

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****Fish and Wildlife Service****50 CFR Part 20**

[FWS-R9-MB-2008-0032; 91200-1231-9BPP-L2]

RIN 1018-AV62

**Migratory Bird Hunting; Proposed Frameworks for Early-Season Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations; Notice of Meetings****AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.**ACTION:** Proposed rule; supplemental.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (hereinafter Service or we) is proposing to establish the 2008–09 early-season hunting regulations for certain migratory game birds. We annually prescribe frameworks, or outer limits, for dates and times when hunting may occur and the maximum number of birds that may be taken and possessed in early seasons. Early seasons may open as early as September 1, and include seasons in Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. These frameworks are necessary to allow State selections of specific final seasons and limits and to allow recreational harvest at levels compatible with population status and habitat conditions. This proposed rule also provides the final regulatory alternatives for the 2008–09 duck hunting seasons.

**DATES:** You must submit comments on the proposed early-season frameworks by August 4, 2008. The Service Migratory Bird Regulations Committee (SRC) will meet to consider and develop proposed regulations for late-season migratory bird hunting and the 2009 spring/summer migratory bird subsistence seasons in Alaska on July 30 and 31, 2008. All meetings will commence at approximately 8:30 a.m. Following later **Federal Register** documents, you will be given an opportunity to submit comments for proposed late-season frameworks and subsistence migratory bird seasons in Alaska by August 31, 2008.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments on the proposals by one of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- U.S. mail or hand-delivery: Public Comments Processing, Attn: 1018-AV62; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222; Arlington, VA 22203.

We will not accept e-mail or faxes. We will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means that we will post any personal information you provide us (see the Public Comments section below for more information).

The SRC will meet in room 200 of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Arlington Square Building, 4401 N. Fairfax Dr., Arlington, VA.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ron W. Kokel, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, MS MBSP-4107-ARLSQ, 1849 C Street, NW., Washington, DC 20240; (703) 358-1714.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Regulations Schedule for 2008**

On May 28, 2008, we published in the **Federal Register** (73 FR 30712) a proposal to amend 50 CFR part 20. The proposal provided a background and overview of the migratory bird hunting regulations process, and dealt with the establishment of seasons, limits, and other regulations for hunting migratory game birds under §§ 20.101 through 20.107, 20.109, and 20.110 of subpart K. Major steps in the 2008–09 regulatory cycle relating to open public meetings and **Federal Register** notifications were also identified in the May 28 proposed rule. Further, we explained that all sections of subsequent documents outlining hunting frameworks and guidelines were organized under numbered headings. As an aid to the reader, we reiterate those headings here:

1. Ducks
  - A. General Harvest Strategy
  - B. Regulatory Alternatives
  - C. Zones and Split Seasons
  - D. Special Seasons/Species Management
    - i. September Teal Seasons
    - ii. September Teal/Wood Duck Seasons
    - iii. Black ducks
    - iv. Canvasbacks
    - v. Pintails
    - vi. Scaup
    - vii. Mottled ducks
    - viii. Wood ducks
    - ix. Youth Hunt
2. Sea Ducks
3. Mergansers
4. Canada Geese
  - A. Special Seasons
  - B. Regular Seasons
  - C. Special Late Seasons
5. White-fronted Geese
6. Brant
7. Snow and Ross's (Light) Geese
8. Swans
9. Sandhill Cranes
10. Coots
11. Moorhens and Gallinules
12. Rails
13. Snipe
14. Woodcock
15. Band-tailed Pigeons

16. Mourning Doves
17. White-winged and White-tipped Doves
18. Alaska
19. Hawaii
20. Puerto Rico
21. Virgin Islands
22. Falconry
23. Other

Subsequent documents will refer only to numbered items requiring attention. Therefore, it is important to note that we will omit those items requiring no attention, and remaining numbered items will be discontinuous and appear incomplete.

On June 18, 2008, we published in the **Federal Register** (73 FR 34692) a second document providing supplemental proposals for early- and late-season migratory bird hunting regulations. The June 18 supplement also provided detailed information on the 2008–09 regulatory schedule and announced the SRC and Flyway Council meetings.

This document, the third in a series of proposed, supplemental, and final rulemaking documents for migratory bird hunting regulations, deals specifically with proposed frameworks for early-season regulations and the regulatory alternatives for the 2008–09 duck hunting seasons. It will lead to final frameworks from which States may select season dates, shooting hours, and daily bag and possession limits for the 2008–09 season.

We have considered all pertinent comments received through June 30, 2008, on the May 28 and June 18, 2008, rulemaking documents in developing this document. In addition, new proposals for certain early-season regulations are provided for public comment. Comment periods are specified above under **DATES**. We will publish final regulatory frameworks for early seasons in the **Federal Register** on or about August 17, 2008.

**Service Migratory Bird Regulations Committee Meetings**

Participants at the June 25–26, 2008, meetings reviewed information on the current status of migratory shore and upland game birds and developed 2008–09 migratory game bird regulations recommendations for these species plus regulations for migratory game birds in Alaska, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands; special September waterfowl seasons in designated States; special sea duck seasons in the Atlantic Flyway; and extended falconry seasons. In addition, we reviewed and discussed preliminary information on the status of waterfowl.

Participants at the previously announced July 30–31, 2008, meetings will review information on the current

status of waterfowl and develop recommendations for the 2008–09 regulations pertaining to regular waterfowl seasons and other species and seasons not previously discussed at the early-season meetings. In accordance with Department of the Interior policy, these meetings are open to public observation and you may submit comments to the Director on the matters discussed.

#### Population Status and Harvest

The following paragraphs provide preliminary information on the status of waterfowl and information on the status and harvest of migratory shore and upland game birds excerpted from various reports. For more detailed information on methodologies and results, you may obtain complete copies of the various reports at the address indicated under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** or from our Web site at <http://fws.gov/migratorybirds/reports/report.html>.

#### Waterfowl Breeding and Habitat Survey

Federal, provincial, and State agencies conduct surveys each spring to estimate the size of breeding populations and to evaluate the conditions of the habitats. These surveys are conducted using fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, and ground crews and encompass principal breeding areas of North America, covering an area over 2.0 million square miles. The Traditional survey area comprises Alaska, Canada, and the northcentral United States, and includes approximately 1.3 million square miles. The Eastern survey area includes parts of Ontario, Quebec, Labrador, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, New York, and Maine, an area of approximately 0.7 million square miles.

Overall, habitat conditions during the 2008 May waterfowl survey were characterized in many areas by a delayed spring compared to several preceding years. Drought in many parts of the traditional survey area contrasted sharply with record amounts of snow and rainfall in the eastern survey area.

#### *Traditional Survey Area (U.S. and Canadian Prairies)*

Although spring was delayed in much of the traditional survey area, field crews reported that habitat conditions were suitable for nesting at the time of the survey. Much of the prairie potholes experienced drought conditions this spring and many semi-permanent wetlands and livestock dugouts were dry. At the time of the survey this area was considered to be in fair to poor

condition, with the exceptions being regions with temporary and seasonal water in southeastern South Dakota, and areas of western South Dakota that received abundant rain and snowfall in early May; conditions were classified as good in both of these areas. Parts of the prairie pothole region experienced heavy rains following completion of the survey. This may improve habitat conditions for late nesters and may improve the success of re-nesting attempts.

The parklands were drier in 2008 than in 2007 when excess water created much additional waterfowl habitat; still, this area was classified as fair to good overall with most seasonal and semi-permanent wetlands full. A late April snowstorm recharged wetlands in some areas of the northern parklands and these areas were classified as excellent.

#### *Bush (Alaska, Northern Manitoba, Northern Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories, Yukon Territory, Western Ontario)*

In the boreal forest, spring break-up was later in 2008 than in recent years, with locally variable snowfall and, consequently, variable runoff that resulted in habitat conditions ranging from fair in the east to good in the west. Most large lakes were still frozen on May 20 in the Northwest Territories; however, warmer temperatures in late May led to habitat conditions suitable for nesting during the survey period. Good conditions were present throughout Alaska, with slightly late spring conditions in some coastal areas.

#### *Eastern Survey Area*

In the eastern survey area, a cold winter with heavy snows and colder than average spring temperatures delayed spring conditions by 1–2 weeks relative to the early springs of preceding years. An exception was northern Quebec, which experienced an early spring with most ice melting by the last week of May. Quickly rising temperatures combined with spring rains led to flooding in parts of Maine and the Maritimes, which disrupted spring nesting phenology; as a result habitat conditions in these areas were classified as fair. Elsewhere in the East, abundant water in most lakes and wetlands resulted in habitat conditions being classified as good or excellent.

#### Status of Teal

The estimate of blue-winged teal numbers from the Traditional Survey Area is 6.6 million. This represents a 1.0 percent decrease from 2007 and is 45 percent above the 1955–2007 average.

#### Sandhill Cranes

Compared to increases recorded in the 1970s, annual indices to abundance of the Mid-Continent Population (MCP) of sandhill cranes have been relatively stable since the early 1980s. The Central Platte River Valley, Nebraska, spring index for 2008, uncorrected for visibility bias, was 472,128 sandhill cranes. The photo-corrected, 3-year average for 2005–07 was 364,281, which is within the established population-objective range of 349,000–472,000 cranes.

All Central Flyway States, except Nebraska, allowed crane hunting in portions of their States during 2007–08. About 9,808 hunters participated in these seasons, which was similar to the number that participated in the previous season. Hunters harvested 18,610 MCP cranes in the U.S. portion of the Central Flyway during the 2007–08 seasons, which was 6 percent higher than the estimated harvest for the previous year. The retrieved harvest of MCP cranes in hunt areas outside of the Central Flyway (Arizona, Pacific Flyway portion of New Mexico, Alaska, Canada, and Mexico combined) was 13,567 during 2007–08. The preliminary estimate for the North American MCP sport harvest, including crippling losses, was 36,567 birds, which is similar to the previous year's estimate. The long-term (1982–2004) trends for the MCP indicate that harvest has been increasing at a higher rate than population growth.

The fall 2007 pre-migration survey for the Rocky Mountain Population (RMP) resulted in a record high count of 22,822 cranes. The 3-year average for 2004, 2005, and 2007 (no survey was conducted in 2006) was 20,732 sandhill cranes, which is within established population objectives of 17,000–21,000 for the RMP. Hunting seasons during 2007–08 in portions of Arizona, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming, resulted in a harvest of 820 RMP cranes, a 10 percent decrease from the harvest of 907 the year before.

#### Woodcock

Singing-ground and Wing-collection Surveys were conducted to assess the population status of the American woodcock (*Scolopax minor*). The Singing-ground Survey is intended to measure long-term changes in woodcock population levels. Singing-ground Survey data for 2008 indicate that the number of displaying woodcock in the Eastern Region in 2008 was unchanged from 2007, while the Central Region experienced a 9.2 percent decline. However, we note that measurement of short-term (i.e., annual) trends tends to give estimates with larger variances and

is more prone to be influenced by climatic factors that may affect local counts during the survey. There was no significant trend in woodcock heard in the Eastern Region during 1998–2008; however, there was a declining trend of –1.5 percent per year in the Central Region. This represents the fifth consecutive year that the 10-year trend estimate for the Eastern Region did not indicate a significant decline, while it is the first time since 2003 that the Central Region had a declining trend. There were long-term (1968–2008) declines of 1.2 percent per year in the Eastern Region and 1.1 percent per year in the Central Region.

Wing-collection Survey data indicate that the 2007 recruitment index for the U.S. portion of the Eastern Region (1.6 immatures per adult female) was 4 percent higher than the 2006 index, and 4 percent lower than the long-term average. The recruitment index for the U.S. portion of the Central Region (1.5 immatures per adult female) was 10 percent lower than the 2006 index and 8 percent below the long-term average.

#### **Band-tailed Pigeons and Doves**

Annual counts of Interior band-tailed pigeons seen and heard per Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) route have not changed significantly since implementation of the BBS in 1966; however, they decreased significantly over the last 10 years. The 2007 harvest was estimated to be 4,800 birds. For Pacific Coast band-tailed pigeons, annual BBS counts of birds seen and heard per route have decreased since 1966, but they have not changed significantly over the last 10 years. According to the Pacific Coast Mineral Site Survey, annual counts of Pacific Coast band-tailed pigeons seen per mineral site have increased significantly since the survey was experimentally implemented in 2001. The 2007 harvest was estimated to be 12,700 birds.

Analyses of Mourning Dove Call-count Survey data over the most recent 10 years indicated no significant trend for doves heard in either the Eastern or Western Management Units while the Central Unit showed a significant decline. Over the 43-year period, 1966–2007, all 3 units exhibited significant declines. In contrast, for doves seen over the 10-year period, no significant trends were found for any of the three Management Units. Over 43 years, no trend was found for doves seen in the Eastern and Central Units while a significant decline was indicated for the Western Unit. The preliminary 2007 harvest estimate for the United States was 20,550,000 doves. A banding program is underway to obtain current

information in order to develop mourning dove population models for each Management Unit to provide guidance for improving our decision-making process with respect to harvest management.

The two key States with a white-winged dove population are Arizona and Texas. California and New Mexico have much smaller populations.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) monitors white-winged dove populations by means of a call-count survey to provide an annual index to population size. The index peaked at a mean of 52.3 doves heard per route in 1968, but fell precipitously in the late 1970s. The index has stabilized to around 25 doves per route in the last few years. In 2008, the mean number of doves heard per route was 26.9. AGFD also monitors harvest. Harvest during the 15-day season (September 1–15) peaked in the late 1960s at ~740,000 birds and has since stabilized at around 100,000 birds. The 2007 Harvest Information Program (HIP) estimate was 127,600 birds. In 2007, Arizona redesigned their dove harvest survey questionnaire to sample only from hunters registered under HIP. In the future, AGFD and HIP harvest estimates should be more comparable than they have been in the past.

In Texas, white-winged doves continue to expand their breeding range. Nesting by whitewings has been recorded in most counties, except for the northeastern part of the state primarily. Nesting is essentially confined to urban areas, but appears to be expanding to exurban areas. Concomitant with this range expansion has been a continuing increase in whitewing abundance. A new DISTANCE sampling protocol was implemented for Central and South Texas for 2007, and expanded in 2008 so that coverage is almost statewide. Once fully implemented, biologists should have the ability to obtain a good estimate of white-winged dove abundance in Texas. While 2008 data were not available at this time, 2007 surveys indicated an estimated abundance throughout surveyed areas (representing about 20 percent of the State) of about 2,300,000 whitewings. Total Statewide harvest has averaged about 2 million birds annually.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is working to improve management of white-winged doves in Texas in the following ways: (1) Expanding current surveys of spring populations to encompass areas throughout the State that now have breeding populations; (2) Completing the Tamaulipas-Texas White-winged

Dove Strategic Plan so that there are consistent and comparable harvest management strategies, surveys, research, and data collection across the breeding range of the species; (3) Expanding operational banding in 2008 that was begun in 2007 to derive estimates of survival and harvest rates; (4) Implementing a wing-collection survey for recruitment rates in lieu of the feeding flight and production surveys; (5) Estimating probability of detection for more accurate estimates of breeding populations within urban environments; and (6) Evaluating and estimating reproductive success in urban areas to better estimate population increases.

