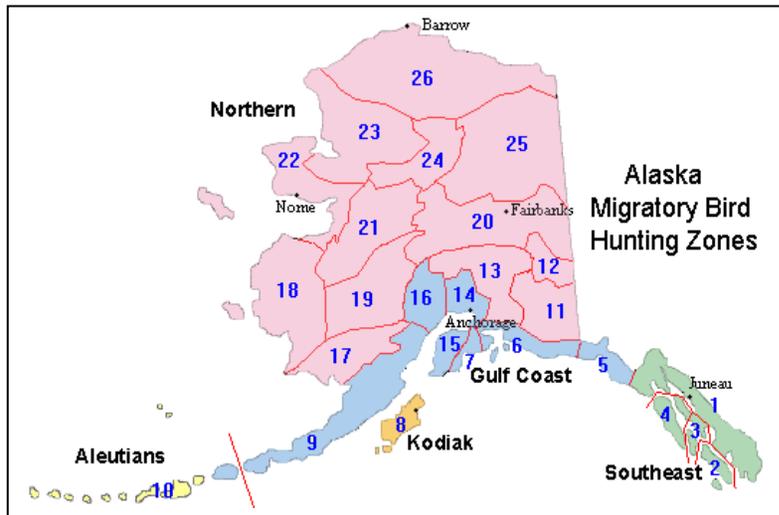


# A L A S K A

## 2008 - 2009 Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations Summary



Northern Pintails by Robert Steiner



# Seasons & Limits

## PRIBILOF/ALEUTIAN Unit 10 (except Unimak Is.)

Oct. 8-Jan. 22

Ducks <sup>1</sup>	7 per day, 21 in possession
Sea Ducks <sup>2</sup> Residents	10 per day, 20 in possession
Nonresidents	7 per day, 20 per season
Dark Geese	6 per day, 12 in possession
White Geese	4 per day, 8 in possession
Brant	3 per day, 6 in possession
Emperor Geese	NO OPEN SEASON
Tundra Swans	NO OPEN SEASON
Common Snipe	8 per day, 16 in possession
Sandhill Cranes	2 per day, 4 in possession

## NORTH Units 11-13, 17-26

Sept. 1-Dec. 16

Ducks <sup>1</sup>	10 per day, 30 in possession
Sea Ducks <sup>2</sup> Residents	10 per day, 20 in possession
Nonresidents	10 per day, 20 per season
Dark Geese <sup>6</sup>	4 per day, 8 in possession
White Geese	4 per day, 8 in possession
Brant	3 per day, 6 in possession
Emperor Geese	NO OPEN SEASON
Tundra Swans <sup>8</sup>	Units 17, 18, 22, 23 only
Common Snipe	8 per day, 16 in possession
Sandhill Cranes <sup>9</sup>	3 per day, 6 in possession

## SOUTHEAST Units 1-4

Sept. 1-Dec. 16

Ducks <sup>1</sup>	7 per day, 21 in possession
Sea Ducks <sup>2</sup> Residents	10 per day, 20 in possession
Nonresidents	7 per day, 20 per season
Dark Geese	4 per day, 8 in possession
White Geese	4 per day, 8 in possession
Brant	3 per day, 6 in possession
Emperor Geese	NO OPEN SEASON
Tundra Swans	NO OPEN SEASON
Common Snipe	8 per day, 16 in possession
Sandhill Cranes	2 per day, 4 in possession

## KODIAK Unit 8

Oct. 8-Jan. 22

Ducks <sup>1</sup>	7 per day, 21 in possession
Sea Ducks <sup>2</sup> Residents	10 per day, 20 in possession
Nonresidents	7 per day, 20 per season
Dark Geese <sup>7</sup>	4 per day, 8 in possession
White Geese	4 per day, 8 in possession
Brant	3 per day, 6 in possession
Emperor Geese	NO OPEN SEASON
Tundra Swans	NO OPEN SEASON
Common Snipe	8 per day, 16 in possession
Sandhill Cranes	2 per day, 4 in possession

