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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[Docket No. FWS-HQ-MB-2023-0211;
FXMB1231099BPP0-245-FF09M32000;
OMB Control Number 1018-0171]

Agency Information Collection Activities; Establishment of Annual Migratory Bird Hunting Seasons

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service,
Interior.

ACTION: Notice of information collection;
request for comment.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the
Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, we,
the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
(Service), are proposing to revise a
currently approved information
collection.

DATES: Interested persons are invited to
submit comments on or before January
19, 2024.

ADDRESSES: Send your comments on the
information collection request (ICR) by
one of the following methods (reference
“1018-0171” in the subject line of your
comment):

- *Internet (preferred):* <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments on Docket No. FWS-HQ-MB-2023-0211.
- *U.S. mail:* Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: PRB (JAO/3W), Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: To
request additional information about
this ICR, contact Madonna L. Baucum,
Service Information Collection
Clearance Officer, by email at InfoColl@fws.gov, or by telephone at (703)
358-2503. Individuals in the United
States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of
hearing, or have a speech disability may
dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to
access telecommunications relay
services. Individuals outside the United
States should use the relay services
offered within their country to make
international calls to the point-of-
contact in the United States.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In
accordance with the Paperwork
Reduction Act of 1995 and 5 CFR
1320.8(d)(1), we provide the general
public and other Federal agencies with

an opportunity to comment on new,
proposed, revised, and continuing
collections of information. This helps us
assess the impact of our information
collection requirements and minimize
the public’s reporting burden. It also
helps the public understand our
information collection requirements and
provide the requested data in the
desired format.

As part of our continuing effort to
reduce paperwork and respondent
burdens, we are again soliciting
comments from the public and other
Federal agencies on the proposed ICR
that is described below. We are
especially interested in public comment
addressing the following:

- (1) Whether or not the collection of
information is necessary for the proper
performance of the functions of the
agency, including whether or not the
information will have practical utility;
- (2) The accuracy of our estimate of the
burden for this collection of
information, including the validity of
the methodology and assumptions used;
- (3) Ways to enhance the quality,
utility, and clarity of the information to
be collected; and
- (4) How might the agency minimize
the burden of the collection of
information on those who are to
respond, including through the use of
appropriate automated, electronic,
mechanical, or other technological
collection techniques or other forms of
information technology, e.g., permitting
electronic submission of response.

Comments that you submit in
response to this notice are a matter of
public record. Before including your
address, phone number, email address,
or other personal identifying
information in your comment, you
should be aware that your that your
entire comment—including your
personal identifying information—may
be publicly available at any time. While
you can ask us in your comment to
withhold your personal identifying
information from public review, we
cannot guarantee that we will be able to
do so.

Abstract: Migratory game birds are
those bird species so designated in
conventions between the United States
and several foreign nations for the
protection and management of these
birds. Under the Migratory Bird Treaty
Act (16 U.S.C. 703-712), the Secretary
of the Interior is authorized to
determine when “hunting, taking,
capture, killing, possession, sale,
purchase, shipment, transportation,
carriage, or export of any such bird, or
any part, nest, or egg” of migratory game
birds can take place, and to adopt
regulations for this purpose. These

regulations are written after giving due
regard to “the zones of temperature and
to the distribution, abundance,
economic value, breeding habits, and
times and lines of migratory flight of
such birds” (16 U.S.C. 704(a)) and are
updated annually. This responsibility
has been delegated to the Service as the
lead Federal agency for managing and
conserving migratory birds in the
United States. However, migratory bird
management is a cooperative effort of
State, Tribal, and Federal governments.
Migratory game bird hunting seasons
provide opportunities for recreation and
sustenance; aid Federal, State, and
Tribal governments in the management
of migratory game birds; and permit
harvests at levels compatible with
migratory game bird population status
and habitat conditions.

