



# 2012-2013 Waterfowl Hunter Survey



Prepared by:

Ted Nichols, Principal Biologist

Jeremiah Heise, Waterfowl Program Seasonal Technician

Orrin Jones, Waterfowl Program Seasonal Biologist

**March 15, 2013**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife conducted a survey of duck hunters during the winter of 2012-13 to measure the importance of several elements annually considered when setting waterfowl seasons and to determine hunters' preferences for duck season frameworks within each of the state's 3 waterfowl zones. A final objective was to gather hunters' opinions on other topics that are useful to wildlife managers when considering long-term season structure policy issues. Surveys were sent via US Mail to a random sample of 1,080 individuals who received Harvest Information Program (HIP) certifications in New Jersey during the 2011-12 hunting season and who indicated that they hunted ducks during the previous year. The sampling rate was 16% for individuals who had hunted ducks. The survey response was 40%.

Nearly half (48%) of duck hunters only hunted in one zone while 8% of respondents hunted ducks in all 3 zones. The most common zone crossover occurred between the South and Coastal Zones. We also asked hunters in which zone they hunted ducks most frequently. The South Zone was the most frequently hunted for ducks followed by the North and Coastal Zone. The zone that respondents duck hunted most frequently was also used as a cross-reference when analyzing season framework preferences within each zone.

### **Annual Elements Considered When Setting Waterfowl Seasons**

Hunters ranked how important 8 particular elements were to them in the annual consideration of waterfowl seasons. Hunters ranked the desire to maximize the number of Saturdays within the season, as well as to have opening days and closing days occur on Saturdays as high importance. Conversely, there was little support to have opening days occur on weekdays. Hunters indicated that it was very important that duck seasons be open to include Thanksgiving as well as the Christmas to New Year Holiday period. Hunters did not rank potential conflicts with other hunting seasons (e.g. deer) as important. Hunters indicated that overlapping duck seasons with Canada goose seasons as somewhat important, even if it meant fewer goose hunting days in January.

### **Hunting Season Structure Preference**

For each of the 3 zones, hunters were presented with 3 choices for a duck season structure and asked to identify which season structure they preferred most. In all zones, one choice was to maintain the recent season structure which was described for each zone. For each zone, we analyzed results separately for all respondents as well as for hunters who indicated that they hunted in that particular zone most frequently.

In the Coastal Zone the majority (29%) of all respondents preferred to hunt later into January by taking days from the 1<sup>st</sup> split in November. Further, when examining responses from individuals who hunted most frequently in the Coastal Zone, the majority of hunters (by a 5:4 margin)

preferred the option to hunt later into January over options to have similar or more hunting days in November.

Similarly, in the South Zone, the majority (30%) of all respondents, as well as individuals who hunted most frequently in the South Zone (44%), preferred to hunt later into January by taking days from the 1<sup>st</sup> split. The 2 other options received less support as a first preference.

North Zone duck season preferences were the least clear. Thirty-eight percent of respondents who duck hunted primarily in the North Zone preferred an option to hunt later in the season by cutting the 1<sup>st</sup> split in October. However, about half of hunters were nearly equally split between retaining 2 Saturdays in the 1<sup>st</sup> split and making the 1<sup>st</sup> split even longer than that. As such, North Zone duck hunters seemed to prefer to retain at least 2 Saturdays in the 1<sup>st</sup> split at about a 5:4 ratio. The ambiguity in North Zone season preferences is probably partially attributable to the recent, frequent changes to the North Zone season structure as the season structure has varied in 3 of the last 4 years.

### **Other Waterfowl Hunting Season Considerations**

Hunters were divided on their preference concerning a question involving allowing Sunday hunting for ducks with a slim majority (50%) opting for a hypothetical season structure which allowed hunting on Sunday. Forty-three percent of respondents preferred retaining the current framework with Sundays closed.

Fifty-four percent of duck hunters thought that the current 60-day duck season was too short while 41% thought the season length was about right. Most (80%) hunters seemed satisfied with the current duck bag limit of 6 birds while 13% thought the bag was too low.

A small majority (55%) of hunters supported doubling the current state stamp fee of \$5.00 for residents and \$10.00 for nonresidents under the auspices that funds continue to be used for waterfowl habitat acquisition and enhancement. Forty-three percent of respondents opposed this fee change.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Waterfowl hunting in New Jersey is a diverse recreational activity. New Jersey waterfowlers can pursue 28 species of ducks and 5 species of geese in a variety of habitats from small beaver ponds to the Atlantic Ocean. Due to New Jersey's wide diversity of waterfowl species and habitats, the state was divided into 3 (North, South and Coastal) zones in 1980 (Figure 1). Selecting hunting season dates for migratory game birds is a balance between science and social factors. Generally, most states select seasons when the birds are most abundant within a state or zone within a state. In addition, managers consider social factors including hunter preferences, traditions and holiday periods. Because of the diversity of habitats waterfowlers hunt, time spent pursuing additional quarry (e.g.: deer, striped bass), competition with work schedules and other

conflicts, and different traditions of when hunters prefer to hunt, it is not surprising that many hunters have different opinions on waterfowl season selections.

This diversity of opinions can make selecting annual waterfowl season dates challenging and at times contentious. The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife (Division) and Fish and Game Council (Council) receive input from hunters during the course of the year on season date selections. Although this input is considered when setting annual regulations, it is difficult to know what the majority of hunters prefer for season dates. The best way to answer this question is to conduct an unbiased, statistically valid survey of hunters who pursue waterfowl in the state. In order to better serve the state's duck hunters, the Division conducted this type of survey during the winter of 2012-13.

There were two key objectives for conducting this survey:

- 1) Have hunters score 8 generic statements on elements that are considered annually when setting duck hunting seasons (e.g.: maximizing Saturdays, days of the week to open seasons, importance of holiday periods).
- 2) Have hunters choose their preference between 3 season date selections within each of the 3 waterfowl zones.

A final objective was to gather hunters' opinions on 5 other ancillary topics that are useful to wildlife managers when considering long-term season structure policy issues.

One of the Division's primary goals in annually setting waterfowl seasons is to select dates that satisfy the majority of the state's hunters, recognizing that season date selections will not satisfy all waterfowl hunters. Although season date selections for state-regulated species such as deer or turkey are under the authority of the state wildlife agency, migratory bird regulations in every state are set under the authority of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Although states have input into how regulations are set through their respective Flyway Councils, the USFWS has final authority. As such, a state's migratory game bird regulations can be more restrictive, but not more liberal, than federal frameworks. For example, in Atlantic Flyway states including New Jersey, the current duck season framework is 60 days and must occur between the last Saturday in September and the last Sunday in January with no more than 2 season splits for zoned (e.g. New Jersey) states. The challenge for state wildlife agencies is to develop migratory game bird season dates that conform to federal frameworks, but account for migration patterns, average weather conditions, traditions, and the preferences of their hunters. Therefore, well-designed surveys are important to gauge hunter preferences.

## **METHODS**

In late November 2012, Division staff met with waterfowl constituents from the NJ Waterfowlers Association, Ducks Unlimited, and Delta Waterfowl to receive their input on the survey questions. Waterfowl hunting organization representatives agreed that the questions in the draft survey reflected the options of season choices that most hunters seemed to prefer in each zone.

The Division sent surveys to 1,080 individuals who received Harvest Information Program (HIP) certifications in New Jersey during the 2011-12 hunting season. Because one of the key objectives was to measure duck season selection preferences, surveys were sent to a random sample of the 6,789 HIP certified individuals who indicated that they hunted ducks during the previous (2010-11) hunting season, giving a sampling rate of 16%. Surveys (see Appendix), along with an accompanying cover letter and postage paid envelope, were sent out December 10, 2012 via US Mail.

Although the cover letter had a requested return date of January 25, 2013, surveys were accepted until February 22 when analysis began. A total of 423 surveys were returned. Adjusting for surveys that were returned because of a failed delivery address ( $n=28$ ), the survey response rate was 40.2%.

