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50 CFR Part 20

Migratory Bird Hunting; Proposed Frameworks for Early-Season Migratory
Bird Hunting Regulations; Notice of Meetings; Proposed Rule

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 20

[Docket No. FWS-HQ-MB-2014-0064;
FF09M21200-156-FXMB1231099BPP0]

RIN 1018-BA67

Migratory Bird Hunting; Proposed Frameworks for Early-Season Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations; Notice of Meetings

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Proposed rule; supplemental.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (hereinafter Service or we) is proposing to establish the 2015–16 early-season hunting regulations for certain migratory game birds. We annually prescribe frameworks, or outer limits, for dates and times when hunting may occur and the maximum number of birds that may be taken and possessed in early seasons. Early seasons may open as early as September 1, and include seasons in Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. These frameworks are necessary to allow State selections of specific final seasons and limits and to allow recreational harvest at levels compatible with population status and habitat conditions. This proposed rule also provides the regulatory alternatives for the 2015–16 duck hunting seasons.

DATES: *Comments:* You must submit comments on the proposed early-season frameworks by July 31, 2015.

Meetings: The Service Migratory Bird Regulations Committee (SRC) will meet to consider and develop proposed regulations for late-season migratory bird hunting and the 2016 spring/summer migratory bird subsistence seasons in Alaska on July 29–30, 2015. All meetings will commence at approximately 8:30 a.m.

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

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments on Docket No. FWS-HQ-MB-2014-0064.

- U.S. mail or hand-delivery: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-HQ-MB-2014-0064; Division of Policy, Performance, and Management Programs; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS: BPHC; 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041.

We will not accept emailed or faxed comments. We will post all comments

on <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means that your entire submission—including any personal identifying information—will be posted on the Web site. See the Public Comments section, below, for more information.

Meetings: The Service Migratory Bird Regulations Committee will meet at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, Virginia.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ron W. Kokel, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, MS: MB, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803; (703) 358-1967.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Regulations Schedule for 2015

On April 13, 2015, we published in the **Federal Register** (80 FR 19852) a proposal to amend 50 CFR part 20. The proposal provided a background and overview of the migratory bird hunting regulations process, and addressed the establishment of seasons, limits, and other regulations for hunting migratory game birds under §§ 20.101 through 20.107, 20.109, and 20.110 of subpart K. Major steps in the 2015–16 regulatory cycle relating to open public meetings and **Federal Register** notifications were also identified in the April 13 proposed rule.

Further, we explained that all sections of subsequent documents outlining hunting frameworks and guidelines were organized under numbered headings. Those headings are:

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

15. Band-tailed Pigeons
16. Doves
17. Alaska
18. Hawaii
19. Puerto Rico
20. Virgin Islands
21. Falconry
22. Other

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

On June 11, 2015, we published in the **Federal Register** (80 FR 33223) a second document providing supplemental proposals for early- and late-season migratory bird hunting regulations. The June 11 supplement also provided detailed information on the 2015–16 regulatory schedule and announced the SRC and Flyway Council meetings.

This document, the third in a series of proposed, supplemental, and final rulemaking documents for migratory bird hunting regulations, deals specifically with proposed frameworks for early-season regulations and the regulatory alternatives for the 2015–16 duck hunting seasons. It will lead to final frameworks from which States may select season dates, shooting hours, and daily bag and possession limits for the 2015–16 season.

We have considered all pertinent comments received through June 26, 2015, on the April 13 and June 11, 2015, rulemaking documents in developing this proposed rule. 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 16, 2015.

Service Migratory Bird Regulations Committee Meetings

Participants at the June 24–25, 2015, meetings reviewed information on the current status of migratory shore and upland game birds and developed 2015–16 migratory game bird regulations recommendations for these species plus regulations for migratory game birds in Alaska, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands; special September waterfowl seasons in designated States; special sea duck seasons in the Atlantic Flyway; and extended falconry seasons. In addition, we reviewed and discussed preliminary information on the status of waterfowl.

Participants at the previously announced July 29–30, 2015, meetings will review information on the current

status of waterfowl and develop recommendations for the 2015–16 regulations pertaining to regular waterfowl seasons and other species and seasons not previously discussed at the early-season meetings. In accordance with Department of the Interior policy, these meetings are open to public observation and you may submit comments on the matters discussed.

Population Status and Harvest

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

Waterfowl Breeding and Habitat Survey

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

Despite an early spring over most of the survey area, habitat conditions were similar to or poorer than last year. In many areas, the decline in habitat conditions was due to average to below-average annual precipitation, with the exception of portions of southern Saskatchewan and central latitudes of eastern Canada. The total pond estimate (Prairie Canada and United States combined) was 6.3 ± 0.2 million, which was 12 percent below the 2014 estimate of 7.2 ± 0.2 million and 21 percent above the long-term average of 5.2 ± 0.03 million.

Traditional Survey Area (U.S. and Canadian Prairies and Parklands)

Spring came early across the traditional survey area, particularly in relation to 2013 and 2014. Much of the Canadian prairies had average to below-

average winter precipitation and above-average temperatures. Best moisture conditions were centered in southern Saskatchewan, but nearly all of prairie Canada experienced below-normal spring precipitation. The 2015 estimate of ponds in Prairie Canada was 4.2 ± 0.1 million. This estimate was 10 percent below the 2014 estimate of 4.6 ± 0.2 million and 19 percent above the long-term average (3.5 ± 0.02 million). Annual winter precipitation was lower in the northern part of the survey area; the Parklands, however, continue to benefit from hold-over water. The boreal region and Alaska exhibited drier conditions, but an early spring and no flooding should aid waterfowl production. Most of the Canadian portion of the traditional survey area was rated as fair or good this year with areas of excellent conditions that received greater annual precipitation.

Following a relatively mild winter, the U.S. prairies also recorded an early spring, although precipitation since last summer was average to mostly below average. Habitat conditions declined from 2014 in Montana and the Dakotas despite significant rainfall in May, which came too late to benefit most nesting waterfowl. The 2015 pond estimate for the northcentral United States was 2.2 ± 0.09 million which was 16 percent below the 2014 estimate of 2.6 ± 0.1 million and 28 percent above the long-term average (1.7 ± 0.02 million).

Eastern Survey Area

Winter and spring temperatures in the eastern survey area were again well below normal. February was the coldest on record in Maine and the State had near-record snowfall. Average to above-average winter and spring precipitation was confined to central latitudes of Ontario and Quebec and the Maritimes whereas far western and southeastern Ontario and northern and extreme southern Quebec received well below-average precipitation. Even with an early spring in the survey area, a protracted thaw produced little flooding in areas that had received above-average precipitation, therefore assisting waterfowl production.

Status of Teal

The estimate of blue-winged teal from the traditional survey area is 8.5 million. This count was similar to 2014, and is 73 percent above the 1955–2014 average.

Sandhill Cranes

The annual indices to abundance of the Mid-Continent Population (MCP) of sandhill cranes have been relatively

stable since 1982, but over the past few years the trend is slightly increasing. The preliminary spring 2015 index for sandhill cranes in the Central Platte River Valley (CPRV), Nebraska, uncorrected for visibility bias, was 325,956 birds. This estimate is 4 percent lower than the long-term average for the ocular estimate. The 3-year average for photo-corrected counts (which are more accurate than ocular estimates because they account for birds present but not seen by aerial crews) for 2012–14 was 620,841, which is above the established population-objective range of 349,000–472,000 cranes. All Central Flyway States, except Nebraska, allowed crane hunting in portions of their States during 2014–15. An estimated 7,825 Central Flyway hunters participated in these seasons, which was 24 percent lower than the number that participated in the previous season. Hunters harvested 15,776 MCP cranes in the U.S. portion of the Central Flyway during the 2014–15 seasons, which was 27 percent lower than the harvest for the previous year but 6 percent higher than the long-term average. The retrieved harvest of MCP cranes in hunt areas outside of the Central Flyway (Arizona, Pacific Flyway portion of New Mexico, Minnesota, Alaska, Canada, and Mexico combined) was 13,221 during 2014–15. The preliminary estimate for the North American MCP sport harvest, including crippling losses, was 32,666 birds, which was a 19 percent decrease from the previous year's estimate. The long-term (1982–2012) trends for the MCP indicate that harvest has been increasing at a higher rate than population growth.

The fall 2014 pre-migration survey for the Rocky Mountain Population (RMP) resulted in a count of 19,668 cranes. The 3-year average was 18,482 sandhill cranes, which is within the established population objective of 17,000–21,000 for the RMP. Hunting seasons during 2014–15 in portions of Arizona, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming resulted in a harvest of 624 RMP cranes, an 8 percent decrease from the previous year's harvest.