The Service develops migratory game
bird hunting regulations by establishing
the frameworks, or outside limits, for
season dates, season lengths, shooting
hours, bag and possession limits, and
areas where migratory game bird
hunting may occur. Acknowledging
regional differences in hunting
conditions, the Service has
administratively divided the Nation into
four Flyways for the primary purpose of
managing migratory game birds. Each
Flyway (Atlantic, Mississippi, Central,
and Pacific) has a Flyway Council, a
formal organization generally composed
of one member from each State and
Province in that Flyway. The Flyway
Councils, established through the
Association of Fish and Wildlife
Agencies, also assist in researching and
providing migratory game bird
management information for Federal,
State, Provincial, and Tribal
governments, as well as private
conservation entities and the general
public.

The information identified below,
solicited annually from State (including
U.S. territory) governments, is necessary
to establish annual migratory bird
hunting seasons. The required
information, received at various times in
the year prior to the actual hunting
season as part of the rulemaking process
described above, is used by the Service
as part of the final rulemaking process
necessary to open annual hunting
seasons otherwise closed by law.

1. *Information Requested from States
and U.S. Territories to Establish Annual
Migratory Bird Hunting Seasons*—State
and U.S. territory governments that
wish to establish annual migratory game
bird hunting seasons are required to
provide the requested dates and other
details for hunting seasons in their
respective States or Territories. The
information is provided to the Service

in a non-form format, usually via letter or spreadsheet, in response to solicitations for the information sent to the State governments each year via an emailed letter and as part of the first final rule (for the frameworks).

2. *Reports (50 CFR part 20)*—The following reports are requested from the States and are submitted either annually or every 3 years as explained in the following text. (*NOTE:* We annotated changes, if any, to the reporting requirements since OMB's last approval.)

a. Reports from Experimental Hunting Seasons and Season Structure Changes (Required):

i. *Atlantic Flyway Council:*

- Delaware—Experimental tundra swan season (Yearly updates and Final report) (Removed—Completed)
- Connecticut, Maryland, North Carolina, and Virginia—Evaluation of the two zone and three segment duck season zone-split configuration including impacts on hunter dynamics (*e.g.*, hunter numbers, satisfaction) and harvest during the 2021–25 seasons (Final report for each State). (New)

ii. *Mississippi Flyway Council:*

- Alabama—Experimental sandhill crane season (Yearly updates and Final report) (Removed—Completed)
- Minnesota—Experimental early teal season (Yearly updates and Final report)
- Louisiana—Evaluation of the two zone and three segment duck season zone-split configuration including impacts on hunter dynamics (*e.g.*, hunter numbers, satisfaction) and harvest during the 2021–25 seasons (Final report). (New)

iii. *Central Flyway Council:*

- New Mexico—Sandhill crane season in Estancia Valley (Yearly updates and Final report) Now operational—Annual data are still required, but there is not a final report, since this monitoring will occur in perpetuity (or as long as the State has that hunt area). (Removed—Experimental completed; Moved to State-specific below)
- South Dakota and Nebraska—Experimental two-tier hunting regulations study per the terms of the study plan and Memorandum of Agreement among these States and the Service (Yearly updates and Final report)
- Wyoming—Split (3-way) season for Canada geese (Final report only) (Removed—Completed)

iv. *Pacific Flyway Council:*

- California—Split (3-way) season for white-fronted geese (Final report only) (Removed—Completed)
- Idaho—Experimental swan season (Yearly updates and Final report) (Removed—Completed)

v. *Additional State-specific Annual Reports:*

- Arizona—Sandhill crane season harvest and subspecies composition (3-year intervals).
- New Mexico—Sandhill crane season harvest and subspecies composition in Estancia Valley (Yearly). (Revised—Relocated from Central Flyway Council experimental reports above)
- Delaware, North Carolina, and Virginia—Tundra swan season hunter participation and harvest (Yearly). (Revised—To add Delaware)
- Montana (Central Flyway portion), North Dakota, and South Dakota—Tundra swan season hunter participation and harvest (Yearly). (Revised—Relocated Montana and South Dakota to separate bullet below)
- Montana (Central Flyway portion) and South Dakota—Swan season hunter participation, harvest, species composition, and hunter compliance rates in providing species-determinant parts or bill measurements of harvested swans for species identification (Yearly). (Revised)
- Idaho, Montana (Pacific Flyway Portion), Utah, and Nevada—Swan season hunter participation, harvest, species composition, and hunter compliance rates in providing species-determinant parts or bill measurements of harvested swans for species identification (Yearly). (Revised—To add Idaho and Montana)

