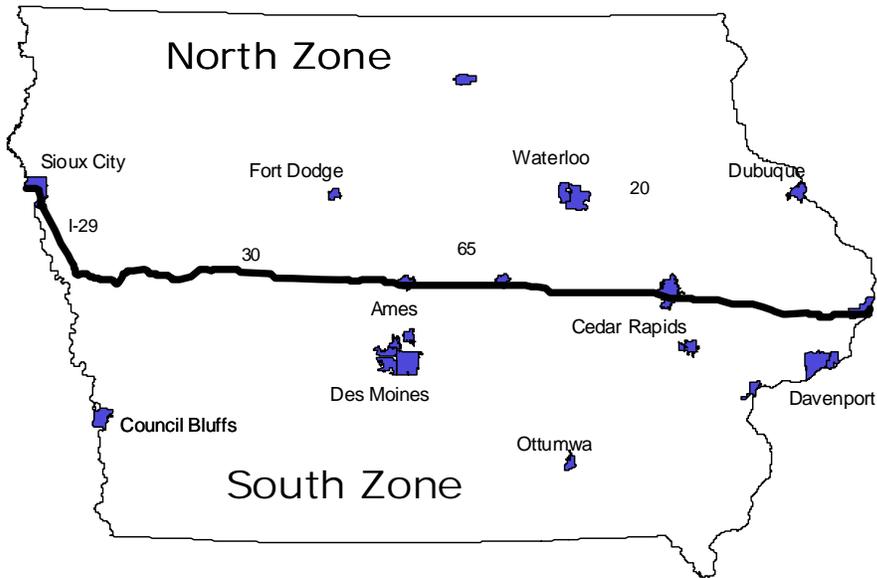


Waterfowl zones and season options.

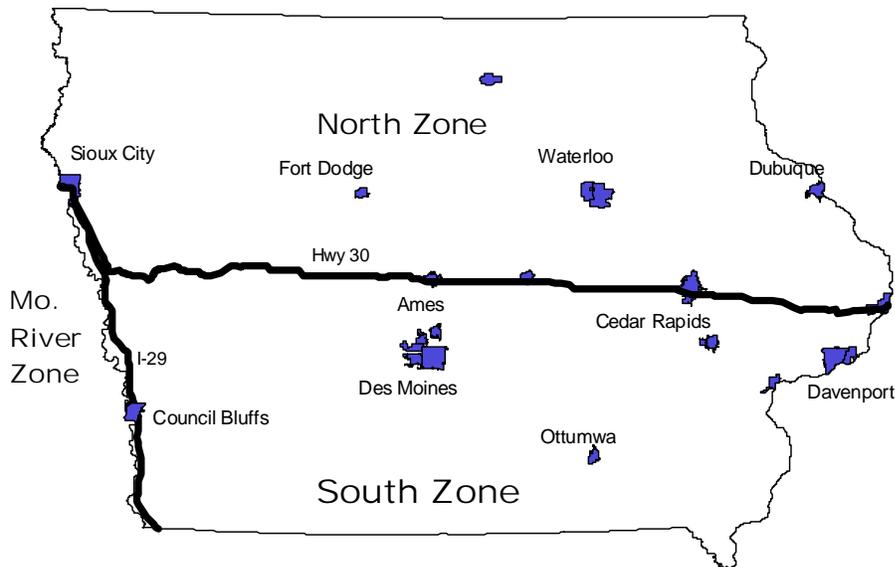
The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service will allow states to have up to three zones with the season split into two segments in each zone for ducks. Listed below are the options and potential season dates that being considered including Option 6, which is the compromise proposed by the Natural Resource Commission during its March meeting.

Zone options:

