

Questions You May Have About Regulations

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What Are Migratory Birds?

PACIFIC BRANT

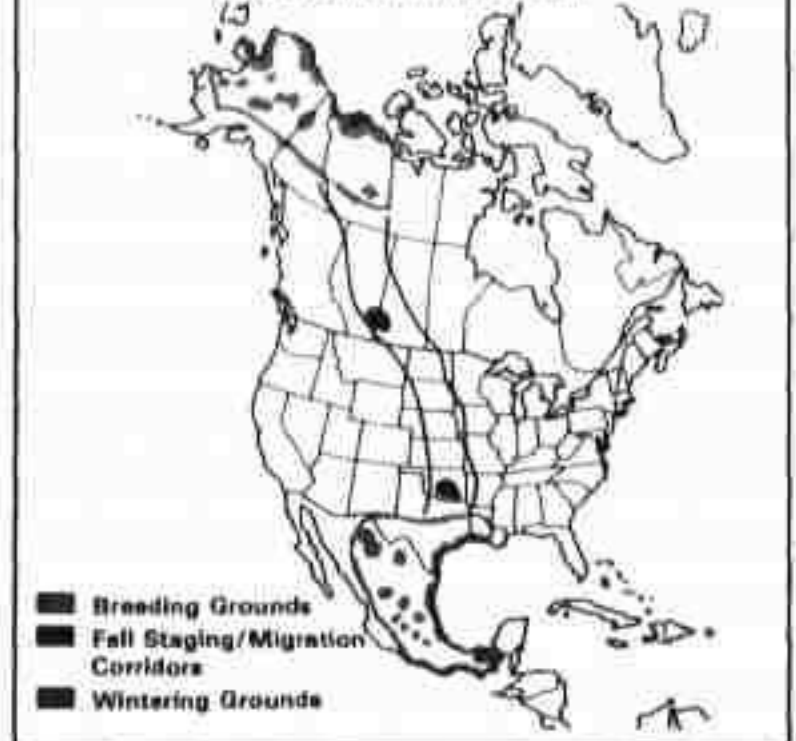


Migratory birds are birds that fly each year between the areas where they winter and the areas where they nest and spend the summer. More than 700 kinds of birds can be found in North America, and most of them are migratory. Each spring, residents of Alaska see large flocks of migratory birds such as ducks, geese and swans arriving to spend the summer. Alaska provides large areas rich in food and free from disturbance that attract birds from places all over the world, including Mexico, the Lower 48 states, Japan, Canada, the Soviet Union, and even South America. Migratory birds frequently use the same wintering and summering areas each year and follow the same routes when they travel between these areas.

During the course of an annual cycle of breeding, wintering and migration, most migratory birds range over a large area and depend for their well-being on habitats in different states and frequently different countries. Thus, Alaska's migratory birds are shared by people in several countries and many states, and the concern and responsibility for their preservation is shared, too.

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WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE Mid-Continent/Western



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Who Is Responsible For Managing Migratory Birds?

Management of migratory birds in the United States is guided by international treaties with four other nations: Canada, Mexico, Japan and the Soviet Union. These treaties and the laws that implement them designate the Secretary of the Interior as the official who is responsible for overall management of migratory birds. This responsibility in turn has been delegated to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the primary federal government wildlife management agency. Although there is a strong federal responsibility for migratory birds, the states play an important role in managing these and other species of wildlife. In practice, respon-



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sibility for migratory birds is shared by state, federal and sometimes local jurisdictions. Thus, the Fish and Wildlife Service coordinates closely with state wildlife agencies and other interested groups on virtually all aspects of migratory bird management. The states are consulted regularly on the development of federal regulations for migratory birds and may develop more specific management strategies within federal guidelines. The states also work closely with the Fish and Wildlife Service to protect habitat and to help gather information needed to make management decisions.

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How Are Migratory Birds Managed?

The goal of migratory bird management in North America is to conserve and manage migratory birds to provide optimum opportunity for their use and enjoyment by people. This is done through a cooperative effort involving many agencies, organizations and individuals. Major elements of conservation and management are preservation of habitat and control of harvest through hunting regulations. In addition, the Fish and Wildlife Service, working with the states, gathers information about bird populations, their habitats and harvests to evaluate the management program.

Hunting regulations are important as a means of assur-

ing that harvest levels are biologically sound, consistent with maintaining the populations being hunted and provide hunting opportunities to all users. Hunting regulations in the United States are set each year through a joint process that involves the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state wildlife agencies and other conservation organizations. Since particular states share the same populations of birds, these states are grouped administratively into flyways. There are four flyways in the U.S. - the Pacific Flyway, the Central Flyway, the Mississippi Flyway, and the Atlantic Flyway. Due to its unique location in the far north, Alaska shares its waterfowl with all four flyways, but it is most closely related to the Pacific Flyway.

Administrative Waterfowl Flyways of the United States