Reports and monitoring are used for a variety of reasons. Some are used to monitor species composition of the harvest for those areas where species intermingling can confound harvest management, and potential overharvest of one species can be of management concern. Others are used to determine overall harvest for those species and/or areas that are not sampled well by our overall harvest surveys due to either the limited nature/area of the hunt or season, or where the harvest requires close monitoring. Experimental season reports are used to determine whether the experimental season is achieving its intended goals and objectives, without causing unintended harm to other species and ultimately whether the experimental season should proceed to operational status. Most experimental

seasons are 3-year trials with yearly reports and a final report. Most of the other reports and monitoring are conducted either annually or at 3-year intervals.

Proposed Revisions

1. (*REVISION*) Submissions of Tribal Proposals—Under the regulations in the Service's September 1, 2023, final rule (88 FR 60375), we have removed the requirement that Tribes annually submit their proposed migratory game bird hunting regulations (and associated monitoring, anticipated harvest, and capabilities for regulation development and enforcement) for our review and approval. We also will no longer publish special Tribal migratory game bird hunting regulations in the **Federal Register** (*i.e.*, a proposed and final rule). The regulations set forth in the September 1, 2023, final rule adopted elements of our guidelines in use since 1985 for establishing special migratory game bird hunting regulations on Federal Indian reservations (including off-reservation trust lands) and ceded lands. Tribes that comply with these regulations will be authorized to independently establish special Tribal migratory bird hunting regulations. However, if circumstances change and data indicates migratory game bird populations are substantially declining or Tribal hunting increases significantly, we will reevaluate the regulations at 50 CFR 20.110.

By allowing Tribes to independently establish special migratory bird hunting regulations, the Service recognizes Tribal sovereignty to exercise reserved hunting rights and, for some Tribes, recognition of their authority to regulate hunting by both Tribal and nontribal members on their reservation. The September 1, 2023, final rule extended to Tribes with reserved hunting rights the same autonomy as the States to independently establish migratory game bird hunting seasons for nontribal members within annually established, biologically appropriate Federal outside limits. As an alternative to promulgating special Tribal migratory game bird hunting regulations, Tribes may choose to observe the hunting regulations established by the State or States in which the reservation is located. We coordinated with Tribes over the past 2 years via letters and four webinars as we developed this new regulatory approach for Tribal self-management of the harvest, and we have received positive feedback. The new system will reduce the annual administrative burden on both the Tribes and the Service to propose, review, and publish special migratory game bird hunting regulations

while continuing to sustain healthy migratory game bird populations for future generations.

2. (NEW) Requests for Consultation (Tribes/States)—The new regulations in the final rule under RIN 1018–BF64 (88 FR 60375, September 1, 2023) also may be applied to the establishment of migratory game bird hunting regulations for nontribal members on all lands within the reservations where Tribes have full wildlife-management authority over such hunting, or where the Tribes and affected States otherwise have reached agreement over hunting by nontribal members on non-Indian lands within the reservation. Tribes usually have the authority to regulate migratory game bird hunting by nonmembers on Indian-owned reservation lands.

The question of jurisdiction is more complex on reservations that include lands owned by non-Indians, especially when the surrounding States have established or intend to establish regulations governing migratory game bird hunting by non-Indians on these lands. In those cases, we encourage the Tribes and States to reach agreement on regulations that would apply throughout the reservations. When appropriate, we will consult with a Tribe and State with the aim of facilitating an accord. We also will consult jointly with Tribal and State officials in the affected States where Tribes may wish to establish special migratory game bird hunting regulations for Tribal members on ceded lands.

