

then closes and reopens Oct. 15 through Dec. 4

### Mississippi River subzone

Hunters along the Mississippi River should be aware of the differing season dates in the area they are hunting. While the season may be open on one side of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, it could be closed on the other. Remember: the west side of the tracks is in the Mississippi River zone; the east of the tracks is in the Southern duck zone. A Mississippi River zone hunting factsheet (pdf) is available on the waterfowl in Wisconsin pages of the DNR website.

“Wisconsin waterfowlers have potential for a good hunting season,” said Kent Van Horn, migratory game bird ecologist for the state Department of Natural Resources. “Continental breeding surveys that have been ongoing for 56 years reported record high numbers of ducks this spring. However, even with excellent early season indications, local conditions and scouting will be the most important factors when pursuing ducks this fall.

“Many of the ducks harvested in Wisconsin come from birds that breed in the state’s wetlands. The four most abundant ducks in Wisconsin’s fall hunting harvest are mallards, wood ducks, green-winged teal, and blue-winged teal,” Van Horn said.

The daily bag limit is six ducks in total, not to include

more than for mallards of which only one may be a hen, three wood ducks, one black duck, two red-heads, two scaup, two pintail, and one canvasback. The bag limit for non-migratory species is five to include no more than one hooded merganser. The daily bag limit for coot is 15.

“As always, hunters who do the early legwork – scouting for good wetland conditions and serving what are using -- will be the ones having a good hunt,” said Van Horn. “Hunter survey data in Wisconsin show that duck hunters who scouted 3 or more times harvested an average of 14.7 ducks while those who did not scout harvested an average of 4.8 ducks per season.”

### Licenses & Stamps

Licenses and stamps required include a Wisconsin small game license, a Wisconsin waterfowl stamp and a federal migratory bird stamp. The \$15 federal stamp can be purchased at a U.S. Post Office. Hunters will also have the option of purchasing the federal stamp privilege at license vendors for an additional \$2.50 surcharge. The pur-



chase will be noted on their license. The stamp itself will arrive weeks later in the mail. State licenses, permits, and stamps are also available through Wisconsin’s Online Licensing Center.

### Be sure to be HIP

Waterfowl and other migratory bird hunters must also register each year with the federal Harvest Information Program (HIP) which places them on a list of hunters that may receive a mailing asking them to provide a summary of their waterfowl harvest. HIP registration is free and should occur at the time hunters purchase their licenses or state waterfowl stamps.