

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

Fiscal Estimate & Economic Impact Analysis

1. Type of Estimate and Analysis ☐ Original ☐ Updated ☐ Corrected	2. Date 8/17/2026
3. Administrative Rule Chapter, Title and Number (and Clearinghouse Number if applicable) NR 10, Game and Hunting, WM-14-25	
4. Subject Establishing the 2027-2030 Migratory Bird Hunting Season Framework and Regulations	
5. Fund Sources Affected ☐ GPR ☐ FED ☐ PRO ☐ PRS ☐ SEG ☐ SEG-S	6. Chapter 20, Stats. Appropriations Affected
7. Fiscal Effect of Implementing the Rule ☒ No Fiscal Effect ☐ Increase Existing Revenues ☐ Increase Costs ☐ Decrease Costs ☐ Indeterminate ☐ Decrease Existing Revenues ☐ Could Absorb Within Agency's Budget	
8. The Rule Will Impact the Following (Check All That Apply) ☐ State's Economy ☐ Specific Businesses/Sectors ☐ Local Government Units ☐ Public Utility Rate Payers ☐ Small Businesses (if checked, complete Attachment A)	
9. Estimate of Implementation and Compliance to Businesses, Local Governmental Units and Individuals, per s. 227.137(3)(b)(1). \$0	
10. Would Implementation and Compliance Costs Businesses, Local Governmental Units and Individuals Be \$10 Million or more Over Any 2-year Period, per s. 227.137(3)(b)(2)? ☐ Yes ☒ No	
11. Policy Problem Addressed by the Rule This rule adjusts migratory game bird seasons and regulations for 2027 and beyond to be consistent with the federal framework for the Mississippi Flyway, current biological information and public input. In general, season frameworks for migratory birds in 2027 are identical to those implemented for 2025. There are three exceptions: This rule adjusts and simplifies the concealment regulations on all waters in Wisconsin with the exception of Lake Michigan (which includes Green Bay) and the Mississippi River. In 2011, the Department identified several inland lakes that would be open to open water hunting. Since that time there have been liberalization of open water hunting to increase opportunity and simplify regulations. This change simplifies the regulation by removing the 50% concealment requirement when further than 3 feet from shore. Wisconsin is one of only two states in the country that have any concealment regulations for hunting waterfowl in the open water, based on historical perception that the open water provided refuge for waterfowl. Current research has shown this is and has likely never been the case. Further, allowing hunters to access open water to hunt on all waters with the exception of Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River will increase opportunity and simplify regulations. Lake Michigan is excluded from the change because there is already an Open Water Zone that is defined by being 500 feet from shore. The Mississippi River is excluded as there is currently separate open water regulations when hunting on the Upper Mississippi Wildlife Refuge. Department biologist staff, law enforcement staff, conservation organizations and public input all were in support of this rule simplification. This rule also adjusts the Mississippi River Canada Goose Zone season framework by eliminating the early closure in December. This will result in having the Canada Goose Season open throughout early and mid-December prior to freeze up on the Mississippi River. In 2023, the decision was made to match the Mississippi River Goose Zone season framework to that of the South Zone Goose Season. After review and public feedback, it was determined that this alignment did not provide any increased opportunity on the Mississippi River and has been changed to reflect the public input. Lastly, as part of this multi-year season framework setting process, the department requested public input on a 30 and 45-day duck season framework specific for each of the three duck zones (North, South, and Open Water). Wisconsin has had 60-day duck seasons every year since 1997, however, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service authorizes 30 and 45-day duck season frameworks if duck populations or habitat conditions fall below a certain threshold. As part of this rule package, the department asked hunters under a hypothetical scenario what would be the preferred season dates if Wisconsin were required to shorten the season from 60-days to 30 or 45-days. Based on the most recent public input, this rule alters the 30 and 45-day frameworks to reflect that preference.	

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These proposed rules were already put in place for the 2026 season through an emergency rule.

12. Summary of the Businesses, Business Sectors, Associations Representing Business, Local Governmental Units, and Individuals that may be Affected by the Proposed Rule that were Contacted for Comments.

