

New late-season goose hunts in Klamath County, South Coast zones begin Feb. 24

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Goose hunters who didn't get enough hunting in during the general season that ended Jan. 28 have additional opportunity through two new hunts slated for Feb. 24 through March 10 of this year.

These late-season goose hunts will be held in two newly created hunting zones: the Klamath County and South Coast zones. Designed to address goose damage to private agricultural lands, the hunts were developed in consultation with state and federal wildlife agencies, Oregon Farm Bureau representatives and landowners.

White-fronted goose - Photos by: ODFW Aleutian Canada goose Snow geese Canada goose
"Sport hunters are very important to wildlife management and are always the preferred method for wildlife managers to address agricultural damage," said Brad Bales, ODFW migratory bird program manager. "This season is a test-run for these two new hunts and we are asking sportsmen to pay close attention to the special regulations so all goes smoothly and the hunts can be reauthorized next year."

Only private lands will be open during these two hunts. Any public lands or waters owned or managed by any state, county or federal agency will be closed to hunting. "Since this is a depredation assistance hunt, the closure of public lands will allow a place for birds to seek refuge and food, thus reducing impacts on private lands," explained Bales.

Klamath County zone hunt

The new Klamath County zone goose hunt is designed to address agricultural damage by white-fronted or speckle-belly geese. The white-fronted geese population in the Pacific Flyway has recovered from a low of 73,000 birds in 1979 to an estimated 440,000 in 2005. The daily bag limit for this hunt is two white-fronted geese and the possession limit is four white-fronted geese.

Hunters are responsible for first obtaining permission from private landowners to take part in this hunt. Private lands with areas of high goose concentrations are normally in close proximity to state and federal refuges, the Klamath River, Lost River and several private lakes. Most depredation complaints received in the area come from locations between the California and Oregon state line and the city of Klamath Falls. Additional damage is happening in Yonna and Langell Valleys east of Klamath Falls. Contact ODFW's Klamath Falls office at (541) 883-5732 for more information. Hunters need to take special care not to shoot any Snow or Canada geese during the hunt, both of which can be found throughout the hunt area.

South Coast zone goose hunt

The new South Coast zone is comprised of those portions of Coos, Curry and Douglas counties west of Hwy. 101. A large percentage of the Pacific Flyway population of 120,000 Aleutian Canada geese are using three private agricultural properties south of Bandon as a staging area during their spring migration, causing significant damage to pastures.

Thanks to a grant to the private landowners from ODFW's Access and Habitat Program (A&H), which provides public hunting access to private lands, hunters can utilize these properties which are known as the New River Access Area. Hunters must first reserve a hunt with one of the private landowners involved in the A&H program; contact ODFW's Gold Beach field office at (541) 247-7605 for maps and landowner contacts. Although most weekend spots have filled up since the hunt was first announced last year, there are still slots available weekdays. Other private lands not enrolled in the A&H Program are also open to hunt but hunters are responsible for getting permission from the landowners.

The bag limit in the South Coast zone is four dark geese and the possession limit is eight dark geese. All Canada goose subspecies are open to hunting during this special hunt, as well as white-fronted geese.

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