

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
NATURAL RESOURCE COMMISSION**

Meeting Date: Thursday, March 12, 2012

Meeting Location: Wallace Bldg – 4th Floor Conference Room (West)
502 E. 9th Street, Des Moines, IA

MEETING AGENDA

Meeting convenes at 4:30pm

INFORMATION ONLY SESSION

General Discussion

- Changes to the Hunting and Trapping Seasons

Upcoming NRC Meeting Dates:

- April 12, 2012 - Henry Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, 9:30am

For details on the NRC meeting schedule, visit:

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/InsideDNR/BoardsCommissions/NaturalResourceCommission.aspx>

Comments during the public participation period regarding proposed rules or notices of intended action are not included in the official comments for that rule package unless they are submitted as required in the Notice of Intended Action.

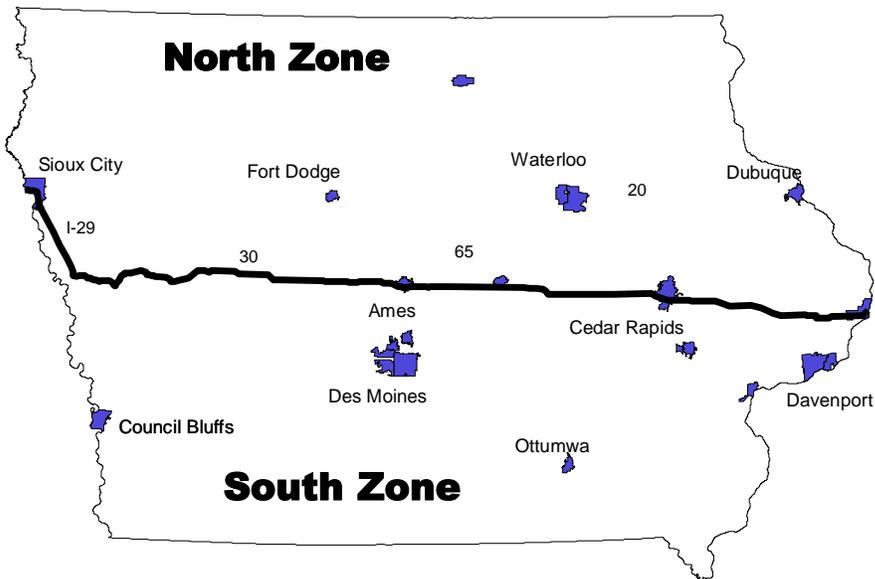
Waterfowl zones and season options.

1. Change from current 2 zones to 1 or 3 zones for waterfowl and adjust season dates.

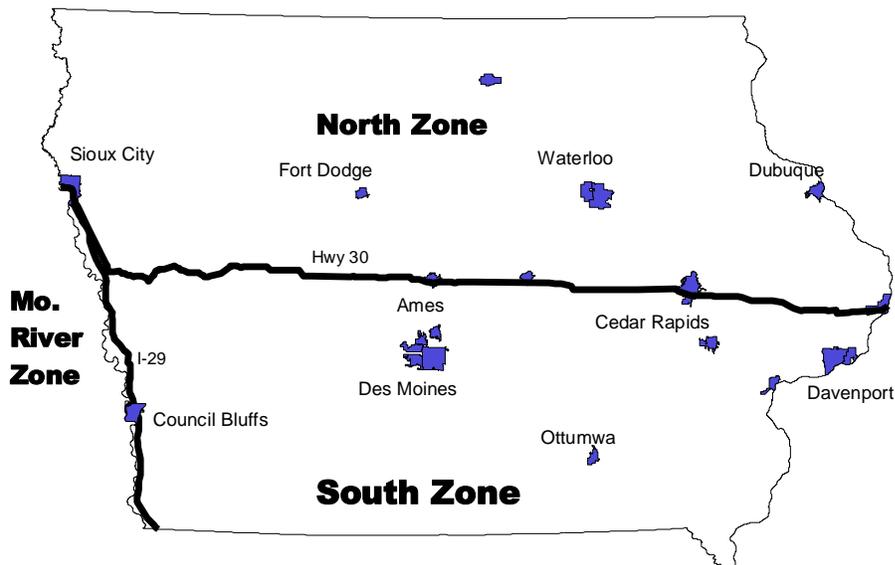
The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service will allow states to have up to 3 zones with the season split into 2 segments in each zone for ducks. Below are the options that have been proposed and potential season dates for each option. I've also included the map from the internet (Option #5) and the changes proposed by Commissioner Drees at Thursday's meeting.

