

## Possession Limits Change for Migratory Waterfowl

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

Some regulations have changed for this waterfowl hunting season, with possession limits for many birds being boosted by a third. As Dan Rosenberg, Waterfowl Program Coordinator for Fish and Game in Anchorage, explains, it's not that there are a third more birds available, but rather a change to provide more hunting opportunity.

"Possession limit is viewed as more a law enforcement tool than a biological management tool, so when people are out hunting in remote areas, this gives them a little more flexibility to have a little more hunting opportunity. And they've put a lot of investment in their travel and they might be out in remote sites and this allows them to get a few more birds. But we don't anticipate that in aggregate of all the hunters it's going to have a huge difference on a population level effect."

In other words, Rosenberg doesn't think every hunter will harvest a third more waterfowl, pointing out that many times hunters don't even get their daily bag limit. In any case, the increase in possession limits will be reviewed after the season for its affect on the birds' populations.

"It'll be followed. You know it'll be monitored to some extent. We have nationwide harvest surveys and this sort of thing and so we'll have an idea, and it can always be changed if there is some sort of population concern for a given species or group of species in the future."

Dark and white geese, brant, common snipe and sand-hill cranes have all had their possession limit increased from double to triple the daily bag limit. The sea duck possession limit has not changed, and remains two times the daily bag limit. Alaska already had a possession limit three-times the bag limit for dabbling ducks.

In the Kodiak area, only one Canada goose may be taken per day, with a possession limit of two. The reason, Rosenberg says, is that the resident population was introduced in the 1980s and few if any migrating Canada geese frequent the archipelago.

Falconers have also seen their possession limits increase by a third and may take three migratory game birds of any species per day, with nine in possession.

Off limits completely with no open season are eiders — both spectacled and Steller's — as well as emperor geese and tundra swans.