The Lower Colorado River Valley Population (LCRVP) survey results indicate a 24 percent decrease from 3,353 birds in 2014 to 2,536 birds in 2015. The 3-year average is 2,989 LCRVP cranes, which is above the population objective of 2,500.

The Eastern Population (EP) sandhill crane fall survey index (83,479) increased by 30 percent in 2014, and a combined total of 401 cranes were harvested in Kentucky's fourth hunting season and Tennessee's second season.

Woodcock

The American woodcock (*Scolopax minor*) is managed as two management regions, the Eastern and the Central. Singing Ground and Wing-collection Surveys are conducted to assess population status. The Singing Ground Survey is intended to measure long-term changes in woodcock population levels. Singing Ground Survey data for 2015 indicate that the number of singing male woodcock per route in the Eastern and Central Management Regions was unchanged from 2014. There was a statistically significant, declining 10-year trend in woodcock heard for the Eastern Management Region during 2005–15, while the 10-year trend in the Central Management Region was not significant. This marks the second year in a row that the 10-year trend in the Eastern Management Region has shown a decline. Both management regions have a long-term (1968–2015) declining trend (–1.1 percent per year in the Eastern Management Region and –0.7 percent per year in the Central Management Region).

The Wing-collection Survey provides an index to recruitment. Wing-collection Survey data indicate that the 2014 recruitment index for the U.S. portion of the Eastern Region (1.49 immatures per adult female) was 6.9 percent less than the 2013 index, and 8.9 percent less than the long-term (1963–2013) average. The recruitment index for the U.S. portion of the Central Region (1.39 immatures per adult female) was 9.7 percent less than the 2013 index and 10.6 percent less than the long-term (1963–2013) average.

During last year's seasons, hunters in the Eastern Region harvested 58,600 birds, which was 6.2 percent below the number for the previous season and 31.4 percent below the long-term (1999–2013) average. In the Central Region, 141,500 woodcock were harvested, 21.4 percent less than in 2013 and 36.5 percent less than the long-term average.

Band-Tailed Pigeons

Two subspecies of band-tailed pigeon occur north of Mexico, and are managed as two separate populations: Interior and Pacific Coast. Information on the abundance and harvest of band-tailed pigeons is collected annually in the United States and British Columbia. Abundance information comes from the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) and the Mineral Site Survey (MSS, specific to the Pacific Coast Population). Harvest and hunter participation are estimated from the Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program (HIP). The BBS provided evidence that the abundance

of Pacific Coast band-tailed pigeons decreased (–1.8 percent per year) over the long term (1968–2014). No trends in abundance were evident during the recent 10- and 5-year periods for both the BBS and MSS. Harvest estimates indicate that 2,900 active hunters took 12,000 pigeons and spent 8,800 days afield in 2014. Composition of harvest was 25 percent hatching-year pigeons.

For Interior band-tailed pigeons, the BBS provided evidence that abundance decreased (–5.5 percent per year) over the long term (1968–2014). Similar to Pacific Coast birds, no trends in abundance were evident during the recent 10- and 5-year periods. An estimated 1,500 hunters harvested 1,500 pigeons and spent 3,300 days afield in 2014.

Mourning Doves

Doves in the United States are managed in three management units, Eastern (EMU), Central (CMU), and Western (WMU). We annually summarize information collected in the United States on survival, recruitment, abundance, and harvest of mourning doves. We report on trends in the number of doves heard and seen per route from the all-bird BBS, and provide absolute abundance estimates based on band recovery and harvest data. Harvest and hunter participation are estimated from the HIP.

BBS data suggested that the abundance of mourning doves over the last 49 years increased in the Eastern Management Unit (EMU) and decreased in the Central (CMU) and Western (WMU) Management Units. Estimates of absolute abundance are available only since 2003 and indicate that there are about 274 million doves in the United States. In 2014, abundance varied among the management units with 68.2 million in the EMU, 161.6 million in the CMU, and 43.6 million in the WMU.

Current (2014) HIP estimates for mourning dove total harvest, active hunters, and total days afield in the United States were 13,809,500 birds, 839,600 hunters, and 2,386,700 days afield. Harvest and hunter participation at the unit level were: EMU, 4,889,800 birds, 310,200 hunters, and 791,300 days afield; CMU, 7,654,700 birds, 427,100 hunters, and 1,333,600 days afield; and WMU, 1,265,000 birds, 102,300 hunters, and 261,800 days afield.

Review of Public Comments

The preliminary proposed rulemaking (April 13, 2015; 80 FR 19852) opened the public comment period for migratory game bird hunting regulations and announced the proposed regulatory

alternatives for the 2015–16 duck hunting season. Comments concerning early-season issues and the proposed alternatives are summarized below and numbered in the order used in the April 13, 2015, **Federal Register** document. Only the numbered items pertaining to early-season issues and the proposed regulatory alternatives for which we received written comments are included. Consequently, the issues do not follow in consecutive numerical or alphabetical order.

We received recommendations from all four Flyway Councils. Some recommendations supported continuation of last year's frameworks. Due to the comprehensive nature of the annual review of the frameworks performed by the Councils, support for continuation of last year's frameworks is assumed for items for which no recommendations were received. Council recommendations for changes in the frameworks are summarized below.

We seek additional information and comments on the recommendations in this supplemental proposed rule. New proposals and modifications to previously described proposals are discussed below. Wherever possible, they are discussed under headings corresponding to the numbered items in the April 13, 2015, **Federal Register** document.

General

Written Comments: A commenter protested the entire migratory bird hunting regulations process, the killing of all migratory birds, and status and habitat data on which the migratory bird hunting regulations are based.

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

always, we continue to seek new ways to streamline and improve the process.

1. Ducks

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

A. General Harvest Strategy

Council Recommendations: The Mississippi Flyway Council recommended that regulations changes be restricted to one step per year, both when restricting as well as liberalizing hunting regulations.

The Pacific Flyway Council recommended removing the objective constraint for the western mallard Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) protocol.

Service Response: As we stated in the April 13, 2015, proposed rule, we intend to continue use of AHM to help determine appropriate duck-hunting regulations for the 2015–16 season. AHM is a tool that permits sound resource decisions in the face of uncertain regulatory impacts, as well as providing a mechanism for reducing that uncertainty over time. The current AHM protocol is used to evaluate four alternative regulatory levels based on the population status of mallards and their breeding habitat (*i.e.*, abundance of ponds). Special hunting restrictions are enacted for certain species, such as canvasbacks, black ducks, scaup, and pintails.

Regarding the Mississippi Flyway Council recommendation to limit regulatory changes to one step per year, we recognize the long-standing interest by the Council to impose a one-step constraint on regulatory changes. In the past, we have not endorsed this recommendation due to the pending completion of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) on migratory bird hunting. With the recently completed SEIS, we are now transitioning to a new regulatory process. At the same time, the Central and Mississippi Flyways have begun a new effort to re-visit the AHM protocol for managing harvest of mid-continent mallards (*i.e.*, “double-looping”). This effort will include a discussion of appropriate management objectives, regulatory packages, and management of non-mallard stocks. We believe that

these discussions would be the appropriate venue to discuss what role, if any, a one-step constraint might play in management of waterfowl in the Central and Mississippi Flyways. Such discussions should include the potential impact of a one-step constraint on the frequency of when the liberal, moderate, and restrictive packages would be recommended. On a final note, while we recognize the Council’s concern about potentially communicating a large regulatory change to hunters, we have concerns about the appropriateness of a one-step constraint in situations when the status of the waterfowl resource may warrant such a measure. We look forward to working with the Flyway Councils on this issue.

In 2008, we described and adopted a protocol for regulatory decision-making for the newly defined stock of western mallards (73 FR 43290; July 24, 2008). We continue to believe that the prescribed regulatory choice for the Pacific Flyway should be based on the status of this western mallard breeding stock. However, as we previously discussed in the April 13, 2015, proposed rule, the current early and late-season regulatory actions will be combined into a new single process beginning with the 2016–17 seasons. Migratory bird hunting regulations will be based on predictions from models derived from long-term biological information and established harvest strategies. Adjustment to western mallard AHM for the new regulatory process was straightforward, except for the implementation of the objective function constraint that has been in use since 2008. Efforts to implement this constraint with new optimization methods were unsuccessful, and assessment results suggest that the objective function constraint used in western mallard AHM may not be necessary or performing as previously envisioned. The Pacific Flyway Council has expressed interest in continued cooperation in working with the Service to clarify western mallard AHM objectives. During 2016, the technical representatives from the Pacific Flyway Council in conjunction with the Harvest Management Working Group will review harvest management objectives, incorporate additional mallard breeding stocks (*i.e.*, those in Washington and British Columbia), and consider constraints to minimize large annual changes in regulation packages with relatively small changes in population size (*e.g.*, moving from liberal to closed seasons in successive years with no moderate or restrictive intermediate steps).

