



## WILDLIFE & HERITAGE SERVICE

### MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR REGULATED SHOOTING AREA (RSA) RELEASING FREE-FLYING MALLARD DUCKS

**Note: This plan is only required for RSAs that release free-flying mallards.**

If you have questions concerning the habitat management plan, please contact:  
Rick Walls, Migratory Game Bird Habitat Manager (410) 827-8612 x103)

#### **Applicant Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Check Any That May Apply:

Landowner\_\_\_\_ Land Manager/Employee\_\_\_\_ Lease Holder\_\_\_\_

RSA Permit Number (if renewal):

RSA Name, Address and County where located (If different from  
Applicant's):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Habitat Management Information** (refer to attached guidelines, attach  
additional sheets if needed):

Number of mallards released or to be released in the 2025–2026 hunting season: \_\_\_\_\_

**Brooding Habitat:** (describe release/holding areas for mallard ducks and steps taken to minimize disease).

***Note: The feeding of captive-raised mallard ducks in tidal waters, or within 25 feet of the mean high water line of tidal waters bordering the regulated shooting area, is prohibited.***

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**Wintering Habitat Description** - Describe types of crop plantings, acreage of crops left for free-flying mallards, number and acreage of ponds or impoundments and freshwater supplies. Include a map and/or aerial photo indicating crop plantings and those left unharvested, ponds, impoundments, and freshwater supplies.

***Note: Acreage of unharvested crops and plantings must be adequate to feed the number of mallards released from October 1-January 31 of the following year. See attached guidelines for adequate crop planting.***

***A MAP DETAILING THE HABITAT MUST BE INCLUDED WITH THIS APPLICATION***

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**Landowner/Manager Signature**

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**Date**

Rev 2/2/25

### **Habitat Management Guidelines for Free-Flying Mallards**

Adequate food in the form of unharvested grain crops must be available to feed free-flying mallards from Oct. 1 - January 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year. Grain crops should be planted to allow adequate access by feeding mallards. Grain crops planted in 30" rows are recommended. Non-traditional crops may be broadcast or drilled. Guidelines are based on an average daily consumption of 4oz. per duck.

1. Grain Sorghum → 1 acre (avg. yield 50bu.) per 100 Mallards
2. Grain Corn → .75 acres (avg. yield 80bu.) per 100 Mallards
3. Japanese Millet → 1.75 acres (avg. yield 30bu.) per 100 Mallards
4. Rice → .5 acre (avg. yield 5250 lbs.) per 100 Mallards
5. Egyptian Wheat → 1.5 acres (avg. yield 40bu.) per 100 Mallards

**Soybeans are not to be planted as an integral part of an R.S.A. planting.** Soybeans have been known to cause compaction and eventual death in waterfowl when consumed while dry. Also, submerged soybeans will lose 86% of their energy content after 90 days.

#### **Freshwater Supply and Diseases:**

The holding ponds for free-flying mallards must have ample freshwater to minimize risk of disease outbreaks to free-flying mallards and wild waterfowl. A constant supply of freshwater and full pools is necessary to minimize the risk of disease outbreaks during summer and early fall.

Water control structures should be installed in all ponds or impoundments supporting free-flying mallards. Disease outbreaks may require complete removal of surface water to deter waterfowl use.

Avian Botulism is a common disease that affects waterfowl when water levels drop during summer months, whether induced by man or persistent drought conditions that expose mudflats, dying fish and other animal matter.

Any waterfowl and other wetland bird species found sick or dead on the R.S.A. must be removed. All birds must be handled with gloves. Sick birds must be euthanized as humanely as possible. All euthanized birds or fresh carcasses should be placed in double plastic bags and kept on ice to be transported to a Maryland Department of Agriculture Health Lab for determining cause of death. In the event the disease outbreak occurs during a holiday or weekend, birds should be kept on ice or refrigerated until they are transported to the lab.

All birds found should be tagged with the location, date and time collected, as well the behavior associated with death.

**The R.S.A. licensee or his agent should report mortality as soon as possible to the Maryland DNR-Wildlife & Heritage Service at 410-221-8838. The MD DNR will provide additional instructions to minimize further mortality.**

Following the submittal of fresh carcasses for diagnosis, the importance of prompt removal and disposal of carcasses as outbreaks occur cannot be overemphasized. Burning or burial of carcasses is an effective mechanism for removing the major source of toxins and decreasing mortality.