Zone options:

Option 1. Retain the 2 zones used for the 2011-12 season.



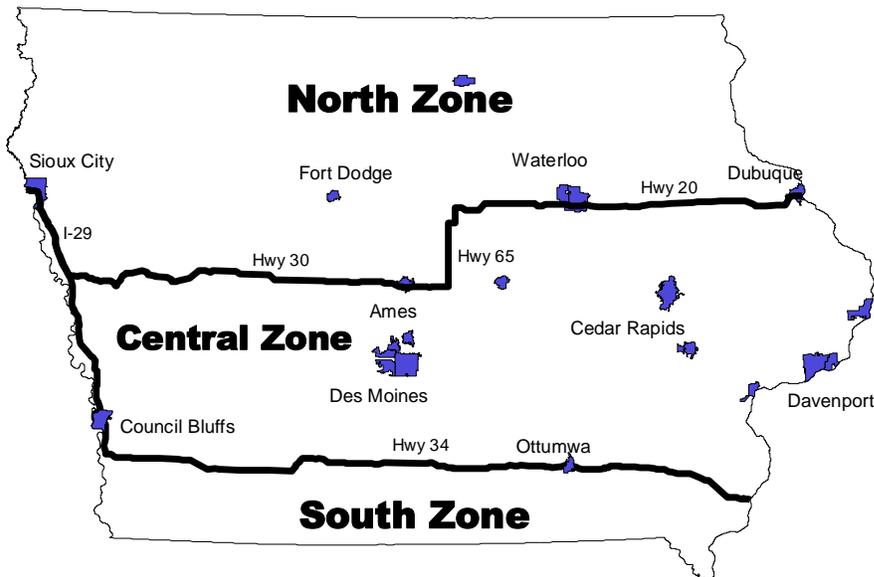
Option 2. Keep current 2 zone boundaries but add a 3rd zone along Missouri River



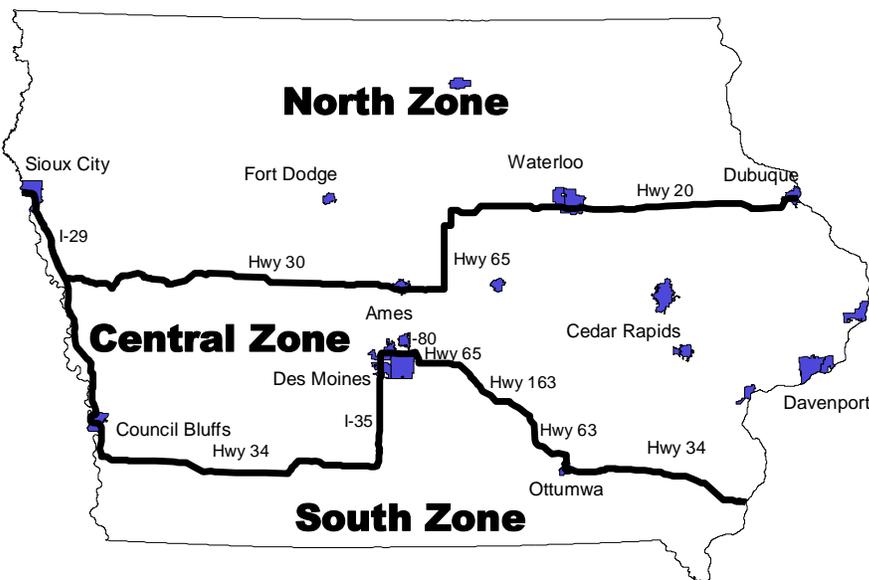
Proposed season dates for Options 1 or 2.