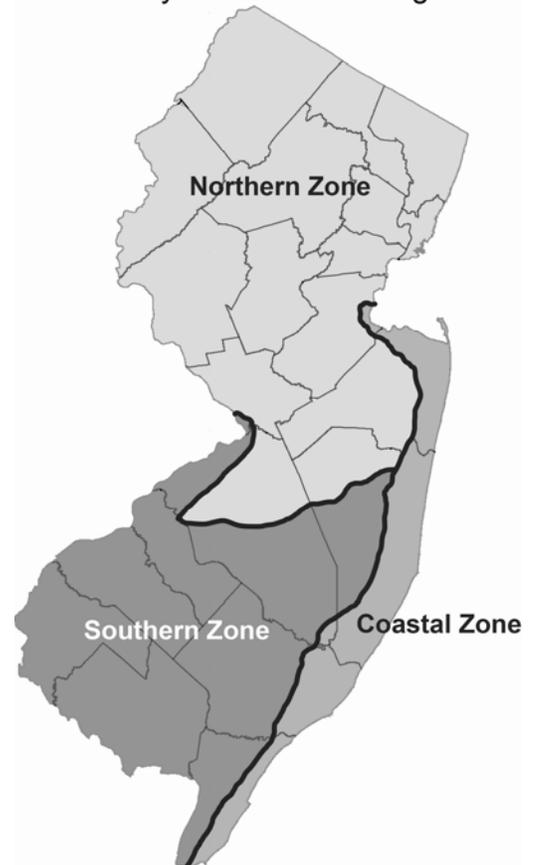
Because there was some concern that hunters could photocopy surveys and submit fraudulent responses, surveys were marked in a fashion such that any fraudulent surveys could be identified and excluded from analyses.

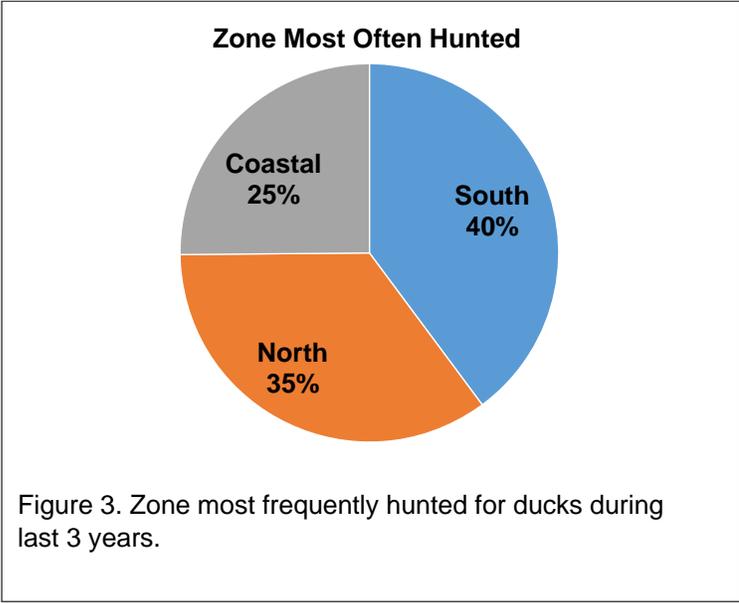
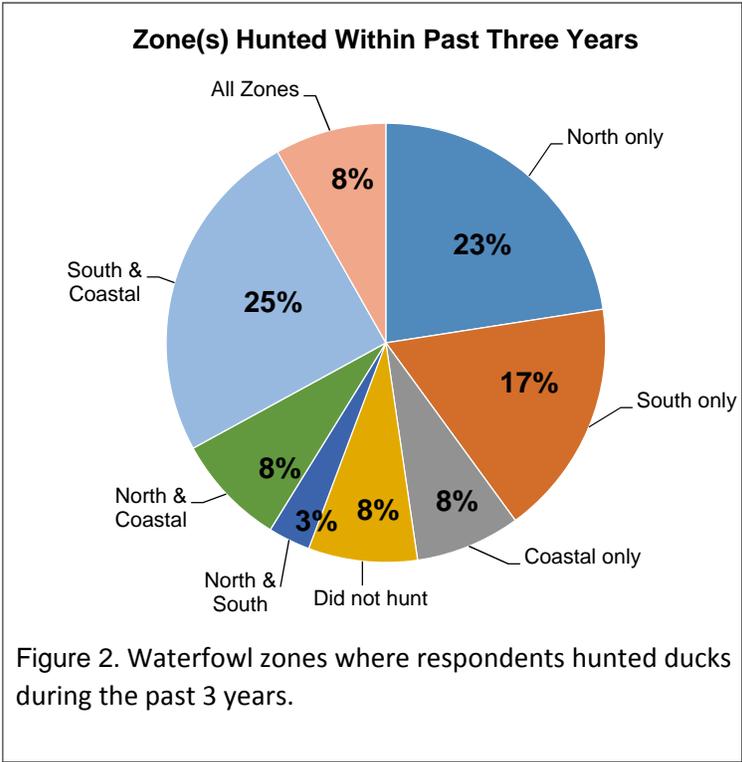
Note that totals in some figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding errors.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We asked waterfowl hunters to indicate all waterfowl zones where they had hunted ducks during the past 3 years. We also asked hunters in which zone they hunted ducks most frequently. Nearly half (48%) of duck hunters only hunted in one zone while 8% of respondents hunted ducks in all 3 zones (Figure 2). The most common zone crossover occurred between the South and Coastal Zones. For ducks, the South Zone was the most frequently hunted for ducks followed by the North and Coastal Zone, respectively (Figure 3).

Figure 1. New Jersey Waterfowl Hunting Zones





**Annual Elements Considered When Setting Waterfowl Seasons**

Hunters were asked to rank 8 elements on a scale from 1 (Very important) to 5 (Not important) that are annually considered when setting duck season dates.

**Importance of Saturdays in Duck Season Structure**

Hunters showed a strong preference for hunting on Saturdays. Hunters strongly favored maximizing the number of Saturdays open to duck hunting (Figure 4a), starting season splits (opening days) on Saturdays or holidays (Figure 4b), and ending season splits on Saturdays (Figure 4d). Hunters did not favor starting season splits on weekdays (4c).

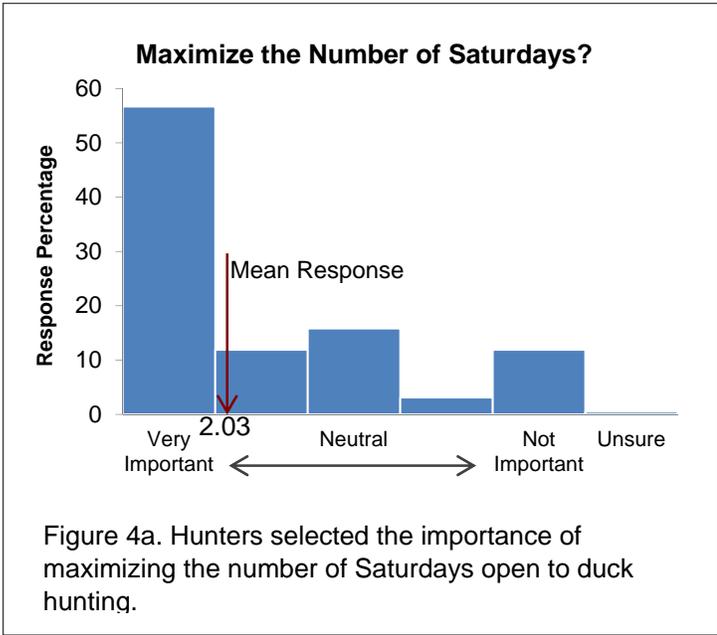


Figure 4a. Hunters selected the importance of maximizing the number of Saturdays open to duck hunting.