## GULF COAST Units 5-7, 9, 10 (Unimak Is. only), 14-16

Sept. 1-Dec. 16

Ducks <sup>1</sup>	8 per day, 24 in possession
Sea Ducks <sup>2</sup> Residents	10 per day, 20 in possession
Nonresidents	8 per day, 20 per season
Dark Geese <sup>3,4,5</sup>	4 per day, 8 in possession

White Geese	4 per day, 8 in possession
Brant	3 per day, 6 in possession
Emperor Geese	NO OPEN SEASON
Tundra Swans	NO OPEN SEASON
Common Snipe	8 per day, 16 in possession
Sandhill Cranes	2 per day, 4 in possession

**SEE SPECIAL RESTRICTIONS BELOW**

## Special Restrictions

- <sup>1</sup> **DUCKS (except sea ducks):** General duck limits may include no more than 1 canvasback per day, 3 in possession.
- <sup>2</sup> **SEA DUCKS:** Includes harlequin, long-tailed duck (oldsquaw), eiders, scoters and mergansers. Limits for **residents** may include no more than 6 per day, 12 in possession each of harlequin or long-tailed ducks. Limits for **nonresidents** are equal to general duck limits for the zone (7, 8 or 10). **Nonresidents** may not take or possess more than 20 sea ducks per season, including no more than 4 each of harlequin, long-tailed duck, black scoter, surf scoter, white-winged scoter, common eider, or king eider per season. Steller's and spectacled eiders are closed statewide.
- GEESE:** Dark geese include any combination of cackling/Canada and white-fronted geese. White geese include snow and Ross's geese.
- <sup>3</sup> Units 5 & 6, Canada goose season is Sept. 28-Dec. 16.
- <sup>4</sup> Unit 6 Middleton Island, Canada goose hunting is by registration permit. 10 permits available in Anchorage or Cordova.
- <sup>5</sup> In Units 9 and Unimak Island portion of Unit 10, dark goose limits are 6 per day, 12 in possession; however, no more than 2 may be Canada geese in Unit 9E, and no more than 4 may be Canada geese in Units 9A-C and Unimak Island.
- <sup>6</sup> In Units 17 and 18, the dark goose limits are 6 per day, 12 in possession; however, no more than 2 may be Canada geese in Unit 18 and no more than 4 may be Canada geese in Unit 17.
- <sup>7</sup> In Unit 8, dark goose limits include no more than 1 Canada goose per day, 2 in possession. Check for area closures before hunting.
- <sup>8</sup> **TUNDRA SWANS:** Tundra swan seasons in Units 17, 18, 22 and 23 are Sept. 1 - Oct. 31. Hunting is by registration permit only, with a limit of 3 swans per permit.
- <sup>9</sup> **SANDHILL CRANES:** In Unit 17 bag limits for sandhill cranes are 2 per day, 4 in possession.

## WHAT'S NEW IN 2008 ?

### Changes to Goose Seasons This Year

This year the number of Pacific brant rose to nearly 150,000 triggering an increase in bag limit from 2 daily to 3. Most goose populations are healthy, but reduced limits remain necessary for cackling geese in Units 9E and 18.

The delayed opening of Canada goose season in Units 5 and 6, and restrictions on Middleton Island continue as precautions to protect dusky Canada geese. Seasons are closed for emperor geese, and spectacled and Steller's eiders.

### Daylight Savings Time Extended To November

New federal time standards mean that shooting times change to Alaska Standard Time on the first Sunday in November (Nov. 2) instead of the last Sunday in October. *Please discard any previously published Alaska shooting timetables.*

### Federal Migratory Bird Subsistence Regulations

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has published federal regulations governing traditional spring and summer subsistence hunting of migratory birds in Alaska. The regulations allow permanent residents of designated harvest areas to hunt certain species of migratory birds during specified open seasons. For more information, contact U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Migratory Bird Comanagement Council: (877) 229-2344 or online at: <http://alaska.fws.gov/ambcc/Regulations.htm>

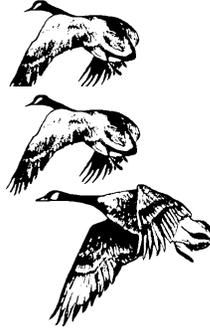
### Need a Waterfowl Hunting Guide ?