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



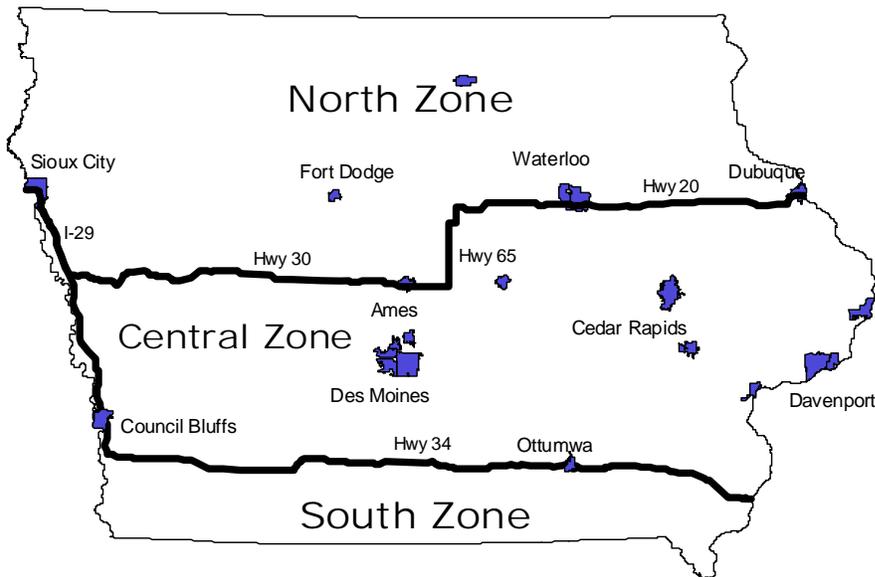
Option 2. Keep current two zone boundaries but add a third zone along Missouri River



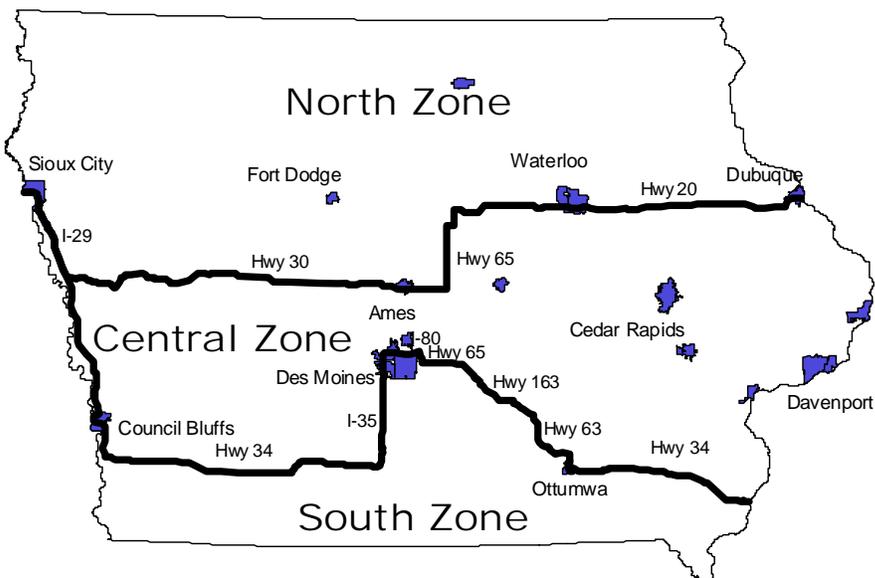
Proposed season dates for Options 1 or 2.

	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 third zone along Missouri River and across southern Iowa south of Hwy. 34 and move the north zone boundary to Hwy. 20 in the eastern half of the state.



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



Potential season dates for Option 3 or 4.