	NORTH ZONE*	SOUTH ZONE*	MO RIVER ZONE*
Ducks, Mergansers and Coots	Sept. 22 – 26 Oct. 13 – Dec. 6	Sept. 22 – 26 Oct. 20 – Dec. 13	Sept. 22 – 26 Oct. 27 – Dec. 20
Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days	Oct. 6 – 7	Oct. 13 – 14	Oct. 20 – 21
Canada geese and Brant	Sept. 29 – Jan. 4, 2013	Oct. 6 – Jan. 11, 2013	Oct. 13 – Jan. 18, 2013
White-fronted geese	Sept. 29 – Dec. 11	Oct. 6 – Dec. 18	Oct. 13 – Dec. 25
Light Geese (white and blue phase snow geese and Ross' geese)	Sept. 29 – Jan. 13, 2013	Oct. 6 - Jan. 18, 2013	Oct. 13 - Jan. 18, 2013

Option 3. Add a 3rd zone along Missouri River and across southern Iowa south of Highway 34 and move the north zone boundary to Highway 20 in the eastern half of the state.



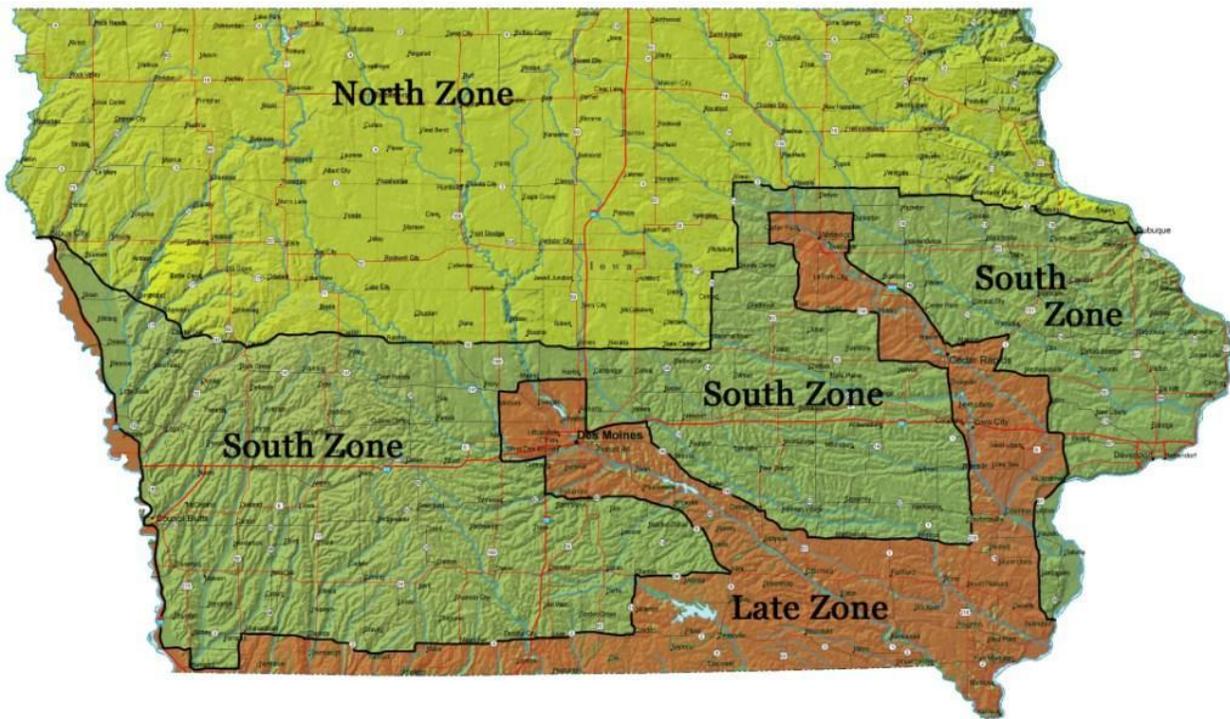
Option 4. Add a 3rd zone along Missouri River and across southern Iowa including the Lake Red Rock area and move the north zone boundary to Highway 20 in the eastern half of the state.



Potential season dates for Option 3, 4 or 5.