All waterfowl hunting guides operating in Alaska are required to register with ADF&G before guiding clients. If you would like a list of registered waterfowl guides, view or download the current list at: [http://www.wildlife.alaska.gov/hunt\\_trap/hunting/duck/wfguides.pdf](http://www.wildlife.alaska.gov/hunt_trap/hunting/duck/wfguides.pdf) or contact the Waterfowl Program at 267-2206. ADF&G does not recommend or vouch for any specific guides or businesses.

## HIP ENROLLMENT FOR 2008

Most migratory bird hunters are required to enroll in the nationwide Harvest Information Program (HIP).

**If you are exempt from the state duck stamp requirement you do not need to enroll in HIP.** HIP enrollment is easy when you buy your hunting license and state duck stamp.



1. Complete a HIP form at a license vendor (takes about 1 minute).  
or  
Enroll on the Internet when you buy a license and state duck stamp with a credit card (5-7 minutes).
2. You will be asked to provide:
  - Your name, address, date of birth
  - Approximate numbers of birds you harvested **last year**.
3. Leave your HIP form **with the license vendor**.

**Prior to hunting, you must sign the face of your stamp in ink, but it does not need to be attached to your license. The serial number of your state duck stamp is proof that you enrolled in HIP—you must have this when you hunt.**

Hunters selected for the national harvest survey will receive a personal letter and hunting record form to keep track of birds they harvest. A more detailed questionnaire will be sent later to record hunting effort and harvest during this season. Survey responses are used only for estimating hunter activity and harvest.

### For More Information

Call (907) 267-2206 during business hours. This telephone number is only for questions and not for HIP registration.

## LICENSE AND TAG REQUIREMENTS

**Resident Hunters** All Alaska residents age 16 or older must possess a hunting license to hunt in Alaska and must carry it while hunting. Resident hunters 60 years old or older may obtain a free, permanent identification card issued by the Department. This card replaces the sport fishing, hunting, and trapping licenses. Disabled veterans qualified under AS 16.05.341 may receive a free hunting license. Residents with an annual family income below \$8,200 (before taxes) may buy a \$5.00 low-income license.

**Nonresident and Alien Hunters** All nonresident and alien hunters, regardless of age, must possess the appropriate hunting license. Nonresidents may buy a small game license for \$20.00.

**Nonresident Military Personnel** Members of the military service on active duty who are permanently stationed in the state, and their dependents who are living in the state, and are not yet Alaska residents under AS 16.05.940(24), may buy special nonresident military small game licenses for \$25.00.

**State and Federal Duck Stamps** All waterfowl hunters 16 years of age or older must have current federal Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp (\$15.00). An Alaska Waterfowl Conservation Stamp (\$5.00) is also required unless you:

- are an Alaska resident under the age of 16;
- are an Alaska resident 60 years old or older;
- are a disabled veteran eligible for free license; or
- qualify for a low income license.

State and Federal stamps must be signed in ink and must be carried at all times while hunting waterfowl. Stamps need not be attached to a hunting license. State and federal stamps are not required when hunting only snipe and sandhill cranes.

**Proof of HIP Enrollment** Migratory bird hunters required to enroll in HIP must carry proof of enrollment while hunting—the serial number on the back of state duck stamps is the HIP number.

## ON-LINE LICENSING AND REGULATIONS

You can purchase licenses and stamps, check current regulations and download regulations from our websites.

**On-line Licenses:** <http://www.admin.adfg.state.ak.us/license/>

**Regulations:**

<http://www.wildlife.alaska.gov/regulations/pdfs/wfl-1.pdf>

### License Fees at Work

Since 1985, the Alaska Waterfowl Conservation Stamp program has raised over \$3 million. Hunting license and state duck stamp fees are contributed to the state's Fish and Game Fund, reserved for the management of Alaska's fish and wildlife. Your duck stamp license fees and other stamp revenues fund the state's waterfowl management program and may not be used for other purposes.