In California, BBS data (although imprecise due to a small sample size) indicate that there has been a significant increase in the population between 1968 and 2007. According to HIP surveys, the preliminary harvest estimate for 2007 was 67,900. In New Mexico, BBS data (very imprecise due to a small sample size) also showed a significant increase over the long term. In 2007, the estimated harvest was 64,000.

White-tipped doves are believed to be maintaining a relatively stable population in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) of Texas. DISTANCE sampling procedures in the LRGV include whitetips. However, until the sampling frame includes rural Rio Grande corridor habitats, not many whitetips will be reported. Sampling frame issues are expected to be resolved by next year. However, annual white-tipped dove harvest during the special season is only averaging 3,000–4,000 birds.

#### **Review of Public Comments**

The preliminary proposed rulemaking (May 28 **Federal Register**) opened the public comment period for migratory game bird hunting regulations and announced the proposed regulatory alternatives for the 2008–09 duck hunting season. Comments concerning early-season issues and the proposed alternatives are summarized below and numbered in the order used in the May 28 **Federal Register** document. Only the numbered items pertaining to early-seasons issues and the proposed regulatory alternatives for which written comments were received are included. Consequently, the issues do not follow in consecutive numerical or alphabetical order.

We received recommendations from all four Flyway Councils. Some recommendations supported continuation of last year's frameworks. Due to the comprehensive nature of the annual review of the frameworks

performed by the Councils, support for continuation of last year's frameworks is assumed for items for which no recommendations were received. Council recommendations for changes in the frameworks are summarized below.

We seek additional information and comments on the recommendations in this supplemental proposed rule. New proposals and modifications to previously described proposals are discussed below. Wherever possible, they are discussed under headings corresponding to the numbered items in the May 28 **Federal Register** document.

## General

*Written Comments:* An individual commenter protested the entire migratory bird hunting regulations process, the killing of all migratory birds, and the Flyway Council process.

*Service Response:* Our long-term objectives continue to include providing opportunities to harvest portions of certain migratory game bird populations and to limit harvests to levels compatible with each population's ability to maintain healthy, viable numbers. Having taken into account the zones of temperature and the distribution, abundance, economic value, breeding habits, and times and lines of flight of migratory birds, we believe that the hunting seasons provided herein are compatible with the current status of migratory bird populations and long-term population goals. Additionally, we are obligated to, and do, give serious consideration to all information received as public comment. While there are problems inherent with any type of representative management of public-trust resources, we believe that the Flyway Council system of migratory bird management has been a longstanding example of State-Federal cooperative management since its establishment in 1952. However, as always, we continue to seek new ways to streamline and improve the process.

## 1. Ducks

Categories used to discuss issues related to duck harvest management are: (A) General Harvest Strategy; (B) Regulatory Alternatives, including specification of framework dates, season lengths, and bag limits; (C) Zones and Split Seasons; and (D) Special Seasons/Species Management. The categories correspond to previously published issues/discussions, and only those containing substantial recommendations are discussed below.

### A. General Harvest Strategy

*Council Recommendations:* The Upper- and Lower-Region Regulations Committees of the Mississippi Flyway Council recommended that regulations changes be restricted to one step per year, both when restricting as well as liberalizing hunting regulations. Both Committees further recommended not implementing the western mallard Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) protocol.

The Central Flyway Council recommended not implementing the western mallard AHM protocol.

The Pacific Flyway Council recommended implementing the Service's proposal for a revised protocol for managing the harvest of mallards in Western North America. They further recommended inclusion of the following initial components:

- (1) Regulation packages that are currently in place in the Pacific Flyway and generally described as Liberal, Moderate, Restrictive, and Closed, with associated target harvest rates of 12, 8, 4, and 0 percent, respectively;
- (2) A harvest objective that corresponds to no more than 95 percent of the Maximum Sustained Yield (MSY) on the yield curve (they further note that current harvest estimates suggest that the current Pacific Flyway mallard harvest is at 80 percent of MSY);
- (3) Consider use of a weighting factor within the decision matrix that would soften the knife-edge effect of optimal policies when regulation changes are warranted;
- (4) No change in the duck regulation provisions for Alaska, except implementation through the western mallard AHM strategy;
- (5) An optimization based only on western mallards; and
- (6) Clarification of the impacts of removing Alaska from the mid-continent mallard strategy.

They also requested that the Service explore options of incorporating mallards and other waterfowl stocks derived from surveyed areas in Canada important to the Pacific Flyway (e.g., Alberta, Northwest Territories) into the decision process in the future.

*Service Response:* As we stated in the May 28 **Federal Register**, we intend to continue use of adaptive harvest management (AHM) to help determine appropriate duck-hunting regulations for the 2008–09 season. AHM is a tool that permits sound resource decisions in the face of uncertain regulatory impacts, as well as providing a mechanism for reducing that uncertainty over time. The current AHM protocol is used to evaluate four alternative regulatory

levels based on the population status of mallards (special hunting restrictions are enacted for certain species, such as canvasbacks, scaup, and pintails).

In recent years, the prescribed regulatory alternative for the Pacific, Central, and Mississippi Flyways has been based on the status of mallards and breeding-habitat conditions in central North America (Federal survey strata 1–18, 20–50, and 75–77, and State surveys in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan). In the May 28 **Federal Register**, we also stated our intent for the 2008–09 hunting season to consider setting hunting regulations in the Pacific Flyway based on the status and dynamics of a newly defined stock of “western” mallards. For now, western mallards would be defined as those breeding in Alaska (as based on Federal surveys in strata 1–12), and in California and Oregon (as based on State-conducted surveys).

We agree with the Pacific Flyway Council's recommendation to implement the western mallard AHM protocol for the 2008–09 hunting season. However, implementation of this new AHM decision framework for western mallards requires several other considerations. First, we believe that implementation of this new protocol necessitates that we “rescale” the closed season constraint in the existing mid-continent mallard (identified above as those breeding in central North America) AHM strategy to 4.75 million mallards from the existing 5.5 million mallards. This “rescaling” is necessary to adjust for removing mallards breeding in Alaska from the mid-continent population and assigning them to the western mallard population. Second, the optimal regulatory policies for western mallards (and mid-continent mallards) would be based on independent optimization. That is, the optimum regulations for mid-continent mallards and western mallards would be determined independently, and based upon the breeding stock that contributes primarily to each Flyway (western mallards for the Pacific Flyway and mid-continent mallards for the Central and Mississippi Flyways). Third, that the current regulatory alternatives remain in place for the Pacific Flyway, while we continue to work with the Flyway to develop regulatory options necessary to effect a substantive increase or decrease in the harvest rate of western mallards. And lastly, regulations in Alaska would continue to be addressed as an early season issue and future consideration of Alaska regulatory changes would be based on the status of the western

mallards rather than mid-continent mallards.

Additionally, since 2000, we have prescribed a regulatory alternative for the Atlantic Flyway based on the population status of mallards breeding in eastern North America (Federal survey strata 51–54 and 56, and State surveys in New England and the mid-Atlantic region). We will continue this protocol for the 2008–09 season.

Regarding incorporation of a one-step constraint into the AHM process, our incorporation of a one-step constraint into the AHM process was addressed by the AHM Task Force of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) in its report and recommendations. This recommendation will be included in considerations of potential changes to the set of regulatory alternatives at a yet to be determined later date. Currently, there is no consensus on behalf of the Flyway Councils on how to modify the regulatory alternatives. We believe that the new Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the migratory bird hunting program (see NEPA Consideration section), currently in preparation, may be an appropriate venue for considering such changes in a more comprehensive manner that involves input from all Flyways.

We will propose a specific regulatory alternative for each of the Flyways during the 2008–09 season after survey information becomes available later this summer. More information on AHM is located at <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/mgmt/AHM/AHM-intro.htm>.

#### B. Regulatory Alternatives

*Council Recommendations:* The Atlantic Flyway Council recommended that the current restriction of two hens in the 4-bird mallard daily bag limit be removed from the “liberal” package in the Atlantic Flyway to allow the harvest of 4 mallards of any sex.

The Upper- and Lower-Region Regulations Committees of the Mississippi Flyway Council and the Central Flyway Council recommended that regulatory alternatives for duck hunting seasons remain the same as those used in 2007.

*Service Response:* We do not support the Atlantic Flyway Council’s proposal to remove the hen mallard restriction in the “liberal” alternative for the Atlantic Flyway. The AHM approach requires that the regulatory packages remain relatively constant over time to insure relatively consistent expected impacts of the various harvest management alternatives. Additionally, we strongly support the development and inclusion of a process to review and revise the

basic regulatory packages. As we stated above, we believe that the new Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the migratory bird hunting program (see NEPA Consideration section), currently in preparation, may be an appropriate venue for considering such changes in a more comprehensive manner that involves input from all Flyways. We do not support a frequent and/or piecemeal approach to the review and revision of the basic regulatory packages and believe that such an approach would not be consistent with the existing AHM process.

Therefore, the regulatory alternatives proposed in the May 28 **Federal Register** will be used for the 2008–09 hunting season (see accompanying table for specifics). In 2005, the AHM regulatory alternatives were modified to consist only of the maximum season lengths, framework dates, and bag limits for total ducks and mallards. Restrictions for certain species within these frameworks that are not covered by existing harvest strategies will be addressed during the late-season regulations process. For those species with harvest strategies (canvasbacks, pintails, black ducks, and scaup), those strategies will be used for the 2008–09 hunting season.

#### D. Special Seasons/Species Management

##### i. September Teal Seasons

Utilizing the criteria developed for the teal season harvest strategy, this year’s estimate of 6.6 million blue-winged teal from the traditional survey area indicates that a 16-day September teal season in the Central and Mississippi Flyway and a 9-day September teal season in the Atlantic Flyway is appropriate in 2008.

##### iii. Black Ducks

*Council Recommendations:* The Atlantic Flyway Council endorsed the interim international harvest strategy for black ducks, with the following modifications: (1) The original criteria of a 25 percent change in the 5-year running average from the long-term (1998–2007) breeding population (BPOP) should be changed to a 15 percent change measured by a 3-year running average, and (2) the original criteria of a 5-year running average to measure parity should be changed to a 3-year running average.

The Upper- and Lower-Region Regulations Committees of the Mississippi Flyway Council endorsed the agreement in concept and the interim approach to the harvest

management of black ducks as outlined by the Black Duck International Management Group.

*Service Response:* For several years we have consulted with the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyway Councils, the Canadian Wildlife Service, and provincial wildlife agencies in eastern Canada concerning the development of an international harvest strategy for black ducks. As we described in the June 18 **Federal Register**, in 2008, U.S. and Canadian waterfowl managers developed a draft interim harvest strategy that was designed to be employed by both countries over the next three seasons (2008–09 to 2010–11), allowing time for the development of a formal strategy based on the principles of Adaptive Harvest Management. The interim harvest strategy is prescriptive, in that it would call for no substantive changes in hunting regulations unless the black duck breeding population, averaged over the most recent 3 years, exceeds or falls below the long-term average breeding population by 15 percent or more. It would allow additional harvest opportunity (commensurate with the population increase) if the 3-year average breeding population exceeds the long-term average by 15 percent or more, and would require reduction of harvest opportunity if the 3-year average falls below the long-term average by 15 percent or more. The strategy is designed to share the black duck harvest equally between the two countries; however, recognizing incomplete control of harvest through regulations, it will allow realized harvest in either country to vary between 40 and 60 percent.

We support the interim international black duck harvest strategy put forward by the International Black Duck Management Group and propose to adopt its use for the 2008–09, 2009–10, and 2010–11 seasons, unless it is supplanted by a new, fully adaptive strategy prior to the 2010–11 season. We note that this strategy was recommended by the Mississippi Flyway Council, and differs from the Atlantic Flyway Council’s recommendation only in that it employs a 5-year running average to assess harvest parity between Canada and the United States, rather than the 3-year average recommended by the Atlantic Flyway Council. We support the 5-year average negotiated in the International Agreement.

##### iv. Canvasbacks

*Council Recommendations:* The Atlantic Flyway Council recommended that the canvasback harvest strategy be

modified to include a provision to allow a daily bag limit of 2 canvasbacks when the predicted breeding population is greater than 750,000 birds.

The Upper- and Lower-Region Regulations Committees of the Mississippi Flyway Council recommended an alternative canvasback harvest management strategy that uses threshold levels based on breeding population size in order to determine bag limits. These threshold levels would allow 2 canvasbacks per day when the population is above 800,000, 1 canvasback per day when the population is between 400,000 and 800,000, and close the season when the population drops below 400,000.

The Central Flyway Council recommended maintaining the current canvasback harvest strategy and updating harvest predictions in the current model.

The Pacific Flyway Council requested revision of the canvasback harvest strategy to include a harvest management prescription for a two-bird, full season option when the canvasback breeding population and predicted harvest will sustain the population at or above 600,000.

*Service Response:* In the May 28 and June 18 **Federal Registers**, we indicated our support for modification of the existing canvasback strategy to allow for a 2-bird daily bag limit when the projected breeding population in the next year exceeds an established threshold level. Our support was contingent on receiving Flyway Council and public input regarding the exact threshold level to be employed for the bag limit increase. Based on our recent biological assessment this threshold should fall between 600,000 and 750,000 canvasbacks projected as the next year's breeding population.

After consideration of the various Flyway Council proposals, we have modified the existing canvasback harvest strategy to allow a 2-bird bag when the breeding population in the following year is projected to be at least 725,000 birds. This approach is consistent with the guidance previously offered by the Service. Further, we prefer to retain use of the existing canvasback strategy rather than replace it with the more prescriptive approach advocated by the Upper- and Lower-Region Regulations Committees of the Mississippi Flyway Council. In addition, we will undertake a review of the existing canvasback strategy and model structures as time and opportunity permit.

#### v. Pintails

*Council Recommendations:* The Atlantic Flyway Council recommended several modifications and considerations for the proposed pintail derived harvest strategy. They recommended we continue exploration of a derived strategy versus a prescribed strategy and consider a closure constraint. They also commented that Flyway-specific bag limits may not be needed to maintain the desired harvest distribution.

The Upper- and Lower-Region Regulations Committees of the Mississippi Flyway Council recommended continued use of the current prescribed northern pintail harvest management strategy until they can see further modeling results of emphasizing a management objective that minimizes the frequency of closed and partial seasons.

The Central Flyway Council recommended that the proposed derived pintail harvest strategy not be adopted and recommended continued use of the current prescribed strategy.

The Pacific Flyway Council recommended that the current prescribed harvest management protocol for pintail be continued in 2008.

*Service Response:* Based on Flyway Council comments and recommendations, we propose to continue the use of the current pintail harvest strategy for the 2008–09 season. We will continue to work with the Flyway Councils to address their concerns on a derived strategy over the next year.