It is incumbent upon the Tribe and/or the State to request consultation. We will not presume to make a determination, without being advised by either a Tribe or a State, that any issue is or is not worthy of formal consultation. Tribal and State requests for consultation with the Service should be sent to the Service's Assistant Director for the Migratory Bird Program. We note that our guidance on resolving issues of concern between Tribes and States on reservations and ceded lands is the same guidance we provided under the previous Tribal regulation process.

3. (NEW) Requests for Experimental Seasons (Tribes)—We will continue to consult with Tribes that wish to reach a mutual agreement (memorandum of understanding (MOU) or similar type of formal agreement) on conducting short-term (possibly several years) experimental hunting seasons using methods outside of the Federal hunting methods at 50 CFR 20.21 for on-reservation and ceded lands hunting by Tribal members. The Tribal-member-only experimental hunting season would provide data and evaluation criteria specified in an agreement for

consideration if a Tribe would like to make the additional hunting method operational. Tribes should send such requests for consultation to the Service's Assistant Director for the Migratory Bird Program at least 9 months before the season or ceremony regarding hunting methods outside of the Federal regulations.

If any individual Tribe wishes to make these additional experimental hunting methods operational and the Service agrees, the Service will conduct rulemaking (using any data from the experimental hunting season) to amend 50 CFR part 20 to allow Tribal members to use these additional hunting methods.

Starting with the 2023–2024 hunting season, annual Tribal hunting season regulations will no longer be published in the **Federal Register**, alleviating the administrative burden to both the Service and the Tribes of developing special Tribal migratory bird hunting regulation proposals, reviewing proposals, and publishing Tribal regulations as Federal regulations. This process would not apply to seasons for subsistence take of migratory birds in Alaska.

Title of Collection: Establishment of Annual Migratory Bird Hunting Seasons, 50 CFR part 20.

OMB Control Number: 1018–0171.

Form Numbers: None.

Type of Review: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Respondents/Affected Public: State and Tribal governments.

Total Estimated Number of Annual Respondents: 52 (from State governments and Territories).

Total Estimated Number of Annual Responses: 78 (from 52 State and U.S. Territories, as well as 26 additional reports).

Estimated Completion Time per Response: Varies from 4 hours to 650 hours, depending on activity.

Total Estimated Number of Annual Burden Hours: 11,423.

Respondent's Obligation: Required to obtain or retain a benefit.

Frequency of Collection: Annually.

Total Estimated Annual Nonhour Burden Cost: None.

An 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.

The authority for this action is the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*).

Madonna Baucum,
Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary

[234D0102DM, DS6120000,
DLSN00000.000000, DX61201]

Request for Public Nominations for Authors and Scientific/Technical Inputs for the First National Nature Assessment

AGENCY: Office of Policy Analysis, Interior.

ACTION: Request for public nominations.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of the Interior, on behalf of the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP), is soliciting nominations for authors and scientific/technical inputs for the First National Nature Assessment (NNA1). Refer to the NNA1 Draft Prospectus for further information on the scope, topics, and overarching themes for the report. NNA1 will adhere to the Global Change Research Act, Information Quality Act, and Evidence Act requirements for quality, transparency, and accessibility as appropriate for a Highly Influential Scientific Assessment. NNA1 will also adhere to USGCRP standards and guidelines requiring it to be a policy-neutral and policy-relevant product.

DATES: Nominations should be submitted via the web address specified below and must be received by the close of this notice January 4, 2024. While we request that scientific/technical inputs be submitted by the close of this notice, they will be accepted on an ongoing basis throughout the development of the report.

ADDRESSES: Nominations for authors must be submitted electronically using a web form accessible via <https://www.globalchange.gov/notices>. A short Curriculum Vitae (CV) of no more than four (4) pages must be included. Scientific/technical inputs should also be submitted electronically using a web form accessible via <https://www.globalchange.gov/notices>.

Instructions: Response to this notice is voluntary. Responses to this notice may be used by the U.S. Government for program planning on a non-attribution basis. The Department of the Interior therefore requests that no business