We will propose a specific regulatory alternative for each of the Flyways during the 2015–16 season after survey information becomes available later this summer. More information on AHM is located at <http://www.fws.gov/birds/management/adaptive-harvest-management.php>.

As we stated above, for the 2016–17 season, the current early and late-season regulatory actions will be combined into a new single process. Migratory bird hunting regulations will be based on predictions from models derived from long-term biological information and established harvest strategies. Since 1995, the Service and Flyway Councils have applied the principles of adaptive management to inform harvest management decisions in the face of uncertainty while trying to learn about system (bird populations) responses to harvest regulations and environmental changes. Prior to the timing and process changes necessary for implementation of SEIS 2013, the annual AHM process began with the observation of the system state each spring followed by an updating of model weights and the derivation of an optimal harvest policy that was then used to make a state-dependent decision (*i.e.*, breeding population estimates were used with a policy matrix to inform harvest regulatory decisions). The system state then evolves over time in response to the decision and natural variation in population dynamics. The following spring, the monitoring programs observe the state of the system and the iterative decision-making process continues forward in time. However, with the changes in decision timing specified by the SEIS, the post-survey AHM process will not be possible because monitoring information describing the system state will not be available at the time the decision must be made. As a result, the optimization framework used to derive the current harvest policy can no longer calculate current and future harvest values as a function of the current system and model states. To address this issue, we adjusted the optimization procedures to calculate harvest values conditional on the last observed system state and regulatory decision.

Results and analysis of our work is contained in a technical report that provides a summary of revised methods and assessment results based on updated AHM protocols developed in response to the preferred alternative specified in the SEIS. The report describes necessary changes to optimization procedures and decision processes for the implementation of AHM for midcontinent, eastern and

western mallards, northern pintails, and scaup decision frameworks.

Results indicate that the necessary adjustments to the optimization procedures and AHM protocols to account for changes in decision timing are not expected to result in major changes to expected management performance for mallard, pintail, and scaup AHM. In general, pre-survey (or pre-SEIS necessary changes) harvest policies were similar to harvest policies based on new post-survey (or post-SEIS necessary changes) AHM protocols. We found some subtle differences in the degree to which strategies exhibited knife-edged regulatory changes in the pre-survey policies with a reduction in the number of cells indicating moderate regulations. In addition, pre-survey policies became more liberal when conditioning on previous regulatory decisions that were more conservative. These patterns were consistent for each AHM decision-making framework. Overall, a comparison of simulation results of the pre- and post-survey protocols did not suggest substantive changes in the frequency of regulations or in the expected average population size. These results suggest that the additional form of uncertainty that the change in decision timing introduces is not expected to limit our expected harvest management performance with the adoption of the pre-survey AHM protocols.

A complete copy of the AHM report can be found on www.regulations.gov or at <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/management/AHM/SEIS&AHMReportFinal.pdf>.

B. Regulatory Alternatives

Council Recommendations: The Mississippi and Central Flyway Councils recommended that regulatory alternatives for duck hunting seasons remain the same as those used in 2014–15.

Service Response: The regulatory alternatives proposed in the April 13, 2015, **Federal Register** will be used for the 2015–16 hunting season (see accompanying table at the end of this proposed rule for specifics). In 2005, the AHM regulatory alternatives were modified to consist only of the maximum season lengths, framework dates, and bag limits for total ducks and mallards. Restrictions for certain species within these frameworks that are not covered by existing harvest strategies will be addressed during the late-season regulations process. For those species with specific harvest strategies (canvasbacks, pintails, black ducks, and scaup), those strategies will again be used for the 2015–16 hunting season.

C. Zones and Split Seasons

Council Recommendations: The Mississippi and Central Flyway Councils recommended no changes to the existing zone and split season guidelines. However, they further recommended that States be provided the option of changing duck zones and split arrangements in either the 2016–17 or 2017–18 seasons, with the next open season in 2021 for the 2021–25 period.

Service Response: Zones and split seasons are “special regulations” designed to distribute hunting opportunities and harvests according to temporal, geographic, and demographic variability in waterfowl and other migratory game bird populations. For ducks, States have been allowed the option of dividing their allotted hunting days into two (or in some cases three) segments to take advantage of species-specific peaks of abundance or to satisfy hunters in different areas who want to hunt during the peak of waterfowl abundance in their area. However, the split-season option does not fully satisfy many States that wish to provide a more equitable distribution of harvest opportunities. Therefore, we also have allowed the establishment of independent seasons in up to four zones within States for the purpose of providing more equitable distribution of harvest opportunity for hunters throughout the State.

In 1978, we prepared an environmental assessment (EA) on the use of zones to set duck hunting regulations. A primary tenet of the 1978 EA was that zoning would be for the primary purpose of providing equitable distribution of duck hunting opportunities within a State or region and not for the purpose of increasing total annual waterfowl harvest in the zoned areas. In fact, target harvest levels were to be adjusted downward if they exceeded traditional levels as a result of zoning. Subsequent to the 1978 EA, we conducted a review of the use of zones and split seasons in 1990. In 2011, we prepared a new EA analyzing some specific proposed changes to the zone and split season guidelines. The current guidelines were then finalized in 2011 (76 FR 53536; August 26, 2011).

Currently, every 5 years, States are afforded the opportunity to change the zoning and split season configuration within which they set their annual duck hunting regulations. The next regularly scheduled open season for changes to zone and split season configurations is in 2016, for use during the 2016–20 period. However, as we discussed in the September 23, 2014, **Federal Register** (79 FR 56864), and the April 13, 2015,

Federal Register (80 FR 19852), we are implementing significant changes to the annual regulatory process as outlined in the 2013 SEIS. As such, the previously identified May 1, 2016, due date for zone and split season configuration changes that was developed under the current regulatory process, is too late for those States wishing to change zone and split season configurations for implementation in the 2016–17 season. Under the new regulatory schedule, we anticipate publishing the proposed rule for all 2016–17 migratory bird seasons sometime this fall—approximately 30 days after the SRC meeting (which is scheduled for October 28–29, 2015). A final rule tentatively would be published 75 days after the proposed rule (no later than April 1). This schedule would preclude inclusion of new zone descriptions in the proposed rule as had been done in past open seasons and would not be appropriate because it would preclude the ability for the public to comment on these new individual State zone descriptions. Therefore, we need to include any new proposed 2016–20 zone descriptions in the 2016–17 hunting seasons proposed rule document that will be published later this year.

Considering all of the above, we agree with the Mississippi and Central Flyway Councils and have decided that a two-phase approach is appropriate. For those States wishing to change zone and split season configurations in time for the 2016–17 season, we will need to receive new configuration and zone descriptions by December 1, 2015. States that do not send in new zone and split season configuration changes until the previously identified May 1, 2016, deadline will have those changes implemented in the 2017–18 hunting season. The next scheduled open season would remain in 2021 for the 2021–25 seasons.

For the current open season, the guidelines for duck zone and split season configurations will be as follows:

Guidelines for Duck Zones and Split Seasons

The following zone and split-season guidelines apply only for the regular duck season:

(1) A zone is a geographic area or portion of a State, with a contiguous boundary, for which independent dates may be selected for the regular duck season.

(2) Consideration of changes for management-unit boundaries is not subject to the guidelines and provisions governing the use of zones and split seasons for ducks.

(3) Only minor (less than a county in size) boundary changes will be allowed for any grandfathered arrangement, and changes are limited to the open season.

(4) Once a zone and split option is selected during an open season, it must remain in place for the following 5 years.

Any State may continue the configuration used in the previous 5-year period. If changes are made, the zone and split-season configuration must conform to one of the following options:

(1) No more than four zones with no splits,

(2) Split seasons (no more than 3 segments) with no zones, or

(3) No more than three zones with the option for 2-way (2-segment) split seasons in one, two, or all zones.

Grandfathered Zone and Split Arrangements

When we first implemented the zone and split guidelines in 1991, several States had completed experiments with zone and split arrangements different from our original options. We offered those States a one-time opportunity to continue (“grandfather”) those arrangements, with the stipulation that only minor changes could be made to zone boundaries. If any of those States now wish to change their zone and split arrangement:

(1) The new arrangement must conform to one of the 3 options identified above; and

(2) The State cannot go back to the grandfathered arrangement that it previously had in place.

Management Units

We will continue to utilize the specific limitations previously established regarding the use of zones and split seasons in special management units, including the High Plains Mallard Management Unit. We note that the original justification and objectives established for the High Plains Mallard Management Unit provided for additional days of hunting opportunity at the end of the regular duck season. In order to maintain the integrity of the management unit, current guidelines prohibit simultaneous zoning and/or 3-way split seasons within a management unit and the remainder of the State. Removal of this limitation would allow additional proliferation of zone and split configurations and compromise the original objectives of the management unit.