#### vi. Scaup

*Council Recommendations:* The Atlantic Flyway Council recommended implementation of the proposed scaup harvest strategy in 2008 conditional upon several modifications:

(1) A harvest management objective that achieves 95 percent of the long-term cumulative harvest when the breeding population is less than 4.0 million birds;

(2) Seasons remain open when the breeding population is at or above 2 million scaup;

(3) Agreement to use alternative methodology developed by the Atlantic Flyway Technical Section to predict scaup harvests in the Atlantic Flyway;

(4) Allow a “hybrid” season option for the Atlantic Flyway that allows for at least 20 days of the general duck season to have a daily bag limit of at least 2 while the remaining days would have a daily bag limit of 1;

(5) A “restrictive” harvest package in the Atlantic Flyway consisting of a 20-

day season with a daily bag limit of 2, and a 40-day season with a daily bag limit of 1;

(6) A “moderate” harvest package in the Atlantic Flyway consisting of a 60-day season with a daily bag limit of 2;

(7) A “liberal” harvest package in the Atlantic Flyway consisting of a 60-day season with a daily bag limit of 3;

(8) Designation of the proposed strategy as “interim” and subject to immediate reconsideration if alternative/competing scaup population models are available that will inform management decisions; and

(9) Reconsideration of the model elements after 3 years.

The Council also urged us to expedite the exploration of alternative/competing models describing scaup population dynamics that may be used to inform a harvest management strategy.

The Upper- and Lower-Region Regulations Committees of the Mississippi Flyway Council recommended we not adopt the proposed scaup harvest strategy and urged us to delay implementation until some alternative models can be developed.

The Central Flyway Council recommended that we delay implementation of the proposed scaup harvest strategy until alternative models are developed and evaluated.

The Pacific Flyway Council supported the implementation of a scaup harvest strategy in 2008, with the following conditions:

(1) A “shoulder” strategy objective that corresponds to 95 percent of MSY;

(2) Revision of harvest prediction models to provide a greater capacity to predict Pacific Flyway scaup harvest; and

(3) Revision of flyway harvest allocations to recognize proportions of greater scaup in flyway harvests.

They also urged us to continue to work on alternative models to incorporate into the decision framework as soon as possible.

*Written Comments:* Several non-governmental organizations expressed concerns about the proposed scaup harvest strategy and potential scaup bag limit reductions. Both organizations urged consideration of alternative models. One organization also submitted a detailed review of the scaup harvest strategy by a review panel.

*Service Response:* The continental scaup (greater *Aythya marila* and lesser *Aythya affinis* combined) population has experienced a long-term decline over the past 20 years. Over the past several years in particular, we have continued to express our growing concern about the status of scaup. The

2007 breeding population estimate for scaup was 3.45 million, essentially unchanged from the 2006 estimate, and the third lowest estimate on record.

In the May 28 **Federal Register**, we reviewed the actions we have taken over the last few years to synthesize data relevant to scaup harvest management and frame a scientifically-sound scaup harvest strategy (for a complete list of reports see <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/reports/reports.html>). We also solicited Flyway Council feedback regarding alternative approaches to developing and implementing a scaup harvest strategy, seeking specific feedback on three alternative courses of action:

(1) Delay implementation of any strategy and continue to work on the alternative model(s) of population dynamics;

(2) Implement the strategy proposed in the June 8 and July 23, 2007, **Federal Registers** (72 FR 31789 and 72 FR 40194) and continue to work on the alternative model(s); or

(3) Discontinue work on alternative models and implement the strategy proposed last year.

In addition, we sought feedback from the Flyway Councils regarding several policy issues. These included the specific objectives that would be used to derive a scaup harvest strategy, the appropriate Flyway-specific harvest models that will be used in part to determine Flyway-specific regulatory alternatives, and feedback regarding flyway-specific combinations of bag limit and season length that would meet target harvest levels under each regulatory package (restrictive, moderate, and liberal).

After considering Flyway Council feedback, we proposed in the June 18 **Federal Register** to adopt the scaup harvest strategy as originally proposed last year (June 8 and July 23, 2007, **Federal Registers**, 72 FR 31789 and 72 FR 40194). We stated then, and continue to believe, that an informed, scientifically-based decision process is far preferable to any other approach. Further, we noted that we had been patient in allowing additional time for review of the proposed strategy by the Flyway Councils and general public. We acknowledge and support the comments received that suggest additional models based on changing carrying capacity should be investigated and used if they can be developed and are supported by existing scaup population data. However, we note that we consider all strategies currently employed for species-specific harvest regulation to be subject to further analysis, review and improvement as new information

becomes available, and we intend to pursue such improvements for the proposed scaup strategy.

We have considered the Flyway Councils' recommendations. At this time, we believe that the decision-making framework for scaup proposed last year provides the best available scientific basis for regulatory decision-making. Thus, we propose to implement this harvest strategy for scaup in 2008.

Regarding the specifics of the various Flyway Council recommendations on the proposed strategy, we support the recommendation of the Pacific Flyway Council to implement a revised version of the Pacific Flyway harvest model since this model does provide for slightly improved harvest predictions over our initially proposed model.

While we do not support the alternative harvest model proposed by the Atlantic Flyway Council, we understand the Council's concerns regarding the initial harvest model we proposed and request that the Flyway continue to work with us to develop a harvest model with broader support within the Atlantic Flyway.

We also support the recommendations of the Atlantic and Pacific Flyway Councils that the harvest management objective for scaup should be to achieve 95 percent of the maximum sustainable harvest. We do not currently support the Atlantic Flyway Council's recommendations that an objective of 95 percent of maximum sustainable harvest be in effect until the scaup population exceeds a breeding population of 4 million and that a closed season constraint of 2 million scaup be included in the objective function. We believe that these particular recommendations should be reviewed and considered by all four Flyways.

We also do not accept the Pacific Flyway's recommendation that the flyway-specific harvest allocation be modified to reflect the distribution of harvest of greater and lesser scaup based on the belief that the status of greater scaup is not of concern. The monitoring programs for scaup do not currently support species-specific management and we believe that additional effort is required to ascertain the species-specific status and harvest potential of greater and lesser scaup prior to considering this recommendation further. Additionally, we feel that any questions of harvest allocation need to be addressed broadly by all four flyways as this recommendation would alter the harvest allocation for all flyways.

Finally, we do not support the Atlantic Flyway Council's recommendation for a hybrid season as it is currently presented. We are

concerned that this season configuration may not result in the necessary harvest reduction under a "restrictive" package due to the timing and duration of the 2-bird daily bag portion of the season that potentially could be selected by individual States.

Consistent with all harvest strategies, we remain committed to working with the Flyway Councils to continue to refine the assessment and decision-making framework and to improve the scientific basis for scaup regulatory decisions.

Given our decision to implement the strategy in 2008, it is critical that we receive recommendations from the Flyway Councils this July on season lengths and daily bag limits that would define Flyway-specific "restrictive," "moderate," and "liberal" regulatory alternatives that are predicted to achieve Flyway-specific harvest allocations under each package. It is our intent that, once defined, these packages would remain fixed in each Flyway for a period of 3 years at which time they would be re-examined in light of realized scaup harvests.

Lastly, we would like to acknowledge the report of the scaup harvest strategy review panel, but note that many of the committee's concerns have been previously addressed during the development and review process that has been ongoing since 2003. However, several comments dealt with specific technical issues that we agree are worthy of additional investigation. Nonetheless, we do not believe that such work precludes the use of the best assessment currently available to determine the appropriate level of harvest of scaup. Much of the focus of the comments received has been toward the development of competing models, and we acknowledge that such model(s) would be desirable. We note, however, that alternative models as described in the review panel report do not presently exist and that there are considerable technical hurdles to their development. Specific details of the review panel's report, all the comments received, and our more detailed technical responses can be found on our Web site at <http://fws.gov/migratorybirds/reports/report.html> or at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

#### viii. Wood Ducks

*Council Recommendations:* The Atlantic Flyway Council provided the following comments on the proposed wood duck harvest strategy:

(1) The Council endorses the use of the Potential Biological Removal method for calculating allowable harvest;

(2) Adult males should be the cohort to monitor;

(3) The management objective should be MSY, with the test criteria that the upper 95 percent confidence interval of the 3-year running average of both northern and region-wide adult male observed kill rates not exceed MSY based on their respective allowable kill rates;

(4) Should monitoring show impact on northern males, the harvest strategy should revert to a 2-bird daily bag limit;

(5) Bag limits should be allowed to differ between flyways; and

(6) The strategy should be adopted in 2008.

The Upper- and Lower-Region Regulations Committees of the Mississippi Flyway Council endorsed use of the Potential Biological Removal method to assess wood duck harvest potential and provided the following guidance on outstanding wood duck harvest management policy issues:

(1) Monitor adult male kill rates from the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways combined to determine whether actual kill rates exceed allowable kill rates;

(2) Use the point of Maximum Sustained Yield ( $\frac{1}{2} r_{max}$ ), combined with a test criteria requirement that the upper 95 percent confidence interval of the observed kill rate be below the allowable kill rate, as the management objective;

(3) Allow wood duck bag limits to differ between the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways; and

(4) Implement in the 2008–09 season.

The Central Flyway Council recommended that the Central Flyway be included in the development and implementation of the wood duck harvest strategy for the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways.

*Written Comments:* In a joint recommendation submitted at the June 25 Service Regulations Committee meeting, the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyway Councils recommended:

(1) Endorsement of the use of the Potential Biological Removal (PBR) method for calculating allowable harvest;

(2) Bag limits should be allowed to differ between flyways;

(3) The cohorts to monitor for the Atlantic Flyway are both range-wide and northern adult males banded in the Atlantic Flyway;

(4) The cohort to monitor for the Mississippi and Central Flyways is range-wide adult males banded in the Mississippi and Central Flyway;

(5) The management objective should be allowable kill rate (AKR), with the test criteria that the upper 95% confidence interval of the 3-year

running average of the monitored cohort observed kill rates not exceed AKR;

(6) The strategy, including 3-bird bag limit, should be adopted for an experimental 3-year period beginning in 2008; and

(7) The Service should calculate allowable kill rates that are specific to the Atlantic Flyway, and specific to the Central and Mississippi Flyways combined before the experimental period is complete.

*Service Response:* In the May 28 **Federal Register**, we reported on the significant technical progress that had been made in estimating the harvest potential of wood ducks in the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyway. This progress included our preparation of a scoping document describing how our assessment of the harvest potential could fit within an overall harvest strategy for wood ducks (see <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/reports/reports.html>).

While we have not formally proposed a wood duck harvest strategy, we stated our support for a wood duck harvest strategy based on the Potential Biological Removal method, with the management objective of 95 percent confidence that harvest will not exceed an allowable kill rate equal to the estimated harvest rate which would achieve the maximum long-term sustainable harvest. We further stated in the June 18 **Federal Register** that we planned to evaluate feedback from the Flyways in order to make a determination whether it would be feasible to consider implementation of a wood duck harvest strategy for the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyways in 2008. After considering the Flyway Councils' comments and recommendations, we do not support adoption of a wood duck harvest strategy at this time. We do, however, continue to strongly support the development of such a strategy and request the Flyways continued help and cooperation in developing one. Our delay in adopting the strategy is based largely on the fact that our current assessment of harvest potential did not evaluate an east/west split, nor did it consider separate monitoring of kill rates of Atlantic Flyway and Mississippi/Central Flyway wood ducks, which would be required by this new proposal. Additionally, we support an approach that treats the eastern population of wood ducks as a whole and are willing to work with the Flyways to determine the appropriate cohort for monitoring kill rates. We believe that additional dialogue is needed to decide upon the appropriate monitoring cohort, and clarify other

aspects of this new proposal. We look forward to continued work with the Flyway Councils to complete this important harvest strategy.

#### 4. Canada Geese

##### A. Special Seasons

*Council Recommendations:* The Atlantic Flyway Council recommended allowing a 10-day experimental extension of the September Resident Canada goose season in Delaware from September 16 to September 25 consistent with September Canada goose seasons in Atlantic Population (AP) zones in the adjacent States of Pennsylvania and New Jersey and other States in the Atlantic Flyway. They requested that this experimental season be permitted for a 3-year period, at which time an analysis of direct band recoveries will be conducted to determine if the harvest of AP Canada geese exceeds 10 percent of the overall goose harvest during Delaware's 10-day extension of the early season. This extended season will not incorporate the "expanded hunting methods" and would be implemented in 2008.

The Pacific Flyway Council recommended allowing Wyoming to modify its current framework that allows 4 geese per season to a 4-bird possession limit.

*Service Response:* We support the Atlantic Flyway Council's request to allow a 10-day extension of Delaware's September Canada goose season on an experimental basis for 3 years. We note that Delaware's evaluation plan meets the criteria currently set forth by the Service for experimental Canada goose seasons. Further, we would also note that we plan to review the efficacy of these criteria in the near future, but we do not believe that such a review will have any impact on this proposal.

We also support the Pacific Flyway Council's recommendation regarding Wyoming and note that this requested possession limit change falls within previously established frameworks for September Canada goose seasons.

##### B. Regular Seasons

*Council Recommendations:* The Upper- and Lower-Region Regulations Committees of the Mississippi Flyway Council recommended that the framework opening date for all species of geese for the regular goose seasons in Michigan and Wisconsin be September 16, 2008.

*Service Response:* We concur. As we stated last year (72 FR 40194), we agree with the objective to increase harvest pressure on resident Canada geese in the Mississippi Flyway and will continue to



consider the opening dates in both States as exceptions to the general Flyway opening date, to be reconsidered annually.

### 9. Sandhill Cranes

*Council Recommendations:* The Central and Pacific Flyway Councils recommended using the 2008 Rocky Mountain Population (RMP) sandhill crane harvest allocation of 1,633 birds as proposed in the allocation formula using the 3-year running average. They further recommended that a new RMP greater sandhill crane hunt area be established in Uinta County, Wyoming.

The Pacific Flyway Council recommended modifying Wyoming's RMP hunt areas by: (1) Expanding the hunt area in Lincoln County to include the Hams Fork drainage, and (2) expanding Area 6 in the Bighorn Basin to include all of Park, Bighorn, Hot Springs and Washakie Counties. The Council also recommended initiating a limited hunt for Lower Colorado River sandhill cranes in Arizona, with the goal of the hunt being a limited harvest of 6 cranes in January. To limit harvest, Arizona would issue permit tags to hunters and require mandatory checking of all harvested cranes. To limit disturbance of wintering cranes, Arizona would restrict the hunt to one 3-day period. Arizona would also coordinate with the National Wildlife Refuges where cranes occur.

*Service Response:* Last year the Pacific Flyway Council recommended, and we approved, the establishment of a limited hunt for the Lower Colorado River Valley Population (LCRVP) of sandhill cranes in Arizona (72 FR 49622). However, the population inventory on which the LCRVP hunt plan is based was not completed last year. Thus, the Arizona Game and Fish Department chose to not conduct the hunt last year. We continue to support the continuation of the 3-year experimental framework for this hunt conditional on successful monitoring being conducted as called for in the Flyway hunt plan for this population.

Our final environmental assessment (FEA) on this new hunt can be obtained by writing Robert Trost, Pacific Flyway Representative, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Migratory Bird Management, 911 NE 11th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97232-4181, or it may be viewed via the Service's home page at <http://fws.gov/migratorybirds/reports/reports.html> or at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Regarding the establishment of a new RMP greater sandhill crane hunt area in Uinta County, Wyoming, and the Pacific Flyway Council's recommended

modification of several of Wyoming's RMP hunt areas, we agree. All of these areas are within existing RMP hunt plans and RMP harvest is controlled by the RMP crane harvest allocation identified in the RMP hunt plan.