### Learn About Duck Stamps on the Web

**Federal Duck Stamps:** <http://duckstamps.fws.gov>

**Alaska Duck Stamp Series:**

<http://www.wildlife.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=waterfowl.stamp>

Artist Robert Steiner created the 2008 Alaska duck stamp design of Northern Pintails. This is the 24<sup>th</sup> Alaska duck stamp.

**Youth Hunter Education Requirement** In Units 7, 13, 14, 15, and 20:

- If you are 16 or older and born after January 1, 1986, you must complete Basic Hunter Education before hunting.
- If you are under 16, you must either (1) complete Basic Hunter Education or (2) hunt under the direct supervision of a hunter who has or one who was born on or before January 1, 1986.

## ILLEGAL METHODS OF TAKING GAME

Game means any species of bird, reptile and mammal, including a feral domestic animal, found or introduced in the state, except domestic birds and mammals (AS 16.05.940(18)).

The following restrictions apply to the taking of waterfowl, snipe and cranes. Refer to current Alaska State Hunting Regulations for descriptions of illegal methods of taking other types of game.

### You May NOT:

- Hunt with a rifle, pistol, or a shotgun larger than 10-gauge.
- Hunt with a shotgun capable of holding more than three shells (magazines must be "plugged" to hold two shells).
- Hunt with shot other than federally-approved nontoxic shot.
- Have lead shot in personal possession while hunting.
- Hunt with shot sizes larger than T (0.20" diameter).
- Shoot on, from, or across the drivable surface of any constructed road or highway.
- Use poison or a substance that temporarily incapacitates wildlife to kill any game species without written permission from the Board of Game (5 AAC 92.990(32)).
- Use a helicopter to hunt; transport hunters, hunting gear, game meat or trophies, or equipment used to pursue or retrieve game.
- Take game from motorized vehicles on land, except under provisions for disabled persons in state and federal regulations.
- Take game from a motor driven boat if the motor is running or if the boat is still moving because of the motor. You **may** use the motor to **retrieve** a dead or injured bird.
- Drive, herd, molest or harass game with any motorized vehicle.
- Use a machine gun or set gun.
- Use a crossbow in any restricted weapons hunt that authorizes taking by bow and arrow.
- Use a pit, fire, artificial light, laser sight, electronic night vision scope, radio communication, cellular or satellite telephone, artificial salt lick, explosive, expanding gas arrow, bomb, smoke, or chemical (excluding scent lures).

## FIELD POSSESSION

You may not possess or transport more than the daily bag limit while in the field, or while returning from the field to your vehicle, camp, etc. (50 CFR 20.35). You may retain up to stated possession limits of migratory birds in camps, primary residences, principal means of transportation (automobile), processing facilities, post offices, and common carriers.

It is illegal to possess live birds without a permit; wounded birds must be killed immediately. Waterfowl may be plucked in the field but one fully feathered wing or the head must remain attached to allow species identification during transport.

## SALVAGE OF MEAT

You must salvage all the edible meat of game birds for human consumption; this is defined as the meat of the breast.

## USE OF GAME

You may not buy, sell, or barter game meat.

## MARKED OR TAGGED GAME

Some animals are marked, tagged or collared for scientific studies. These animals are legal game. However, if you take a marked animal, you must notify either the Alaska Department of Fish and Game or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

## Reporting BANDED BIRDS IS EASY!

One minute of your time can furnish valuable data on the origin, movements, and ages of ducks and geese. You may keep the bands and you will receive a certificate showing the date and location each bird was originally banded. Please report bands on harvested birds or bands that you find by telephone or Internet:

**USGS Bird Banding Laboratory**  
**Toll-free (800) 327-BAND**  
**[www.reportband.gov](http://www.reportband.gov)**

For more information on bird banding, visit the USGS Bird Banding Laboratory at: <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/>

## ADDITIONAL FEDERAL REGULATIONS

In addition to state regulations, certain federal regulations (50 CFR 20) apply to migratory bird hunting. For complete federal hunting rules, contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Law Enforcement, 1011 E. Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503 (907) 786-3311.

