

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Duck Season

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

In the United States, the vast majority of wildlife management is done by state wildlife agencies – the same folks who issue your hunting and fishing licenses. But there are some areas where the federal government steps in and takes a larger role.

Ducks fly up and down North America each year, and they are avidly hunted. What if hunters in Virginia shot all the ducks before they could get to North Carolina? Migratory birds, including ducks, is an area where the federal government steps in and plays a key role.

Migratory birds are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, a nearly 100-year-old law which codified a conservation agreement between the U.S. and Canada and has since expanded to include Mexico, Japan, and Russia.

The treaty identifies about 170 birds as game birds, and each year, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with states to establish frameworks for hunting season lengths, dates, and bag limits. States select their individual seasons from within the federal frameworks.

Essentially this allows biologists to use data from the past year to set hunting season dates and to project appropriate harvest limits for each game species, ensuring the birds are hunted at a sustainable level in all states.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.