### 16. Mourning Doves

*Council Recommendations:* The Atlantic Flyway Council and the Upper- and Lower-Region Regulations Committees of the Mississippi Flyway Council recommended that States within the Eastern Management Unit should be offered a 70-day season and 15-bird daily bag limit for the 2008-09 mourning dove hunting season, and the dichotomous hunting season structure should be eliminated.

The Atlantic Flyway Council, the Upper- and Lower-Region Regulations Committees of the Mississippi Flyway Council, and the Central Flyway Council submitted interim mourning dove harvest management strategies for the Eastern Management Unit and the Central Management Unit for implementation in 2009.

*Service Response:* We concur with the recommendation to eliminate dichotomous bag limit choice and standardize the dove hunting framework to a 70-day season with a 15-bird daily bag limit in the Eastern Management Unit beginning with the 2008-09 season. Our assessment indicates that the increase in harvest will be minimal. We agree that this will be a simplification in the regulations and facilitate future harvest evaluations.

We also accept and endorse the interim harvest strategies for the Central and Eastern Management Units and await the submittal of an interim harvest strategy for the Western Management Unit in late July. The interim mourning dove harvest strategies are a step towards implementing the Mourning Dove National Strategic Harvest Plan (Plan) that was approved by all four Flyway Councils in 2003. The Plan represents a new, more informed means of decision-making for dove harvest management besides relying solely on traditional roadside counts of mourning doves as indicators of population trend. However, recognizing that a more comprehensive, national approach would take time to develop, we requested the development of interim harvest strategies, by management unit, until the elements of the Plan can be fully implemented. In 2004, each management unit submitted its respective strategy, but the strategies used different datasets and different approaches or methods. After initial submittal and review in 2006, we requested that the strategies be revised,

using similar, existing datasets among the management units along with similar decision-making criteria. In January 2008, we recommended that, following approval by the respective Flyway Councils in March, they be submitted in 2008 for endorsement by the Service with implementation for the 2009-10 hunting season.

### 18. Alaska

*Council Recommendations:* The Pacific Flyway Council recommended maintaining status quo in the Alaska early season framework, except for increasing the daily bag limit for canvasbacks to 2 per day with 6 in possession, and increasing the daily bag limit for brant to 3 per day with 6 in possession.

*Service Response:* We concur with the Pacific Flyway Council's recommendation for an increase in the daily bag and possession limit for brant. However, we do not support increasing the canvasback daily bag limit to 2 birds per day for the 2008-09 season. Our proposal is based on two factors: (1) There is no biological data currently available to justify a 2-bird daily bag limit for canvasbacks for the 2008-09 season, and (2) we note that prior to this year, the canvasback strategy had no provisions for a daily bag limit greater than one bird. In recognition of our change to the canvasback harvest strategy (discussed above in 1.D.iv. Canvasbacks), we request that the Pacific Flyway, in conjunction with Alaska, develop a recommendation on how to effectively incorporate Alaska into any future regulations when 2-bird daily bags are offered during the late season regulatory process.

### 20. Puerto Rico

*Council Recommendations:* The Atlantic Flyway Council recommended that Puerto Rico be permitted to adopt a 20-bird bag limit for doves in the aggregate for the next three hunting seasons, 2008-2010. Legally hunted dove species in Puerto Rico are the Zenaida dove, the white-winged dove, and the mourning dove. They also recommended that the 20-bird aggregate bag limit should include no more than 10 Zenaida doves and no more than 3 mourning doves.

*Service Response:* We concur.

### Public Comments

The Department of the Interior's policy is, whenever practicable, to afford the public an opportunity to participate in the rulemaking process. Accordingly, we invite interested persons to submit written comments, suggestions, or recommendations

regarding the proposed regulations. Before promulgation of final migratory game bird hunting regulations, we will take into consideration all comments received. Such comments, and any additional information received, may lead to final regulations that differ from these proposals.

You may submit your comments and materials concerning this proposed rule by one of the methods listed in the **ADDRESSES** section. We will not consider comments sent by e-mail or fax or to an address not listed in the **ADDRESSES** section. Finally, we will not consider hand-delivered comments that we do not receive, or mailed comments that are not postmarked, by the date specified in the **DATES** section.

We will post your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—on <http://www.regulations.gov>. If you provide personal identifying information in your comment, you may request at the top of your document that we withhold this information from public review. However, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Comments and materials we receive, as well as supporting documentation we used in preparing this proposed rule, will be available for public inspection on <http://www.regulations.gov>, or by appointment, during normal business hours, at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Migratory Bird Management, Room 4107, 4501 North Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203.

For each series of proposed rulemakings, we will establish specific comment periods. We will consider, but possibly may not respond in detail to, each comment. As in the past, we will summarize all comments received during the comment period and respond to them after the closing date in any final rules.

#### NEPA Consideration

NEPA considerations are covered by the programmatic document “Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement: Issuance of Annual Regulations Permitting the Sport Hunting of Migratory Birds (FSES 88–14),” filed with the Environmental Protection Agency on June 9, 1988. We published Notice of Availability in the **Federal Register** on June 16, 1988 (53 FR 22582). We published our Record of Decision on August 18, 1988 (53 FR 31341). In addition, an August 1985 environmental assessment entitled “Guidelines for Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations on Federal Indian Reservations and Ceded Lands” is available from the address indicated

#### under the caption **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

In a notice published in the September 8, 2005, **Federal Register** (70 FR 53376), we announced our intent to develop a new Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the migratory bird hunting program. Public scoping meetings were held in the spring of 2006, as detailed in a March 9, 2006, **Federal Register** (71 FR 12216). We have prepared a scoping report summarizing the scoping comments and scoping meetings. The report is available by either writing to the address indicated under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** or by viewing on our Web site at <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds>.

#### Endangered Species Act Consideration

Prior to issuance of the 2008–09 migratory game bird hunting regulations, we will comply with provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531–1543; hereinafter, the Act), to ensure that hunting is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any species designated as endangered or threatened, or modify or destroy its critical habitat, and is consistent with conservation programs for those species. Consultations under Section 7 of this Act may cause us to change proposals in this and future supplemental rulemaking documents.

#### Executive Order 12866

The Office of Management and Budget has determined that this rule is significant and has reviewed this rule under Executive Order 12866. OMB bases its determination upon the following four criteria:

(a) Whether the rule will have an annual effect of \$100 million or more on the economy or adversely affect an economic sector, productivity, jobs, the environment, or other units of the government.

(b) Whether the rule will create inconsistencies with other Federal agencies' actions.

(c) Whether the rule will materially affect entitlements, grants, user fees, loan programs, or the rights and obligations of their recipients.

(d) Whether the rule raises novel legal or policy issues.

#### Clarity of the Rule

We are required by Executive Orders 12866 and 12988 and by the Presidential Memorandum of June 1, 1998, to write all rules in plain language. This means that each rule we publish must:

(a) Be logically organized;

(b) Use the active voice to address readers directly;

(c) Use clear language rather than jargon;

(d) Be divided into short sections and sentences; and

(e) Use lists and tables wherever possible.

If you feel that we have not met these requirements, send us comments by one of the methods listed in the **ADDRESSES** section. To better help us revise the rule, your comments should be as specific as possible. For example, you should tell us the numbers of the sections or paragraphs that are unclearly written, which sections or sentences are too long, the sections where you feel lists or tables would be useful, etc.

#### Regulatory Flexibility Act

The regulations have a significant economic impact on substantial numbers of small entities under the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.). We analyzed the economic impacts of the annual hunting regulations on small business entities in detail as part of the 1981 cost-benefit analysis discussed under Executive Order 12866. This analysis was revised annually from 1990–95. In 1995, the Service issued a Small Entity Flexibility Analysis (Analysis), which was subsequently updated in 1996, 1998, 2004, and 2008. The primary source of information about hunter expenditures for migratory game bird hunting is the National Hunting and Fishing Survey, which is conducted at 5-year intervals. The 2008 Analysis was based on the 2006 National Hunting and Fishing Survey and the U.S. Department of Commerce's County Business Patterns, from which it was estimated that migratory bird hunters would spend approximately \$1.2 billion at small businesses in 2008. Copies of the Analysis are available upon request from the address indicated under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** or from our Web site at <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/reports/reports.html> or at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

#### Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act

This rule is a major rule under 5 U.S.C. 804(2), the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act. For the reasons outlined above, this rule has an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more. However, because this rule establishes hunting seasons, we do not plan to defer the effective date under the exemption contained in 5 U.S.C. 808(1).

### Paperwork Reduction Act

We examined these regulations under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*). The various recordkeeping and reporting requirements imposed under regulations established in 50 CFR part 20, Subpart K, are utilized in the formulation of migratory game bird hunting regulations. Specifically, OMB has approved the information collection requirements of our Migratory Bird Surveys and assigned control number 1018-0023 (expires 2/28/2011). This information is used to provide a sampling frame for voluntary national surveys to improve our harvest estimates for all migratory game birds in order to better manage these populations. OMB has also approved the information collection requirements of the Alaska Subsistence Household Survey, an associated voluntary annual household survey used to determine levels of subsistence take in Alaska, and assigned control number 1018-0124 (expires 1/31/2010). A Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

### Unfunded Mandates Reform Act

We have determined and certify, in compliance with the requirements of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, 2 U.S.C. 1502 *et seq.*, that this rulemaking will not impose a cost of \$100 million or more in any given year on local or State government or private entities. Therefore, this rule is not a "significant regulatory action" under the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

### Civil Justice Reform—Executive Order 12988

The Department, in promulgating this proposed rule, has determined that this proposed rule will not unduly burden the judicial system and that it meets the requirements of sections 3(a) and 3(b)(2) of Executive Order 12988.

### Takings Implication Assessment

In accordance with Executive Order 12630, this proposed rule, authorized by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, does not have significant takings implications and does not affect any constitutionally protected property rights. This rule will not result in the physical occupancy of property, the physical invasion of property, or the regulatory taking of any property. In fact, these rules allow hunters to exercise otherwise unavailable privileges and, therefore, reduce restrictions on the use of private and public property.

### Energy Effects—Executive Order 13211

On May 18, 2001, the President issued Executive Order 13211 on regulations that significantly affect energy supply, distribution, and use. Executive Order 13211 requires agencies to prepare Statements of Energy Effects when undertaking certain actions. While this proposed rule is a significant regulatory action under Executive Order 12866, it is not expected to adversely affect energy supplies, distribution, or use. Therefore, this action is not a significant energy action and no Statement of Energy Effects is required.

### Federalism Effects

Due to the migratory nature of certain species of birds, the Federal Government has been given responsibility over these species by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. We annually prescribe frameworks from which the States make selections regarding the hunting of migratory birds, and we employ guidelines to establish special regulations on Federal Indian reservations and ceded lands. This process preserves the ability of the States and tribes to determine which seasons meet their individual needs. Any State or Indian tribe may be more restrictive than the Federal frameworks at any time. The frameworks are developed in a cooperative process with the States and the Flyway Councils. This process allows States to participate in the development of frameworks from which they will make selections, thereby having an influence on their own regulations. These rules do not have a substantial direct effect on fiscal capacity, change the roles or responsibilities of Federal or State governments, or intrude on State policy or administration. Therefore, in accordance with Executive Order 13132, these regulations do not have significant federalism effects and do not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

### List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 20

Exports, Hunting, Imports, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Transportation, Wildlife.

The rules that eventually will be promulgated for the 2008-09 hunting season are authorized under 16 U.S.C. 703-712 and 16 U.S.C. 742 a-j.

Dated: July 14, 2008.

**Lyle Laverty,**

*Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.*

### Proposed Regulations Frameworks for 2008-09 Early Hunting Seasons on Certain Migratory Game Birds

Pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and delegated authorities, the Department of the Interior approved the following proposed frameworks, which prescribe season lengths, bag limits, shooting hours, and outside dates within which States may select hunting seasons for certain migratory game birds between September 1, 2008, and March 10, 2009.

#### General

Dates: All outside dates noted below are inclusive.

Shooting and Hawking (taking by falconry) Hours: Unless otherwise specified, from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset daily.

Possession Limits: Unless otherwise specified, possession limits are twice the daily bag limit.

#### Flyways and Management Units

##### *Waterfowl Flyways:*

Atlantic Flyway—includes Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Mississippi Flyway—includes Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin.

Central Flyway—includes Colorado (east of the Continental Divide), Kansas, Montana (Counties of Blaine, Carbon, Fergus, Judith Basin, Stillwater, Sweetgrass, Wheatland, and all counties east thereof), Nebraska, New Mexico (east of the Continental Divide except the Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation), North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming (east of the Continental Divide).

Pacific Flyway—includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and those portions of Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, and Wyoming not included in the Central Flyway.

#### Management Units

##### *Mourning Dove Management Units:*

Eastern Management Unit—All States east of the Mississippi River, and Louisiana.

Central Management Unit—Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota,

Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming.

Western Management Unit—Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington.

#### *Woodcock Management Regions*

Eastern Management Region—Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Central Management Region—Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin.

Other geographic descriptions are contained in a later portion of this document.

#### **Definitions**

*Dark geese:* Canada geese, white-fronted geese, brant (except in Alaska, California, Oregon, Washington, and the Atlantic Flyway), and all other goose species except light geese.

*Light geese:* snow (including blue) geese and Ross' geese.

#### **Waterfowl Seasons in the Atlantic Flyway**

In the Atlantic Flyway States of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, where Sunday hunting is prohibited statewide by State law, all Sundays are closed to all take of migratory waterfowl (including mergansers and coots).

#### **Special September Teal Season**

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and September 30, an open season on all species of teal may be selected by the following States in areas delineated by State regulations:

*Atlantic Flyway*—Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia.

*Mississippi Flyway*—Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, and Tennessee.

*Central Flyway*—Colorado (part), Kansas, Nebraska (part), New Mexico (part), Oklahoma, and Texas.

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Not to exceed 9 consecutive days in the Atlantic Flyway and 16 consecutive days in the Mississippi and Central Flyways. The daily bag limit is 4 teal.

#### **Shooting Hours:**

*Atlantic Flyway*—One-half hour before sunrise to sunset except in Maryland, where the hours are from sunrise to sunset.

*Mississippi and Central Flyways*—One-half hour before sunrise to sunset, except in the States of Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, and Ohio, where the hours are from sunrise to sunset.

#### **Special September Duck Seasons**

Florida, Kentucky and Tennessee: In lieu of a special September teal season, a 5-consecutive-day season may be selected in September. The daily bag limit may not exceed 4 teal and wood ducks in the aggregate, of which no more than 2 may be wood ducks.

Iowa: Iowa may hold up to 5 days of its regular duck hunting season in September. All ducks that are legal during the regular duck season may be taken during the September segment of the season. The September season segment may commence no earlier than the Saturday nearest September 20 (September 20). The daily bag and possession limits will be the same as those in effect last year, but are subject to change during the late-season regulations process. The remainder of the regular duck season may not begin before October 10.

#### **Special Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days**

Outside Dates: States may select two consecutive days (hunting days in Atlantic Flyway States with compensatory days) per duck-hunting zone, designated as "Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days," in addition to their regular duck seasons. The days must be held outside any regular duck season on a weekend, holidays, or other non-school days when youth hunters would have the maximum opportunity to participate. The days may be held up to 14 days before or after any regular duck-season frameworks or within any split of a regular duck season, or within any other open season on migratory birds.