No person shall take migratory game birds:

- With a trap, net, fishhook, swivel gun, punt gun, or battery gun.
- From a sink box providing concealment below the water.
- By the use or aid of live decoys.
- Using recordings of migratory birdcalls or electrically amplified imitations of birdcalls (except where allowed for snow geese).
- By baiting or on areas reasonably known to be baited. Areas are considered baited for ten days after bait is gone.

## Possession and Tagging

Migratory birds must be tagged before being left at any place other than the hunter's residence or placed in the custody of another person for any purpose. Tags must show the number and kind of birds, date killed, and address and signature of the hunter.

## Transportation and Shipment

All migratory game birds being transported in the United States must have a head or one fully feathered wing attached until they reach the possessor's home or a preservation facility. Packages containing migratory game birds or parts that are shipped by post or common carrier must be marked on the outside with the name and address of both the sender and recipient, and the number of birds, by species, in the package.

## Import/Export

Check both specific export limits of other countries and import limits for the United States. One fully feathered wing must remain attached to all migratory game birds being imported or exported until they reach one's home or a preservation facility. No person may import migratory birds belonging to another person. Check both specific export limits of other countries and import limits for the United States. One fully feathered wing must remain attached to all migratory game birds being imported or exported until they reach one's home or a preservation facility. No person may import migratory birds belonging to another person.

## RESTRICTED OR CLOSED AREAS

Some areas in Alaska have restrictions on hunting methods, use of motorized vehicles, and access to state special areas (Refuges and Critical Habitat Areas), implemented by regulation or annual General Permits issued by the department. The restrictions summarized below are those that most apply to waterfowl hunting.

**GMU 1: Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge** is closed to hunting, except for waterfowl, snipe and cranes. No person may use any off-road or all-terrain vehicle, motorcycle, or other motorized vehicle (except a boat) within the refuge. All waterfowl hunters are required to complete a certified hunter education course. Hunters under age 10 may complete a course or hunt under the supervision of an adult. Before hunting in the refuge, all hunters must register with the department and carry proof of registration in the field. Check for local zone closures.

**Mendenhall Lake Closed Area** is closed to hunting within ¼ mile of Mendenhall Lake, the U.S. Forest Service Mendenhall Glacier Visitor's Center and the center's parking area.

**Auke Lake** is closed to the taking of waterfowl.

**GMU 7: Portage Glacier Closed Area** is closed to the discharge of firearms with 150 yards of all developed facilities on Forest Service lands south of Portage Creek.

**GMU 14: Anchorage Management Area** consists of all Cook Inlet drainages south of the Elmendorf and Fort Richardson military reservations and north of and including Rainbow Creek. Waterfowl may be taken only by falconry, but not in the Ship Creek drainage west of Post Road.

**Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge** consists of all public land and water south and west of and adjacent to the toe of the bluff from Point Woronzof southeasterly to Potter Creek. Hunting is closed in that portion between the Alaska Railroad and the Old Seward Highway (**Potter Marsh**). On the remainder of the refuge, hunting is permitted only for small game by archery, falconry, and shotgun. However, shotgun hunting is prohibited in that portion designated by signs between the radio tower at Kincaid Park motocross area and Furrow Creek. Shotgun hunting is allowed

only from September 1 through March 31. All hunters on the refuge must have completed a certified hunter education course and carry an annual registration permit issued by the department. Motorized vehicles are prohibited, except by permit.

**Eklutna Lake Management Area:** Drainages of Eklutna River and Lake upstream from the Glenn Highway, excluding those drainages flowing into the East Fork of Eklutna River upstream from the bridge above the lake and Thunderbird Creek, are open to hunting for small game by bow and arrow only from the day after Labor Day through April 30.

