: Oct 26 – Dec 24
- 2025: Oct 25 – Dec 23

South Central Zone

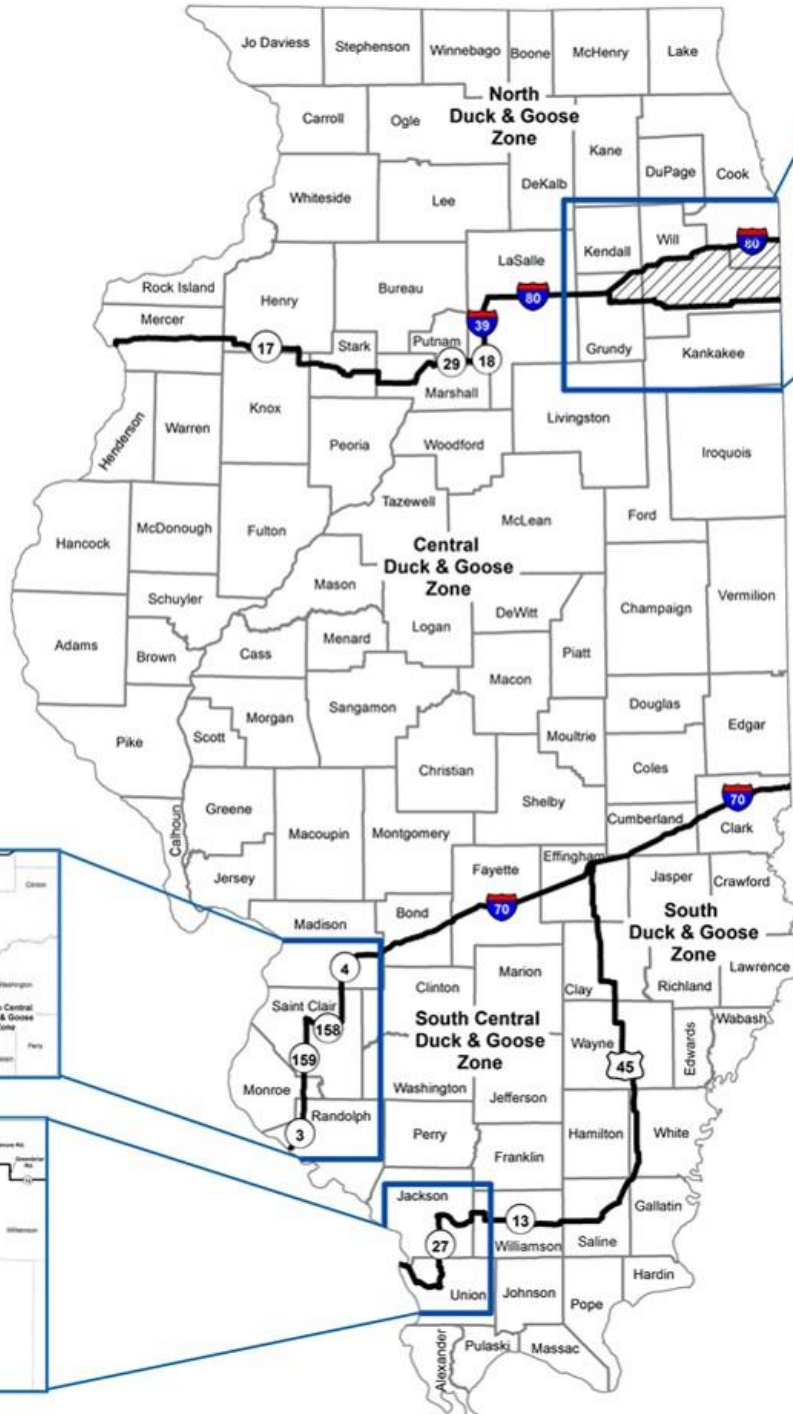
- 2021: Nov 13 – Jan 11
- 2022: Nov 12 – Jan 10
- 2023: Nov 11 – Jan 9
- 2024: Nov 16 – Jan 14
- 2025: Nov 15 – Jan 13

South Zone

- 2021: Nov 27 – Jan 25
- 2022: Dec 3 – Jan 31
- 2023: Dec 2 – Jan 30
- 2024: Nov 30 – Jan 28
- 2025: Nov 29 – Jan 27

Teal Season

- 2021: Sept 11 – Sept 26
- 2022: Sept 10 – Sept 25
- 2023: Sept 9 – Sept 24
- 2024: Sept 7 – Sept 22
- 2025: Sept 6 – Sept 21



Canada Goose Season Dates

North Zone

- 2021: Oct 23 – Jan 20
- 2022: Oct 22 – Jan 19
- 2023: Oct 21 – Jan 18
- 2024: Oct 19 – Jan 16
- 2025: Oct 18 – Jan 15

Central Zone

- 2021: Oct 30 – Nov 7
Nov 12 – Jan 31
- 2022: Oct 29 – Nov 6
Nov 12 – Jan 31
- 2023: Oct 28 – Nov 5
Nov 12 – Jan 31
- 2024: Oct 26 – Nov 3
Nov 12 – Jan 31
- 2025: Oct 25 – Nov 2
Nov 12 – Jan 31

South Central Zone

- 2021: Nov 13 – Jan 31
- 2022: Nov 12 – Jan 31
- 2023: Nov 11 – Jan 31
- 2024: Nov 16 – Jan 31
- 2025: Nov 15 – Jan 31

South Zone

- 2021: Nov 27 – Jan 31
- 2022: Dec 3 – Jan 31
- 2023: Dec 2 – Jan 31
- 2024: Nov 30 – Jan 31
- 2025: Nov 29 – Jan 31