D. Special Seasons/Species Management

i. September Teal Seasons

Utilizing the criteria developed for the teal season harvest strategy, this year’s estimate of 8.3 million blue-winged teal from the traditional survey area indicates that a 16-day September teal season in the Atlantic, Central, and Mississippi Flyways is appropriate for 2015.

4. Canada Geese

A. Special Seasons

Council Recommendations: The Pacific Flyway Council recommended increasing season length from 7 to 15 days and the daily bag limit from 2 to 5 for Canada geese in Idaho.

Service Response: We agree with the Pacific Flyway Council’s request to increase the Canada goose season length and daily bag limit in Idaho. The special early Canada goose hunting season is generally designed to reduce or control overabundant resident Canada goose populations. Increasing the season length from 7 to 15 days and the daily bag limit from 2 to 5 geese in Idaho may help reduce or control the abundance of resident Canada geese.

B. Regular Seasons

Council Recommendations: The Mississippi Flyway Council recommended that the framework opening date for all species of geese for the regular goose seasons in the Lower Peninsula of Michigan and Wisconsin be September 16, 2015, and in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan be September 11, 2015.

Service Response: We concur with recommended framework opening dates. Michigan, beginning in 1998, and Wisconsin, beginning in 1989, have opened their regular Canada goose seasons prior to the Flyway-wide framework opening date to address resident goose management concerns in these States. As we have previously stated (73 FR 50678, August 27, 2008), we agree with the objective to increase harvest pressure on resident Canada geese in the Mississippi Flyway and will continue to consider the opening dates in both States as exceptions to the general Flyway opening date, to be reconsidered annually. The framework closing date for the early goose season in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan is September 10. By changing the framework opening date for the regular season to September 11 in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan there will be no need to close goose hunting in that area for 5 days and thus lose the ability to

maintain harvest pressure on resident Canada geese. We note that the most recent resident Canada goose estimate for the Mississippi Flyway was 1,461,000 geese during the spring of 2014, above the Flyway’s population goal of 1.18 to 1.40 million birds.

6. Brant

As we discussed in the June 11, 2015, **Federal Register** (80 FR 33223), for the 2015–16 Atlantic brant season, we will continue to use the existing Flyway Cooperative Management Plan for this species to determine the appropriate hunting regulations. However, as we discuss below, the process for determining regulations for the 2016–17 season will need to be modified. In the April 30, 2014 (79 FR 24512), and the April 13, 2015 (80 FR 19852), **Federal Registers**, we discussed how, under the new regulatory process, the current early- and late-season regulatory actions will be combined into a new single process beginning with the 2016–17 seasons. Regulatory proposals will be developed using biological data from the preceding year(s), model predictions, and/or most recently accumulated data that are available at the time the proposals are being formulated. Individual harvest strategies will be modified using data from the previous year(s) because the current year’s data would not be available for many of the strategies.

Further, we stated that during this transition period, harvest strategies and prescriptions would be modified to fit into the new regulatory schedule. Atlantic brant is one such species that will require some modifications to the regulatory process that we have largely used since 1992 to establish the annual frameworks.

In developing the annual proposed frameworks for Atlantic brant in the past, the Atlantic Flyway Council and the Service used the number of brant counted during the Mid-winter Waterfowl Survey (MWS) in the Atlantic Flyway, and took into consideration the brant population’s expected productivity that summer. The MWS is conducted each January, and expected brant productivity is based on early-summer observations of breeding habitat conditions and nesting effort in important brant nesting areas. Thus, the data under consideration were available before the annual Flyway and SRC decision-making meetings took place in late July. Although the existing regulatory alternatives for Atlantic brant were developed by factoring together long-term productivity rates (observed during November and December productivity surveys) with estimated

observed harvest under different framework regulations, the primary decision-making criterion for selecting the annual frameworks was the MWS count.

In the April 13, 2015, **Federal Register** (80 FR 19852), we presented the major steps in the 2016–17 regulatory cycle relating to biological information availability, open public meetings, and **Federal Register** notifications. Under the new regulatory schedule due to be implemented this fall and winter for the 2016–17 migratory bird hunting regulations, neither the expected 2016 brant production information (available summer 2016) nor the 2016 MWS count (conducted in January 2016) will be available this October, when the decisions on proposed Atlantic brant frameworks for the 2016–17 seasons must be made. However, the 2016 MWS will be completed and winter brant data will be available by the expected publication of the final frameworks (late February 2016). Therefore, we are proposing frameworks for Atlantic brant in 2016–17 using the process laid out below, with the final decision to be determined by the 2016 MWS count:

If the MWS count is <100,000 Atlantic brant, the season will be closed.

If the MWS count is between 100,000 and 125,000 brant, States may select a 30-day season between the Saturday nearest September 24 and January 31, with a 2-bird daily bag limit. States may split their seasons into 2 segments.

If the MWS count is between 125,000 and 150,000 brant, States may select a 50-day season between the Saturday nearest September 24 and January 31, with a 2-bird daily bag limit. States may split their seasons into 2 segments.

If the MWS count is between 150,000 and 200,000 brant, States may select a 60-day season between the Saturday nearest September 24 and January 31, with a 2-bird daily bag limit. States may split their seasons into 2 segments.

If the MWS count is >200,000 brant, States may select a 60-day season between the Saturday nearest September 24 and January 31, with a 3-bird daily bag limit. States may split their seasons into 2 segments.

We note that the proposed prescriptive regulatory frameworks listed above are identical to those contained in the Atlantic Flyway Council's current Atlantic brant hunt plan (2011), with the exception of considering expected brant production. However, at this time our new regulatory schedule will likely preclude any formal consideration of the brant population's expected productivity in the summer. While our proposed

process would be a slight change to the existing mechanics of the Atlantic brant hunt plan, we believe it would have no significant effects on the long-term conservation of the Atlantic brant resource.

For a more detailed discussion of the various technical aspects of the new regulatory process, we refer the reader to the 2013 SEIS on our Web site at <http://www.fws.gov/birds/index.php>.

8. Swans

Council Recommendations: In March the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyway Councils recommended increasing tundra swan permit numbers by 25 percent (2,400 permits) for the 2015–16 season, if the final 3-year running average mid-winter count exceeds 110,000 Eastern Population tundra swans, in accordance with the Eastern Population tundra swan management plan.

Service Response: At the June 24–25 SRC meeting, the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyway Councils withdrew their recommendations to increase tundra swan permit numbers because the final 3-year running average mid-winter count did not exceed 110,000 Eastern Population tundra swans.

9. Sandhill Cranes

Council Recommendations: The Atlantic and Mississippi Flyway Councils recommended that Kentucky be granted an operational sandhill crane hunting season beginning in 2015 following the guidelines established in the Eastern Population of Sandhill Cranes Management Plan (EP Management Plan). Kentucky's operational season would consist of a maximum season length of 60 days (with no splits) to be held between September 1 and January 31, with a daily bag limit of 2 birds, and a season limit of 3 birds. Hunting would occur between sunrise and sunset. Per the guidelines set forth in the EP Management Plan, and based on the State's 5-year peak average of 12,072 birds, Kentucky would be allowed to issue a maximum of 1,207 tags during the 2015–16 season. These permits would be divided among 400 permitted hunters. Hunters would be required to take mandatory whooping crane identification training, utilize Service-approved nontoxic shot shells, tag birds, report harvest daily via Kentucky's reporting system, and complete a post-season survey.

The Central and Pacific Flyway Councils recommended using the Rocky Mountain Population (RMP) sandhill crane harvest allocation of 938 birds as proposed in the allocation formula

using the 3-year running population average for 2012–14. The Councils also recommended that, under the new annual regulatory process beginning with the 2016–17 season, the harvest strategy described in the Pacific and Central Flyway Management Plan for RMP sandhill cranes be published in the proposed season frameworks and be used to determine allowable harvest. They recommended that the final allowable harvest each year be included in the final season frameworks published in February.

The Pacific Flyway Council recommended some minor changes to the hunt area boundaries in Idaho to simplify and clarify hunt area descriptions. More specifically, Area 5 would now include all of Franklin County, and Area 1 would include all of Caribou County except that portion lying within the Grays Lake Basin. The Pacific Flyway Council also recommended eliminating the Lower Colorado River Valley Population (LCRVP) experimental season.

Service Response: We agree with the recommendation to grant operational status to Kentucky's sandhill crane hunting season. Kentucky held an experimental sandhill crane season during 2011–13 and was granted an additional year in order to finalize analysis of the first 3 years of data collected during the experiment. The structure of the experimental seasons conformed to the frameworks outlined in the Eastern Population of Sandhill Cranes Management Plan. Harvest of sandhill cranes in Kentucky during 2011–13 ranged from 59 to 96 birds per year. This level of annual harvest was well below the allowable annual harvest of 1,174 birds determined by the permit allocation system outlined in the management plan. Therefore, we believe that Kentucky's crane season should continue on an operational basis, and that seasons should conform to the frameworks and permit guidelines outlined in the Eastern Population of Sandhill Cranes Management Plan.