**Chugach State Park Management Area:** That portion of the park outside of the Eagle River, Anchorage, and Eklutna Management Areas is open to hunting under regulations governing Unit 14(C), except that small game hunting is prohibited in the Tokle Creek drainage (Arctic Valley Ski Area).

**Birchwood Management Area:** All lands bounded on the south and west by Eagle River and Fort Richardson Military Reservation, on the east by the Old Glenn Highway, and on the north by Peters Creek, are open to hunting for small game, but only by shotgun or bow and arrow north and west of the Alaska Railroad.

**Finger Lake** west of Palmer is open to the hunting of waterfowl only by archery with flu-flu arrows or falconry.

**Susitna Flats State Game Refuge** in Units 14 and 16: Off-road use of vehicles weighing less than 1000 lbs. GVW is allowed on all lands November 9 - March 31, provided there is at least a 12-inch snow cover and sufficient frozen ground. During April 1 – November 8, use of such vehicles is allowed only by special permit issued by the department. You cannot use a motorboat May 15 - August 31 on the Theodore River upstream from private parcel USS 3956. Aircraft landing and take-off is prohibited in the designated waterfowl habitat zone along the coast from April 1 through May 15 ([map available at ADF&G](#)).

**Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge:** Off-road vehicles may not be used within ½ mile of the Glenn Highway. Off-road use of vehicles weighing less than 1,000 lbs GVW is allowed on the rest of the refuge only November 9-March 31, provided there is at least a 12-inch snow cover and sufficient ground frost to prevent penetration or disturbance of the soil and plant roots.

If ADF&G issues a General Permit, off-road vehicles also may be used August 15 - November 15 in a posted 100-yard wide corridor extending from Cottonwood Creek on the western edge of the refuge along the north bank of Palmer Slough and Knik Arm to a sign at the end of the trail (check with ADF&G offices in Palmer or Anchorage to see if the trail is open to ORV use). Motorized watercraft are allowed year round on the Knik River, Matanuska River, and Knik Arm waters. On Wasilla Creek (Rabbit Slough), motorized watercraft may be used year round except that, during openings of weekend-only sport fisheries, watercraft capable of producing more than 42 lbs of thrust or 3 hp are prohibited (check for dates of fishery openings). On all other refuge waters, you may use an outboard motor of 20 hp or less August 16 - March 31. Aircraft landing and take-off is prohibited except from November 10 - March 31 when the department has determined that there is adequate snow and frozen ground.

**Goose Bay State Game Refuge:** Off-road vehicles weighing less than 1,000 lbs. GVW can be used on all refuge lands November 9 - March 31, provided there is at least a 12-inch snow cover and sufficient ground frost to prevent penetration or disturbance of the soil and plant roots, and August 31 - November 8 on established trails located within the electrical transmission line right-of-way.

**GMU 15: Moose River Closed Area**, on and within ¼ mile of the Moose River between the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge boundary and Sterling Highway, is closed to waterfowl hunting.

**Skilak Loop Management Area** is open to small game hunting by bow and arrow during October 1 - March 1. Hunters age 16 or under may hunt small game with .22 caliber rimfire firearms and shotguns only during weekends Nov. 1 – Dec. 31, only in the western portion of the area, and only when accompanied by a licensed hunter at least 18 years old. The youth hunter or the accompanying hunter must have successfully completed a hunter education course.

**GMU 16: Susitna Flats State Game Refuge:** (See GMU).

**Trading Bay State Game Refuge:** The use of off-road vehicles is prohibited in the refuge during April 1 - November 8. Off-road use of vehicles less than 1,000 lbs. GVW is allowed November 9 -

March 31, provided there is at least a 12-inch snow cover and sufficient frozen ground to prevent damage to vegetation.

**GMU 20: Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge** is open to hunting and trapping only by advance registration.

The **Healy-Lignite Management Area** is open to hunting by bow and arrow only.