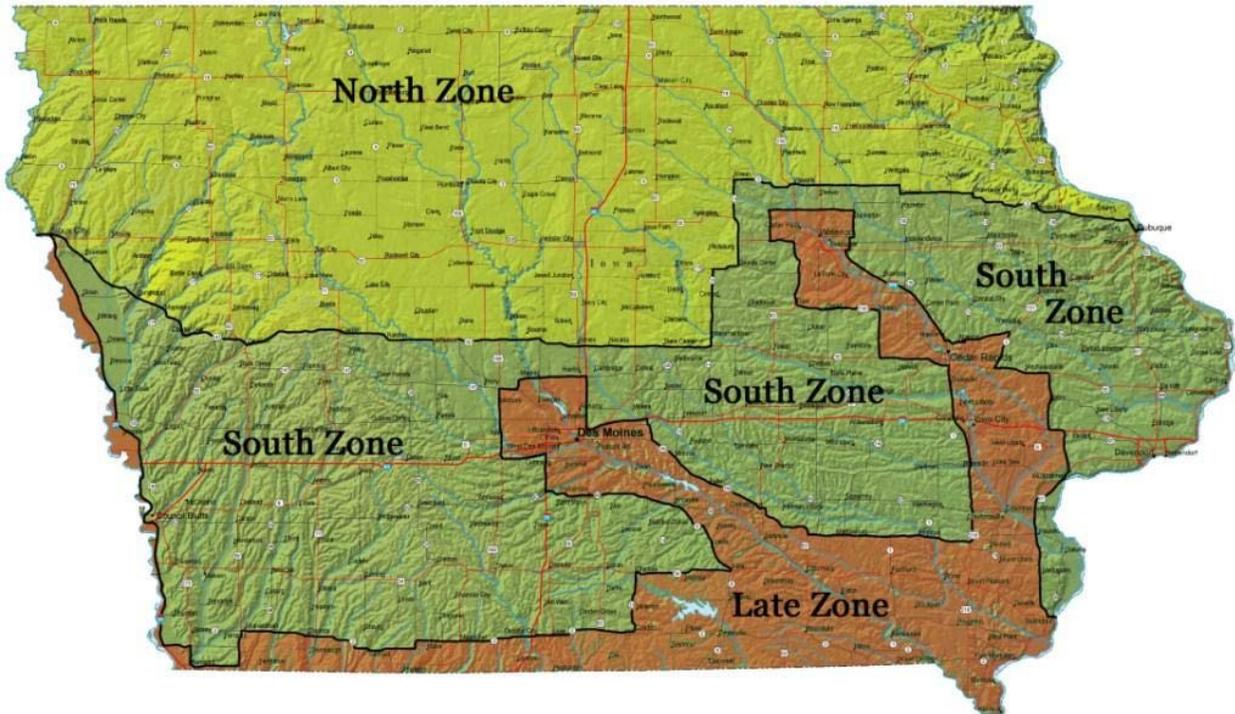
	NORTH ZONE*	CENTRAL ZONE*	SOUTH ZONE*
Ducks, Mergansers and Coots	Sept. 22 – 26 Oct. 13 – Dec. 6	Sept. 22 – 26 Oct. 20 – Dec. 13	Sept. 22 – 26 Oct. 27 – Dec. 20
Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days	Oct. 6 – 7	Oct. 13 – 14	Oct. 20 – 21
Canada geese and Brant	Sept. 29 – Jan. 4, 2013	Oct. 6 – Jan. 11, 2013	Oct. 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

Alternative season dates for Option 3 and 4.

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 #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. Season dates would be the same as for Options 3 and 4,



Option #6. This option was proposed by the Natural Resource Commission in March as a compromise. There would be one zone and three seasons. The dates of the seasons for the 2012 duck season under his proposal would be:

Sept. 22- 26

Oct. 13 – Nov 27

Dec. 8 – 16

Under this option everyone makes some sacrifices but this option provides many of the preferred days for hunters. The early season is kept at five days. 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 almost all of November which are the preferred weeks in the survey. The late season hunters get to hunt a week later anywhere in the state but not all of the December days they desire. This option also adds an extra weekend to the waterfowl season.

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

Most of the wildlife and law enforcement bureau staffs meet in February and the consensus was to keep the current two zones but this discussion was held before the sixth option was added. Option 6 was discussed by staff through email and the comments received indicate this option is preferable to three zones and may be a workable compromise.

Staff does not believe that adding a third zone will increase hunting opportunities for most duck hunters. 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. Simply put, there is no way to add a third zone without taking opportunity away in October.

If the decision is made to add a third zone most law enforcement and wildlife staff believe Option 2 is the best choice simply because it impacts the fewest hunters. Although law enforcement and wildlife staff believe Options 3-5 might provide some limited hunting opportunity in December along some interior 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 second week of December and those that do stay are only found in a few limited locations which are not geographically connected.

Results from the ICN meeting on March 6, 2012.

Despite extensive discussion there was not a consensus among hunters on whether the structure of the waterfowl season should be changed. Much of the discussion centered on the benefits of a third zone with split seasons. Option #6 was not discussed at the ICN meetings since it had not been proposed as a compromise at that time.

Nearly forty percent of those in attendance preferred to keep the current north/south zone two seasons/two zone split. The other options for adding a third zone were discussed, but no consensus were reached on which if any was preferred. Each of the four options received some support: 16 percent preferred Options 2 and 5 while 15 percent preferred Options 3 and 4.