We also agree with the Central and Pacific Flyway Councils' recommendations on the RMP sandhill crane harvest allocation of 938 cranes for the 2015–16 season, as outlined in the RMP sandhill crane management plan's hunting area requirements and harvest allocation formula. The objective for RMP sandhill cranes is to manage for a stable population index of 17,000–21,000 cranes determined by an average of the three most recent, reliable September (fall pre-migration) surveys. Additionally, the RMP management plan allows for the regulated harvest of cranes when the 3-year average of the

population indices exceeds 15,000 cranes. The most recent 3-year average for the RMP sandhill crane fall index is 18,482 birds, a slight increase from the previous 3-year average of 17,757 cranes.

Regarding the RMP crane harvest and the new regulatory process, this issue is very similar to the Atlantic brant issue discussed above under 6. Brant. Currently, results of the fall survey of RMP sandhill cranes, upon which the annual allowable harvest is based, will continue to be released between December 15 and January 31 each year, which is after the date for which proposed frameworks will be formulated in the new regulatory process. If the usual procedures for determining allowable harvest were used, data 2–4 years old would be used to determine the annual allocation for RMP sandhill cranes. Due to the variability in fall survey counts and recruitment for this population, and their impact on the annual harvest allocations, we agree that relying on data that is 2–4 years old is not ideal. Thus, we agree that the formula to determine the annual allowable harvest for RMP sandhill cranes should be used under the new regulatory schedule and propose to utilize it as such. That formula uses information on abundance and recruitment collected annually through operational monitoring programs, as well as constant values based on past research or monitoring for survival of fledglings to breeding age and harvest retrieval rate. The formula is:

$$H = C \times P \times R \times L \times f$$

where:

H = total annual allowable harvest;

C = the average of the three most recent, reliable fall population indices;

P = the average proportion of fledged chicks in the fall population in the San Luis Valley during the most recent 3 years for which data are available;

R = estimated recruitment of fledged chicks to breeding age (current estimate is 0.5);

L = retrieval rate of 0.80 (allowance for an estimated 20 percent crippling loss based on hunter interviews); and

f = (C/16,000) (a variable factor used to adjust the total harvest to achieve a desired effect on the entire population)

A final estimate for the allowable harvest would be available to publish in the final rule, allowing us to use data that is 1–3 years old as is currently practiced. We look forward to continuing discussions and work on the RMP crane issue with the Central and Pacific Flyway Councils this summer in preparation for the 2016–17 season.

We also agree with the Pacific Flyway Council's recommendation for minor

changes to the existing RMP sandhill crane hunting area boundaries in Idaho. The boundary adjustments are intended to simplify and clarify existing hunting area boundary descriptions, and are consistent with the Pacific and Central Flyway Council's RMP sandhill crane management plan hunting area requirements.

Finally, we also agree with the Pacific Flyway Council's recommendation to eliminate the LCRVP sandhill crane experimental hunting season. As requested by the Pacific Flyway Council in 2006 (71 FR 51407, August 29, 2006), we authorized in 2007 a carefully controlled, very limited experimental season for LCRVP sandhill cranes in Arizona based on our final environmental assessment (72 FR 49624, August 28, 2007). In 2009, the Pacific Flyway Council recommended extending the experimental season for LCRVP sandhill cranes in Arizona for an additional 3 years (74 FR 43009, August 25, 2009). The extension was necessary due to implementation difficulties that prohibited initiating the new hunt. We continued to support the establishment of the 3-year experimental framework for this hunt, conditional on successful monitoring being conducted as called for in the Flyway hunting plan for this population. Subsequently, the only hunting season successfully implemented in Arizona for this population was in 2010 where 5 youth participated and no cranes were harvested. The Pacific Flyway Council has indicated in their recent recommendation that there are no plans to hunt this population in the near future.

11. Moorhens and Gallinules

Council Recommendations: The Atlantic Flyway Council recommended allowing the hunting of purple swamphens (*Porphyrio porphyria*) in Florida beginning in 2015. They recommended that hunting be allowed during any open waterfowl season and that all regulations in 50 CFR 20 subparts C and D would apply. Further, they recommended a daily bag limit of 25 birds, with a possession limit of 75. They also recommended that we exclude this species from monitoring programs.

Service Response: Purple swamphens are a species native to the U.S. Territories of American Samoa, Baker and Howland Islands, and Guam, and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and as such are protected under 50 CFR 10.13. In Florida, purple swamphens are an introduced species that likely resulted from escapees. Available data indicate that the

population may be expanding and competing with native species. As such, in 2010, we established a Control Order in 50 CFR 21.53 in order to control possible expansion of the species (75 FR 9314, March 1, 2010). However, there has never been a sport hunting season established in the United States for purple swamphens. Consequently, we believe a new hunting season for purple swamphens would require appropriate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) coverage. Since a NEPA analysis of this proposal has not yet been conducted, we do not support the Council's recommendation at this time. We will reconsider it after appropriate NEPA analysis has been completed.

14. Woodcock

In 2011, we implemented an interim harvest strategy for woodcock for a period of 5 years (2011–15) (76 FR 19876, April 8, 2011). The interim harvest strategy provides a transparent framework for making regulatory decisions for woodcock season length and bag limit while we work to improve monitoring and assessment protocols for this species. Utilizing the criteria developed for the interim strategy, the 3-year average for the Singing Ground Survey indices and associated confidence intervals fall within the “moderate package” for both the Eastern and Central Management Regions. As such, a “moderate season” for both management regions for the 2015–16 woodcock hunting season is appropriate. Specifics of the interim harvest strategy can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/NewsPublicationsReports.html>.

15. Band-Tailed Pigeons

Council Recommendations: The Central and Pacific Flyway Councils recommended decreasing the season length from 30 days to 14 days, and decreasing the daily bag limit from 5 to 2 for the Interior Population of band-tailed pigeons.

Service Response: We agree with the Central and Pacific Flyway Councils' recommendations to decrease season length from 30 to 14 days and daily bag limit from 5 to 2 birds for Interior band-tailed pigeons. Last year (79 FR 51405, August 28, 2014), we recommended that the Councils work together and with the Service's Division of Migratory Bird Management to review available information and conduct an assessment of the harvest potential of this population. We also requested they advise us of the results of this assessment and develop a regulatory recommendation using this information at our June 2015 regulatory meeting.

Technical representatives from the Central and Pacific Flyway Councils and the Service's Division of Migratory Bird Management met in Denver on October 23–24, 2014, to discuss an approach to assessing harvest potential and review available demographic data for interior band-tailed pigeons. At the meeting in Denver, participants agreed on using the Potential Take Level framework (PTL) for the harvest potential assessment. The objective of this PTL assessment was to derive an estimate of allowable harvest to compare with the best estimate of observed harvest after accounting for uncertainty of demographic parameters (*i.e.*, survival, reproduction, and population size). The assessment used all available demographic information for this species, albeit limited, but the information is dated and may not adequately represent extant conditions. Also, current abundance is largely unknown, and estimated hunter harvest is highly imprecise and may be biased high relative to the true value. Considering all the data, their precision, and potential biases, the assessment suggested that a conservative approach to harvest management for this population is warranted. Results were consistent with those of earlier investigators (1992) that reported low harvest potential for the Pacific Coast band-tailed pigeon. Results of the assessment provide a transparent approach to help inform the regulatory decision-making process for this population until additional information becomes available or a formal harvest strategy is developed. The PTL assessment could be updated if improved information on estimated hunter harvest and population size becomes available.

16. Mourning Doves

Council Recommendations: The Atlantic and Mississippi Flyway Councils recommended use of the “standard” season framework comprising a 90-day season and 15-bird daily bag limit for States within the Eastern Management Unit. The daily bag limit could be composed of mourning doves and white-winged doves, singly or in combination.

The Mississippi and Central Flyway Councils recommended the use of the “standard” season package of a 15-bird daily bag limit and a 70-day season for the 2015–16 mourning dove season in the States within the Central Management Unit.

The Pacific Flyway Council recommended use of the “standard” season framework for States in the Western Management Unit (WMU)

population of mourning doves. In Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington, the season length would be no more than 60 consecutive days with a daily bag limit of 15 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate. In Arizona and California, the season length would be no more than 60 consecutive days, which could 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 would be 15 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate, of which no more than 10 could be white-winged doves. During the remainder of the season, the daily bag limit would be 15 mourning doves. In California, the daily bag limit would be 15 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate, of which no more than 10 could be white-winged doves.

