

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

RIN: 1018-AG08

Migratory Bird Hunting; Proposed Frameworks for Early-Season Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations and Regulatory Alternatives for the 2000-01 Duck Hunting Season; Notice of Meeting**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.**ACTION:** Proposed rule; supplemental.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, are proposing to establish the 2000-01 early-season 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 generally open prior to October 1, and include seasons in Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. These frameworks are necessary to allow State selections of final seasons and limits and to allow recreational harvest at levels compatible with population status and habitat conditions. This supplement to the proposed rule of April 25, 2000, also provides the regulatory alternatives for the 2000-01 duck hunting season.

DATES: You must submit comments on the proposed migratory bird hunting-season frameworks for Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and other early seasons by August 10, 2000, and for the forthcoming proposed late-season frameworks by September 8, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Send your comments on these proposals to the Chief, Division of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, room 634-Arlington Square, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20240. All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the public record. You may inspect comments during normal business hours in room 634, Arlington Square Building, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, Virginia.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jonathan Andrew, Chief, or Ron W. Kokel, Division of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (703) 358-1714.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Regulations Schedule for 2000**

On April 25, 2000, we published in the **Federal Register** (65 FR 24260) a proposal to amend 50 CFR part 20. The proposal dealt with the establishment of seasons, limits, and other regulations for migratory game birds under §§ 20.101 through 20.107, 20.109, and 20.110 of subpart K. On June 20, 2000, we published in the **Federal Register** (65 FR 38400) a second document providing supplemental proposals for early- and late-season migratory bird hunting regulations frameworks and the proposed regulatory alternatives for the 2000-01 duck hunting season. The June 20 supplement also provided detailed information on the 2000-01 regulatory schedule and announced the Service Migratory Bird Regulations Committee 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 final regulatory alternatives for the 2000-01 duck hunting season. It will lead to final frameworks from which States may select season dates, shooting hours, and daily bag and possession limits for the 2000-01 season. We have considered all pertinent comments received through July 7, 2000, on the April 25 and June 20, 2000, 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 20, 2000.

Service Migratory Bird Regulations Committee Meetings

Participants at the June 21-22, 2000, meetings reviewed information on the current status of migratory shore and upland game birds and developed 2000-01 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 as it relates to the development and selection of the regulatory packages for the 2000-01 regular waterfowl seasons. Participants at the previously announced August 2-3, 2000, meetings will review

information on the current status of waterfowl and develop 2000-01 migratory game bird regulations recommendations for 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 written comments to the Director of the Service 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.

May Breeding Waterfowl and Habitat Survey

In the Western or Traditional survey area, conditions were much drier this spring than the previous 6 years. These dry conditions are reflected in the Prairie May ponds estimate of 3.9 ± 0.1 million, down 41 percent from 1999 and 20 percent below the 1974-99 average. Conditions ranged from poor in much of Alberta and parts of Montana and Saskatchewan to fair to good in most other areas. Only portions of northern Manitoba and the Dakotas were in excellent condition. In June, much of the prairie received heavy rains. While this may have increased breeding habitat quantity and quality, heavy rains in the Dakotas may have caused flooding and loss of nests. Southern Saskatchewan and Manitoba were in generally fair condition, and the Dakotas were in generally good condition, while most of Northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba were in good to excellent condition. In Alaska, a significant cooling down changed an early warm spring into a cool, late spring, resulting in a 2-3 week later-than-normal ice breakup. In Alaska, a later spring generally results in lower production. Overall, May habitat conditions in the traditional survey area were poor to good, improving to the north and east. July surveys will help determine if recent rain helped duck production.

Winter and spring were also warm and dry in the Eastern survey area. A seemingly early spring cooled down markedly, especially in Labrador, Newfoundland, and Eastern Quebec. In these easternmost regions, spring was 2-3 weeks behind normal. Water levels in southwestern Ontario, Maine, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick are higher this year than last year. However, southern Ontario and southern Quebec are drier than normal. In southwest Ontario, Maine, and the Maritimes,

heavy thunderstorms in May caused severe flooding and may have caused much renesting. Overall, habitat conditions in the east are generally good, with the exception of some areas of southern Ontario and southern/central Quebec, where low water levels resulted in fair to poor habitat conditions. Overall, the survey area was in generally good condition, and production is expected to be good this year.

The 2000 total duck population estimate for the traditional survey area was 41.8 ± 0.7 million birds. This was similar to last year's record estimate of 43.4 ± 0.7 million birds, and still 27 percent above the 1955–99 average. Mallard abundance was 9.5 ± 0.3 million, which is 12 percent below last year's record estimate but still 27 percent above the 1955–99 average. Blue-winged teal abundance was estimated at a record high of 7.4 ± 0.4 million. This was similar to last year's estimate of 7.1 million, and 69 percent above the 1955–99 average. Gadwall (3.2 ± 0.2 , +100 percent), green-winged teal (3.2 ± 0.2 million, +80 percent), northern shovelers (3.5 ± 0.2 million, +73 percent), and redheads (0.9 ± 0.1 million, +50 percent) were all above their long-term averages, while northern pintails (2.9 ± 0.2 million, –33 percent) and scaup (4.0 ± 0.2 million, –25 percent) were again below their long-term averages. Green-winged teal was the only species that increased over 1999, an increase of 21 percent.

This year, new areas have again been included in the Eastern survey area. In addition, we have redefined the total duck composition of this area to include scoters and mergansers, because they are important breeding species in this survey area. Therefore, the eastern 1999 total duck estimate used this year is not the same as that published last year. The 2000 total duck population estimate for the eastern survey area was 2.6 ± 0.3 million birds, similar to last year's total duck estimate of 2.9 ± 0.2 million birds. Abundances of individual species were similar to last year, with the exception of scaup (116.1 ± 32 thousand, +296 percent), scoters (182.1 ± 59 thousand, +288 percent), and green-winged teal (201.6 ± 28.7 thousand, –52 percent).

Status of Teal

Blue-winged teal abundance this spring was a record high of 7.4 ± 0.4 million, which is similar to last year's estimate of 7.1 million and 69 percent above the 1955–99 average. This population size is well above the 4.6 million trigger level needed for the liberal 16-day teal season in the Central and Mississippi Flyways and a 9-day

teal season in the Atlantic Flyway. Green-winged teal abundance was estimated at 3.2 ± 0.2 million, which is 21 percent above last year's estimate and 80 percent above the long-term average.

The 1999–2000 season was the second consecutive year of an extended (16 days vs. 9 days) September teal season in the Central and Mississippi Flyways. Preliminary harvest estimates from last year's September teal season in the Mississippi Flyway indicate that harvest increased from 266,000 to 413,000 teal, an increase of 55 percent over the 1998 September teal season. Preliminary estimates in the Central Flyway indicate that harvest decreased from 160,000 to 126,000 birds, a decrease of 23 percent over the 1998 September teal season. The total estimated harvest in the Mississippi and Central Flyways was 539,000 cinnamon, blue- and green-winged teal, which is 26 percent more than the 1998 September teal season harvests.