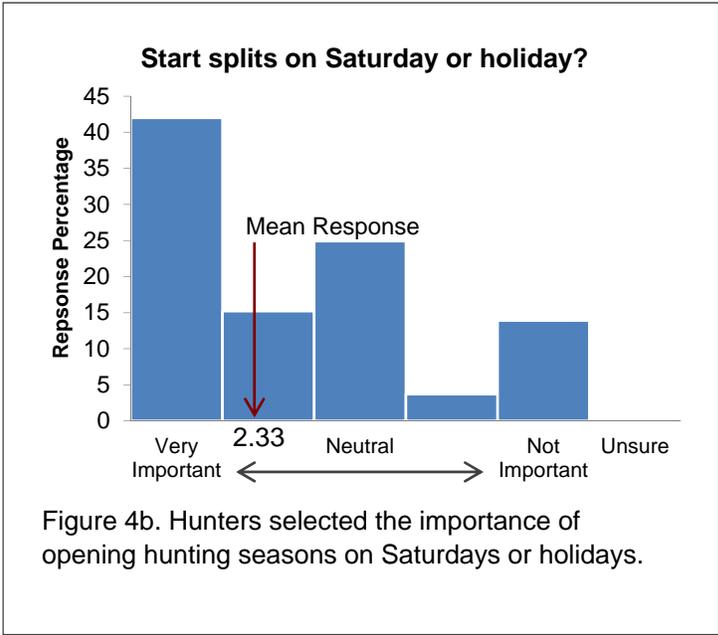


Figure 4b. Hunters selected the importance of opening hunting seasons on Saturdays or holidays.

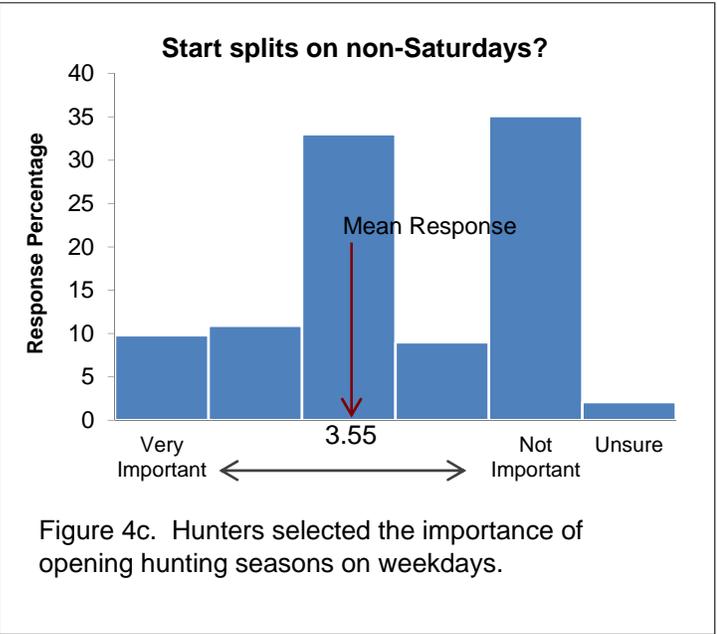


Figure 4c. Hunters selected the importance of opening hunting seasons on weekdays.

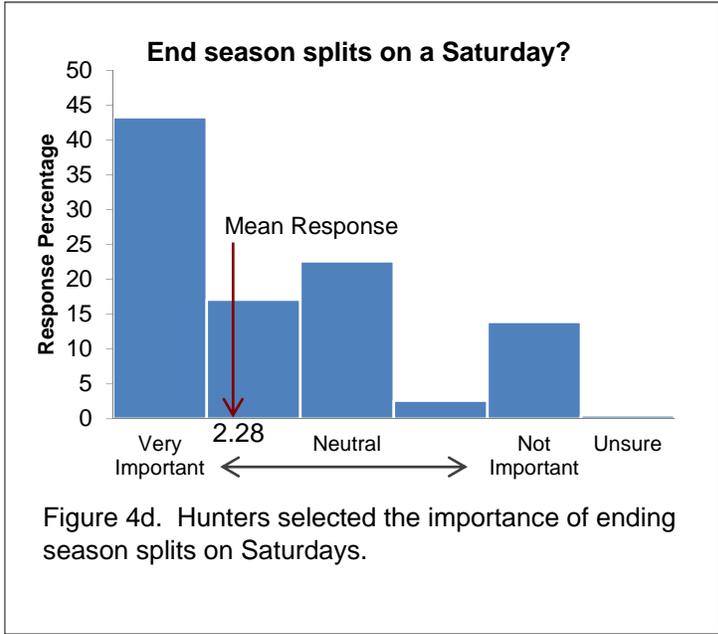


Figure 4d. Hunters selected the importance of ending season splits on Saturdays.

Hunters were more ambiguous in their preference of minimizing overlap with other hunting seasons (Figure 4e), with roughly equal proportions selecting high importance, neutral, and low importance.

Hunters strongly favored including the Thanksgiving holiday period (Figure 4f) and the Christmas/New Year's holiday period in the hunting season (Figure 4g). The opportunity to hunt

ducks during holiday periods was very important to hunters. Hunters favored overlapping duck and goose seasons, even if it resulted in fewer goose hunting days in January (Figure 4h). It is important to keep in mind that survey participants were those who duck hunted and may therefore not be representative of all Canada goose hunters (see “Canada Goose Hunting Patterns” for further discussion).

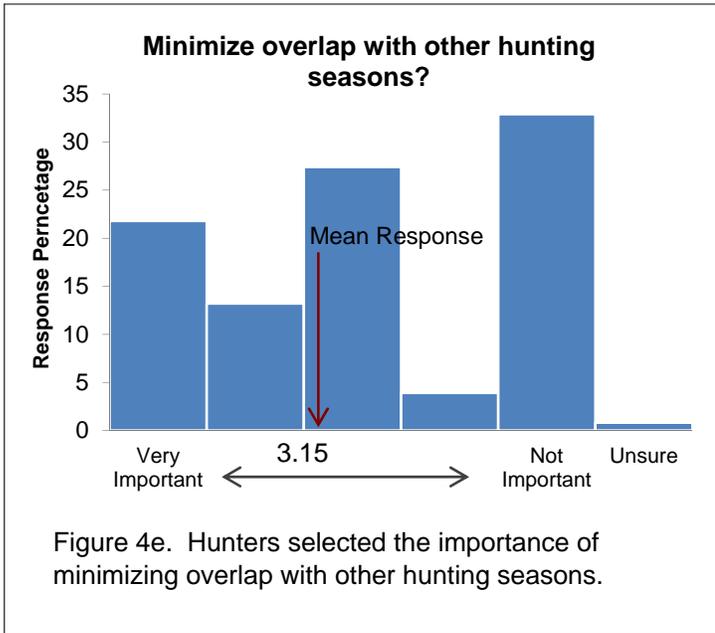


Figure 4e. Hunters selected the importance of minimizing overlap with other hunting seasons.

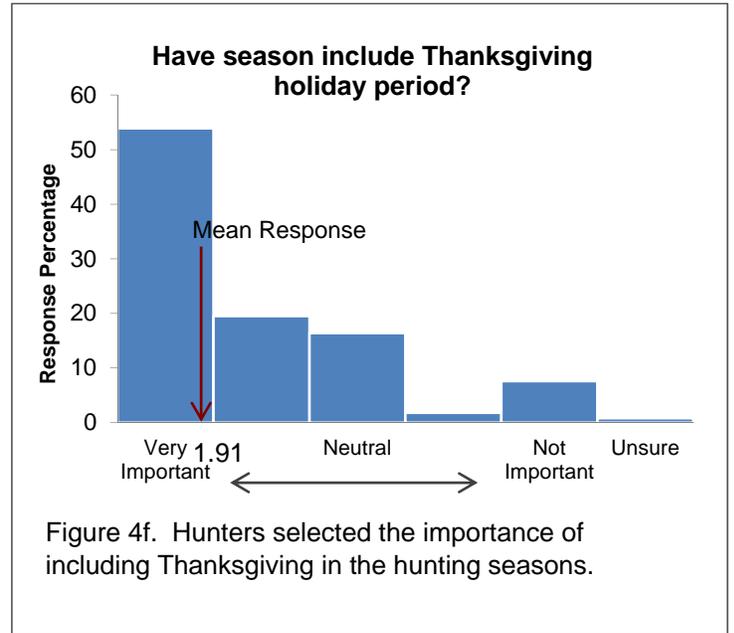


Figure 4f. Hunters selected the importance of including Thanksgiving in the hunting seasons.