**GMU 20, 24, 25, 26:** The **Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area** (lands within five miles of the right-of-way of the Dalton Highway) is closed to hunting, except that big game, small game, and fur animals may be taken by bow and arrow. No motorized vehicle may be used to transport hunters, their hunting gear, or game, except that licensed highway vehicles may be used on designated public roads; aircraft and boats may be used in the corridor; and snow machines may be used to cross the corridor to access lands on the other side of the Management Area. Any hunter traveling on the Dalton Highway must stop at any check station operated by the department within the Management Area.

***If you intend to hunt on private land, always ask permission of the owner and respect your privileges.***

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) administers all programs and activities free from discrimination based on race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, marital status, pregnancy, parenthood, or disability. The department administers all programs and activities to comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Education Amendments of 1972. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility please write:

- ADF&G ADA Coordinator, P.O. Box 115526, Juneau, AK 99811-5526
- Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street NW MS 5230, Washington DC 20240.

## **NONTOXIC SHOT: The Solution to Lead Poisoning**

Nontoxic shot is required for hunting waterfowl, sandhill cranes, and snipe in Alaska. It is a violation to have shells loaded with lead shot in personal possession while hunting migratory birds. Shot sizes larger than T (0.20" diameter) are prohibited. Nontoxic shot also is required for muzzleloading shotguns. Current federally approved nontoxic shot types include: steel, bismuth-tin, tungsten-iron, tungsten-bronze, tungsten polymer, tungsten matrix, tungsten-tin-bismuth, TNI (HEVI-METAL), and TINT (HEVI-SHOT). Steel remains the most widely used and tested nontoxic shot.

### **SHOOTING STEEL SHOT**

There are two major differences between steel and lead shot: steel is LIGHTER and ROUNDER than lead shot. These characteristics affect both the energy for penetrating birds and the size of the downrange shot string needed to intercept birds.

### **STEEL IS LIGHTER . . . USE A LARGER SHOT SIZE**

Steel pellets weigh about one-third less than lead pellets of the same size. To compensate for weight differences and improve downrange energy, use steel shot one or two sizes larger than the old lead load. The chart "Proven Steel Shot Loads for Waterfowl & Upland Game Birds" shows both typical effective ranges for various shot sizes and the desired patterning performance for taking different sizes of birds.

### **STEEL IS ROUNDER . . . USE A MORE OPEN CHOKE**

Soft lead shot is deformed during firing and passage through the barrel, forming longer and wider shot strings of irregular pellets. Steel shot manufacturing produces pellets that are more round than lead. The iron used in "steel" shot is about three times harder than lead pellets (but softer than gun barrels), so it does not deform when fired or when it strikes birds. Steel's more aerodynamic shape delivers better pattern density and penetration, but shot strings are shorter and narrower than lead loads. More open chokes such as Improved Cylinder and Modified will enlarge patterns and lengthen shot strings to provide more margin of error in elevation aim and trigger timing.

**Remember to pattern test your gun and loads—and practice shooting often before the season opens.**

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For information on shotshell performance and shotgun skills clinics, contact Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game, Hunter Information and Training at (907) 267-2187.

## **AVIAN INFLUENZA: What Hunters Should Know**

Public concern and widespread media attention about the Asian H5N1 avian influenza virus requires hunters to know the facts.

- Asian H5N1 has not been detected in North America
- This specific virus is not a major human health risk; it very rarely infects people mostly associated with intense poultry outbreaks.
- Viruses, bacteria, and parasites in game animals can be avoided by following common sense hygiene practices:
  - Use rubber gloves when you clean game and don't touch your mouth, nose, and eyes with your hands. Don't eat, drink, or smoke while cleaning game.
  - Wash your hands with soap and water, or use alcohol hand sanitizer after cleaning game
  - Disinfect your tools and work area with hot, soapy water.
  - Cook game meat thoroughly (internal temperature of 165° F) until the juices run clear and meat is no longer pink.

### **For More Information**

For information about avian influenza or about human influenza, see the comprehensive state website at [www.avianflu.alaska.gov](http://www.avianflu.alaska.gov)

Wildlife agencies in Alaska want to know if you see sick or dead birds that seem unusual. Report sightings promptly:

**Interagency Bird Disease Hotline (866) 527-3358**