

Long Island Zone Season Summary



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

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The updated 60-day duck season format for the Long Island Zone (LIZ) will be used for three years spanning the 2024-25 to 2026-27 seasons. This season structure maximizes the two most important factors influencing waterfowl hunter satisfaction – maintaining a short split surrounding the traditional Thanksgiving holiday while maximizing migration and abundance into December/January. This season format also reflects the importance that hunters placed on ensuring more opportunity later in the season when ice conditions on smaller water bodies force ducks to concentrate on larger lakes and rivers found in the zone. Duck hunters want to see lots of ducks; they want to hunt during prime movement periods; and they value opportunity when ducks are concentrated because of local freeze-ups. The first split will start on the fourth Saturday in November and run for nine days. The season will close at or near the end of November and then reopen for the remaining 51 days in early December and run through the last Sunday in January.

First Split Open	First Split Close	Second Split Open	Second Split Close
11/23/24	12/1/24	12/7/24	1/26/25
11/22/25	11/30/25	12/6/25	1/25/26
11/21/26	11/29/26	12/12/26	1/31/27

The numbers of days and weekends open to duck hunting per month will vary slightly depending on the calendar year:

- 8-9 days in November (2 weekends including Thanksgiving)
- 20-26 days in December (3-4 weekends including Christmas)
- 26-31 days in January (4-5 weekends including New Years Day and Martin Luther King Jr. Day)

Key Points:

- The four most important species in the LIZ continue to be mallard, black duck, green-winged teal and northern pintail. The least important species were diving ducks and sea ducks. The selected dates reflect the migration and abundance of species duck hunters said were important to them.
- The early part of both the first and second split captures peak migration for preferred species.
- The second split in December through the end of January encompasses dates where desirable duck species are likely to be most abundant in the zone and open when icing is likely to occur and concentrate ducks in open water areas.

Long Island Zone Duck Abundance, Migration, Icing, and Season Selection

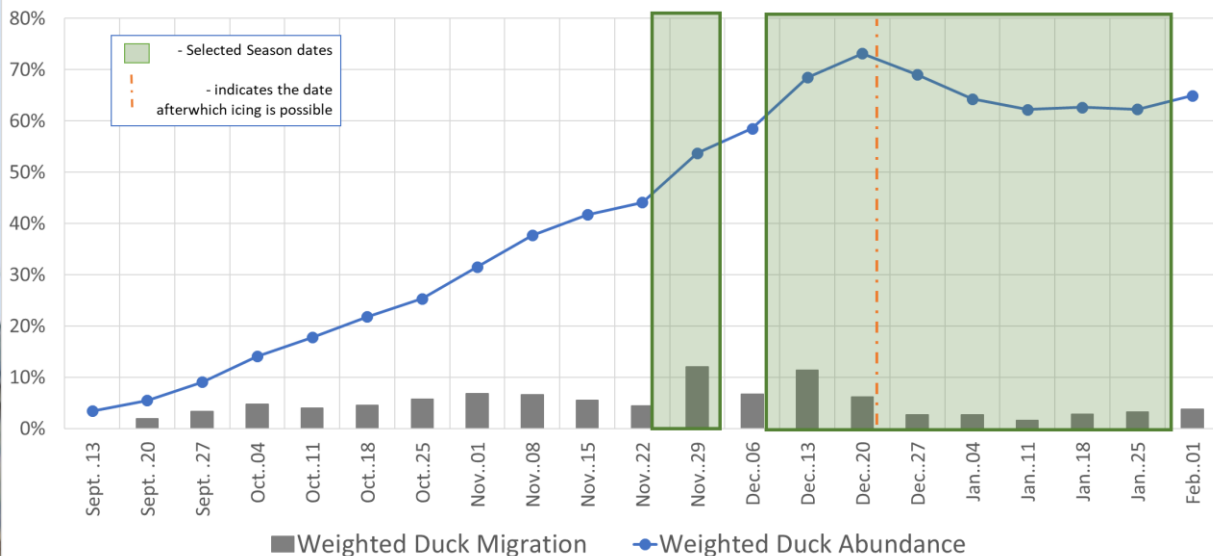


Figure 1 – This graph shows the abundance (blue line) and migration (gray bars) of all ducks in the Long Island Zone. Each species is weighted based on their importance to Long Island Zone hunters (i.e., a mallard is nearly 4 times as important as a scoter). The orange dashed line represents the date after which icing is likely to occur on smaller bodies of water in the zone. The green boxes are the selected duck season dates for the zone.

Long Island Zone Hunter Objective Weights

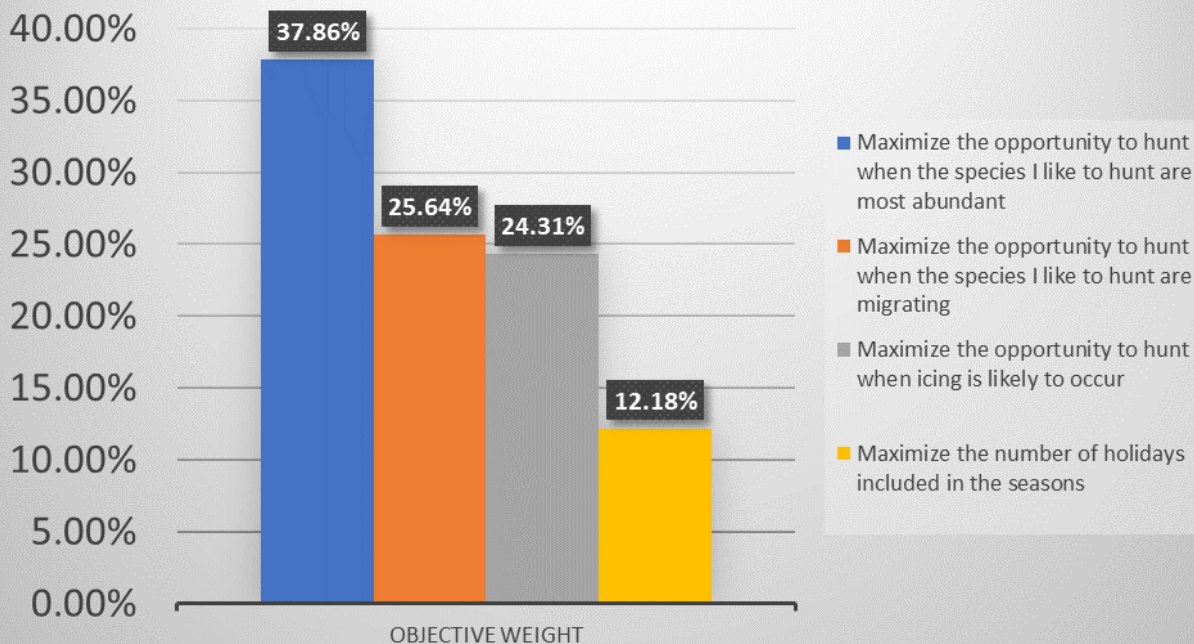


Figure 2 - This graph represents the importance of the 4 survey objectives to Long Island Zone duck hunters (i.e., 64% of what duck hunters value is based on maximizing abundance and migration of desired species)