Last year, the Atlantic Flyway also participated in the second year of its 3-year experimental September teal season. Six States harvested an estimated 32,000 blue- and green-winged teal, an increase of 33 percent over the 1998 September teal season harvest of 24,000. Additionally, the Atlantic Flyway completed the second year of its required spy blind assessment of attempt rates at nontarget species. Results indicate that the average nontarget attempt rates for 1999 were virtually identical to those in 1998 (19 percent in 1998 vs. 20 percent in 1999). Since only 2 years of the required 3-year study have been completed, results are incomplete at this time. However, we note that a few individual States have exceeded the maximum acceptable nontarget attempt rate of 25 percent. After the third year, we will conduct a full assessment of nontarget attempt rates and review the further continuation of the season.

Sandhill Cranes

The Mid-Continent Population of Sandhill Cranes appears to have stabilized following dramatic increases in the early 1980's. The Central Platte River Valley 2000 preliminary spring index, uncorrected for visibility, was 488,000. The photo-corrected 3-year average for the 1997–99 period was 450,126, which was within the established population-objective range of 343,000–465,000 cranes. All Central Flyway States, except Nebraska, elected to allow crane hunting in portions of their respective States in 1999–2000. About 6,700 hunters participated in these seasons, which was 18 percent

lower than the previous year's seasons. About 19,800 cranes were harvested in 1999–2000 in the Central Flyway, a 7 percent decrease from the previous year's high estimate. Harvests from the Pacific Flyway, Canada, and Mexico are estimated to be about 13,800 for the 1999–2000 sport-hunting seasons. The total North American sport harvest, including crippling losses, was estimated to be about 37,207 for the Mid-Continent Population.

The fall 1999 premigration survey estimate for the Rocky Mountain Population was 19,501, which is similar to the 1998 estimate of 18,202. Limited special seasons were held during 1999 in portions of Arizona, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming, resulting in an estimated harvest of 658 cranes.

Woodcock

Singing-ground and Wing-collection surveys were conducted to assess the population status of the American woodcock (*Scolopax minor*). Singing-ground Survey data from 2000 indicate that the number of displaying woodcock in the Eastern Region decreased 11.0 percent ($P < 0.1$) from 1999 levels. In the Central Region, there was a 10.4 percent increase in the number of woodcock heard displaying ($P < 0.1$) compared to 1999 levels. Trends from the Singing-ground Survey during 1990–00 were negative (–3.5 and –3.1 percent per year for the Eastern and Central regions, respectively; $P < 0.01$). There were long-term (1968–00) declines ($P < 0.01$) of 2.3 percent per year in the Eastern Region and 1.6 percent per year in the Central Region.

The 1999 recruitment index for the Eastern Region (1.1 immatures per adult female) was 35 percent below the long-term regional average; the recruitment index for the Central Region (1.2 immatures per adult female) was 29 percent below the long-term regional average. The index of daily hunting success in the Eastern Region increased from 1.9 woodcock per successful hunt in 1998 to 2.0 woodcock per successful hunt in 1999, and seasonal hunting success increased 3 percent, from 7.2 to 7.4 woodcock per successful hunter in 1998 and 1999, respectively. In the Central Region, the daily success index in 1999 was unchanged from the 1998 index (2.1 woodcock per successful hunt) but the seasonal success index decreased 11 percent from 11.3 to 10.0 woodcock per successful hunter.

Band-Tailed Pigeons and Doves

The status of the Coastal population of band-tailed pigeons appears to be improving. While a significant decline

occurred between 1968–99 as indicated by the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), no trend was indicated over the most recent 10 years. Additionally, mineral site counts at 10 selected sites in Oregon indicate a steady increase over the past 10 years. The count in 1999 was 65 percent above the previous 31-year average. Call-count surveys conducted in Washington showed a nonsignificant decline between the 1975–99 and 1995–99 periods. Washington has opted not to select a hunting season for bandtails since 1991. The harvest of Coastal pigeons is estimated to be about 23,000 birds out of a population of about 3 million. The Interior band-tailed pigeon population is stable with no trend indicated by the BBS over the short- or long-term periods. Harvest estimates range from 1,300 to 1,900 birds. Analyses of Mourning Dove Call-count Survey data indicated significant declines in doves heard over the most recent 10 years and the entire 35 years of the survey in all three management units. A project has been funded recently to develop mourning dove population models for each unit to provide guidance in what needs to be done to improve our decision-making process with respect to harvest management. White-winged doves in Arizona are maintaining a fairly stable population since the 1970's. Between 1999 and 2000, the average number of doves heard per route doubled from 25 to 50. A low harvest (142,000 in 1999) is being maintained compared with birds taken several decades ago. In Texas, the phenomenon of the white-winged dove expansion continues. The population in the Lower Rio Grande Valley increased 19 percent from 1999 to an estimated 507,000 birds; in Upper South Texas, the count increased 7 percent to 999,000; and, in West Texas, the count increased 94 percent to 33,000. The whitewing population may reach epidemic proportions in 5–10 years and could begin causing substantial damage to agricultural crops being grown near cities that have a large population of whitewings. Hunting does not appear to be having any effect upon these norther urban nesters.

Review of Public Comments

The preliminary proposed rulemaking, which appeared in the April 25 **Federal Register**, opened the public comment period for migratory game bird hunting regulations. The supplemental proposed rule, which appeared in the June 20 **Federal Register**, defined the public comment period for the proposed regulatory alternatives for the 2000–01 duck hunting season. The public comment

period for the proposed regulatory alternatives ended July 7, 2000. Early-season comments and comments pertaining to the proposed alternatives are summarized below and numbered in the order used in the April 25 **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 direct 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 April 25, 2000, **Federal Register** document.

1. Ducks

Categories used to discuss issues related to duck harvest management are: (A) Harvest Strategy Considerations, (B) Regulatory Alternatives, (C) Zones and Split Seasons, and (D) Special Seasons/Species Management. The categories correspond to previously published issues/discussion, and only those containing substantial recommendations are discussed below.

A. Harvest Strategy Considerations

Council Recommendations: The Atlantic Flyway Council recommended that duck hunting regulations in the Atlantic Flyway for the 2000–01 season be based on the optimal harvest strategy for eastern mallards.