Daily Bag Limits: The daily bag limits may include ducks, geese, mergansers, coots, moorhens, and gallinules and would be the same as those allowed in the regular season. Flyway species and area restrictions would remain in effect.

Shooting Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

Participation Restrictions: Youth hunters must be 15 years of age or younger. In addition, an adult at least 18 years of age must accompany the youth hunter into the field. This adult may not duck hunt but may participate in other seasons that are open on the special youth day.

#### **Scoter, Eider, and Long-tailed Ducks (Atlantic Flyway)**

Outside Dates: Between September 15 and January 31.

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Not to exceed 107 days, with a daily bag limit of 7, singly or in the aggregate, of the listed sea-duck species, of which no more than 4 may be scoters.

Daily Bag Limits During the Regular Duck Season: Within the special sea duck areas, during the regular duck season in the Atlantic Flyway, States may choose to allow the above sea duck limits in addition to the limits applying to other ducks during the regular duck season. In all other areas, sea ducks may be taken only during the regular open season for ducks and are part of the regular duck season daily bag (not to exceed 4 scoters) and possession limits.

Areas: In all coastal waters and all waters of rivers and streams seaward from the first upstream bridge in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York; in any waters of the Atlantic Ocean and in any tidal waters of any bay which are separated by at least 1 mile of open water from any shore, island, and emergent vegetation in New Jersey, South Carolina, and Georgia; and in any waters of the Atlantic Ocean and in any tidal waters of any bay which are separated by at least 800 yards of open water from any shore, island, and emergent vegetation in Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, and Virginia; and provided that any such areas have been described, delineated, and designated as special sea-duck hunting areas under the hunting regulations adopted by the respective States.

#### **Special Early Canada Goose Seasons Atlantic Flyway**

##### **General Seasons**

Canada goose seasons of up to 15 days during September 1–15 may be selected for the Eastern Unit of Maryland and Delaware. Seasons not to exceed 25 days during September 1–25 may be selected for the Montezuma Region of New York and the Lake Champlain Region of New York and Vermont. Seasons not to exceed 30 days during September 1–30 may be selected for Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, New Jersey, New York (Long Island Zone), North Carolina, Rhode Island, and South Carolina. Seasons may not exceed 25 days during September 1–25 in the remainder of the Flyway. Areas open to the hunting of Canada geese must be described, delineated, and designated as such in each State's hunting regulations.

Daily Bag Limits: Not to exceed 15 Canada geese.

**Experimental Seasons**

Canada goose seasons of up to 10 days during September 16–25 may be selected in Delaware. The daily bag limit may not exceed 15 Canada geese. Areas open to the hunting of Canada geese must be described, delineated, and designated as such in each State's hunting regulations.

**Shooting Hours:** One-half hour before sunrise to sunset, except that during any general season, shooting hours may extend to one-half hour after sunset if all other waterfowl seasons are closed in the specific applicable area.

**Mississippi Flyway****General Seasons**

Canada goose seasons of up to 15 days during September 1–15 may be selected, except in the Upper Peninsula in Michigan, where the season may not extend beyond September 10, and in Minnesota (except in the Northwest Goose Zone), where a season of up to 22 days during September 1–22 may be selected. The daily bag limit may not exceed 5 Canada geese. Areas open to the hunting of Canada geese must be described, delineated, and designated as such in each State's hunting regulations.

A Canada goose season of up to 10 consecutive days during September 1–10 may be selected by Michigan for Huron, Saginaw, and Tuscola Counties, except that the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, Shiawassee River State Game Area Refuge, and the Fish Point Wildlife Area Refuge will remain closed. The daily bag limit may not exceed 5 Canada geese.

**General Seasons****Experimental Seasons**

Canada goose seasons of up to 7 days during September 16–22 may be selected in the Northwest Goose Zone in Minnesota. The daily bag limit may not exceed 5 Canada geese. Areas open to the hunting of Canada geese must be described, delineated, and designated as such in each State's hunting regulations.

**Shooting Hours:** One-half hour before sunrise to sunset, except that during September 1–15 shooting hours may extend to one-half hour after sunset if all other waterfowl seasons are closed in the specific applicable area.

**Central Flyway****General Seasons**

In Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Texas, Canada goose seasons of up to 30 days during September 1–30 may be selected. In Colorado, New Mexico, North Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming, Canada goose

seasons of up to 15 days during September 1–15 may be selected. The daily bag limit may not exceed 5 Canada geese. Areas open to the hunting of Canada geese must be described, delineated, and designated as such in each State's hunting regulations.

**Shooting Hours:** One-half hour before sunrise to sunset, except that during September 1–15 shooting hours may extend to one-half hour after sunset if all other waterfowl seasons are closed in the specific applicable area.

**Pacific Flyway****General Seasons**

California may select a 9-day season in Humboldt County during the period September 1–15. The daily bag limit is 2.

Colorado may select a 9-day season during the period of September 1–15. The daily bag limit is 3.

Oregon may select a special Canada goose season of up to 15 days during the period September 1–15. In addition, in the NW goose management zone in Oregon, a 15-day season may be selected during the period September 1–20. Daily bag limits may not exceed 5 Canada geese.

Idaho may select a 7-day season during the period September 1–15. The daily bag limit is 2 and the possession limit is 4.

Washington may select a special Canada goose season of up to 15 days during the period September 1–15. Daily bag limits may not exceed 5 Canada geese.

Wyoming may select an 8-day season on Canada geese between September 1–15. This season is subject to the following conditions:

1. Where applicable, the season must be concurrent with the September portion of the sandhill crane season.
2. A daily bag limit of 2, with season and possession limits of 4, will apply to the special season.

Areas open to hunting of Canada geese in each State must be described, delineated, and designated as such in each State's hunting regulations.

**Regular Goose Seasons**

Regular goose seasons may open as early as September 16 in Wisconsin and Michigan. Season lengths, bag and possession limits, and other provisions will be established during the late-season regulations process.

**Sandhill Cranes**

**Regular Seasons in the Central Flyway:**

**Outside Dates:** Between September 1 and February 28.

**Hunting Seasons:** Seasons not to exceed 37 consecutive days may be selected in designated portions of North Dakota (Area 2) and Texas (Area 2). Seasons not to exceed 58 consecutive days may be selected in designated portions of the following States: Colorado, Kansas, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Seasons not to exceed 93 consecutive days may be selected in designated portions of the following States: New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.

**Daily Bag Limits:** 3 sandhill cranes, except 2 sandhill cranes in designated portions of North Dakota (Area 2) and Texas (Area 2).

**Permits:** Each person participating in the regular sandhill crane seasons must have a valid Federal sandhill crane hunting permit and/or, in those States where a Federal sandhill crane permit is not issued, a State-issued Harvest Information Survey Program (HIP) certification for game bird hunting in their possession while hunting.

**Special Seasons in the Central and Pacific Flyways:**

Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming may select seasons for hunting sandhill cranes within the range of the Rocky Mountain Population (RMP) subject to the following conditions:

**Outside Dates:** Between September 1 and January 31.

**Hunting Seasons:** The season in any State or zone may not exceed 30 days.

**Bag Limits:** Not to exceed 3 daily and 9 per season.

**Permits:** Participants must have a valid permit, issued by the appropriate State, in their possession while hunting.

**Other Provisions:** Numbers of permits, open areas, season dates, protection plans for other species, and other provisions of seasons must be consistent with the management plan and approved by the Central and Pacific Flyway Councils, with the following exceptions:

1. In Utah, 100 percent of the harvest will be assigned to the RMP quota;
2. In Arizona, monitoring the racial composition of the harvest must be conducted at 3-year intervals;
3. In Idaho, 100 percent of the harvest will be assigned to the RMP quota; and
4. In New Mexico, the season in the Estancia Valley is experimental, with a requirement to monitor the level and racial composition of the harvest; greater sandhill cranes in the harvest will be assigned to the RMP quota.

**Special Seasons in the Pacific Flyway:**

Arizona may select a season for hunting sandhill cranes within the range of the Lower Colorado River

Population (LCR) of sandhill cranes, subject to the following conditions:

Outside Dates: Between January 1 and January 31.

Hunting Seasons: The season may not exceed 3 days.

Bag Limits: Not to exceed 1 daily and 1 per season.

Permits: Participants must have a valid permit, issued by the appropriate State, in their possession while hunting.

Other Provisions: The season is experimental. Numbers of permits, open areas, season dates, protection plans for other species, and other provisions of seasons must be consistent with the management plan and approved by the Pacific Flyway Council.

#### **Common Moorhens and Purple Gallinules**

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and the last Sunday in January (January 25) in the Atlantic, Mississippi and Central Flyways. States in the Pacific Flyway have been allowed to select their hunting seasons between the outside dates for the season on ducks; therefore, they are late-season frameworks, and no frameworks are provided in this document.

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Seasons may not exceed 70 days in the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyways. Seasons may be split into 2 segments. The daily bag limit is 15 common moorhens and purple gallinules, singly or in the aggregate of the two species.

Zoning: Seasons may be selected by zones established for duck hunting.

#### **Rails**

Outside Dates: States included herein may select seasons between September 1 and the last Sunday in January (January 25) on clapper, king, sora, and Virginia rails.

Hunting Seasons: The season may not exceed 70 days, and may be split into 2 segments.

#### **Daily Bag Limits**

Clapper and King Rails—In Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland, 10, singly or in the aggregate of the 2 species. In Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia, 15, singly or in the aggregate of the two species.

Sora and Virginia Rails—In the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyways and the Pacific-Flyway portions of Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, and Wyoming, 25 daily and 25 in possession, singly or in the aggregate of the two species. The season is closed in the remainder of the Pacific Flyway.

#### **Common Snipe**

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and February 28, except in Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, where the season must end no later than January 31.

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Seasons may not exceed 107 days and may be split into two segments. The daily bag limit is 8 snipe.

Zoning: Seasons may be selected by zones established for duck hunting.

#### **American Woodcock**

Outside Dates: States in the Eastern Management Region may select hunting seasons between October 1 and January 31. States in the Central Management Region may select hunting seasons between the Saturday nearest September 22 (September 20) and January 31.

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Seasons may not exceed 30 days in the Eastern Region and 45 days in the Central Region. The daily bag limit is 3. Seasons may be split into two segments.

Zoning: New Jersey may select seasons in each of two zones. The season in each zone may not exceed 24 days.

#### **Band-tailed Pigeons**

#### **Pacific Coast States (California, Oregon, Washington, and Nevada)**

Outside Dates: Between September 15 and January 1.

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Not more than 9 consecutive days, with a daily bag limit of 2 band-tailed pigeons.

Zoning: California may select hunting seasons not to exceed 9 consecutive days in each of two zones. The season in the North Zone must close by October 3.

#### **Four-Corners States (Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah)**

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and November 30.

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Not more than 30 consecutive days, with a daily bag limit of 5 band-tailed pigeons.

Zoning: New Mexico may select hunting seasons not to exceed 20 consecutive days in each of two zones. The season in the South Zone may not open until October 1.

#### **Mourning Doves**

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and January 15, except as otherwise provided, States may select hunting seasons and daily bag limits as follows:

#### **Eastern Management Unit**

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Not more than 70 days with a daily bag limit of 15 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate.

Zoning and Split Seasons: States may select hunting seasons in each of two zones. The season within each zone may be split into not more than three periods. Regulations for bag and possession limits, season length, and shooting hours must be uniform within specific hunting zones.

#### **Central Management Unit**

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Not more than 70 days with a daily bag limit of 12 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate, or not more than 60 days with a bag limit of 15 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate.

Zoning and Split Seasons: States may select hunting seasons in each of two zones. The season within each zone may be split into not more than three periods.

Texas may select hunting seasons for each of three zones subject to the following conditions:

A. The hunting season may be split into not more than two periods, except in that portion of Texas in which the special white-winged dove season is allowed, where a limited mourning dove season may be held concurrently with that special season (see white-winged dove frameworks).

B. A season may be selected for the North and Central Zones between September 1 and January 25; and for the South Zone between September 20 and January 25.

C. Daily bag limits are aggregate bag limits with mourning, white-winged, and white-tipped doves (see white-winged dove frameworks for specific daily bag limit restrictions).

D. Except as noted above, regulations for bag and possession limits, season length, and shooting hours must be uniform within each hunting zone.

#### **Western Management Unit**

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits:

Idaho, Oregon, and Washington—Not more than 30 consecutive days with a daily bag limit of 10 mourning doves.

Utah—Not more than 30 consecutive days with a daily bag limit that may not exceed 10 mourning doves and white-winged doves in the aggregate.

Nevada—Not more than 30 consecutive days with a daily bag limit of 10 mourning doves, except in Clark and Nye Counties, where the daily bag limit may not exceed 10 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate.

Arizona and California—Not more than 60 days, which may be split between two periods, September 1–15 and November 1–January 15. In Arizona, during the first segment of the season, the daily bag limit is 10 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate, of which no more than 6 may be white-winged doves. During the remainder of the season, the daily bag limit is 10 mourning doves. In California, the daily bag limit is 10 mourning doves, except in Imperial, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties, where the daily bag limit may not exceed 10 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate.

#### White-winged and White-tipped Doves

**Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits:** Except as shown below, seasons must be concurrent with mourning dove seasons.

**Eastern Management Unit:** The daily bag limit may not exceed 15 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate.

#### Central Management Unit

In Texas, the daily bag limit may not exceed 12 mourning, white-winged, and white-tipped doves (15 under the alternative) in the aggregate, of which no more than 2 may be white-tipped doves. In addition, Texas also may select a hunting season of not more than 4 days for the special white-winged dove area of the South Zone between September 1 and September 19. The daily bag limit may not exceed 12 white-winged, mourning, and white-tipped doves in the aggregate, of which no more than 4 may be mourning doves and 2 may be white-tipped doves.

In the remainder of the Central Management Unit, the daily bag limit may not exceed 12 (15 under the alternative) mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate.

#### Western Management Unit

Arizona may select a hunting season of not more than 30 consecutive days, running concurrently with the first segment of the mourning dove season. The daily bag limit may not exceed 10 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate, of which no more than 6 may be white-winged doves.

In Utah, the Nevada Counties of Clark and Nye, and in the California Counties of Imperial, Riverside, and San Bernardino, the daily bag limit may not exceed 10 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate.

In the remainder of the Western Management Unit, the season is closed.

#### Alaska

**Outside Dates:** Between September 1 and January 26.

**Hunting Seasons:** Alaska may select 107 consecutive days for waterfowl, sandhill cranes, and common snipe in each of 5 zones. The season may be split without penalty in the Kodiak Zone. The seasons in each zone must be concurrent.

**Closures:** The hunting season is closed on emperor geese, spectacled eiders, and Steller's eiders.

#### Daily Bag and Possession Limits

**Ducks—**Except as noted, a basic daily bag limit of 7 and a possession limit of 21 ducks. Daily bag and possession limits in the North Zone are 10 and 30, and in the Gulf Coast Zone, they are 8 and 24. The basic limits may include no more than 1 canvasback daily and 3 in possession and may not include sea ducks.

In addition to the basic duck limits, Alaska may select sea duck limits of 10 daily, 20 in possession, singly or in the aggregate, including no more than 6 each of either harlequin or long-tailed ducks. Sea ducks include scoters, common and king eiders, harlequin ducks, long-tailed ducks, and common and red-breasted mergansers.

