



# United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Washington, D.C. 20240



In Reply Refer To:  
FWS/AMB/069808

The Honorable Doug LaMalfa  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

MAY 29 2019

Dear Representative LaMalfa:

Thank you for your letter of March 8, 2019, also cosigned by several of your colleagues, regarding support for revision of the National Pintail Adaptive Harvest Management strategy. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is committed to providing quality waterfowl hunting opportunities, helping to recruit the next generation of waterfowl hunters, and ensuring the future of the waterfowl populations for current and future generations of Americans.

The 2019-2020 change in the harvest regulations for pintails from a 2 bird-day daily bag limit to a 1 bird daily bag limit which was supported by all four Flyway Councils, is the result of the population numbers and previous year harvest. This change in daily bag limit reflects the decrease in the 2018 breeding pair numbers for pintails. Since the implementation of the current harvest strategy the pintail population has fluctuated around the threshold for a 2 and 1 bird daily bag limit. Therefore, the current harvest strategy calls for a 1 bird daily bag to help achieve the maximum harvest over the long-term. Annual changes and fluctuations in the pintail breeding population is driven by changes in mortality reproduction. Habitat conditions, including the number of ponds in prairie Canada and land cover type, also can impact reproductive success, and is believed to be an important factor in determining pintail production.

The Service recently initiated the process of revising the current pintail harvest strategy and assembled a team consisting of Migratory Bird Program biologists, state biologists from the four flyways, and research biologists from the U.S. Geological Survey. The revised strategy will re-evaluate the goals of pintail harvest management, assess current and new season lengths and bag limits, and incorporate the most up-to-date scientifically collected information. This process will take approximately two years to complete. When complete, it will provide waterfowl managers with the opportunity to evaluate the most current data and models to determine a suite of season lengths and bag limits that: 1) maximize long-term hunter opportunities; 2) minimize restrictive seasons; and, 3) ensure the future of the pintail population.

The Service looks forward to working with our state agency partners and other conservation organizations through the Flyway Councils to revise the pintail harvest strategy. If you have any additional questions, please contact Mr. Jerome Ford, Assistant Director for the Migratory Bird Program at 202-208-1050 or [jerome\\_ford@fws.gov](mailto:jerome_ford@fws.gov).

Sincerely,

Margaret E. Everson  
Principal Deputy Director  
Exercising the Authority of the Director  
For the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service