Service Response: In the June 20, 2000, **Federal Register** document, we proposed to modify the existing Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) protocol to account for the status of mallards breeding in eastern North America. Based on a technical assessment completed in January 2000 (available on the Internet at <http://migratorybirds.fws.gov/reports/reports.html>), there appear to be two possible approaches to modifying the current AHM protocol. The first would

involve a single joint optimization of midcontinent and eastern mallard harvests. This approach would result in optimal regulatory choices for the Atlantic Flyway and for the remaining Flyways as a group for each possible combination of midcontinent population size, pond numbers in Canada, and eastern mallard population size. The characteristic feature of this approach is that all regulatory choices, regardless of harvest area, would be predicated on the status of both midcontinent and eastern mallards (with the degree of dependence based on each harvest area's unique combination of mallard populations). The second alternative would entail two separate harvest optimizations, in which the Atlantic Flyway regulation would be based solely on the status of eastern mallards, and the regulatory choice for the remainder of the country would be based solely on the status of midcontinent mallards. Both alternatives would be expected to significantly increase the frequency of liberal regulations in the Atlantic Flyway.

The recent technical assessment of AHM for eastern mallards formally considered only the large-scale status of mallard populations, and not the status of local breeding populations or segments of populations with affinities for certain wintering areas. Thus, it is not clear how AHM for eastern mallards might affect mallards at relatively small spatial scales. Some concern has been expressed regarding potential impacts of a modified AHM protocol on midcontinent mallards breeding in the Great Lakes States, and for midcontinent mallards that winter in the southern Atlantic Flyway. For those mallards breeding in the Great Lakes States and wintering in the Mississippi Flyway, a single, joint optimization of midcontinent and eastern mallards could result in a higher frequency of more liberal regulations in the Mississippi Flyway than would be the case in the absence of an accounting for eastern mallards. Only a small proportion (about 4 percent based on recent analyses) of Great Lakes' mallards winter in the Atlantic Flyway, so regulations there should have minimal impact on this population segment. On the other hand, the southern Atlantic Flyway derives a relatively high proportion of its wintering mallards from the midcontinent population, and it's not clear how a modified AHM protocol might affect this population segment.

Also, the recent assessment of AHM for eastern mallards did not formally consider potential impacts on species

other than mallards. Although the concern for other species is heightened by the prospect of more frequent liberal regulations in the Atlantic Flyway, the issue is no less a concern under the existing AHM protocol. Therefore, it is imperative to move quickly to consider how other key species might be incorporated into the AHM protocol. However, we reiterate that a full-featured AHM approach for all species is not realistic, and that concerns over many species necessarily will be handled on an as-needed basis.

The decision about how to account for eastern mallards in AHM would not affect the specification of the regulatory alternatives. The prescribed regulatory alternative for the Atlantic Flyway would consist of one of the existing regulatory alternatives. The only change is that the regulatory alternative prescribed for the Atlantic Flyway might differ from that prescribed for the remainder of the country. The Atlantic Flyway Council will have the opportunity to consider changes to the set of regulatory alternatives at the same time as the other Flyway Councils. The AHM technical working group is currently developing a recommended schedule and criteria for such changes.

We support appropriate modifications to the existing AHM protocol to account for eastern mallards, and will consider the implications discussed in the referenced technical report, as well as all public comment, in proposing a regulatory alternative for the Atlantic Flyway for the 2000–01 hunting season. In the meantime, we seek further discussion and review of this issue among the Flyway Councils at their joint meeting in July 2000. Modifications, if any, to the current AHM protocol will be proposed along with the late-season regulatory frameworks.

B. Regulatory Alternatives

Council Recommendations: The Upper-Region Regulations Committee of the Mississippi Flyway Council recommended that the regulations alternatives from 1999 be used in 2000, except that the framework opening and closing dates in all alternatives should be the Saturday nearest September 23 to the Sunday nearest January 28, with appropriate offsets (e.g., reduction in season length) as determined by the Service.

The Lower-Region Regulations Committee of the Mississippi Flyway Council recommended that the framework opening and closing dates in all regulatory alternatives should be the Saturday nearest September 23 to the

Sunday nearest January 28, with no penalties in season length.

The Central Flyway Council recommended the continued use of the 1999 regulatory alternatives for the 2000–01 season, but with modifications. The Council recommended a framework opening date of the Saturday closest to September 24 in the “liberal” and “moderate” regulatory alternatives with no offsets, and a framework closing date of the Sunday closest to January 25. Additionally, the Council recommended that no additional changes be allowed to the alternatives for a 5-year period.

The Pacific Flyway Council recommended that the set of regulatory alternatives for the 2000–01 hunting season remain unchanged from those adopted in 1999.

Service Response: Due to the continuing absence of agreement among States and Flyways about how best to modify framework dates, no changes were made to the regulatory alternatives proposed in the June 20, 2000 **Federal Register**. We reiterate that our desire is to maintain current framework-date specifications through the 2002–03 hunting season, or until such time that the Flyway Councils can develop an approach that adequately addresses the concerns of the Service and a majority of States.

For the 2000–01 regular duck hunting season, we will use the four regulatory alternatives detailed in the accompanying table. Alternatives are specified for each Flyway and are designated as “VERY RES” for the very restrictive, “RES” for the restrictive, “MOD” for the moderate, and “LIB” for the liberal alternative. We will propose a specific regulatory alternative in early August when survey data on waterfowl population and habitat status are available.

D. Special Seasons/Species Management

iii. September Teal Seasons

Council Recommendations: The Central Flyway Council recommended that Nebraska be allowed to have an experimental 9-day teal season in the nonproduction area of the State.

Service Response: We concur with the Central Flyway Council’s recommendation for an experimental 9-day special September teal season in the nonproduction area of Nebraska. The State would be required to evaluate the impacts to nontarget waterfowl species by conducting hunter performance surveys. This season will be experimental for a 3-year period but must include a pre-sunrise evaluation in order to have shooting hours begin ½-hour before sunrise.

iv. September Teal/Wood Duck Seasons

Council Recommendations: The Lower-Region Regulations Committee of the Mississippi Flyway Council requested that the Service and the Council’s Wood Duck Technical Committee move forward during the current year (2000) to allow for implementation of a wood duck Flyway harvest management strategy by the year 2001 as scheduled. The Committee further recommended that September seasons remain an option for delineated wood duck reference areas (population units), provided that specified data-collection requirements are met.

Written Comments: Three individuals questioned the rationale for the Service’s decision to terminate September teal/wood duck seasons when information indicating that such seasons are detrimental to wood duck populations seems to be lacking.