The Central Flyway Council also recommended that the Service, beginning with the 2016–17 hunting season, adopt a new “standard” season package framework comprised of a 90-day season and 15-bird daily bag limit for States within the Central Management Unit.

Service Response: Based on the harvest strategies and current population status, we agree with the recommended selection of the “standard” season frameworks for doves in the Eastern, Central, and Western Management Units for the 2015–16 seasons.

We do not support the recommendation by the Central Flyway to increase the length of the dove season to 90 days for the 2016–17 season at this time. We understand that the Central Flyway will continue to work with the Mississippi Flyway in the coming months to develop a joint recommendation to increase the season length, and we would consider such a recommendation at that time.

Lastly, as we discussed in the April 13, 2015, **Federal Register** (80 FR 19852), 2016 is the next open season for changes to dove zone and split configurations for the 2016–20 period. The current guidelines were approved in 2006 (see July 28, 2006, **Federal Register**, 71 FR 43008), for the use of zones and split seasons for doves with implementation beginning in the 2007–08 season. While the initial period was for 4 years (2007–10), we further stated that, beginning in 2011, zoning would conform to a 5-year period.

As discussed above under C. Zones and Split Seasons for ducks, because of unintentional and unanticipated issues with changing the regulatory schedule for the 2016–17 season, we have

decided that a two-phase approach is appropriate. For those States wishing to change zone and split season configurations in time for the 2016–17 season, we will need to receive that new configuration and zone descriptions by December 1, 2015. For those States that do not send in zone and split season configuration changes until the previously identified May 1, 2016, deadline, we will implement those changes in the 2017–18 hunting season. The next normally scheduled open season will be in 2021 for the 2021–25 seasons.

For the current open season, the guidelines for dove zone and split season configurations will be as follows:

Guidelines for Dove Zones and Split Seasons in the Eastern and Central Mourning Dove Management Units

(1) A zone is a geographic area or portion of a State, with a contiguous boundary, for which independent seasons may be selected for dove hunting.

(2) States may select a zone and split option during an open season. The option must remain in place for the following 5 years except that States may make a one-time change and revert to their previous zone and split configuration in any year of the 5-year period. Formal approval will not be required, but States must notify the Service before making the change.

(3) Zoning periods for dove hunting will conform to those years used for ducks, *e.g.*, 2016–20.

(4) The zone and split configuration consists of two zones with the option for 3-way (3-segment) split seasons in one or both zones. As a grandfathered arrangement, Texas will have three zones with the option for 2-way (2-segment) split seasons in one, two, or all three zones.

(5) States that do not wish to zone for dove hunting may split their seasons into no more than 3 segments.

For the 2016–20 period, any State may continue the configuration used in 2011–15. If changes are made, the zone and split-season configuration must conform to one of the options listed above. If Texas uses a new configuration for the entirety of the 5-year period, it cannot go back to the grandfathered arrangement that it previously had in place.

18. Alaska

Council Recommendations: The Pacific Flyway Council recommended two changes in the Alaska early-season frameworks. Specifically, they recommended:

1. For white-fronted geese in Unit 18 (Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta), increasing the daily bag limit from 8 to 10.

2. For Canada geese in Units 6–B, 6–C, and on Hinchinbrook and Hawkins Islands in Unit 6–D, increasing the possession limit from two times to three times the daily bag limit.

Service Response: We agree with the Pacific Flyway Council's recommendation to increase the daily bag limit from 8 to 10 white-fronted geese in Unit 18. The recent 3-year (2012–14) average fall population of Pacific white-fronted geese was 627,108 geese, and is well above the population objective of 300,000 geese as identified in the Pacific Flyway Council's management plan for this population. The Yukon-Kuskowim Delta (Unit 18) supports more than 95 percent of the breeding population of Pacific white-fronted geese.

We also agree with the Pacific Flyway Council's recommendation to increase the possession limit for Canada geese from two times to three times the daily bag limit in Units 6–B, 6–C, and on Hinchinbrook and Hawkins Islands in Unit 6–D. The recent 3-year (2011–14, no estimate was available in 2013) average breeding population of dusky Canada geese was 13,678 geese, and is the highest 3-year average since 1995. The dusky Canada goose annual population index has increased steadily since 2009, and 2014 (15,574) is the highest value since 2005. The status of dusky Canada geese continues to be of concern, and harvest restrictions have been and remain in place to protect these geese throughout their range since the 1970s. We continue to support the harvest strategy described in the Pacific Flyway Council's management plan for this population.

Public Comments

The Department of the Interior's policy is, whenever possible, to afford the public an opportunity to participate in the rulemaking process. Accordingly, we invite interested persons to submit written comments, suggestions, or recommendations regarding the proposed regulations. Before promulgating final migratory game bird hunting regulations, we will consider all comments we receive. These comments, and any additional information we receive, may lead to final regulations that differ from these proposals.

You may submit your comments and materials concerning this proposed rule by one of the methods listed in **ADDRESSES**. We will not accept comments sent by email or fax. We will not consider hand-delivered comments that we do not receive, or mailed

comments that are not postmarked, by the date specified in **DATES**.

We will post all comments in their entirety—including your personal identifying information—on <http://www.regulations.gov>. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Comments and materials we receive, as well as supporting documentation we used in preparing this proposed rule, will be available for public inspection on <http://www.regulations.gov>, or by appointment, during normal business hours, at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Migratory Bird Management, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041–3803.

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

Required Determinations

Based on our most current data, we are affirming our required determinations made in the April 13, 2015, proposed rule (80 FR 19852); see that document, for descriptions of our actions to ensure compliance with the following statutes and Executive Orders:

- National Environmental Policy Act;
- Endangered Species Act;
- Regulatory Planning and Review;
- Regulatory Flexibility Act;
- Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act;
- Paperwork Reduction Act;
- Unfunded Mandates Reform Act;
- Executive Orders 12630, 12988, 13175, 13132, and 13211.

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 20

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

These rules that are proposed to be promulgated for the 2015–16 hunting season are authorized under 16 U.S.C. 703–712 and 16 U.S.C. 742 a–j.

Dated: July 9, 2015.

Michael J. Bean,

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

Proposed Regulations Frameworks for 2015–16 Early Hunting Seasons on Certain Migratory Game Birds

Pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and delegated authorities, the Department of the Interior approved the following proposed frameworks, which prescribe season lengths, bag limits, shooting hours, and outside dates within which States may select hunting seasons for certain migratory game birds between September 1, 2015, and March 10, 2016. These frameworks are summarized below.

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 three times the daily bag limit.

Permits: For some species of migratory birds, the Service authorizes the use of permits to regulate harvest or monitor their take by sport hunters, or both. In many cases (*e.g.*, tundra swans, some sandhill crane populations), the Service determines the amount of harvest that may be taken during hunting seasons during its formal regulations-setting process, and the States then issue permits to hunters at levels predicted to result in the amount of take authorized by the Service. Thus, although issued by States, the permits would not be valid unless the Service approved such take in its regulations.

These Federally authorized, State-issued permits are issued to individuals, and only the individual whose name and address appears on the permit at the time of issuance is authorized to take migratory birds at levels specified in the permit, in accordance with provisions of both Federal and State regulations governing the hunting season. The permit must be carried by the permittee when exercising its provisions and must be presented to any law enforcement officer upon request. The permit is not transferrable or assignable to another individual, and may not be sold, bartered, traded, or otherwise provided to another person. If the permit is altered or defaced in any way, the permit becomes invalid.

Flyways and Management Units

Waterfowl Flyways

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

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

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

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

Management Units

Mourning Dove Management Units

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

Central Management Unit—Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming.

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

Woodcock Management Regions

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

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

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

Definitions

Dark geese: Canada geese, white-fronted geese, brant (except in Alaska,

California, Oregon, Washington, and the Atlantic Flyway), and all other goose species, except light geese.

Light geese: Snow (including blue) geese and Ross's geese.

Waterfowl Seasons in the Atlantic Flyway

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

Special September Teal Season

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

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

Mississippi Flyway—Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. The seasons in Iowa, Michigan, and Wisconsin are experimental.

Central Flyway—Colorado (part), Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico (part), Oklahoma, and Texas. The season in the northern portion of Nebraska is experimental.

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Not to exceed 16 consecutive hunting days in the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyways. The daily bag limit is 6 teal.

Shooting Hours:

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

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

Special September Duck Seasons

Florida, Kentucky and Tennessee: In lieu of a special September teal season, a 5-consecutive-day season may be selected in September. The daily bag limit may not exceed 6 teal and wood ducks in the aggregate, of which no more than 2 may be wood ducks. In addition, a 4-consecutive-day experimental season may be selected in September either immediately before or immediately after the 5-consecutive day

teal/wood duck season. The daily bag limit is 6 teal.