**Light Geese—**A basic daily bag limit of 4 and a possession limit of 8.

**Dark Geese—**A basic daily bag limit of 4 and a possession limit of 8.

Dark-geese seasons are subject to the following exceptions:

1. In Units 5 and 6, the taking of Canada geese is permitted from September 28 through December 16.

2. On Middleton Island in Unit 6, a special, permit-only Canada goose season may be offered. No more than 10 permits can be issued. A mandatory goose identification class is required. Hunters must check in and check out. The bag limit is 1 daily and 1 in possession. The season will close if incidental harvest includes 5 dusky Canada geese. A dusky Canada goose is any dark-breasted Canada goose (Munsell 10 YR color value five or less) with a bill length between 40 and 50 millimeters.

3. In Units 9, 10, 17 and 18, dark goose limits are 6 per day, 12 in possession; however, no more than 2 may be Canada geese in Units 9(E) and 18; and no more than 4 may be Canada geese in Units 9(A–C), 10 (Unimak Island portion), and 17.

**Brant—**A daily bag limit of 3 and a possession limit of 6.

**Common snipe—**A daily bag limit of 8.

**Sandhill cranes—**Bag and possession limits of 2 and 4, respectively, in the

Southeast, Gulf Coast, Kodiak, and Aleutian Zones, and Unit 17 in the Northern Zone. In the remainder of the Northern Zone (outside Unit 17), bag and possession limits of 3 and 6, respectively.

**Tundra Swans—**Open seasons for tundra swans may be selected subject to the following conditions:

1. All seasons are by registration permit only.

2. All season framework dates are September 1–October 31.

3. In Game Management Unit (GMU) 17, no more than 200 permits may be issued during this operational season. No more than 3 tundra swans may be authorized per permit with no more than 1 permit issued per hunter per season.

4. In Game Management Unit (GMU) 18, no more than 500 permits may be issued during the operational season. Up to 3 tundra swans may be authorized per permit. No more than 1 permit may be issued per hunter per season.

5. In GMU 22, no more than 300 permits may be issued during the operational season. Each permittee may be authorized to take up to 3 tundra swan per permit. No more than 1 permit may be issued per hunter per season.

6. In GMU 23, no more than 300 permits may be issued during the operational season. No more than 3 tundra swans may be authorized per permit with no more than 1 permit issued per hunter per season.

#### Hawaii

**Outside Dates:** Between October 1 and January 31.

**Hunting Seasons:** Not more than 65 days (75 under the alternative) for mourning doves.

**Bag Limits:** Not to exceed 15 (12 under the alternative) mourning doves.

**Note:** Mourning doves may be taken in Hawaii in accordance with shooting hours and other regulations set by the State of Hawaii, and subject to the applicable provisions of 50 CFR part 20.

#### Puerto Rico

##### Doves and Pigeons

**Outside Dates:** Between September 1 and January 15.

**Hunting Seasons:** Not more than 60 days.

**Daily Bag and Possession Limits:** Not to exceed 20 Zenaida, mourning, and white-winged doves in the aggregate, of which not more than 10 may be Zenaida doves and 3 may be mourning doves. Not to exceed 5 scaly-naped pigeons.

**Closed Seasons:** The season is closed on the white-crowned pigeon and the plain pigeon, which are protected by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

**Closed Areas:** There is no open season on doves or pigeons in the following areas: Municipality of Culebra, Desecheo Island, Mona Island, El Verde Closure Area, and Cidra Municipality and adjacent areas.

**Ducks, Coots, Moorhens, Gallinules, and Snipe**

**Outside Dates:** Between October 1 and January 31.

**Hunting Seasons:** Not more than 55 days may be selected for hunting ducks, common moorhens, and common snipe. The season may be split into two segments.

**Daily Bag Limits**

Ducks—Not to exceed 6.

Common moorhens—Not to exceed 6.

Common snipe—Not to exceed 8.

**Closed Seasons:** The season is closed on the ruddy duck, white-cheeked pintail, West Indian whistling duck, fulvous whistling duck, and masked duck, which are protected by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The season also is closed on the purple gallinule, American coot, and Caribbean coot.

**Closed Areas:** There is no open season on ducks, common moorhens, and common snipe in the Municipality of Culebra and on Desecheo Island.

### Virgin Islands

**Doves and Pigeons**

**Outside Dates:** Between September 1 and January 15.

**Hunting Seasons:** Not more than 60 days for Zenaida doves.

**Daily Bag and Possession Limits:** Not to exceed 10 Zenaida doves.

**Closed Seasons:** No open season is prescribed for ground or quail doves, or pigeons in the Virgin Islands.

**Closed Areas:** There is no open season for migratory game birds on Ruth Cay (just south of St. Croix).

**Local Names for Certain Birds:** Zenaida dove, also known as mountain dove; bridled quail-dove, also known as Barbary dove or partridge; Common ground-dove, also known as stone dove, tobacco dove, rola, or tortolita; scaly-naped pigeon, also known as red-necked or scaled pigeon.

**Ducks**

**Outside Dates:** Between December 1 and January 31.

**Hunting Seasons:** Not more than 55 consecutive days.

**Daily Bag Limits:** Not to exceed 6.

**Closed Seasons:** The season is closed on the ruddy duck, white-cheeked pintail, West Indian whistling duck, fulvous whistling duck, and masked duck.

### Special Falconry Regulations

Falconry is a permitted means of taking migratory game birds in any State meeting Federal falconry standards in 50 CFR 21.29(k). These States may select an extended season for taking migratory game birds in accordance with the following:

**Extended Seasons:** For all hunting methods combined, the combined length of the extended season, regular season, and any special or experimental seasons must not exceed 107 days for any species or group of species in a geographical area. Each extended season may be divided into a maximum of 3 segments.

**Framework Dates:** Seasons must fall between September 1 and March 10.

**Daily Bag and Possession Limits:** Falconry daily bag and possession limits for all permitted migratory game birds must not exceed 3 and 6 birds, respectively, singly or in the aggregate, during extended falconry seasons, any special or experimental seasons, and regular hunting seasons in all States, including those that do not select an extended falconry season.

**Regular Seasons:** General hunting regulations, including seasons and hunting hours, apply to falconry in each State listed in 50 CFR 21.29(k). Regular-season bag and possession limits do not apply to falconry. The falconry bag limit is not in addition to gun limits.

### Area, Unit, and Zone Descriptions

#### Mourning and White-winged Doves

##### Alabama

**South Zone—**Baldwin, Barbour, Coffee, Covington, Dale, Escambia, Geneva, Henry, Houston, and Mobile Counties.

**North Zone—**Remainder of the State.

##### California

**White-winged Dove Open Areas—**Imperial, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties.

##### Florida

**Northwest Zone—**The Counties of Bay, Calhoun, Escambia, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton, Washington, Leon (except that portion north of U.S. 27 and east of State Road 155), Jefferson (south of U.S. 27, west of State Road 59 and north of U.S. 98), and Wakulla (except that portion south of U.S. 98 and east of the St. Marks River).

**South Zone—**Remainder of State.

##### Louisiana

**North Zone—**That portion of the State north of a line extending east from the Texas border along State Highway 12 to

U.S. Highway 190, east along U.S. 190 to Interstate Highway 12, east along Interstate 12 to Interstate Highway 10, then east along Interstate 10 to the Mississippi border.

**South Zone—**The remainder of the State.

##### Mississippi

**North Zone—**That portion of the State north and west of a line extending west from the Alabama State line along U.S. Highway 84 to its junction with State Highway 35, then south along State Highway 35 to the Louisiana State line.

**South Zone—**The remainder of Mississippi.

##### Nevada

**White-winged Dove Open Areas—**Clark and Nye Counties.

##### Oklahoma

**North Zone—**That portion of the State north of a line extending east from the Texas border along U.S. Highway 62 to Interstate 44, east along Oklahoma State Highway 7 to U.S. Highway 81, then south along U.S. Highway 81 to the Texas border at the Red River.

**Southwest Zone—**The remainder of Oklahoma.

##### Texas

**North Zone—**That portion of the State north of a line beginning at the International Bridge south of Fort Hancock; north along FM 1088 to TX 20; west along TX 20 to TX 148; north along TX 148 to I-10 at Fort Hancock; east along I-10 to I-20; northeast along I-20 to I-30 at Fort Worth; northeast along I-30 to the Texas-Arkansas State line.

**South Zone—**That portion of the State south and west of a line beginning at the International Bridge south of Del Rio, proceeding east on U.S. 90 to State Loop 1604 west of San Antonio; then south, east, and north along Loop 1604 to Interstate Highway 10 east of San Antonio; then east on I-10 to Orange, Texas.

**Special White-winged Dove Area in the South Zone—**That portion of the State south and west of a line beginning at the International Bridge south of Del Rio, proceeding east on U.S. 90 to State Loop 1604 west of San Antonio, southeast on State Loop 1604 to Interstate Highway 35, southwest on Interstate Highway 35 to TX 44; east along TX 44 to TX 16 at Freer; south along TX 16 to TX 285 at Hebbronville; east along TX 285 to FM 1017; southwest along FM 1017 to TX 186 at Linn; east along TX 186 to the Mansfield Channel at Port Mansfield; east along the Mansfield Channel to the Gulf of Mexico.



Area with additional restrictions—Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy Counties.

Central Zone—That portion of the State lying between the North and South Zones.

### **Band-tailed Pigeons**

#### **California**

North Zone—Alpine, Butte, Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Trinity Counties.

South Zone—The remainder of the State.

#### **New Mexico**

North Zone—North of a line following U.S. 60 from the Arizona State line east to I-25 at Socorro and then south along I-25 from Socorro to the Texas State line.

South Zone—Remainder of the State.

#### **Washington**

Western Washington—The State of Washington excluding those portions lying east of the Pacific Crest Trail and east of the Big White Salmon River in Klickitat County.

#### **Woodcock**

#### **New Jersey**

North Zone—That portion of the State north of NJ 70.

South Zone—The remainder of the State.

### **Special September Canada Goose Seasons**

#### **Atlantic Flyway**

#### **Connecticut**

North Zone—That portion of the State north of I-95.

South Zone—Remainder of the State.

#### **Maryland**

Eastern Unit—Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Kent, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties; and that part of Anne Arundel County east of Interstate 895, Interstate 97 and Route 3; that part of Prince George's County east of Route 3 and Route 301; and that part of Charles County east of Route 301 to the Virginia State line.

Western Unit—Allegany, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Garrett, Howard, Montgomery, and Washington Counties and that part of Anne Arundel County west of Interstate 895, Interstate 97 and Route 3; that part of Prince George's County west of Route 3 and Route 301; and that part of Charles County west of Route 301 to the Virginia State line.

#### **Massachusetts**

Western Zone—That portion of the State west of a line extending south from the Vermont border on I-91 to MA 9, west on MA 9 to MA 10, south on MA 10 to U.S. 202, south on U.S. 202 to the Connecticut border.

Central Zone—That portion of the State east of the Berkshire Zone and west of a line extending south from the New Hampshire border on I-95 to U.S. 1, south on U.S. 1 to I-93, south on I-93 to MA 3, south on MA 3 to U.S. 6, west on U.S. 6 to MA 28, west on MA 28 to I-195, west to the Rhode Island border; except the waters, and the lands 150 yards inland from the high-water mark, of the Assonet River upstream to the MA 24 bridge, and the Taunton River upstream to the Center St.—Elm St. bridge will be in the Coastal Zone.

Coastal Zone—That portion of Massachusetts east and south of the Central Zone.

#### **New York**

Lake Champlain Zone—The U.S. portion of Lake Champlain and that area east and north of a line extending along NY 9B from the Canadian border to U.S. 9, south along U.S. 9 to NY 22 south of Keesville; south along NY 22 to the west shore of South Bay, along and around the shoreline of South Bay to NY 22 on the east shore of South Bay; southeast along NY 22 to U.S. 4, northeast along U.S. 4 to the Vermont border.

Long Island Zone—That area consisting of Nassau County, Suffolk County, that area of Westchester County southeast of I-95, and their tidal waters.

Western Zone—That area west of a line extending from Lake Ontario east along the north shore of the Salmon River to I-81, and south along I-81 to the Pennsylvania border, except for the Montezuma Zone.

Montezuma Zone—Those portions of Cayuga, Seneca, Ontario, Wayne, and Oswego Counties north of U.S. Route 20, east of NYS Route 14, south of NYS Route 104, and west of NYS Route 34.

Northeastern Zone—That area north of a line extending from Lake Ontario east along the north shore of the Salmon River to I-81, south along I-81 to NY 49, east along NY 49 to NY 365, east along NY 365 to NY 28, east along NY 28 to NY 29, east along NY 29 to I-87, north along I-87 to U.S. 9 (at Exit 20), north along U.S. 9 to NY 149, east along NY 149 to U.S. 4, north along U.S. 4 to the Vermont border, exclusive of the Lake Champlain Zone.

Southeastern Zone—The remaining portion of New York.

#### **North Carolina**

Northeast Hunt Unit—Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Hyde, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, and Washington Counties; that portion of Bertie County north and east of a line formed by NC 45 at the Washington County line to US 17 in Midway, US 17 in Midway to US 13 in Windsor to the Hertford County line; and that portion of Northampton County that is north of US 158 and east of NC 35.

#### **Vermont**

Lake Champlain Zone: The U.S. portion of Lake Champlain and that area north and west of the line extending from the New York border along U.S. 4 to VT 22A at Fair Haven; VT 22A to U.S. 7 at Vergennes; U.S. 7 to the Canadian border.

Interior Zone: That portion of Vermont west of the Lake Champlain Zone and eastward of a line extending from the Massachusetts border at Interstate 91; north along Interstate 91 to US 2; east along US 2 to VT 102; north along VT 102 to VT 253; north along VT 253 to the Canadian border.

Connecticut River Zone: The remaining portion of Vermont east of the Interior Zone.

#### **Mississippi Flyway**

#### **Arkansas**

Early Canada Goose Area: Baxter, Benton, Boone, Carroll, Clark, Conway, Crawford, Faulkner, Franklin, Garland, Hempstead, Hot Springs, Howard, Johnson, Lafayette, Little River, Logan, Madison, Marion, Miller, Montgomery, Newton, Perry, Pike, Polk, Pope, Pulaski, Saline, Searcy, Sebastian, Sevier, Scott, Van Buren, Washington, and Yell Counties.

#### **Illinois**

Northeast Canada Goose Zone—Cook, Du Page, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will Counties.

North Zone: That portion of the State outside the Northeast Canada Goose Zone and north of a line extending west from the Indiana border along Peotone-Beecher Road to Illinois Route 50, south along Illinois Route 50 to Wilmington-Peotone Road, west along Wilmington-Peotone Road to Illinois Route 53, north along Illinois Route 53 to New River Road, northwest along New River Road to Interstate Highway 55, south along I-55 to Pine Bluff-Lorenzo Road, west along Pine Bluff-Lorenzo Road to Illinois Route 47, north along Illinois Route 47 to I-80, west along I-80 to I-39, south along I-39 to Illinois Route 18, west along Illinois Route 18 to

Illinois Route 29, south along Illinois Route 29 to Illinois Route 17, west along Illinois Route 17 to the Mississippi River, and due south across the Mississippi River to the Iowa border.