Service Response: September teal/wood duck seasons in Florida, Kentucky, and Tennessee have been in an experimental status since their inception in 1981. We have consistently requested that States collect information to evaluate these special seasons, including hunter and harvest surveys, banding, and population surveys. In 1986, due to decreases in wood duck survival rates in Kentucky and Tennessee, we restricted the bag limit during Experimental September teal/wood duck seasons to include no more than two wood ducks. At that time, we also noted that preseason wood duck banding in Florida was not sufficient to allow assessment of the impacts associated with the Experimental September season (51 FR 24418). On March 13, 1987 (52 FR 7997), we indicated that although September teal/wood duck seasons are in principle a feasible harvest management strategy, the situation with regard to their evaluation, including flyway-wide aspects of the management of target species, and their suitability for widespread application was under review. At that time, we also reaffirmed the need for cooperative studies that are flyway-oriented in scope to better understand and manage wood ducks. On June 6, 1990 (55 FR 23179), we noted that preseason banding programs were not meeting the regional requirements for sample size and distribution necessary to evaluate special seasons for wood ducks on a State-by-State basis. We stated that unless arrangements could be made to initiate regional banding programs and facilitate widespread data collection, experimental seasons may be modified or suspended (55 FR 23179). During

1991–96, a cooperative Wood Duck Population Monitoring-Initiative was undertaken by the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyway Councils and the Service to improve population-monitoring programs. We agreed not to discontinue or expand Experimental September teal/wood duck seasons until the Initiative was completed. Results from the Initiative indicated that wood duck population-monitoring programs at geographic scales below the flyway level were not meeting requisite sample sizes. Our evaluation of September teal/wood duck seasons in Florida, Kentucky, and Tennessee indicated that estimates of population parameters for individual States are usually imprecise, which precludes drawing meaningful conclusions about State or regional wood duck harvest-management experiments (63 FR 13751).

On August 28, 1998 (63 FR 46126), we stated our intent to discontinue September teal/wood duck seasons in Florida, Kentucky, and Tennessee after September 2000, due to our inability to adequately evaluate such seasons. We also stated that, without adequate regional population monitoring, wood duck harvest management should be approached at the flyway level during the regular season. During the interim, a flyway-wide harvest strategy was to be developed and ready for implementation during the 2001–02 regular season. We met with representatives from the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyway Council Technical Sections in September 1999 to discuss technical aspects of flyway wood duck harvest strategies. Development of the technical foundation for the strategy commenced following the working group meeting. A progress report of this work will be made at the Flyway Council meetings in July 2000. It is likely that several Technical Section representatives will be asked to attend a follow-up meeting in the Fall to address Council concerns and suggestions for a flyway wood duck harvest strategy. A draft harvest strategy will be distributed to Technical Sections prior to their February 2001 meetings. A final harvest strategy will be forwarded to the Flyway Councils for their consideration prior to their March 2001 meeting.

September wood duck seasons remain an option for delineated wood duck population units, provided that regional data-collection requirements are met. Such seasons should not be approached on a State-by-State basis. The final report of the Wood Duck Population-Monitoring Initiative outlined many of the sample size requirements needed for regional monitoring programs. We point

out that the Initiative represented a period when Federal and State cooperators made special efforts to improve regional wood duck monitoring programs. The final report of the Initiative indicated that this goal was not achieved. Before a proposal for regional September wood duck seasons is considered in the future, we request that the Flyway Councils review the results of the Initiative and indicate how failure to achieve requisite regional sample sizes in the past will be avoided in the future.

v. Youth Hunt

Council Recommendations: The Lower-Region Regulations Committee of the Mississippi Flyway Council recommended a special 2-day youth waterfowl hunt for the 2000–01 season.

The Central Flyway Council recommended expansion of the special youth waterfowl hunt to 2 days.

The Pacific Flyway Council recommended that the Service allow States the opportunity to select up to 2 consecutive days for a youth waterfowl hunt outside the general season and frameworks in 2000.

Service Response: In light of the continuing interest from the Flyway Councils, we have decided to expand the special youth waterfowl hunt to 2 consecutive days. Anecdotal data suggest that the special hunt has proven to be very popular and has provided an excellent opportunity to introduce youth hunters to the sport of waterfowling and waterfowl and wetland conservation. Expansion of the special hunt to 2 consecutive days should reduce travel difficulties and scheduling conflicts inherent with the current 1-day hunt.

Based on the limited number of youths participating, we do not expect any significant increase in harvest due to the expansion of the opportunity, and thus no significant impact on waterfowl populations.

4. Canada Geese

A. Special Seasons

Council Recommendations: The Upper-Region Regulations Committee of the Mississippi Flyway Council recommended that the three counties near Saginaw Bay in Michigan (Huron, Saginaw, and Tuscola), which previously have been closed in the special early Canada goose season, be allowed an experimental special early season with a two-bird daily bag limit.

The Lower-Region Regulations Committee of the Mississippi Flyway Council urged the Service to use caution in changing or expanding special goose seasons.

The Central Flyway Council recommended that the framework closing date for operational September Canada goose seasons in the Central Flyway be extended to September 30 with no additional evaluation required.

The Pacific Flyway Council recommended that Wyoming's daily bag and season limits be increased from 2 and 4, to 3 and 6 birds, respectively, and that the bag and possession limits for Washington's September season increase from 3 and 6, to 5 and 10, respectively.

Service Response: Results of the previous experimental season in the three Saginaw-Bay Counties in Michigan indicated a substantial proportion of migrant Canada geese in the special-season harvest. The current proposal for a repetition of the experiment documents a significant increase in the number of resident Canada geese in the area since that time, but information concerning the population composition during the first half of September is sketchy. We agree that the change in resident Canada goose numbers warrants another experiment, but because of the small amount of information about the proportion of migrants in early September, we feel that the season should not extend beyond September 10.

We do not support the Central Flyway recommendation to remove evaluation requirements (August 29, 1995 **Federal Register**) for Special September Canada goose seasons for the period between September 16–30. Past experience with these special seasons has shown seasons during September 1–15 generally achieve the objective of targeting resident Canada geese and this period has been designated as operational. In contrast, harvests during the period of September 16–30 has indicated an increasing proportional take of migrant stocks of geese. We have no experience with special seasons in the Central Flyway during September 16–30, and the impacts on nontarget populations of Canada geese have not been determined. Although impacts to nontarget populations of Canada geese that are over objective levels may not be of immediate concern, we believe that evaluation during this period is necessary to insure that the objective of targeting resident geese is maintained. According to established special season guidelines, Central Flyway States have the option to conduct an experimental hunt during the late-September period with an appropriate evaluation. Although collection of neck collar data may not be possible due to low numbers of marked geese, current guidelines

allow for the use of morphological information of harvested geese to access the proportion of migrant geese during this period. Because migrant Canada geese are limited to small subspecies of the Tall Grass Prairie Population in the East-Tier States and the Short Grass Prairie Population in the West-Tier States, we believe that tail fan measurements of harvested geese will be sufficient to determine the proportion of harvested migrant geese. In the event that States are interested in conducting an experimental season during this period, we will cooperatively work with State personnel to determine appropriate sample sizes necessary to access proportional harvests of migrant Canada geese as required by existing guidelines for the experimental seasons.

Regarding the Lower-Region Regulation Committee's concern for cumulative impacts of special-season harvests on migrant Canada goose populations of concern, we are aware of the Committee's concern and are monitoring the harvests occurring during these seasons.

We concur with the Pacific Flyway Council recommendation.