Iowa: In lieu of an experimental special September teal season, 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 19). 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 days per duck-hunting zone, designated as "Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days," in addition to their regular duck seasons. The days must be held outside any regular duck season on a weekend, holidays, or other non-school days when youth hunters would have the maximum opportunity to participate. The days may be held up to 14 days before or after any regular duck-season frameworks or within any split of a regular duck season, or within any other open season on migratory birds.

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

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

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

Scoters, Eiders, and Long-Tailed Ducks (Atlantic Flyway)

Outside Dates: Between September 15 and January 31.

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

Daily Bag Limits During the Regular Duck Season: Within the special sea duck areas, during the regular duck season in the Atlantic Flyway, States may choose to allow the above sea duck limits in addition to the limits applying to other ducks during the regular duck season. In all other areas, sea ducks may be taken only during the regular open

season for ducks and are part of the regular duck season daily bag (not to exceed 4 scoters) and possession limits.

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

Special Early Canada Goose Seasons Atlantic Flyway

General Seasons

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

Daily Bag Limits: Not to exceed 15 Canada geese.

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

Mississippi Flyway

General Seasons

Canada goose seasons of up to 15 days during September 1–15 may be selected, except in the Upper Peninsula in Michigan, where the season may not extend beyond September 10, and in Minnesota, where a season of up to 22 days during September 1–22 may be selected. The daily bag limit may not exceed 5 Canada geese, except in designated areas of Minnesota where the daily bag limit may not exceed 10 Canada geese. Areas open to the hunting

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

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

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

Central Flyway

General Seasons

In Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Texas, Canada goose seasons of up to 30 days during September 1–30 may be selected. In Colorado, New Mexico, North Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming, Canada goose seasons of up to 15 days during September 1–15 may be selected. The daily bag limit may not exceed 5 Canada geese, except in Kansas, Nebraska, and Oklahoma, where the daily bag limit may not exceed 8 Canada geese and in North Dakota and South Dakota, where the daily bag limit may not exceed 15 Canada geese. Areas open to the hunting of Canada geese must be described, delineated, and designated as such in each State's hunting regulations.

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

Pacific Flyway

General Seasons

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

Colorado may select a 9-day season during September 1–15. The daily bag limit is 4.

Oregon may select a 15-day season during September 1–15, except that in the Northwest Zone the season may be during September 1–20. The daily bag limit is 5.

Idaho may select a 15-day season during September 1–15. The daily bag limit is 5.

Washington may select a 15-day season during September 1–15. The

daily bag limit is 5, except in Pacific County where the daily bag limit is 15.

Wyoming may select an 8-day season during September 1–15. The daily bag limit is 3.

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

Mississippi Flyway

Regular goose seasons may open as early as September 11 in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and September 16 in Wisconsin and the Lower Peninsula of 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 Mississippi Flyway:

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and February 28 in Minnesota and between September 1 and January 31 in Kentucky.

Hunting Seasons: A season not to exceed 37 consecutive days may be selected in the designated portion of northwestern Minnesota (Northwest Goose Zone) and a season not to exceed 60 consecutive days in Kentucky.

Daily Bag Limit: 2 sandhill cranes. In Kentucky the seasonal bag limit is 3 sandhill cranes.

Permits: Each person participating in the regular sandhill crane seasons must have a valid Federal or State sandhill crane hunting permit.

Other Provisions: The number of permits (where applicable), open areas, season dates, protection plans for other species, and other provisions of seasons must be consistent with the management plans and approved by the Mississippi Flyway Council.

Experimental Season in the Mississippi Flyway:

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and January 31.

Hunting Seasons: A season not to exceed 60 consecutive days may be selected in Tennessee.

Bag Limit: Not to exceed 3 daily and 3 per season in Tennessee.

Permits: Each person participating in the regular sandhill crane season must have a valid Federal or State sandhill crane hunting permit.

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 Mississippi Flyway Council.

Regular Seasons in the Central Flyway:

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and February 28.

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

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

Permits: Each person participating in the regular sandhill crane season must have a valid Federal or State sandhill crane hunting permit.

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 consecutive 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:

A. In Utah, 100 percent of the harvest will be assigned to the RMP quota;

B. In Arizona, monitoring the racial composition of the harvest must be conducted at 3-year intervals;

C. In Idaho, 100 percent of the harvest will be assigned to the RMP quota; and

D. In New Mexico, the season in the Estancia Valley is experimental, with a requirement to monitor the level and racial composition of the harvest; greater sandhill cranes in the harvest will be assigned to the RMP quota.

Common Moorhens and Purple Gallinules

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and the last Sunday in January (January

31) in the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyways. States in the Pacific Flyway have been allowed to select their hunting seasons between the outside dates for the season on ducks; therefore, they are late-season frameworks, and no frameworks are provided in this document.

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

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

Rails

Outside Dates: States included herein may select seasons between September 1 and the last Sunday in January (January 31) on clapper, king, sora, and Virginia rails.

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

Daily Bag Limits:

Clapper and King Rails—In Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Rhode Island, 10, singly or in the aggregate of the two species. In Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, 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 rails, singly or in the aggregate of the two species. The season is closed in the remainder of the Pacific Flyway.

Snipe

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

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

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

American Woodcock

Outside Dates: States in the Eastern Management Region may select hunting seasons between October 1 and January 31. States in the Central Management Region may select hunting seasons

between the Saturday nearest September 22 (September 19) and January 31.

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Seasons may not exceed 45 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 36 days.

Band-Tailed Pigeons

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

Outside Dates: Between September 15 and January 1.

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

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

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

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and November 30.

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Not more than 14 consecutive days, with a daily bag limit of 2.

Zoning: New Mexico may select hunting seasons not to exceed 14 consecutive days in each of two zones. The season in the South Zone may not open until October 1.

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 90 days, with a daily bag limit of 15 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate.

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

Central Management Unit

For all States except Texas:

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

Zoning and Split Seasons: States may select hunting seasons in each of two zones. The season within each zone may

be split into not more than three periods.

Texas:

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits: Not more than 70 days, with a daily bag limit of 15 mourning, white-winged, and white-tipped doves in the aggregate, of which no more than 2 may be white-tipped doves.

Zoning and Split Seasons: 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 take of mourning and white-tipped doves may also occur during that special season (see Special White-winged Dove Area).

B. A season may be selected for the North and Central Zones between September 1 and January 25; and for the South Zone between the Friday nearest September 20 (September 18), but not earlier than September 17, and January 25.

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

Special White-winged Dove Area in Texas:

In addition, Texas may select a hunting season of not more than 4 days for the Special White-winged Dove Area of the South Zone between September 1 and September 19. The daily bag limit may not exceed 15 white-winged, mourning, and white-tipped doves in the aggregate, of which no more than 2 may be mourning doves and no more than 2 may be white-tipped doves.

Western Management Unit

Hunting Seasons and Daily Bag Limits:

Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington—Not more than 60 consecutive days, with a daily bag limit of 15 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 15 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate, of which no more than 10 could be white-winged doves. During the remainder of the season, the daily bag limit is 15 mourning doves. In California, the daily bag limit is 15 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate, of which no more than 10 could be white-winged 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 5 zones. The season may be split without penalty in the Kodiak Zone. The seasons in each zone must be concurrent.

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

Daily Bag and Possession Limits:

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

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

Light Geese—The daily bag limit is 4.

Canada Geese—The daily bag limit is 4 with the following exceptions:

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

B. On Middleton Island in Unit 6, a special, permit-only Canada goose season may be offered. A mandatory goose identification class is required. Hunters must check in and check out. The bag limit is 1 daily and 1 in possession. The season will close if incidental harvest includes 5 dusky Canada geese. A dusky Canada goose is any dark-breasted Canada goose (Munsell 10 YR color value five or less) with a bill length between 40 and 50 millimeters.

D. In Units 9, 10, 17, and 18, the daily bag limit is 6 Canada geese.

White-fronted Geese—The daily bag limit is 4 with the following exceptions:

A. In Units 9, 10, and 17, the daily bag limit is 6 white-fronted geese.

B. In Unit 18, the daily bag limit is 10 white-fronted geese.

Brant—The daily bag limit is 2.

Snipe—The daily bag limit is 8.

Sandhill cranes—The daily bag limit is 2 in the Southeast, Gulf Coast, Kodiak, and Aleutian Zones, and Unit 17 in the North Zone. In the remainder of the North Zone (outside Unit 17), the daily bag limit is 3.

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

A. All seasons are by registration permit only.

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

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

D. In Unit 18, no more than 500 permits may be issued during the operational season. No more than 3 tundra swans may be authorized per permit. No more than 1 permit may be issued per hunter per season.

E. In Unit 22, no more than 300 permits may be issued during the operational season. No more than 3 tundra swans may be authorized per permit. No more than 1 permit may be issued per hunter per season.