**Central Zone:** That portion of the State outside the Northeast Canada Goose Zone and south of the North Zone to a line extending west from the Indiana border along Interstate Highway 70 to Illinois Route 4, south along Illinois Route 4 to Illinois Route 161, west along Illinois Route 161 to Illinois Route 158, south and west along Illinois Route 158 to Illinois Route 159, south along Illinois Route 159 to Illinois Route 156, west along Illinois Route 156 to A Road, north and west on A Road to Levee Road, north on Levee Road to the south shore of New Fountain Creek, west along the south shore of New Fountain Creek to the Mississippi River, and due west across the Mississippi River to the Missouri border.

**South Zone:** The remainder of Illinois.

## Iowa

**North Zone:** That portion of the State north of U.S. Highway 20.

**South Zone:** The remainder of Iowa.

**Cedar Rapids/Iowa City Goose Zone.** Includes portions of Linn and Johnson Counties bounded as follows: Beginning at the intersection of the west border of Linn County and Linn County Road E2W; thence south and east along County Road E2W to Highway 920; thence north along Highway 920 to County Road E16; thence east along County Road E16 to County Road W58; thence south along County Road W58 to County Road E34; thence east along County Road E34 to Highway 13; thence south along Highway 13 to Highway 30; thence east along Highway 30 to Highway 1; thence south along Highway 1 to Morse Road in Johnson County; thence east along Morse Road to Wapsi Avenue; thence south along Wapsi Avenue to Lower West Branch Road; thence west along Lower West Branch Road to Taft Avenue; thence south along Taft Avenue to County Road F62; thence west along County Road F62 to Kansas Avenue; thence north along Kansas Avenue to Black Diamond Road; thence west on Black Diamond Road to Jasper Avenue; thence north along Jasper Avenue to Rohert Road; thence west along Rohert Road to Ivy Avenue; thence north along Ivy Avenue to 340th Street; thence west along 340th Street to Half Moon Avenue; thence north along Half Moon Avenue to Highway 6; thence west along Highway 6 to Echo Avenue; thence north along Echo Avenue to 250th Street; thence east on 250th Street to Green Castle Avenue; thence north along Green Castle Avenue

to County Road F12; thence west along County Road F12 to County Road W30; thence north along County Road W30 to Highway 151; thence north along the Linn-Benton County line to the point of beginning.

**Des Moines Goose Zone.** Includes those portions of Polk, Warren, Madison and Dallas Counties bounded as follows: Beginning at the intersection of Northwest 158th Avenue and County Road R38 in Polk County; thence south along R38 to Northwest 142nd Avenue; thence east along Northwest 142nd Avenue to Northeast 126th Avenue; thence east along Northeast 126th Avenue to Northeast 46th Street; thence south along Northeast 46th Street to Highway 931; thence east along Highway 931 to Northeast 80th Street; thence south along Northeast 80th Street to Southeast 6th Avenue; thence west along Southeast 6th Avenue to Highway 65; thence south and west along Highway 65 to Highway 69 in Warren County; thence south along Highway 69 to County Road G24; thence west along County Road G24 to Highway 28; thence southwest along Highway 28 to 43rd Avenue; thence north along 43rd Avenue to Ford Street; thence west along Ford Street to Filmore Street; thence west along Filmore Street to 10th Avenue; thence south along 10th Avenue to 155th Street in Madison County; thence west along 155th Street to Cumming Road; thence north along Cumming Road to Badger Creek Avenue; thence north along Badger Creek Avenue to County Road F90 in Dallas County; thence east along County Road F90 to County Road R22; thence north along County Road R22 to Highway 44; thence east along Highway 44 to County Road R30; thence north along County Road R30 to County Road F31; thence east along County Road F31 to Highway 17; thence north along Highway 17 to Highway 415 in Polk County; thence east along Highway 415 to Northwest 158th Avenue; thence east along Northwest 158th Avenue to the point of beginning.

## Minnesota

**Twin Cities Metropolitan Canada Goose Zone—**

**A.** All of Hennepin and Ramsey Counties.

**B.** In Anoka County, all of Columbus Township lying south of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 18, Anoka County; all of the cities of Ramsey, Andover, Anoka, Coon Rapids, Spring Lake Park, Fridley, Hilltop, Columbia Heights, Blaine, Lexington, Circle Pines, Lino Lakes, and Centerville; and all of the city of Ham Lake except that portion

lying north of CSAH 18 and east of U.S. Highway 65.

**C.** That part of Carver County lying north and east of the following described line: Beginning at the northeast corner of San Francisco Township; thence west along the north boundary of San Francisco Township to the east boundary of Dahlgren Township; thence north along the east boundary of Dahlgren Township to U.S. Highway 212; thence west along U.S. Highway 212 to State Trunk Highway (STH) 284; thence north on STH 284 to County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 10; thence north and west on CSAH 10 to CSAH 30; thence north and west on CSAH 30 to STH 25; thence east and north on STH 25 to CSAH 10; thence north on CSAH 10 to the Carver County line.

**D.** In Scott County, all of the cities of Shakopee, Savage, Prior Lake, and Jordan, and all of the Townships of Jackson, Louisville, St. Lawrence, Sand Creek, Spring Lake, and Credit River.

**E.** In Dakota County, all of the cities of Burnsville, Eagan, Mendota Heights, Mendota, Sunfish Lake, Inver Grove Heights, Apple Valley, Lakeville, Rosemount, Farmington, Hastings, Lilydale, West St. Paul, and South St. Paul, and all of the Township of Nininger.

**F.** That portion of Washington County lying south of the following described line: Beginning at County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 2 on the west boundary of the county; thence east on CSAH 2 to U.S. Highway 61; thence south on U.S. Highway 61 to State Trunk Highway (STH) 97; thence east on STH 97 to the intersection of STH 97 and STH 95; thence due east to the east boundary of the State.

**Northwest Goose Zone—**That portion of the State encompassed by a line extending east from the North Dakota border along U.S. Highway 2 to State Trunk Highway (STH) 32, north along STH 32 to STH 92, east along STH 92 to County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 2 in Polk County, north along CSAH 2 to CSAH 27 in Pennington County, north along CSAH 27 to STH 1, east along STH 1 to CSAH 28 in Pennington County, north along CSAH 28 to CSAH 54 in Marshall County, north along CSAH 54 to CSAH 9 in Roseau County, north along CSAH 9 to STH 11, west along STH 11 to STH 310, and north along STH 310 to the Manitoba border.

**Southeast Goose Zone—**That part of the State within the following described boundaries: Beginning at the intersection of U.S. Highway 52 and the south boundary of the Twin Cities Metro Canada Goose Zone; thence along the U.S. Highway 52 to State Trunk

Highway (STH) 57; thence along STH 57 to the municipal boundary of Kasson; thence along the municipal boundary of Kasson County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 13, Dodge County; thence along CSAH 13 to STH 30; thence along STH 30 to U.S. Highway 63; thence along U.S. Highway 63 to the south boundary of the State; thence along the south and east boundaries of the State to the south boundary of the Twin Cities Metro Canada Goose Zone; thence along said boundary to the point of beginning.

Five Goose Zone—That portion of the State not included in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Canada Goose Zone, the Northwest Goose Zone, or the Southeast Goose Zone.

West Zone—That portion of the State encompassed by a line beginning at the junction of State Trunk Highway (STH) 60 and the Iowa border, then north and east along STH 60 to U.S. Highway 71, north along U.S. 71 to Interstate Highway 94, then north and west along I-94 to the North Dakota border.

#### Tennessee

Middle Tennessee Zone—Those portions of Houston, Humphreys, Montgomery, Perry, and Wayne Counties east of State Highway 13; and Bedford, Cannon, Cheatham, Coffee, Davidson, Dickson, Franklin, Giles, Hickman, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Macon, Marshall, Maury, Moore, Robertson, Rutherford, Smith, Sumner, Trousdale, Williamson, and Wilson Counties.

East Tennessee Zone—Anderson, Bledsoe, Bradley, Blount, Campbell, Carter, Claiborne, Clay, Cocke, Cumberland, DeKalb, Fentress, Grainger, Greene, Grundy, Hamblen, Hamilton, Hancock, Hawkins, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Knox, Loudon, Marion, McMinn, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Overton, Pickett, Polk, Putnam, Rhea, Roane, Scott, Sequatchie, Sevier, Sullivan, Unicoi, Union, Van Buren, Warren, Washington, and White Counties.

#### Wisconsin

Early-Season Subzone A—That portion of the State encompassed by a line beginning at the intersection of U.S. Highway 141 and the Michigan border near Niagara, then south along U.S. 141 to State Highway 22, west and southwest along State 22 to U.S. 45, south along U.S. 45 to State 22, west and south along State 22 to State 110, south along State 110 to U.S. 10, south along U.S. 10 to State 49, south along State 49 to State 23, west along State 23 to State 73, south along State 73 to State 60, west along State 60 to State 23, south along State 23 to State 11, east

along State 11 to State 78, then south along State 78 to the Illinois border.

Early-Season Subzone B—The remainder of the State.

#### Central Flyway

##### Nebraska

September Canada Goose Unit—That part of Nebraska bounded by a line from the Nebraska-Iowa State line west on U.S. Highway 30 to US Highway 81, then south on US Highway 81 to NE Highway 64, then east on NE Highway 64 to NE Highway 15, then south on NE Highway 15 to NE Highway 41, then east on NE Highway 41 to NE Highway 50, then north on NE Highway 50 to NE Highway 2, then east on NE Highway 2 to the Nebraska-Iowa State line.

##### South Dakota

Special Early Canada Goose Unit: Entire state of South Dakota *except* the counties of Bennett, Bon Homme, Brule, Buffalo, Charles Mix, Custer east of SD HW 79 and south of French Creek, Dewey south of 212, Fall River east of SD HW 71 and US HW 385, Gregory, Hughes, Hyde south of US HW 14, Lyman, Potter west of US HW 83, Stanley, and Sully.

#### Pacific Flyway

##### Idaho

East Zone—Bonneville, Caribou, Fremont, and Teton Counties.

##### Oregon

Northwest Zone—Benton, Clackamas, Clatsop, Columbia, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Polk, Multnomah, Tillamook, Washington, and Yamhill Counties.

Southwest Zone—Coos, Curry, Douglas, Jackson, Josephine, and Klamath Counties.

East Zone—Baker, Gilliam, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, and Wasco Counties.

##### Washington

Area 1—Skagit, Island, and Snohomish Counties.

Area 2A (SW Quota Zone)—Clark County, except portions south of the Washougal River; Cowlitz County; and Wahkiakum County.

Area 2B (SW Quota Zone)—Pacific County.

Area 3—All areas west of the Pacific Crest Trail and west of the Big White Salmon River that are not included in Areas 1, 2A, and 2B.

Area 4—Adams, Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Franklin, Grant, Kittitas, Lincoln, Okanogan, Spokane, and Walla Walla Counties.

Area 5—All areas east of the Pacific Crest Trail and east of the Big White

Salmon River that are not included in Area 4.

#### Ducks

##### Atlantic Flyway

##### New York

Lake Champlain Zone: The U.S. portion of Lake Champlain and that area east and north of a line extending along NY 9B from the Canadian border to U.S. 9, south along U.S. 9 to NY 22 south of Keesville; south along NY 22 to the west shore of South Bay, along and around the shoreline of South Bay to NY 22 on the east shore of South Bay; southeast along NY 22 to U.S. 4, northeast along U.S. 4 to the Vermont border.

Long Island Zone: That area consisting of Nassau County, Suffolk County, that area of Westchester County southeast of I-95, and their tidal waters.

Western Zone: That area west of a line extending from Lake Ontario east along the north shore of the Salmon River to I-81, and south along I-81 to the Pennsylvania border.

Northeastern Zone: That area north of a line extending from Lake Ontario east along the north shore of the Salmon River to I-81, south along I-81 to NY 49, east along NY 49 to NY 365, east along NY 365 to NY 28, east along NY 28 to NY 29, east along NY 29 to I-87, north along I-87 to U.S. 9 (at Exit 20), north along U.S. 9 to NY 149, east along NY 149 to U.S. 4, north along U.S. 4 to the Vermont border, exclusive of the Lake Champlain Zone.

Southeastern Zone: The remaining portion of New York.

##### Maryland

Special Teal Season Area: Calvert, Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties and those parts of Cecil, Harford, and Baltimore Counties east of Interstate 95; that part of Anne Arundel County east of Interstate 895, Interstate 97, and Route 3; that part of Prince George's County east of Route 3 and Route 301; and that part of Charles County east of Route 301 to the Virginia State Line.

#### Mississippi Flyway

##### Indiana

North Zone: That portion of the State north of a line extending east from the Illinois border along State Road 18 to U.S. Highway 31, north along U.S. 31 to U.S. 24, east along U.S. 24 to Huntington, then southeast along U.S. 224 to the Ohio border.

Ohio River Zone: That portion of the State south of a line extending east from the Illinois border along Interstate Highway 64 to New Albany, east along

State Road 62 to State 56, east along State 56 to Vevay, east and north on State 156 along the Ohio River to North Landing, north along State 56 to U.S. Highway 50, then northeast along U.S. 50 to the Ohio border.

South Zone: That portion of the State between the North and Ohio River Zone boundaries.

### Iowa

North Zone: That portion of the State north of a line extending east from the Nebraska border along State Highway 175 to State Highway 37, southeast along State Highway 37 to State Highway 183, northeast along State Highway 183 to State Highway 141, east along State Highway 141 to U.S. Highway 30, then east along U.S. Highway 30 to the Illinois border.

South Zone: The remainder of Iowa.

### Central Flyway

#### Colorado

Special Teal Season Area: Lake and Chaffee Counties and that portion of the State east of Interstate Highway 25.

#### Kansas

High Plains Zone: That portion of the State west of U.S. 283.

Low Plains Early Zone: That area of Kansas east of U.S. 283, and generally west of a line beginning at the Junction of the Nebraska State line and KS 28; south on KS 28 to U.S. 36; east on U.S. 36 to KS 199; south on KS 199 to Republic Co. Road 563; south on Republic Co. Road 563 to KS 148; east on KS 148 to Republic Co. Road 138; south on Republic Co. Road 138 to Cloud Co. Road 765; south on Cloud Co. Road 765 to KS 9; west on KS 9 to U.S. 24; west on U.S. 24 to U.S. 281; north on U.S. 281 to U.S. 36; west on U.S. 36 to U.S. 183; south on U.S. 183 to U.S. 24; west on U.S. 24 to KS 18; southeast on KS 18 to U.S. 183; south on U.S. 183 to KS 4; east on KS 4 to I-135; south on I-135 to KS 61; southwest on KS 61 to KS 96; northwest on KS 96 to U.S. 56; west on U.S. 56 to U.S. 281; south on U.S. 281 to U.S. 54; west on U.S. 54 to U.S. 183; north on U.S. 183 to U.S. 56; and southwest on U.S. 56 to U.S. 283.

Low Plains Late Zone: The remainder of Kansas.

#### Nebraska

Special Teal Season Area: That portion of the State south of a line beginning at the Wyoming State line; east along U.S. 26 to Nebraska Highway L62A east to U.S. 385; south to U.S. 26; east to NE 92; east along NE 92 to NE 61; south along NE 61 to U.S. 30; east along U.S. 30 to the Iowa border.