B. Regular Seasons

Council Recommendations: The Upper-Region Regulations Committee of the Mississippi Flyway Council recommended that the 1999 regular-goose-season opening date be as early as September 16 in Michigan and Wisconsin. The Committee further recommended that the framework opening date for regular goose seasons in the Mississippi Flyway be September 16.

The Central Flyway Council recommended that the framework opening date for regular dark-goose seasons in the East and West Tiers be fixed at September 1, rather than the current opening date of the Saturday nearest October 1.

Service Response: We do not support the Central Flyway's recommendation for changing the dark-goose framework opening dates from the Saturday nearest October 1 to September 1 or the Mississippi Flyway's light-and-dark-goose seasons from the Saturday nearest October 1 to September 16. We have minimal experience with regular goose seasons that begin prior to the Saturday nearest October 1 and believe that management of several migratory goose populations would require complex spacial and temporal considerations within this period to address needs of various populations. The change in the framework opening date to earlier in September would require the movement of goose frameworks from the late-to the

early-season process and, for some populations, would result in a serious timing problem in that decisions would have to be made prior to having breeding-ground information. We are also developing a management strategy for resident Canada geese that will allow for States to have more flexibility in addressing human/goose conflicts caused by growing populations of resident geese, and we believe that changes such as this may impede progress.

9. Sandhill Cranes

Council Recommendations: The Central Flyway Council recommended a 95-day season with the option for a two-way split season for the hunting of Mid-Continent sandhill cranes. This change would result in a 37-day season length increase in North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado and a 2-day season length increase in Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico.

The Council further recommended that the open area for the hunting of Mid-Continent sandhill cranes be extended eastward to the Mississippi Flyway. The Council recommends a season length of 37 days with outside framework dates of September 1 and February 28, and a daily bag/possession limit of 3 and 9, respectively, for this expanded area.

The Pacific Flyway Council recommended a boundary modification in Box Elder County, Utah, to exclude that portion of the County known to be used by greater sandhill cranes affiliated with the Lower Colorado River Population.

Service Response: We do not support the Central Flyway Council's recommendations to liberalize hunting seasons on the Mid-Continent Population of sandhill cranes. We believe that last year's hunting regulations should be maintained until ongoing satellite-transmitter tracking studies are completed. Recent genetic information on subspecies composition has further complicated management of the two identified subpopulations. We believe that information regarding the population status and harvests of the two subpopulations must be further refined before additional changes are implemented. Annual indices to the total Mid-Continent Population remain stable; however, harvests continue to increase. The proposed regulations changes along the eastern portion of the Mid-Continent range in the Flyway would affect the Gulf Coast Subpopulation, which contains almost all of the greater sandhill cranes in this population.

We concur with the Pacific Flyway Council recommendation.

12. Rails

Council Recommendations: The Pacific Flyway Council recommended that those States divided between the Central and Pacific Flyways be allowed to select rail-season frameworks, on a statewide basis, that conform with the Central Management Unit frameworks.

Service Response: We concur.

13. Snipe

Council Recommendations: The Pacific Flyway Council recommended that those States divided between the Central and Pacific Flyways be allowed to select snipe-season frameworks, on a statewide basis, that conform with the Central Management Unit frameworks.

Service Response: We concur.

14. Woodcock

Written Comments: An individual from Minnesota felt that the daily bag limit for woodcock should be four birds, and that the framework opening date for the Mississippi Flyway should be September 1, rather than the Saturday nearest September 22.

Service Response: In response to long-term population declines, we implemented several framework changes in 1997 to reduce the harvest of woodcock. In the Central Region, the bag limit was reduced from five to three birds, season length was reduced from 65 to 45 days, and the framework opening date was changed to the Saturday nearest September 22 (rather than September 1). Based on harvest information for various bag limits, it was determined that a reduction from five to three birds was necessary to achieve a meaningful reduction in harvest. Furthermore, a framework opening date of the Saturday nearest September 22 was contained in an interim woodcock harvest strategy proposed by the Mississippi Flyway Council in 1997 (62 FR 44232). The framework date we adopted reflected the opening date proposed in the Flyway Council strategy.

15. Band-tailed Pigeons

Council Recommendations: The Pacific Flyway Council recommended a change in frameworks for Pacific Coast band-tailed pigeons from 1999 to increase the possession limit from two to four birds.

Service Response: We concur.

16. Mourning Doves

Council Recommendations: The Pacific Flyway Council recommended that those States divided between the

Central and Pacific Flyways be allowed to select dove season frameworks, on a statewide basis, that conform with the Central Management Unit frameworks.

Service Response: We concur.

18. Alaska

Council Recommendations: The Pacific Flyway Council recommended a reduction in sandhill crane bag limits from three to two in that portion of the State associated with the Pacific Flyway Population of lesser sandhill cranes.

Service Response: We concur.

Public Comment Invited

The Department of the Interior's policy is, whenever practicable, to afford the public an opportunity to participate in the rulemaking process. We intend that adopted final rules be as responsive as possible to all concerned interests and, therefore, seek the comments and suggestions of the public, other concerned governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and other private interests on these proposals. Accordingly, we invite interested persons to submit written comments, suggestions, or recommendations regarding the proposed regulations to the address indicated under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

Special circumstances involved in the establishment of these regulations limit the amount of time that we can allow for public comment. Specifically, two considerations compress the time in which the rulemaking process must operate: (1) The need to establish final rules at a point early enough in the summer to allow affected State agencies to appropriately adjust their licensing and regulatory mechanisms; and (2) the unavailability, before mid-June, of specific, reliable data on this year's status of some waterfowl and migratory shore and upland game bird populations. Therefore, we believe that to allow comment periods past the dates specified is contrary to the public interest.

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 inspect comments received on the proposed annual regulations during normal business hours at the Service's office in room 634, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Arlington, Virginia. 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.

However, as in the past, we will summarize all comments received during the comment period and respond to them after the closing date in the final rule.

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 a 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). Copies are available from the address indicated under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

Endangered Species Act Consideration

Prior to issuance of the 2000-01 migratory game bird hunting regulations, we will consider 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 that the proposed action 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 proposed rulemakings.

Executive Order 12866

While this individual supplemental rule was not reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the migratory bird hunting regulations are economically significant and are annually reviewed by OMB under Executive Order 12866. Executive Order 12866 requires each agency to write regulations that are easy to understand. We invite comments on how to make this rule easier to understand, including answers to questions such as the following: (1) Are the requirements in the rule clearly stated? (2) Does the rule contain technical language or jargon that interferes with its clarity? (3) Does the format of the rule (grouping and order of sections, use of headings, paragraphing, etc.) aid or reduce its clarity? (4) Would the rule be easier to understand if it were divided into more (but shorter) sections? (5) Is the description of the rule in the "Supplementary Information" section of the preamble helpful in understanding the rule? What else could we do to make the rule easier to understand?