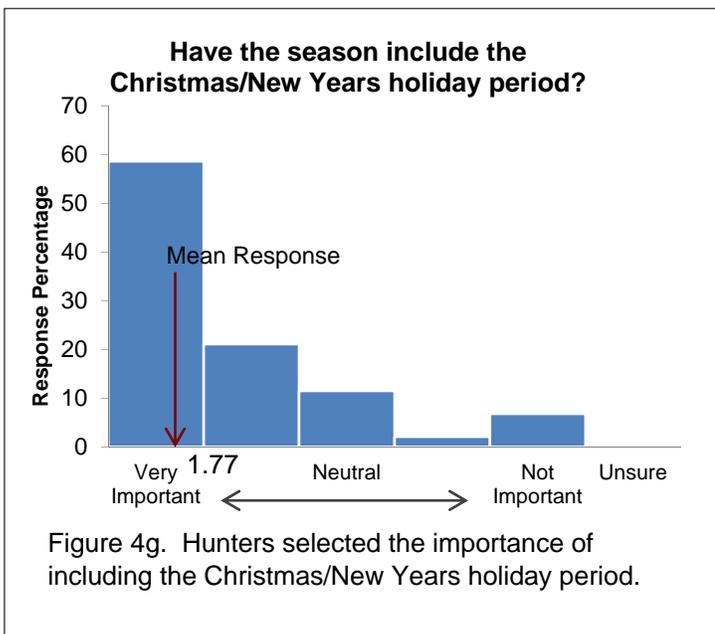


Figure 4g. Hunters selected the importance of including the Christmas/New Years holiday period.

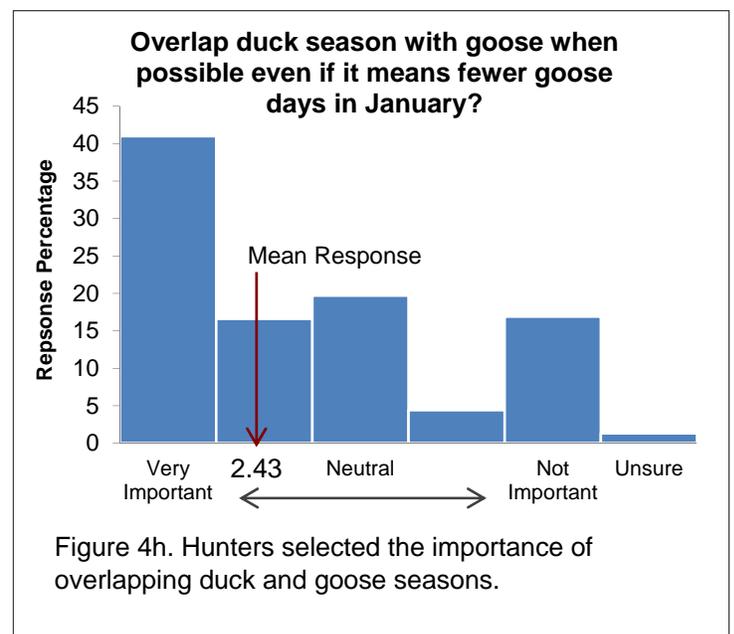


Figure 4h. Hunters selected the importance of overlapping duck and goose seasons.

## Hunting Season Structure Preference

The Division sets duck seasons within federal guidelines. The current season structure is 60 days and must occur between the last Saturday in September and the last Sunday in January with no more than 2 season splits within each zone. For each zone, hunters were presented with 3 choices for a duck season structure and asked to identify which season structure they preferred most. Hunters who were undecided or uninterested were also given the option to offer no opinion. The 3 season choices within each zone were the season structures that have been the most frequently put forth by various waterfowl hunting organizations over the past several years. In all zones, one choice was to maintain the recent season structure, which was described for each zone.

When conducting the analysis, we presented results for all respondents as well as from respondents who indicated that they hunted in that particular zone most frequently (cross-referenced to responses in Question 2 of the survey). For example, when examining season structure preferences for the Coastal Zone, we tallied preferences from all respondents as well as preferences for individuals who hunted ducks most frequently in the Coastal Zone. It seemed prudent to examine respondents from individuals who hunted most often in a particular zone for 3 reasons:

- 1) Survey results indicated that nearly half of duck hunters only hunt in one zone.
- 2) These individuals had the most experience with duck abundance and traditions in that particular zone.
- 3) These individuals had the most at stake concerning season preferences in that particular zone.

### Coastal Zone

The recent Coastal Zone season structure was as follows:

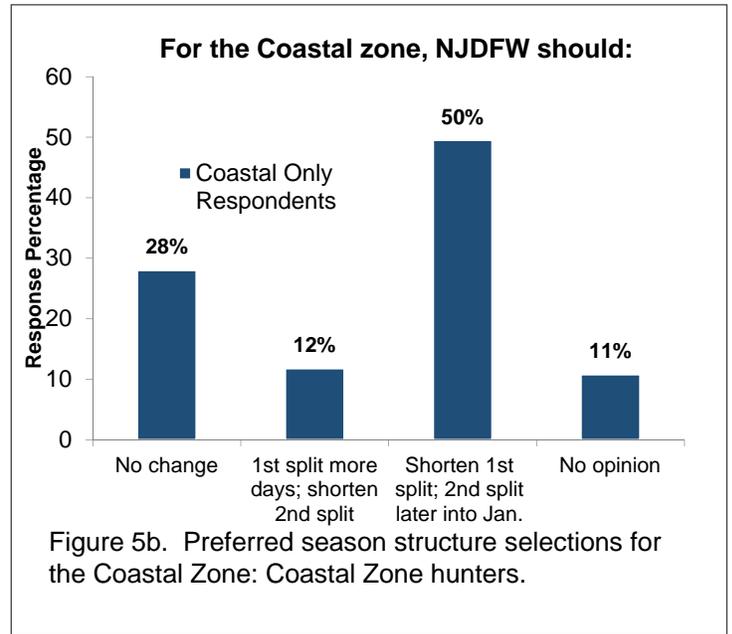
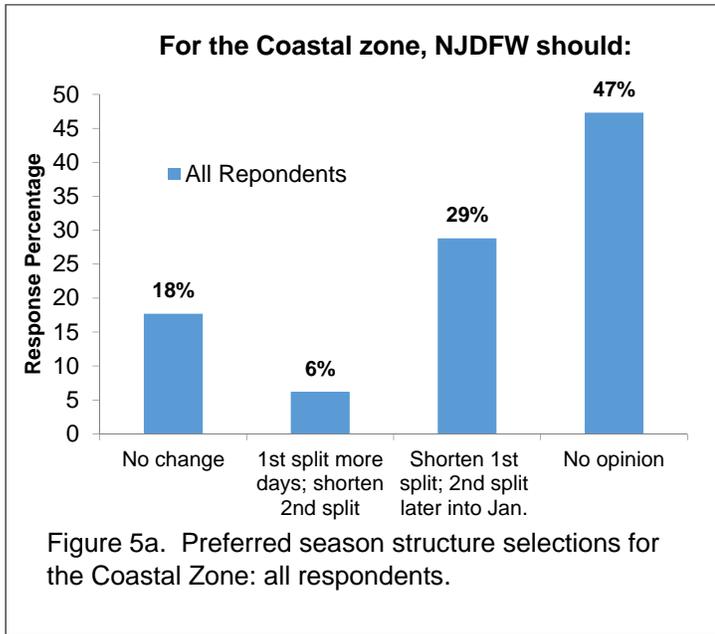
*The 1<sup>st</sup> split opens the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in November and runs for 7 days to include 2 Saturdays. The 2<sup>nd</sup> split opens on Thanksgiving Day and runs until the last Tuesday in January which is 4 days prior to the end of the federal framework (last Saturday in January).*

The 3 choices for season dates were:

- Option 1.* Keep the recent duck season structure
- Option 2.* Take days from the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> split in January and add the additional days to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> split in November.
- Option 3.* Shorten the first split to 3 days and add the additional 4 days to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> split in January
- Option 4.* No opinion

Nearly half (47%) of all respondents did not offer a preference for the Coastal Zone, while 29% of those who indicated a preference chose Option 3 (Figure 5a). However, when examining responses from individuals who hunted most frequently in the Coastal Zone (Figure 5b), nearly

90% of hunters offered a preference with half preferring Option 3 and only 12% preferring Option 2. However, it is probably reasonable to assume that if hunters were only given the choice between Option 1 and Option 3, those who chose Option 2 would likely have preferred Option 1. This is because both Option 1 and Option 2 have a larger portion of the Coastal Zone season occurring in November instead of January. Notwithstanding, the majority of hunters preferred the opportunity to hunt later into January (Option 3) over hunting in November (Options 1 and 2 combined) at a 5:4 ratio.