### New Mexico (Central Flyway Portion)

North Zone: That portion of the State north of I-40 and U.S. 54.

South Zone: The remainder of New Mexico.

### Pacific Flyway

#### California

Northeastern Zone: In that portion of California lying east and north of a line beginning at the intersection of Interstate 5 with the California-Oregon line; south along Interstate 5 to its junction with Walters Lane south of the town of Yreka; west along Walters Lane to its junction with Easy Street; south along Easy Street to the junction with Old Highway 99; south along Old Highway 99 to the point of intersection with Interstate 5 north of the town of Weed; south along Interstate 5 to its junction with Highway 89; east and south along Highway 89 to Main Street Greenville; north and east to its junction with North Valley Road; south to its junction of Diamond Mountain Road; north and east to its junction with North Arm Road; south and west to the junction of North Valley Road; south to the junction with Arlington Road (A22); west to the junction of Highway 89; south and west to the junction of Highway 70; east on Highway 70 to Highway 395; south and east on Highway 395 to the point of intersection with the California-Nevada State line; north along the California-Nevada State line to the junction of the California-Nevada-Oregon State lines west along the California-Oregon State line to the point of origin.

Colorado River Zone: Those portions of San Bernardino, Riverside, and Imperial Counties east of a line extending from the Nevada border south along U.S. 95 to Vidal Junction; south on a road known as "Aqueduct Road" in San Bernardino County through the town of Rice to the San Bernardino-Riverside County line; south on a road known in Riverside County as the "Desert Center to Rice Road" to the town of Desert Center; east 31 miles on I-10 to the Wiley Well Road; south on this road to Wiley Well; southeast along the Army-Milpitas Road to the Blythe, Brawley, Davis Lake intersections; south on the Blythe-Brawley paved road to the Ogilby and Tumco Mine Road; south on this road to U.S. 80; east 7 miles on U.S. 80 to the Andrade-Algodones Road; south on this paved road to the Mexican border at Algodones, Mexico.

Southern Zone: That portion of southern California (but excluding the Colorado River Zone) south and east of a line extending from the Pacific Ocean east along the Santa Maria River to CA

166 near the City of Santa Maria; east on CA 166 to CA 99; south on CA 99 to the crest of the Tehachapi Mountains at Tejon Pass; east and north along the crest of the Tehachapi Mountains to CA 178 at Walker Pass; east on CA 178 to U.S. 395 at the town of Inyokern; south on U.S. 395 to CA 58; east on CA 58 to I-15; east on I-15 to CA 127; north on CA 127 to the Nevada border.

Southern San Joaquin Valley Temporary Zone: All of Kings and Tulare Counties and that portion of Kern County north of the Southern Zone.

Balance-of-the-State Zone: The remainder of California not included in the Northeastern, Southern, and Colorado River Zones, and the Southern San Joaquin Valley Temporary Zone.

### Canada Geese

#### Michigan

MVP—Upper Peninsula Zone: The MVP—Upper Peninsula Zone consists of the entire Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

MVP—Lower Peninsula Zone: The MVP—Lower Peninsula Zone consists of the area within the Lower Peninsula of Michigan that is north and west of the point beginning at the southwest corner of Branch County, north continuing along the western border of Branch and Calhoun Counties to the northwest corner of Calhoun County, then east to the southwest corner of Eaton County, then north to the southern border of Ionia County, then east to the southwest corner of Clinton County, then north along the western border of Clinton County continuing north along the county border of Gratiot and Montcalm Counties to the southern border of Isabella County, then east to the southwest corner of Midland County, then north along the west Midland County border to Highway M-20, then easterly to U.S. Highway 10, then easterly to U.S. Interstate 75/U.S. Highway 23, then northerly along I-75/U.S. 23 and easterly on U.S. 23 to the centerline of the Au Gres River, then southerly along the centerline of the Au Gres River to Saginaw Bay, then on a line directly east 10 miles into Saginaw Bay, and from that point on a line directly northeast to the Canadian border.

SJBP Zone is the rest of the State, that area south and east of the boundary described above.

### Sandhill Cranes

#### Central Flyway

#### Colorado

The Central Flyway portion of the State except the San Luis Valley

(Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Hinsdale, Mineral, Rio Grande, and Saguache Counties east of the Continental Divide) and North Park (Jackson County).

#### Kansas

That portion of the State west of a line beginning at the Oklahoma border, north on I-35 to Wichita, north on I-135 to Salina, and north on U.S. 81 to the Nebraska border.

#### Montana

The Central Flyway portion of the State except for that area south and west of Interstate 90, which is closed to sandhill crane hunting.

#### New Mexico

Regular-Season Open Area—Chaves, Curry, De Baca, Eddy, Lea, Quay, and Roosevelt Counties.

Middle Rio Grande Valley Area—The Central Flyway portion of New Mexico in Socorro and Valencia Counties.

Estancia Valley Area—Those portions of Santa Fe, Torrance and Bernallilo Counties within an area bounded on the west by New Mexico Highway 55 beginning at Mountainair north to NM 337, north to NM 14, north to I-25; on the north by I-25 east to U.S. 285; on the east by U.S. 285 south to U.S. 60; and on the south by U.S. 60 from U.S. 285 west to NM 55 in Mountainair.

Southwest Zone—Sierra, Luna, Dona Ana Counties, and those portions of Grant and Hidalgo Counties south of I-10.

#### North Dakota

Area 1—That portion of the State west of U.S. 281.

Area 2—That portion of the State east of U.S. 281.

#### Oklahoma

That portion of the State west of I-35.

#### South Dakota

That portion of the State west of U.S. 281.

#### Texas

Zone A—That portion of Texas lying west of a line beginning at the international toll bridge at Laredo, thence northeast along U.S. Highway 81 to its junction with Interstate Highway 35 in Laredo, thence north along Interstate Highway 35 to its junction with Interstate Highway 10 in San Antonio, thence northwest along Interstate Highway 10 to its junction with U.S. Highway 83 at Junction, thence north along U.S. Highway 83 to its junction with U.S. Highway 62, 16 miles north of Childress, thence east along U.S. Highway 62 to the Texas-Oklahoma State line.

Zone B—That portion of Texas lying within boundaries beginning at the junction of U.S. Highway 81 and the Texas-Oklahoma State line, thence southeast along U.S. Highway 81 to its junction with U.S. Highway 287 in Montague County, thence southeast along U.S. Highway 287 to its junction with Interstate Highway 35W in Fort Worth, thence southwest along Interstate Highway 35 to its junction with Interstate Highway 10 in San Antonio, thence northwest along Interstate Highway 10 to its junction with U.S. Highway 83 in Junction, thence north along U.S. Highway 83 to its junction with U.S. Highway 62, 16 miles north of Childress, thence east along U.S. Highway 62 to the Texas-Oklahoma State line, thence south along the Texas-Oklahoma state line to the south bank of the Red River, thence eastward along the vegetation line on the south bank of the Red River to U.S. Highway 81.

Zone C—The remainder of the State, except for the closed areas.

Closed areas—(A) That portion of the State lying east and north of a line beginning at the junction of U.S. Highway 81 and the Texas-Oklahoma State line, thence southeast along U.S. Highway 81 to its junction with U.S. Highway 287 in Montague County, thence southeast along U.S. Highway 287 to its junction with Interstate Highway 35W in Fort Worth, thence southwest along Interstate Highway 35 to its junction with U.S. Highway 290 East in Austin, thence east along U.S. Highway 290 to its junction with Interstate Loop 610 in Harris County, thence south and east along Interstate Loop 610 to its junction with Interstate Highway 45 in Houston, thence south on Interstate Highway 45 to State Highway 342, thence to the shore of the Gulf of Mexico, and thence north and east along the shore of the Gulf of Mexico to the Texas-Louisiana State line. (B) That portion of the State lying within the boundaries of a line beginning at the Kleberg-Nueces County line and the shore of the Gulf of Mexico, thence west along the County line to Park Road 22 in Nueces County, thence north and west along Park Road 22 to its junction with State Highway 358 in Corpus Christi, thence west and north along State Highway 358 to its junction with State Highway 286, thence north along State Highway 286 to its junction with Interstate Highway 37, thence east along Interstate Highway 37 to its junction with U.S. Highway 181, thence north and west along U.S. Highway 181 to its junction with U.S. Highway 77 in Sinton, thence north and east along U.S. Highway 77 to its junction with U.S.

Highway 87 in Victoria, thence south and east along U.S. Highway 87 to its junction with State Highway 35 at Port Lavaca, thence north and east along State Highway 35 to the south end of the Lavaca Bay Causeway, thence south and east along the shore of Lavaca Bay to its junction with the Port Lavaca Ship Channel, thence south and east along the Lavaca Bay Ship Channel to the Gulf of Mexico, and thence south and west along the shore of the Gulf of Mexico to the Kleberg-Nueces County line.

#### Wyoming

Regular-Season Open Area—Campbell, Converse, Crook, Goshen, Laramie, Niobrara, Platte, and Weston Counties.

Riverton-Boysen Unit—Portions of Fremont County.

Park and Big Horn County Unit—Portions of Park and Big Horn Counties.

#### Pacific Flyway

##### Arizona

Special-Season Area—Game Management Units 30A, 30B, 31, and 32.

##### Montana

Special-Season Area—See State regulations.

##### Utah

Special-Season Area—Rich, Cache, and Uintah Counties and that portion of Box Elder County beginning on the Utah-Idaho State line at the Box Elder-Cache County line; west on the State line to the Pocatello Valley County Road; south on the Pocatello Valley County Road to I-15; southeast on I-15 to SR-83; south on SR-83 to Lamp Junction; west and south on the Promontory Point County Road to the tip of Promontory Point; south from Promontory Point to the Box Elder-Weber County line; east on the Box Elder-Weber County line to the Box Elder-Cache County line; north on the Box Elder-Cache County line to the Utah-Idaho State line.

#### Wyoming

Bear River Area—That portion of Lincoln County described in State regulations.

Salt River Area—That portion of Lincoln County described in State regulations.

Farson-Eden Area—Those portions of Sweetwater and Sublette Counties described in State regulations.

Uinta County Area—That portion of Uinta County described in State regulations.

**All Migratory Game Birds in Alaska**

North Zone—State Game Management Units 11–13 and 17–26.

Gulf Coast Zone—State Game Management Units 5–7, 9, 14–16, and 10 (Unimak Island only).

Southeast Zone—State Game Management Units 1–4.

Pribilof and Aleutian Islands Zone—State Game Management Unit 10 (except Unimak Island).

Kodiak Zone—State Game Management Unit 8.

**All Migratory Game Birds in the Virgin Islands**

Ruth Cay Closure Area—The island of Ruth Cay, just south of St. Croix.

**All Migratory Game Birds in Puerto Rico**

Municipality of Culebra Closure Area—All of the municipality of Culebra.

Desecheo Island Closure Area—All of Desecheo Island.

Mona Island Closure Area—All of Mona Island.

El Verde Closure Area—Those areas of the municipalities of Rio Grande and Loiza delineated as follows: (1) All lands between Routes 956 on the west and 186 on the east, from Route 3 on the north to the juncture of Routes 956 and 186 (Km 13.2) in the south; (2) all lands between Routes 186 and 966 from the juncture of 186 and 966 on the north, to the Caribbean National Forest Boundary on the south; (3) all lands lying west of Route 186 for 1 kilometer from the juncture of Routes 186 and 956 south to Km 6 on Route 186; (4) all lands within Km 14 and Km 6 on the west and the Caribbean National Forest Boundary on the east; and (5) all lands within the Caribbean National Forest Boundary whether private or public.

Cidra Municipality and adjacent areas—All of Cidra Municipality and portions of Aguas Buenas, Caguas, Cayey, and Comerio Municipalities as encompassed within the following boundary: beginning on Highway 172 as it leaves the municipality of Cidra on the west edge, north to Highway 156, east on Highway 156 to Highway 1, south on Highway 1 to Highway 765, south on Highway 765 to Highway 763, south on Highway 763 to the Rio Guavate, west along Rio Guavate to Highway 1, southwest on Highway 1 to Highway 14, west on Highway 14 to Highway 729, north on Highway 729 to Cidra Municipality boundary to the point of the beginning.

**BILLING CODE 4310–55–P**

## FINAL REGULATORY ALTERNATIVES FOR DUCK HUNTING DURING THE 2008-09 SEASON

	ATLANTIC FLYWAY			MISSISSIPPI FLYWAY			CENTRAL FLYWAY (a)			PACIFIC FLYWAY (b)(c)		
	RES	MOD	LIB	RES	MOD	LIB	RES	MOD	LIB	RES	MOD	LIB
Beginning Shooting Time	1/2 hr. before sunrise	1/2 hr. before sunrise	1/2 hr. before sunrise	1/2 hr. before sunrise	1/2 hr. before sunrise	1/2 hr. before sunrise	1/2 hr. before sunrise	1/2 hr. before sunrise	1/2 hr. before sunrise	1/2 hr. before sunrise	1/2 hr. before sunrise	1/2 hr. before sunrise
Ending Shooting Time	Sunset	Sunset	Sunset	Sunset	Sunset	Sunset	Sunset	Sunset	Sunset	Sunset	Sunset	Sunset
Opening Date	Oct. 1	Sat. nearest Sept. 24	Sat. nearest Sept. 24	Sat. nearest Oct. 1	Sat. nearest Sept. 24	Sat. nearest Sept. 24	Sat. nearest Oct. 1	Sat. nearest Sept. 24	Sat. nearest Oct. 1	Sat. nearest Sept. 24	Sat. nearest Sept. 24	Sat. nearest Sept. 24
Closing Date	Jan. 20	Last Sunday in Jan.	Last Sunday in Jan.	Sun. nearest Jan. 20	Last Sunday in Jan.	Last Sunday in Jan.	Sun. nearest Jan. 20	Last Sunday in Jan.	Sun. nearest Jan. 20	Last Sunday in Jan.	Last Sunday in Jan.	Last Sunday in Jan.
Season Length (in days)	30	45	60	30	45	60	39	60	74	60	86	107
Daily Bag/Possession Limit	3 6	6 12	6 12	3 6	6 12	6 12	3 6	6 12	6 12	4 8	7 14	7 14
<b>Species/Sex Limits within the Overall Daily Bag Limit</b>												
Mallard (Total/Female)	3/1	4/2	4/2	2/1	4/1	4/2	3/1	5/1	5/2	3/1	5/2	7/2

- (a) In the High Plains Mallard Management Unit, all regulations would be the same as the remainder of the Central Flyway, with the exception of season length. Additional days would be allowed under the various alternatives as follows: restrictive - 12, moderate and liberal - 23. Under all alternatives, additional days must be on or after the Saturday nearest December 10.
- (b) In the Columbia Basin Mallard Management Unit, all regulations would be the same as the remainder of the Pacific Flyway, with the exception of season length. Under all alternatives except the liberal alternative, an additional 7 days would be allowed.
- (c) In Alaska, framework dates, bag limits, and season length would be different from the remainder of the Pacific Flyway. The bag limit would be 5-8 under the restrictive alternative, and 7-10 under the moderate and liberal alternatives. Under all alternatives, season length would be 107 days and framework dates would be Sep. 1 - Jan. 26.