Regulatory Flexibility Act

These 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 and issued a Small Entity Flexibility Analysis (Analysis) in 1998. The Analysis documented the significant beneficial economic effect on a substantial number of small entities. 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 Analysis was based on the 1996 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 between \$429 million and \$1,084 million at small businesses in 1998. Copies of the Analysis are available upon request from the address indicated under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

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. We utilize the various recordkeeping and reporting requirements imposed under regulations established in 50 CFR part 20, Subpart K, in the formulation of migratory game bird hunting regulations. Specifically, OMB has approved the information collection requirements of the Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program and assigned clearance number 1018-0015 (expires 9/30/2001). 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 Sandhill Crane Harvest Questionnaire and assigned clearance number 1018-0023 (expires 9/30/2000). The information from this survey is used to estimate the

magnitude and the geographical and temporal distribution of harvest, and the portion it constitutes of the total population. 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 Act, 2 U.S.C. 1502 *et seq.*, that this rulemaking will not "significantly or uniquely" affect small governments, and will not produce a Federal mandate of \$100 million or more in any given year on local or State government or private entities. Therefore, this proposed 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 rule will not unduly burden the judicial system and 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, this rule will allow hunters to exercise otherwise unavailable privileges, and, therefore, reduces restrictions on the use of private and public property.

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 and 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 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 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 12612, 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 2000–01 hunting season are authorized under 16 U.S.C. 703–712 and 16 U.S.C. 742 a–j.

Dated: July 24, 2000.

Stephen C. Saunders,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

Proposed Regulations Frameworks for 2000–01 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 for certain migratory game birds between September 1, 2000, and March 10, 2001.

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.

Compensatory Days in the Atlantic Flyway: In the Atlantic Flyway States of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West 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, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia,

and West Virginia. All seasons are experimental.

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. The season in Nebraska is experimental.

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, except in Nebraska where the season is not to exceed 9 consecutive days. The daily bag limit is 4 teal.

Shooting Hours:

Atlantic Flyway—One-half hour before sunrise to sunset, if evaluated; otherwise 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: 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.

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 23). 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 2 consecutive 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 limit may include ducks, geese, mergansers, coots, moorhens, and gallinules and would be the same as that 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 could not duck hunt but may participate in other seasons that are open on the special youth day.

Scoter, Eider, and Oldsquaw Ducks (Atlantic Flyway)

Outside Dates: Between September 15 and January 20.

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 Montezuma Region of New York, the Lake Champlain Region of New York and Vermont, the Eastern Unit of Maryland, and Delaware. Seasons not to exceed 20 days during September 1–20 may be selected for the Northeast Hunt Unit of North Carolina. Seasons not to exceed 30 days during September 1–30 may be selected by New Jersey. Seasons may not exceed 25 days during September 1–25 in the remainder of the Flyway, except Georgia and Florida, where the season is closed. 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 5 Canada geese.

Experimental Seasons: Experimental Canada goose seasons of up to 20 days during September 1–20 may be selected by New York (Montezuma Region). Experimental seasons of up to 30 days during September 1–30 may be selected by New York (Long Island Zone), North Carolina (except in the Northeast Hunt Unit), and South Carolina. 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 5 Canada geese.

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. 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.

Experimental Seasons: An experimental Canada goose season of up to 7 consecutive days during September 16–22 may be selected by Minnesota, except in the Northwest Goose Zone. The daily bag limit may not exceed 5 Canada geese.

An experimental 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 2 Canada geese.

Central Flyway

General Seasons: 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.

Pacific Flyway

General Seasons: 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. All participants must have a valid State permit for the special season.
3. A daily bag limit of 3, with season and possession limits of 6 will apply to the special season.

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, a 15-day season may be selected during the period September 1–20. Any portion of the season selected between September 16 and 20 will be considered experimental. Daily bag limits may not exceed 5 Canada geese. In the NW goose zone, at a minimum, Oregon must provide an annual evaluation of the number of dusky Canada geese present in the hunt zone during the period September 16–20 and agree to adjust seasons as necessary to avoid any potential harvest of dusky Canada geese.

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.

Idaho may select a 15-day season in the special East Canada Goose Zone, as described in State regulations, during the period September 1–15. All participants must have a valid State permit, and the total number of permits issued is not to exceed 110 for this zone. The daily bag limit is 2.

Idaho may select a 7-day Canada Goose Season during the period September 1–15 in Nez Perce County, with a bag limit of 4.

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

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 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.

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, the requirement for monitoring the racial composition of the harvest in the experimental season is waived, and 100 percent of the harvest will be assigned to the RMP quota;

(2) In Arizona, the annual requirement for monitoring the racial composition of the harvest is changed to once every 3 years; and

(3) In Idaho, seasons are experimental, and the requirement for monitoring the racial composition of the harvest is waived; 100 percent of the harvest will be assigned to the RMP quota.

Common Moorhens and Purple Gallinules

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and January 20 in the Atlantic Flyway,

and between September 1 and the Sunday nearest January 20 (January 21) in the 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.

Rails

Outside Dates: States included herein may select seasons between September 1 and January 20 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 two 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.

American Woodcock

Outside Dates: States in the Eastern Management Region may select hunting seasons between October 6 and January 31. States in the Central Management Region may select hunting seasons between the Saturday nearest September 22 (September 23) 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 bag and possession limits of 2 and 4 band-tailed pigeons, respectively.

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 4.

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 12, or not more than 60 days with a daily bag limit of 15.

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. The hunting seasons in the South Zones of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi may commence no earlier than September 20. 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, or not more than 60 days with a daily bag limit of 15.

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. Each zone may have a daily bag limit of 12 doves (15 under the alternative) in the aggregate, no more than 2 of which may be white-tipped doves, except that during the special white-winged dove season, the daily bag limit may not exceed 10 white-winged, mourning, and white-tipped doves in the aggregate, of which no more than 5 may be mourning doves and 2 may be white-tipped doves.

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, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington—Not more than 30 consecutive days with a daily bag limit of 10 mourning doves (in Nevada, 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 restricted to 10 mourning doves. In California, 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 in Arizona, California, Florida, Nevada, New Mexico, and Texas must be concurrent with mourning dove seasons.

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 Florida, the daily bag limit may not exceed 12 mourning and white-winged doves (15 under the alternative) in the aggregate, of which no more than 4 may be white-winged doves.

In 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 New Mexico, the daily bag limit may not exceed 12 mourning and white-winged doves (15 under the alternative) in the aggregate.

In Texas, the daily bag limit may not exceed 12 doves (15 under the alternative) in the aggregate, of which not more than 2 may be white-tipped doves.

In addition, Texas may also 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 10 white-winged, mourning, and white-tipped doves in the aggregate, of which no more than 5 may be mourning doves and 2 may be white-tipped doves.

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 five zones. The season may be split without penalty in the Kodiak Zone. The seasons in each zone must be concurrent.

Closures: The season is closed on Canada geese from Unimak Pass westward in the Aleutian Island chain. The hunting season is closed on Aleutian Canada geese, 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, respectively. The basic limits may include no more than 1 canvasback daily and 3 in possession.