### South Zone

The recent South Zone season structure was as follows:

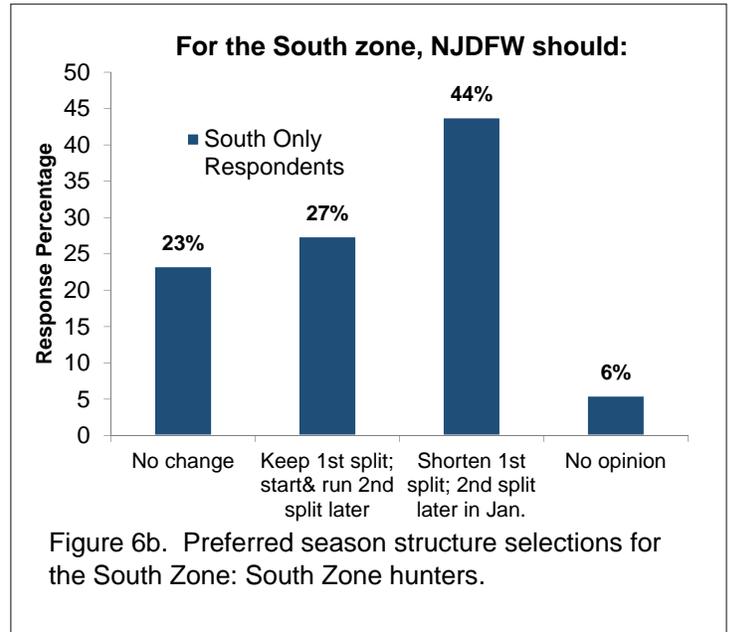
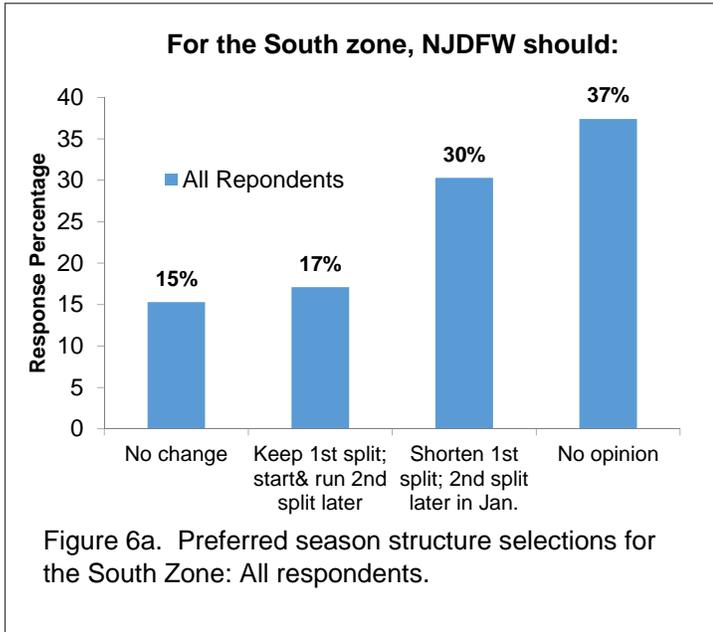
*The 1<sup>st</sup> split opens the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in October for 13 days to include 3 Saturdays. The 2<sup>nd</sup> split opens in mid-November and runs into the first week in January.*

The 3 choices for season dates were:

- Option 1.* Keep the recent duck season structure
- Option 2.* Keep the first split intact and start the 2<sup>nd</sup> split later and run it later into January
- Option 3.* Shorten the first split (October) and add the additional days in January
- Option 4.* No opinion

Over one-third of all respondents did not offer an opinion (37%) for a South Zone season structure while the majority (30%) of those who made a choice preferred Option 3 (Figure 6a). Nearly all respondents who hunted primarily in the South Zone offered a season structure preference with the majority (44%) choosing Option 3 (Figure 6b). Given that Option 2, favored by 27% of South Zone respondents, was somewhat of a “hybrid” season structure of Options 1

and 3, it is difficult to surmise how hunters would have voted if faced with only Options 1 and 3. However, it is probably reasonable to assume that hunters who preferred Option 2 would have split their vote to some degree between Options 1 and 3 and that Option 3 would still have been the preferred season structure.



### North Zone

The recent North Zone season structure was as follows:

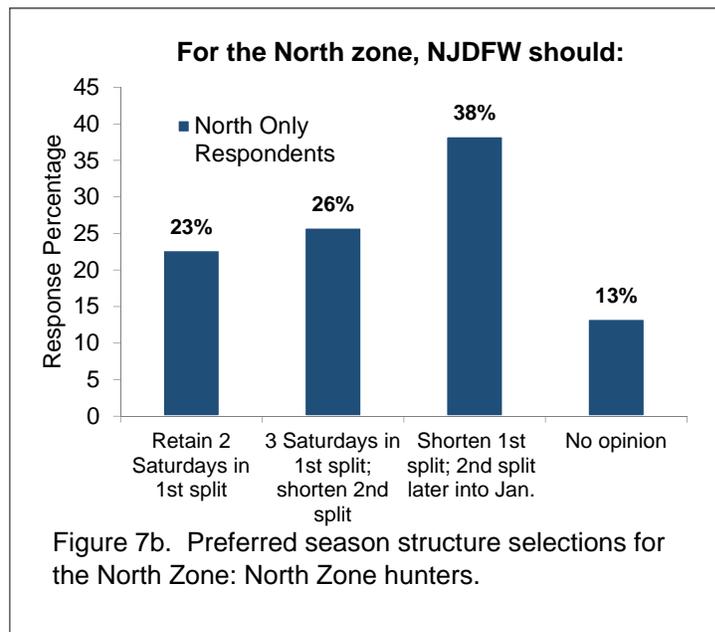
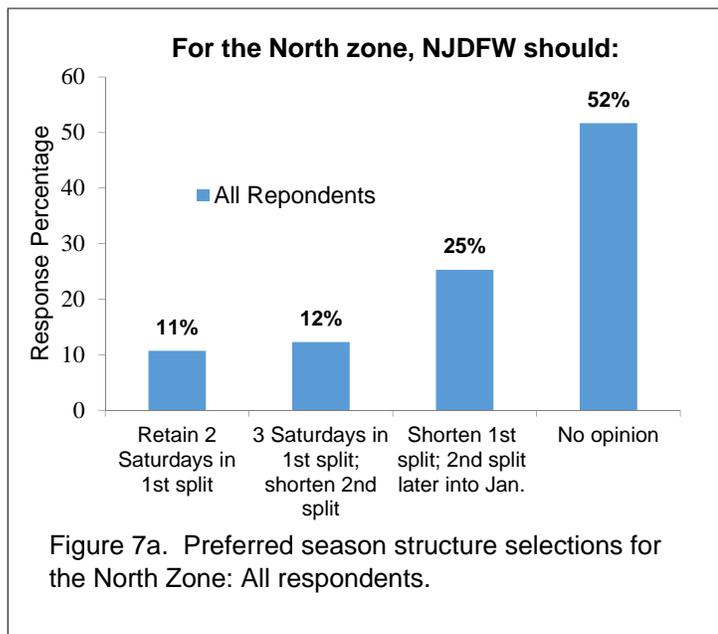
*The 1<sup>st</sup> split opens the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in October and includes 3 (2010 and 2011) or 4 (1997-2009) Saturdays. In 2012, the 1<sup>st</sup> split was reduced to 11 days and included only 2 Saturdays. The 2<sup>nd</sup> split opens in mid-November and runs until about January 1. During more recent years, the 2<sup>nd</sup> split has had more days at the expense of days taken from the 1<sup>st</sup> (October) split.*

The 3 choices for season dates were:

- Option 1.* Keep the most recent duck season structure (2012 structure that includes only 2 Saturdays in the first split
- Option 2.* Reinstiate the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the 1<sup>st</sup> split (October) by taking days from the 2<sup>nd</sup> split
- Option 3.* Shorten the 1<sup>st</sup> split (October) even further and add the additional days in January
- Option 4.* No opinion

Less than half of all respondents made a season structure preference for the North Zone with 25% choosing Option 3 (Figure 7a). Respondents who duck hunted primarily in the North Zone did not have a clear preference for season date selections. The majority (38%) preferred Option

3 while half of hunters were about equally split between retaining 2 Saturdays in the 1<sup>st</sup> split (Option 1) and making the 1<sup>st</sup> split (Option 2) even longer (Figure 7b). As such, North Zone duck hunters seemed to prefer to retain at least 2 Saturdays in the 1<sup>st</sup> split at about a 5:4 ratio. The ambiguity in North Zone season preferences is probably partially attributable to the recent, frequent changes to the North Zone season structure as the season structure has varied in 3 of the last 4 years.

