



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Division of Migratory Bird Management
Population and Habitat Assessment Branch
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To: Pat Devers, Acting Chief, Branch of Assessment and Decision Support

From: Pam Garrettson, Wildlife Biologist, Branch of Assessment and Decision Support

Date: 12 August 2026

Re: Early Teal Seasons 2027

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service adopted guidelines for special early teal seasons in the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central flyways and special early teal-wood duck seasons in the Atlantic and Mississippi flyways in 2014 (79 FR 51402, August 28, 2014), based on assessments of teal harvest potential (Teal Harvest Potential Working Group 2013). The guidelines allow a 16-day special early teal season in the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central flyways when the blue-winged teal breeding population estimate from the traditional survey area (i.e., strata 1–18, 20–50, and 75–77) is greater than 4.7 million birds, and a 9-day season when the blue-winged teal estimate is between 3.3 and 4.7 million birds. In production states in the Mississippi and Central Flyways that don't select a special teal season, two additional bonus blue-winged teal may be offered beyond the daily duck bag limit during the regular duck season. States may offer this bonus for the first 16 days when the blue-winged teal population estimate exceeds 4.7 million, or for the first 9 days when the estimate falls between 3.3 and 4.7 million (79 FR 56864, September 23, 2014).

The blue-winged teal breeding population estimate for 2026 (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2026) is 4.0 million (standard error = 0.2 million), which corresponds to a 9-day teal season for the 2027-28 hunting season in the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central flyways; in production states in the Mississippi and Central Flyways that don't select a special teal season two additional blue-winged teal (beyond the daily duck bag limit) may be taken during the first 9 days of the regular duck season. In Florida, Kentucky, and Tennessee, in lieu of a special early teal season, a 5-consecutive-day teal-wood duck season may be selected in September. The daily bag limit may not exceed six teal and wood ducks in the aggregate, of which no more than two may be wood ducks.

Literature Cited:

Federal Register, Volume 79, No. 167, page 51403, August 28, 2014.

Federal Register, Volume 79, No. 184, page 56866, September 23, 2014.



Teal Harvest Potential Working Group. 2013. An assessment of the Harvest Potential of North American Teal. Unpublished report. <https://downloads.regulations.gov/FWS-HQ-MB-2013-0057-0046/content.pdf>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2026. Waterfowl population status, 2026. U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. USA.