In addition to the basic duck limits, there is a sea duck daily bag limit of 10, with a possession limit of 20, scoter, common and king eiders, and common and red-breasted mergansers, singly or in the aggregate. Alaska may choose to allow these sea duck limits in addition to regular duck bag limits. However, the total daily bag limit for any duck species may not exceed 10.

Light Geese—A basic daily bag limit of 3 and a possession limit of 6.

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. A special, permit-only Canada goose season may be offered on Middleton Island. No more than 10 permits can be issued. A mandatory goose identification class is required.

Hunters must check-in and check-out. Bag limit of 1 daily and 1 in possession. Season to 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.

2. In Unit 10 (except Unimak Island), the taking of Canada geese is prohibited.

3. In Unit 9(D) and the Unimak Island portion of Unit 10, the limits for dark geese are 6 daily and 12 in possession.

Brant—A daily bag limit of 2.

Common snipe—A daily bag limit of 8.

Sandhill cranes—Bag and possession limit of 2 and 4, respectively, in the Southeast, Gulf Coast, Kodiak, Aleutian, 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) 18, no more than 500 swans may be harvested 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.

4. In GMU 22, no more than 300 swans may be harvested 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.

5. In GMU 23, no more than 300 swans may be harvested during the experimental season. No more than 3 tundra swans may be authorized per permit with no more than 1 permit issued per hunter per season. The experimental season evaluation must adhere to the guidelines for experimental seasons as described in the Pacific Flyway Management Plan for the Western Population of (Tundra) Swans.

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 10 Zenaida, mourning, and white-winged doves in the aggregate. Not to exceed 5 scaly-naped pigeons.

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 shall 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 shall 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, Conecuh, 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.
- Georgia
Northern Zone—That portion of the State lying north of a line running west to east along U.S. Highway 280 from Columbus to Wilcox County, thence southward along the western border of Wilcox County; thence east along the southern border of Wilcox County to the Ocmulgee River, thence north along the Ocmulgee River to Highway 280, thence east along Highway 280 to the Little Ocmulgee River; thence southward along the Little Ocmulgee River to the Ocmulgee River; thence southwesterly along the Ocmulgee River to the western border of Jeff Davis County; thence south along the western border of Jeff Davis County; thence east along the southern border of Jeff Davis and Appling Counties; thence north along the eastern border of Appling County, to the Altamaha River; thence east to the eastern border of Tattnall County; thence north along the eastern border of Tattnall County; thence north along the western border of Evans to Candler County; thence east along the northern border of Evans County to U.S. Highway 301; thence northeast along U.S. Highway 301 to the South Carolina line.
South Zone—Remainder of the State.
- Louisiana
North Zone—That portion of the State north of Interstate Highway 10 from the Texas State line to Baton Rouge, Interstate Highway 12 from Baton Rouge to Slidell and Interstate Highway 10 from Slidell to the Mississippi State line.
South Zone—The remainder of the State.
- Mississippi
South Zone—The Counties of Forrest, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Lamar, Marion, Pearl River, Perry, Pike, Stone, and Walthall.
North Zone—The remainder of the State.
- Nevada
White-winged Dove Open Areas—Clark and Nye Counties.
- 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 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 Uvalde; south on U.S. 83 to TX 44; east along TX 44 to TX 16 at Freer; south along TX 16 to TX 285 at Hebronville; 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.
- Maryland
Eastern Unit—Anne Arundel, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Harford, Kent, Queen Annes, St. Marys, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties, and those portions of Baltimore, Howard, and Prince George's Counties east of I-95.
Western Unit—Allegany, Carroll, Frederick, Garrett, Montgomery, and Washington Counties, and those portions of Baltimore, Howard, and Prince George's Counties west of I-95.
- 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 shall 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—Counties of Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Hyde, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, and Washington.

South Carolina

Early-season Hunt Unit—Clarendon County and those portions of Orangeburg County north of SC Highway 6 and Berkeley County north of SC Highway 45 from the Orangeburg County line to the junction of SC Highway 45 and State Road S-8-31 and west of the Santee Dam.

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: The remaining portion of Vermont.

Mississippi Flyway

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 east from the Iowa border along Illinois Highway 92 to Interstate Highway 280, east along I-280 to I-80, then east along I-80 to the Indiana border.

Central Zone: That portion of the State outside the Northeast Canada Goose Zone and south of the North Zone to a line extending east from the Missouri border along the Modoc Ferry route to Modoc Ferry Road, east along Modoc Ferry Road to Modoc Road, northeasterly along Modoc Road and St. Leo's Road to Illinois Highway 3, north along Illinois 3 to Illinois 159, north along Illinois 159 to Illinois 161, east along Illinois 161 to Illinois 4, north along Illinois 4 to Interstate Highway 70, east along I-70 to the Bond County line, north and east along the Bond County line to Fayette County, north and east along the Fayette County line to Effingham County, east and south along the Effingham County line to I-70, then east along I-70 to the Indiana border.

South Zone: The remainder of Illinois.

Iowa

North Zone: That portion of the State north of a line extending east from the Nebraska border along State Highway 175 to State 37, southeast along State 37 to U.S. Highway 59, south along U.S. 59 to Interstate Highway 80, then east along I-80 to the Illinois border.

South Zone: The remainder of Iowa.

Michigan

North Zone: The Upper Peninsula.

Middle Zone: That portion of the Lower Peninsula north of a line beginning at the Wisconsin border in Lake Michigan due west of the mouth of Stony Creek in Oceana County; then due east to, and easterly and southerly along the south shore of, Stony Creek to Scenic Drive, easterly and southerly along Scenic Drive to Stony Lake Road, easterly along Stony Lake and Garfield Roads to Michigan Highway 20, east along Michigan 20 to U.S. Highway 10 Business Route (BR) in the city of Midland, east along U.S. 10 BR to U.S. 10, east along U.S. 10 to Interstate Highway 75/U.S. Highway 23, north along I-75/U.S. 23 to the U.S. 23 exit at Standish, east along U.S. 23 to Shore Road in Arenac County, east along Shore Road to the tip of Point Lookout, then on a line directly east 10 miles into Saginaw Bay, and from that point on a line directly northeast to the Canada border.

South Zone: The remainder of Michigan.

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.

Two Goose Zone—That portion of the State lying east of Interstate Highway 35 and south of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Canada Goose Zone.

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

Kansas

September Canada Goose Unit—That part of Kansas bounded by a line from

the Kansas-Missouri State line west on KS-68 to its junction with KS-33, then north on KS-33 to its junction with US-56, then west on US-56 to its junction with KS-31, then west-northwest on KS-31 to its junction with KS-99, then north on KS-99 to its junction with US-24, then east on US-24 to its junction with KS-63, then north on KS-63 to its junction with KS-16, then east on KS-16 to its junction with KS-116, then east on KS-116 to its junction with US-59, then northeast on US-59 to its junction with the Kansas-Missouri line, then south on the Kansas-Missouri line to its junction with KS-68.