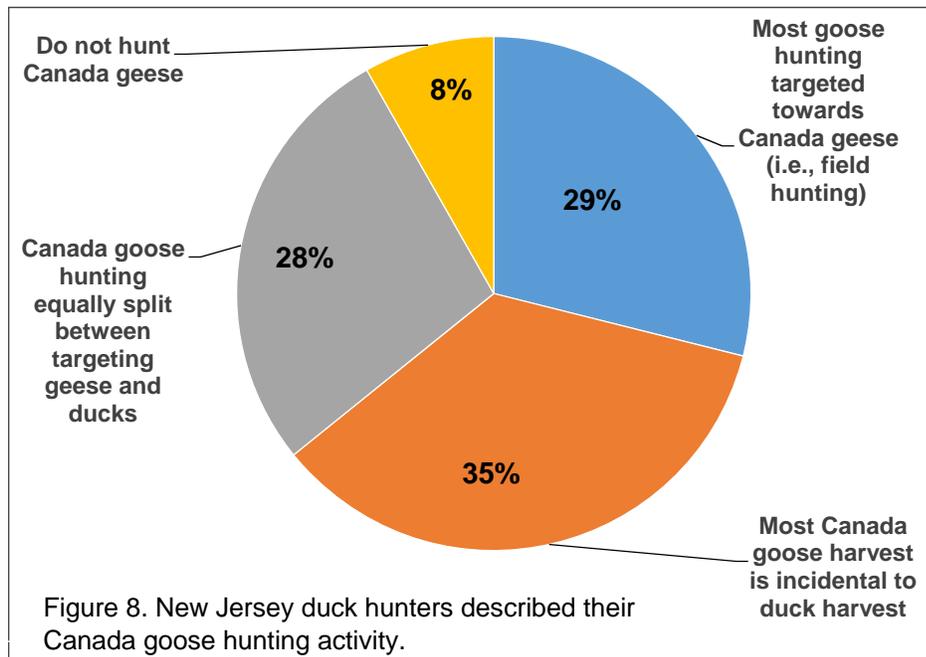


### Other Waterfowl Hunting Season Considerations

The final portion of the survey gathered duck hunter opinions on several ancillary topics that are important to wildlife managers when considering long-term season setting policy issues.

#### Canada Goose Hunting Patterns

New Jersey duck hunters were roughly divided into thirds regarding Canada goose hunting (Figure 8). One third specifically targeted geese, one third incidentally harvested geese, and one third split their time between specifically targeting geese or ducks. This result provides further clarification regarding hunter preference for overlapping duck and goose seasons (Figure 4h). Two-thirds of hunters show an interest in hunting ducks and geese at the same time and would therefore favor having duck and goose seasons overlap. It is important to remember that surveys were sent to HIP certified individuals who hunted ducks. There are a considerable number of HIP certified individuals who hunt primarily Canada geese or at least place a higher importance on Canada goose hunting than on duck hunting. Preference of these individuals is likely quite different from that of duck hunters.



### Hypothetical Sunday Hunting for Ducks

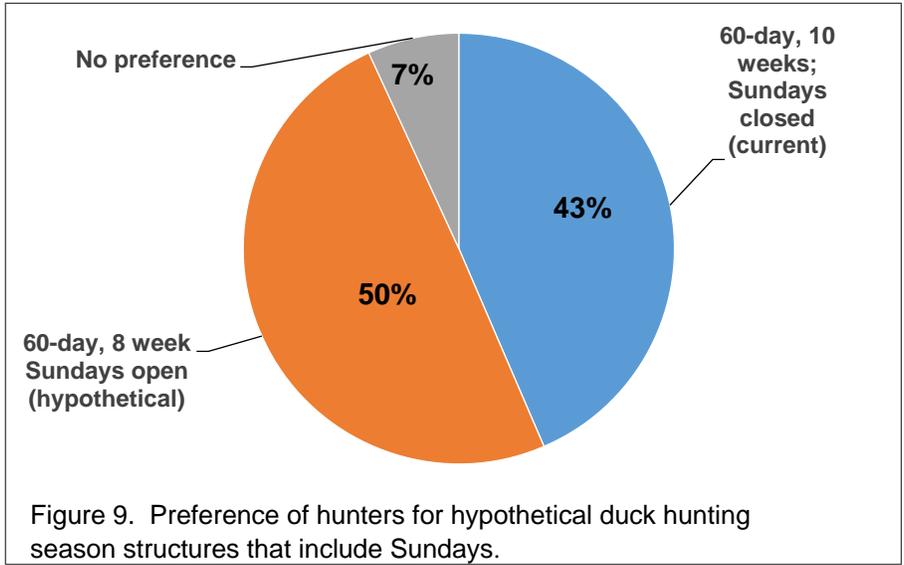
Currently, hunting on Sunday is prohibited in New Jersey by state statute with the exception of bowhunting for deer on private land and state Wildlife Management Areas. Rescinding the prohibition on Sunday hunting can only be done by the state legislature. The US Fish and Wildlife Service allows states which have statutory Sunday hunting season closures the option to have compensatory days for Sundays, or more simply, Sundays do not count against a state's quota of 60 duck season days. The implication is that if the statutory Sunday hunting prohibition were rescinded, Sundays would count as part of New Jersey's allotment of 60 days as opposed to being just "extra" days added within the course of the hunting season.

Hunters were presented with a choice of the following concerning duck hunting on Sunday:

*If each of the following options provided equal conservation of duck populations, please select the one choice which you would prefer as a duck season structure in New Jersey. (check only one)*

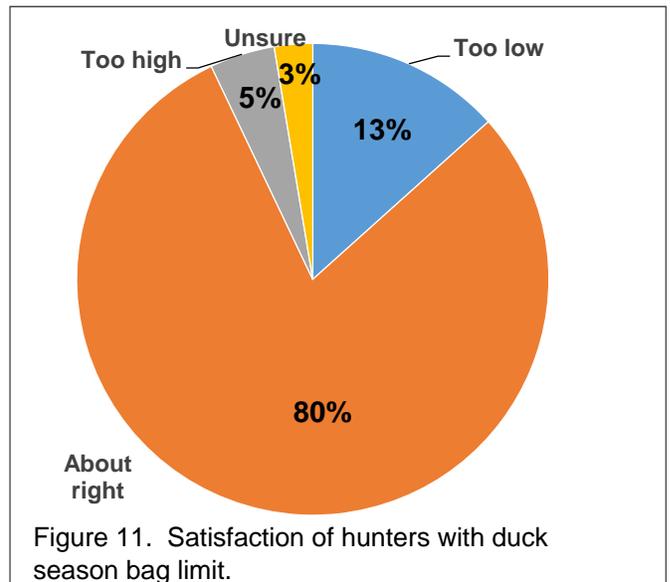
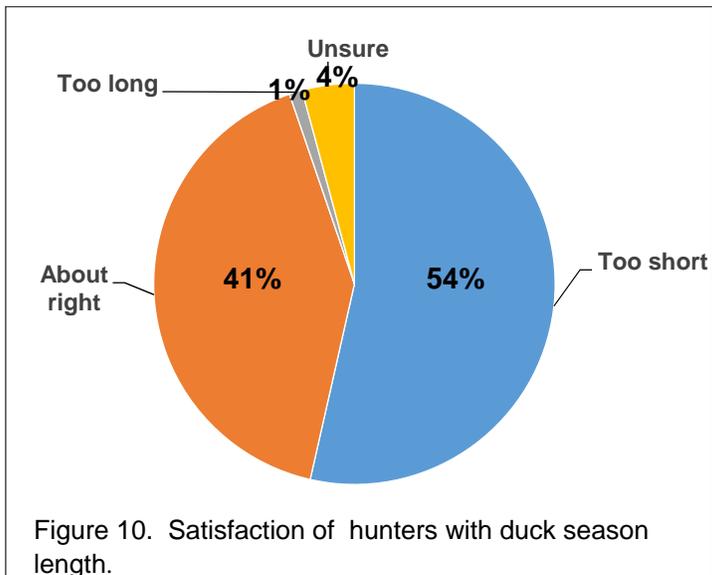
- A 60-day, 10-week season with Sundays closed to hunting (current NJ season structure)
- A 60-day, 8-9 week season with Sundays open to hunting (hypothetical season structure which would require statutory change by NJ Legislature).
- No preference.