	NORTH ZONE*	CENTRAL ZONE*	SOUTH ZONE*
Ducks, Mergansers and Coots	Sept. 22 – 26 Oct. 13 – Dec. 6	Sept. 22 – 26 Oct. 20 – Dec. 13	Sept. 22 – 26 Oct. 27 – Dec. 20
Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days	Oct. 6 – 7	Oct. 13 – 14	Oct. 20 – 21
Canada geese and Brant	Sept. 29 – Jan. 4, 2013	Oct. 6 – Jan. 11, 2013	Oct. 13 – Jan. 18, 2013
White-fronted geese	Sept. 29 – Dec. 11	Oct. 6 – Dec. 18	Oct. 13 – Dec. 25
Light Geese (white and blue phase snow geese and Ross' geese)	Sept. 29 – Jan. 13, 2013	Oct. 6 - Jan. 18, 2013	Oct. 13 - Jan. 18, 2013

Option #5. Another option for a third zone has been forwarded to the DNR. The third zone would include the Missouri River as well as areas along the Des Moines, Iowa and Cedar rivers.



Alternative season dates for Option 3, 4 and 5.

The following set of season dates avoids opening the duck season in the south zone on the same day as the pheasant season and closes the duck season during the first deer season in.

	NORTH ZONE*	CENTRAL ZONE*	SOUTH ZONE*
Ducks, Mergansers and Coots	Sept. 22 – 26 Oct. 13 – Dec. 6	Sept. 22 – 26 Oct. 20 – Dec. 13	Oct. 20 – Nov. 30 Dec. 6 – Dec. 23
Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days	Oct. 6 – 7	Oct. 13 – 14	Oct. 13 – 14
Canada geese and Brant	Sept. 29 – Jan. 4, 2013	Oct. 6 – Jan. 11, 2013	Oct. 13 – Jan. 18, 2013
White-fronted geese	Sept. 29 – Dec. 11	Oct. 6 – Dec. 18	Oct. 13 – Dec. 25
Light Geese (white and blue phase snow geese and Ross' geese)	Sept. 29 – Jan. 13, 2013	Oct. 6 - Jan. 18, 2013	Oct. 13 - Jan. 18, 2013

Option #6. Another option was offered at the Natural Resource Commission meeting on Thursday March 8th which would opt for 1 zone and 3 seasons. The dates of the seasons for the 2012 duck season under his proposal would be:

Sept 22 and 23

Oct 13 – Nov 30

Dec 8 – 16 (or Dec 15 - 23)

Under this option everyone would make some sacrifices but get some of what they want with this compromise. The early season is shortened from 5 to 2 days but hunters still have a September season. The September season was the most preferred segment by hunters in last year's waterfowl hunter survey. The mid season should satisfy most hunters since they get to hunt most of October and all of November which are the preferred weeks in the survey. The late season hunters get to hunt a week (or 2) later but not all of the December days they desire. This option also adds a weekend to the waterfowl season.

Wildlife and law enforcement bureau discussion and preference for the zones.

Most of the wildlife and law enforcement bureau staff would prefer to keep the current 2 zones (but this discussion was held before the 6th option was added).

Staff believes that the additional complexity of adding a third zone will not significantly increase hunting opportunities. Surveys and harvest records show most hunters prefer to hunt in October or November and not in December. There are many more ducks and places to hunt ducks in Iowa in October than December as most wetlands and backwaters freeze up by December. Consequently hunters shoot more ducks/day in October than December.

If the decision is made to add a third zone most law enforcement and wildlife staff believe option #3 is the best choice. Although law enforcement and wildlife staff believe Option #5 might provide some limited hunting opportunity to a few hunters in December on parts of these rivers or in adjacent crop fields, most of the waterfowl hunting that occurs along these rivers occurs on public and private wetlands that will be frozen in December. Most waterfowl will have migrated out of the state by the end of the second week of December and those that do stay beyond that time are only found in a few limited locations.

[Option 6 is currently being discussed by staff but comments received so far are that this option is preferable to 3 zones and may be a workable compromise but that law enforcement and wildlife bureau staff still believes that the current 2 season/2 zone split is the best choice.]