North Dakota

Special Early Canada Goose Unit—Richland and Sargent Counties.

South Dakota

September Canada Goose Unit—Brookings, Clark, Codington, Day, Deuel, Grant, Hamlin, Kingsbury, Lake, Marshall, McCook, Moody Counties, and Miner County east of SD 25, and that portion of Minnehaha County north and west of a line beginning at the junction of County 130 (Renner Road) and the Minnesota border, then west on County 130 to I-29 and along I-29 to the Lincoln County line.

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

Southwest Zone—Clark, Cowlitz, Pacific, and Wahkiakum Counties.

East Zone—Asotin, Benton, Columbia, Garfield, Klickitat, and Whitman Counties.

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

Teton Area—Those portions of Teton County described in State regulations.

Bridger Valley Area—The area described as the Bridger Valley Hunt Unit in State regulations.

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.

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 37, southeast along State 37 to U.S. Highway 59, south along U.S. 59 to Interstate Highway 80, then east along I-80 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 a line extending east from the Wyoming border, south along U.S. 85 to I-76, south along I-76 to I-25, south along I-25 to the New Mexico border.

Kansas

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

Low Plains Early Zone: That portion of the State east of the High Plains Zone and west of a line extending south from the Nebraska border along KS 28 to U.S. 36, east along U.S. 36 to KS 199, south along KS 199 to Republic County Road 563, south along Republic County Road 563 to KS 148, east along KS 148 to Republic County Road 138, south along Republic County Road 138 to Cloud County Road 765, south along Cloud County Road 765 to KS 9, west along KS 9 to U.S. 24, west along U.S. 24 to U.S. 281, north along U.S. 281 to U.S. 36, west along U.S. 36 to U.S. 183, south along U.S. 183 to U.S. 24, west along U.S. 24 to KS 18, southeast along KS 18 to U.S. 183, south along U.S. 183 to KS 4, east along KS 4 to I-135, south along I-135 to KS 61, southwest along KS 61 to KS 96, northwest on KS 96 to U.S. 56, west along U.S. 56 to U.S. 281, south along U.S. 281 to U.S. 54, then west along U.S. 54 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 92; east along Nebraska Highway 92 to Nebraska Highway 61; south along Nebraska Highway 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: That portion of the State east and north of a line beginning at the Oregon border; south and west along the Klamath River to the mouth of Shovel Creek; south along Shovel Creek to Forest Service Road 46N10; south and east along FS 46N10 to FS 45N22; west and south along FS 45N22 to U.S. 97 at Grass Lake Summit; south and west along U.S. 97 to I-5 at the town of Weed; south along I-5 to CA 89; east and south along CA 89 to the junction with CA 49; east and north on CA 49 to CA 70; east on CA 70 to U.S. 395; south and east on U.S. 395 to the Nevada border.

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

North Zone: The Upper Peninsula.
Middle Zone: That portion of the Lower Peninsula north of a line beginning at the Wisconsin border in Lake Michigan due west of the mouth of Stony Creek in Oceana County; then due east to, and easterly and southerly along the south shore of, Stony Creek to Scenic Drive, easterly and southerly along Scenic Drive to Stony Lake Road, easterly along Stony Lake and Garfield Roads to Michigan Highway 20, east along Michigan 20 to U.S. Highway 10 Business Route (BR) in the city of Midland, east along U.S. 10 BR to U.S. 10, east along U.S. 10 to Interstate Highway 75/U.S. Highway 23, north along I-75/U.S. 23 to the U.S. 23 exit at Standish, east along U.S. 23 to Shore Road in Arenac County, east along Shore Road to the tip of Point Lookout, then on a line directly east 10 miles into Saginaw Bay, and from that point on a line directly northeast to the Canada border.

South Zone: The remainder of Michigan.

*Sandhill Cranes**Central Flyway*

Colorado

Regular-Season Open Area—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

Regular Season Open Area—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.

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.

Southwest Zone—Sierra, Luna, and Dona Ana Counties.

Oklahoma

Regular-Season Open Area—That portion of the State west of I-35.

Texas

Regular-Season Open Area—That portion of the State west of a line from the International Toll Bridge at

Brownsville along U.S. 77 to Victoria; U.S. 87 to Placedo; Farm Road 616 to Blessing; State 35 to Alvin; State 6 to U.S. 290; U.S. 290 to Austin; I-35 to the Texas-Oklahoma border.

North Dakota

Regular-Season Open Area—That portion of the State west of U.S. 281.

South Dakota

Regular-Season Open Area—That portion of the State west of U.S. 281.

Montana

Regular-Season Open Area—The Central Flyway portion of the State except that area south of I-90 and west of the Bighorn River.

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 and Cache 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.

Eden-Farson Area—Those portions of Sweetwater and Sublette Counties 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 Birds in the Virgin Islands

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

All Migratory 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 2000-01 SEASON

	ATLANTIC FLYWAY			MISSISSIPPI FLYWAY (a)			CENTRAL FLYWAY (b)			PACIFIC FLYWAY (c)(d)		
	VERY RES	RES	LIB									
Beginning Shooting Time	1/2 hr. before sunrise											
Ending Shooting Time	Sunset											
Opening Date	Oct. 1											
Closing Date	Jan. 20											
Season Length (in days)	20	30	45	60	45	60	39	60	74	38	60	86
Daily Bag/Possession	3 6	3 6	6 12	6 12	3 6	6 12	3 6	3 6	6 12	4 6	4 6	7 14
Species/Sex Limits within the Overall Daily Bag Limit												
Mallard (Total/Female)	3/1	3/1	4/2	4/2	2/1	2/1	3/1	3/1	5/1	3/1	3/1	5/2
Pintail	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Black Duck												
Scaup (e)												
Canvasback	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Redhead	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Wood Duck	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Whistling Ducks	Closed											
Harlequin	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mottled Duck	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

(a) In the States of Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee, the season length will be 51 days in the liberal alternative and 38 days in the moderate alternative with a framework closing date in both alternatives of January 31.

(b) 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: very restrictive - 8, restrictive - 12, moderate and liberal - 23. Under all alternatives, additional days must be on or after the Saturday nearest December 10.

(c) 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.

(d) In Alaska, framework dates, bag limits, and season length would be different than the remainder of the Pacific Flyway. The bag limit would be 5-7 under the very restrictive and restrictive alternatives, and 8-10 under the moderate and liberal alternatives. There would be no restrictions on pintails, and canvasback limits would follow those for the remainder of the Pacific Flyway. Under all alternatives, season length would be 107 days and framework dates would be Sep 1 - Jan 26.

(e) Scaup daily bag limits will be based on current scaup status information until an agreed upon harvest strategy is completed and implemented.