



[TOP](#)

Duck Season Zone Workshop Slated for Dexter

JANUARY 28TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Dexter, Missouri - The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) invites Missouri waterfowl hunters to upcoming public workshops where Department staff will gather hunter input about duck season dates and zone boundary locations for the 2017-2020 hunting seasons. Participants will have the opportunity to review long-term data about weather, migration, habitat use, harvest, and hunter opinions, and to discuss season date and zone preferences with other hunters and MDC staff. MDC will use the hunter input gathered through the workshops, along with results of hunter-opinion surveys, to help establish Missouri's 2017-2020 duck season dates and zones.

Before attending a workshop, MDC encourages hunters to review information compiled by Department biologists on migration, harvest, weather, and hunter preferences for each region of the state. This information will be posted on the MDC website by the end of January at on.mo.gov/1giLHme.

The following workshops will be held in Southeast Missouri between Feb. 1 and March 9 and all will run from 7-9 p.m. No reservations are necessary.

Dexter on Feb. 17 at the National Guard Armory, 1702 Missouri Hwy 114. For more information, call 573-290-5730.

Jackson on Feb. 18 at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 3305 N. High St. For more information, call 573-290-5730.

Kennett on Feb. 16 at the National Guard Armory, 1450 North Bypass. For more information, call 573-290-5730.

"The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service gives states the opportunity to change the number and location of duck zones every five years," explained MDC Resources Scientist Andy Raedeke. "At these times, states can also select a continuous season or split season, which refers to a season that is open for a period of time, closes, and then reopens for a second period of time."

Raedeke added that once selections are made, Missouri then keeps the same season-date formulas for multiple years, with the next ones being 2017 to 2020.

"Conservation makes Missouri a great place to hunt waterfowl. As hunters know, hunting conditions can vary tremendously from one year to the next," he said. "During some years, the best hunting can occur early in the season. During other years, it can occur late. Limiting changes to every four or five years helps the Department of Conservation evaluate the effectiveness of zone boundaries and season dates over a range of conditions."

Raedeke noted that recommended changes for a given period depend primarily upon hunter input.

"If most hunters from a particular region prefer a different season structure or season dates, we will likely recommend a change," Raedeke said. "Hunter input from the last series of workshops prompted MDC to make two changes to the boundary of the south hunting zone."

He added that given the range of hunter preferences, not all hunters will be completely satisfied with season dates and zone boundaries.

"Our aim is to accommodate at least a portion of most hunters' desires. We listen to what waterfowl hunters want and sincerely appreciate their time, effort, and input."

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