A notice for solicitation of comments on this analysis will be posted on the department's website in September 2026 and various interest groups may be contacted. No fiscal effects on small businesses, their associations, or local governments are anticipated.

13. Identify the Local Governmental Units that Participated in the Development of this EIA.

A notice for solicitation of comments on this analysis will be posted on the department's website during a 10 day period in September 2026.

14. Summary of Rule's Economic and Fiscal Impact on Specific Businesses, Business Sectors, Public Utility Rate Payers, Local Governmental Units and the State's Economy as a Whole (Include Implementation and Compliance Costs Expected to be Incurred)

No effects on small businesses, their associations, or local governments are anticipated. The department does not anticipate any fiscal impacts as a result of these rules. Following is the department's preliminary analysis.

Economic Impact

Because the hunting season framework proposed in this rule will be very similar to those in place during previous seasons, no economic impacts are anticipated. We do not anticipate that these rules will result in changes in the activities of migratory bird hunters, their expenditures, and the related economic activity. These rules are applicable to individual hunters and impose no compliance or reporting requirements for small business, nor are any design or operational standards contained in the rule.

Fiscal Impact

The department anticipates no fiscal impact resulting from these rules. The department currently annually conducts a number of activities related to migratory bird hunting such as managing department lands, selling licenses, providing law enforcement services, and surveys and related research. The department will continue to conduct the same activities under the season framework proposed in this rule and does not anticipate any new or reduced expenditures. No effects on small businesses, their associations, or local governments are anticipated. The department does not anticipate any fiscal impacts as a result of these rules. Following is the department's preliminary analysis.

15. Benefits of Implementing the Rule and Alternative(s) to Implementing the Rule

By implementing this rule, Wisconsin's migratory bird hunters will continue to enjoy excellent hunting opportunities. The expenditures of migratory bird hunters and the economic impacts resulting from their expenditures will continue to benefit the state's economy

16. Long Range Implications of Implementing the Rule

Implementing these rules will have little impact on the public except that they will continue to have good hunting opportunities into the future.

17. Compare With Approaches Being Used by Federal Government

Migratory game bird hunting is regulated by the United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), in 50 CFR part 20. Under international treaty and Federal law, migratory game bird seasons are closed unless opened annually through the USFWS regulations process. As part of the federal rule process, the service annually evaluates migratory game bird populations and breeding habitat in cooperation with state provincial agencies and the Canadian Wildlife Service. After considering recommendations from the flyway councils of states and the guidance of cooperatively developed harvest strategies, the USFWS establishes annual frameworks within flyway or bird populations regions. States can then establish hunting seasons within the sideboards for each species and region.

None of the provisions of this rule conflict with the federal framework.

18. Compare With Approaches Being Used by Neighboring States (Illinois, Iowa, Michigan and Minnesota)

The department establishes migratory game bird hunting seasons based on a federal framework that is presented to Wisconsin by the US Fish & Wildlife Service. Because of the federal guidelines, Wisconsin's regulations are similar to those in neighboring states.

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ATTACHMENT A

1. Summary of Rule's Economic and Fiscal Impact on Small Businesses (Separately for each Small Business Sector, Include Implementation and Compliance Costs Expected to be Incurred)

2. Summary of the data sources used to measure the Rule's impact on Small Businesses

3. Did the agency consider the following methods to reduce the impact of the Rule on Small Businesses?

- ☐ Less Stringent Compliance or Reporting Requirements
☐ Less Stringent Schedules or Deadlines for Compliance or Reporting
☐ Consolidation or Simplification of Reporting Requirements
☐ Establishment of performance standards in lieu of Design or Operational Standards
☐ Exemption of Small Businesses from some or all requirements
☐ Other, describe:

4. Describe the methods incorporated into the Rule that will reduce its impact on Small Businesses

5. Describe the Rule's Enforcement Provisions

6. Did the Agency prepare a Cost Benefit Analysis (if Yes, attach to form)

☐ Yes ☐ No