Hunters were divided on their preference for Sunday hunting with a slim majority (50%) preferring the hypothetical structure which allowed hunting on Sunday (Figure 9).



Satisfaction with Duck Season Length and Bag Limit

A slight majority (54%) of New Jersey duck hunters felt the season length was too short while 41% felt the season length was about right (Figure 10). Most hunters seemed satisfied with the current bag limit of 6 ducks (Figure 11). The current 60-day, 6 bird bag limit season structure is part of a “liberal” harvest package, which has been in place since 1997.



## State Duck Stamp Fees

Since 1984, all New Jersey waterfowl hunters 16 years and older have been required to purchase a state duck stamp certification. The Waterfowl Stamp Act of 1984 requires that monies are earmarked for the “...acquisition, ...improvement, and enhancement of waterfowl habitat and wetlands...and access for public use of waterfowl habitat areas.” Stamp Account revenues cannot be used by the general state treasury or for administrative costs within the Division. The sales of state stamps and prints have raised over \$3 million leading to the purchase of more than 16,000 public hunting acres. The current stamp fee of \$5.00 for residents and \$10.00 for nonresidents has not changed since 1996. Since 1996, however, land values have increased, diluting the purchasing power of program dollars. As a result, hunters were asked if they would support doubling the current stamp fee to \$10.00 for residents and \$20.00 for nonresidents. A small majority (55%) of hunters supported such a fee increase (Figure 12). Two percent of hunters did not clearly answer the question but most of these respondents indicated that they would support the fee increase only under the condition that the physical stamp and/or artwork were restored. Since 2009, the artwork for the state waterfowl stamp and the paper stamp itself were discontinued as cost saving measures.

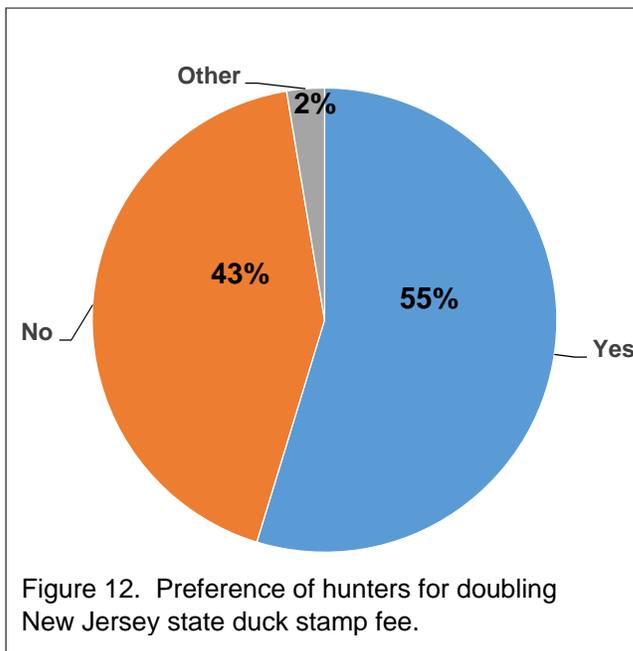


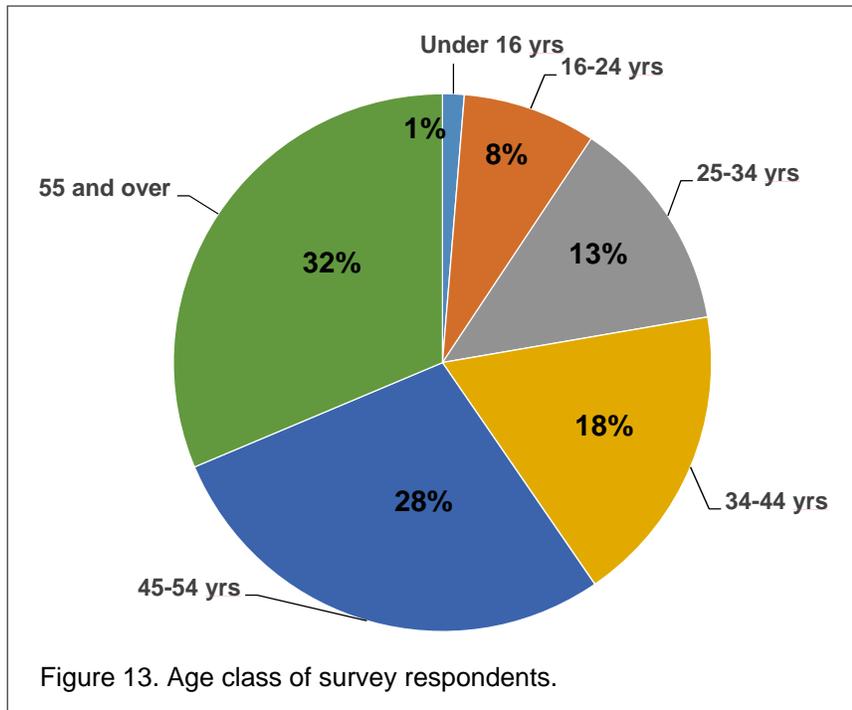
Table 1. Residence of survey respondents.

Residence	Respondents	Percent
New Jersey	343	88
Pennsylvania	27	7
Delaware	8	2
Maryland	3	1
New York	3	1
Other State	4	1

## Profile of Survey Respondents

Most survey respondents were New Jersey residents, while most non-residents were from neighboring states (Table 1).

The majority (60%) of survey respondents were over the age of 45, with the two oldest cohorts having the most hunters (Figure 13).



### Additional Comments

Over half of the surveys returned included handwritten comments. Comments varied from appreciation of the survey and suggested changes for season lengths and bag limits. The two most common comments related to a longer/later season and Sunday hunting. This was not surprising as both these topics were explicitly addressed in the survey leading to a heightened awareness of these issues. A synthesis of comments are included in Table 2.

Table 2. Comments provided by survey respondents.

Comment	Total
Later/longer duck season	73
Sunday hunting	34
Expand Canada goose seasons	26
Thank you DFW	21
Higher black duck limit	17
Duck hunting is too expensive	16
Need more hunting access	13
Teal season	10
Expand brant seasons/bag	9
Concerned about duck populations	8
Later shooting hours	6
Return artistic duck stamp	6
Enjoys waterfowl hunting	6
Miscellaneous	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>303</b>

## CONCLUSIONS

Although the Division and Council receive input from hunters on duck season dates throughout the year, it is difficult to know if these comments are representative of the majority of duck hunter opinions. Statistically designed surveys are important for obtaining unbiased data regarding the preferences of user groups. In addition, the Division recently analyzed contemporary Harvest Information Program (HIP) data to identify patterns of duck hunter activity and success (see [Patterns of Duck Hunting Activity and Success in NJ, 1999-2011](#), pdf, 300kb) of New Jersey duck hunters.

Survey results will likely weigh heavily in 2013 and future duck season date selections. It is inevitable that some hunters will not be satisfied with 2013 season dates. It would seem reasonable to keep the season date structure similar for at least 2-3 years before considering season structure changes. It would also be prudent to repeat some type of hunter opinion survey at periodic intervals (e.g. 3-5 year). Major findings from the 2012-13 Hunter Survey and contemporary HIP analysis follow.

- The majority (5:4 margin) of Coastal Zone duck hunters wants to hunt later into January at the expense of taking days from the 1<sup>st</sup> split; HIP data suggest that hunting activity is relatively constant through the duration of the Coastal Zone duck season.
- The majority of South Zone duck hunters want to hunt later into January by taking days from the 1<sup>st</sup> split; HIP data reveals that hunters are most active during the 1<sup>st</sup> split in the South Zone.
- North Zone hunters were not as clear in their preferences for duck season dates. The majority (5:4 margin) of North Zone duck hunters prefer not extending the season later into January. HIP data reveals that duck hunters in the North Zone are most active during October.
- Disclarity in North Zone season preferences are probably partially attributable to recent, frequent changes in the North Zone season structure. The North Zone season structure has been changed in 3 of the last 4 years
- Contemporary HIP data do not suggest a single best period when duck hunting success is highest in any zone



## 2012 New Jersey Waterfowl Hunter Survey



This survey is designed for you to provide input concerning New Jersey's duck season date selections. Even if you have not hunted ducks in NJ during the past 3 years, please respond to Question 1 and return the survey in the provided envelope.

1. During any of the past 3 years, please indicate **all** of the NJ zones where you have hunted **ducks**. **(check all that apply)**

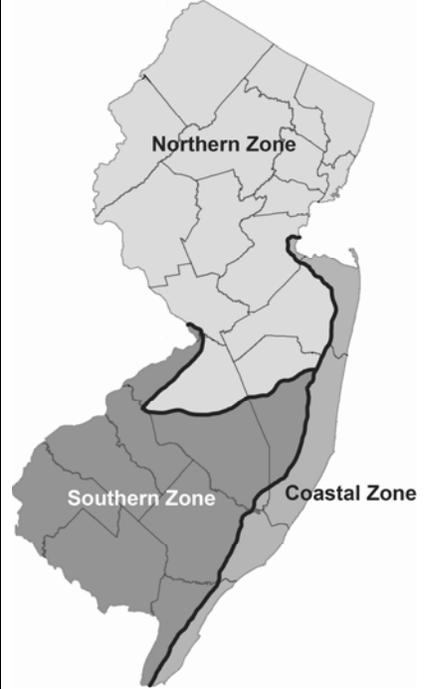
- North Zone
- South Zone
- Coastal Zone
- I did not hunt **ducks** in the past 3 years

2. During the last 3 years, in which zone did you **most often** hunt **ducks**? **(select one)**

- North Zone
- South Zone
- Coastal Zone

3. Please indicate how important each of the following statements are to you for selecting annual duck season dates. **(fill in only one circle for each statement)**

New Jersey Waterfowl Hunting Zones



	← Very Important      Neutral      Not Important →					Unsure
	1	2	3	4	5	
Maximize the number of Saturdays	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Start season splits (opening days) on a Saturday or holiday (e.g., Thanksgiving)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Start season splits (opening days) on a non-Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
End season splits on a Saturday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minimize overlap with other seasons (e.g., 6-Day Firearms Deer Season)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have the season include the Thanksgiving Holiday period	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have the season include the Christmas-New Years Holiday period	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overlap duck season with Canada goose season wherever possible, even if it means having fewer Canada goose season days in late January	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other concern: \_\_\_\_\_ (write in)

The NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife (NJDFW) sets duck seasons within federal guidelines. The current season structure is 60 days and must occur between the last Saturday in September and the last Saturday in January with no more than 2 season splits within each zone. Recent season structures in each zone are described below.

**Number the following season structure choices for each zone from 1 (most preferred) to 3 (least preferred). If you have no opinion for a particular zone, check 'No opinion' and do not rank the other season structure choices for that question.**

---

4. **North Zone:** The 1<sup>st</sup> split opens the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in October and includes 3 (2010 and 2011) or 4 (1997-2009) Saturdays. In 2012, the first split was reduced to 11 days and included only 2 Saturdays. The 2<sup>nd</sup> split opens in mid-November and runs until about January 1. During more recent years, the last Saturday in the first (October) split has been transferred to a Saturday in the second split meaning that the second split has had more days at the expense of days taken from the first (October) split.

**For the North Zone, NJDFW should:**

- Keep the 2012 duck season structure that includes only 2 Saturdays in the first split
- Reinstate the third Saturday of the first split (October) by taking days from the second split
- Shorten the first split (October) even further and add the additional days in January
- No opinion

5. **South Zone:** The 1<sup>st</sup> split opens the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in October for 13 days to include 3 Saturdays. The 2<sup>nd</sup> split opens in mid-November and runs into the first week in January.

**For the South Zone, NJDFW should:**

- Keep the recent duck season structure
- Keep the first split intact and start the 2<sup>nd</sup> split later and run it later into January
- Shorten the first split (October) and add the additional days in January
- No opinion

6. **Coastal Zone:** The 1<sup>st</sup> split opens the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in November for 7 days to include 2 Saturdays. The 2<sup>nd</sup> split opens on Thanksgiving Day and runs until the last Tuesday in January which is 4 days prior to the end of the federal framework (last Saturday in January).

**For the Coastal Zone, NJDFW should:**

- Keep the recent duck season structure
- Take days from the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> split in January and add the additional days to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> split in November.
- Shorten the first split to 3 days and add the additional 4 days to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> split in January

\_\_\_\_\_ No opinion

7. Which of the following best describes your Canada goose hunting in New Jersey during the 'regular' (November-January) Canada goose season?

- Most of my Canada goose hunting and harvest is targeted specifically towards Canada geese (i.e. field hunting)
- Most of my hunting harvest of Canada geese is incidental to my duck hunting
- My Canada goose hunting is about equally split between specifically targeting geese and during duck hunting
- I do not hunt Canada geese

8. If each of the following options provided equal conservation of duck populations, please select the one choice which you would prefer as a duck season structure in New Jersey. **(check only one)**

- A 60-day, 10-week season with Sundays closed to hunting (current NJ season structure)
- A 60-day, 8-9 week season with Sundays open to hunting (hypothetical season structure which would require statutory change by NJ Legislature).
- No preference.

9. The duck season in New Jersey is currently 60 days. Do you believe this season length is: **(check only one)**

- Too short
- About right
- Too long
- Unsure

10. The current daily bag limit for ducks in New Jersey is 6. Do you believe this daily bag limit is: **(check only one)**

- Too low
- About right
- Too high
- Unsure

11. Since 1984, the New Jersey Waterfowl Stamp Program has raised over \$3 million leading to the purchase of over 16,000 acres which are open to hunting. The current stamp fee of \$5.00 for residents and \$10.00 for nonresidents has not changed since 1996. Since 1996, however, land values have increased, diluting the purchasing power of program dollars. **Monies in the NJ Waterfowl Stamp Account are legally earmarked for**

**“...acquisition...improvement, and enhancement of waterfowl habitat and wetlands...and access for public use of waterfowl habitat areas.” Stamp Account**

monies cannot be used by the general state treasury or for administrative costs within the Division of Fish and Wildlife.

Would you support doubling the current fee of the stamp to \$10.00 for residents and \$20.00 for nonresidents?

- Yes
  - No
- 

**Background Information:**

For us to better understand people’s responses to the previous questions more fully, we need to know a few more things about your background. Remember that responses are kept confidential.

12. In what state do you reside? **(fill in one)**

- New Jersey
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

13. Please select your age **(fill in only one)**:

- Under 16
- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55 and over

If you have other comments you would like to share with us, please use the space below.

Please return the survey by **January 25, 2013** in the postage-paid, self-addressed envelope provided, or mail to:

NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife  
2201 County Route 631  
Woodbine, NJ 08270  
Attn: Waterfowl Survey