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

Hawaii

Outside Dates: Between October 1 and January 31.

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

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

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

Puerto Rico

Doves and Pigeons

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and January 15.

Hunting Seasons: Not more than 60 days.

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

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

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

Ducks, Coots, Moorhens, Gallinules, and Snipe

Outside Dates: Between October 1 and January 31.

Hunting Seasons: Not more than 55 days may be selected for hunting ducks,

common moorhens, and common snipe. The season may be split into two segments.

Daily Bag Limits:

Ducks—Not to exceed 6.

Common moorhens—Not to exceed 6.

Common snipe—Not to exceed 8.

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

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

Virgin Islands

Doves and Pigeons

Outside Dates: Between September 1 and January 15.

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

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

Closed Seasons: No open season is prescribed for ground or quail doves or pigeons.

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. These States may select an extended season for taking migratory game birds in accordance with the following:

Extended Seasons: For all hunting methods combined, the combined length of the extended season, regular season, and any special or experimental seasons must not exceed 107 days for

any species or group of species in a geographical area. Each extended season may be divided into a maximum of 3 segments.

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

Daily Bag Limits: Falconry daily bag limits for all permitted migratory game birds must not exceed 3 birds, 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. Regular season bag limits do not apply to falconry. The falconry bag limit is not in addition to gun limits.

Area, Unit, and Zone Descriptions

Doves

Alabama

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

North Zone—Remainder of the State.

Florida

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

South Zone—Remainder of State.

Louisiana

North Zone—That portion of the State north of a line extending east from the Texas border along State Highway 12 to U.S. Highway 190, east along U.S. 190 to Interstate Highway 12, east along Interstate Highway 12 to Interstate Highway 10, then east along Interstate Highway 10 to the Mississippi border.

South Zone—The remainder of the State.

Mississippi

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

South Zone—The remainder of Mississippi.

Texas

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

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

Special White-winged Dove Area in the South Zone—That portion of the State south and west of a line beginning at the International Toll Bridge in Del Rio; then northeast along U.S. Highway 277 Spur to U.S. Highway 90 in Del Rio; then east along U.S. Highway 90 to State Loop 1604; then along Loop 1604 south and east to Interstate Highway 37; then south along Interstate Highway 37 to U.S. Highway 181 in Corpus Christi; then north and east along U.S. 181 to the Corpus Christi Ship Channel, then eastwards along the south shore of the Corpus Christi Ship Channel to the Gulf of Mexico.

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—The 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 Early Canada Goose Seasons Atlantic Flyway

Connecticut

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

South Zone—The remainder of the State.

Maryland

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

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

Massachusetts

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

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

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

New York

Lake Champlain Goose Area—The same as the Lake Champlain Waterfowl Hunting Zone, which is that area of New York State lying east and north of a continuous line extending along Route 11 from the New York-Canada International boundary south to Route 9B, south along Route 9B to Route 9, south along Route 9 to Route 22 south of Keeseville, south along Route 22 to

the west shore of South Bay along and around the shoreline of South Bay to Route 22 on the east shore of South Bay, southeast along Route 22 to Route 4, northeast along Route 4 to the New York-Vermont boundary.

Northeast Goose Area—The same as the Northeastern Waterfowl Hunting Zone, which is that area of New York State lying north of a continuous line extending from Lake Ontario east along the north shore of the Salmon River to Interstate 81, south along Interstate Route 81 to Route 31, east along Route 31 to Route 13, north along Route 13 to Route 49, east along Route 49 to Route 365, east along Route 365 to Route 28, east along Route 28 to Route 29, east along Route 29 to Route 22 at Greenwich Junction, north along Route 22 to Washington County Route 153, east along CR 153 to the New York-Vermont boundary, exclusive of the Lake Champlain Zone.

East Central Goose Area—That area of New York State lying inside of a continuous line extending from Interstate Route 81 in Cicero, east along Route 31 to Route 13, north along Route 13 to Route 49, east along Route 49 to Route 365, east along Route 365 to Route 28, east along Route 28 to Route 29, east along Route 29 to Route 147 at Kimball Corners, south along Route 147 to Schenectady County Route 40 (West Glenville Road), west along Route 40 to Touareuna Road, south along Touareuna Road to Schenectady County Route 59, south along Route 59 to State Route 5, east along Route 5 to the Lock 9 bridge, southwest along the Lock 9 bridge to Route 5S, southeast along Route 5S to Schenectady County Route 58, southwest along Route 58 to the NYS Thruway, south along the Thruway to Route 7, southwest along Route 7 to Schenectady County Route 103, south along Route 103 to Route 406, east along Route 406 to Schenectady County Route 99 (Windy Hill Road), south along Route 99 to Dunnsville Road, south along Dunnsville Road to Route 397, southwest along Route 397 to Route 146 at Altamont, west along Route 146 to Albany County Route 252, northwest along Route 252 to Schenectady County Route 131, north along Route 131 to Route 7, west along Route 7 to Route 10 at Richmondville, south on Route 10 to Route 23 at Stamford, west along Route 23 to Route 7 in Oneonta, southwest along Route 7 to Route 79 to Interstate Route 88 near Harpursville, west along Route 88 to Interstate Route 81, north along Route 81 to the point of beginning.

West Central Goose Area—That area of New York State lying within a continuous line beginning at the point

where the northerly extension of Route 269 (County Line Road on the Niagara-Orleans County boundary) meets the International boundary with Canada, south to the shore of Lake Ontario at the eastern boundary of Golden Hill State Park, south along the extension of Route 269 and Route 269 to Route 104 at Jeddo, west along Route 104 to Niagara County Route 271, south along Route 271 to Route 31E at Middleport, south along Route 31E to Route 31, west along Route 31 to Griswold Street, south along Griswold Street to Ditch Road, south along Ditch Road to Foot Road, south along Foot Road to the north bank of Tonawanda Creek, west along the north bank of Tonawanda Creek to Route 93, south along Route 93 to Route 5, east along Route 5 to Crittenden-Murrays Corners Road, south on Crittenden-Murrays Corners Road to the NYS Thruway, east along the Thruway 90 to Route 98 (at Thruway Exit 48) in Batavia, south along Route 98 to Route 20, east along Route 20 to Route 19 in Pavilion Center, south along Route 19 to Route 63, southeast along Route 63 to Route 246, south along Route 246 to Route 39 in Perry, northeast along Route 39 to Route 20A, northeast along Route 20A to Route 20, east along Route 20 to Route 364 (near Canandaigua), south and east along Route 364 to Yates County Route 18 (Italy Valley Road), southwest along Route 18 to Yates County Route 34, east along Route 34 to Yates County Route 32, south along Route 32 to Steuben County Route 122, south along Route 122 to Route 53, south along Route 53 to Steuben County Route 74, east along Route 74 to Route 54A (near Pulteney), south along Route 54A to Steuben County Route 87, east along Route 87 to Steuben County Route 96, east along Route 96 to Steuben County Route 114, east along Route 114 to Schuyler County Route 23, east and southeast along Route 23 to Schuyler County Route 28, southeast along Route 28 to Route 409 at Watkins Glen, south along Route 409 to Route 14, south along Route 14 to Route 224 at Montour Falls, east along Route 224 to Route 228 in Odessa, north along Route 228 to Route 79 in Mecklenburg, east along Route 79 to Route 366 in Ithaca, northeast along Route 366 to Route 13, northeast along Route 13 to Interstate Route 81 in Cortland, north along Route 81 to the north shore of the Salmon River to shore of Lake Ontario, extending generally northwest in a straight line to the nearest point of the International boundary with Canada, south and west along the International boundary to the point of beginning.

Hudson Valley Goose Area—That area of New York State lying within a continuous line extending from Route 4 at the New York–Vermont boundary, west and south along Route 4 to Route 149 at Fort Ann, west on Route 149 to Route 9, south along Route 9 to Interstate Route 87 (at Exit 20 in Glens Falls), south along Route 87 to Route 29, west along Route 29 to Route 147 at Kimball Corners, south along Route 147 to Schenectady County Route 40 (West Glenville Road), west along Route 40 to Touareuna Road, south along Touareuna Road to Schenectady County Route 59, south along Route 59 to State Route 5, east along Route 5 to the Lock 9 bridge, southwest along the Lock 9 bridge to Route 5S, southeast along Route 5S to Schenectady County Route 58, southwest along Route 58 to the NYS Thruway, south along the Thruway to Route 7, southwest along Route 7 to Schenectady County Route 103, south along Route 103 to Route 406, east along Route 406 to Schenectady County Route 99 (Windy Hill Road), south along Route 99 to Dunnsville Road, south along Dunnsville Road to Route 397, southwest along Route 397 to Route 146 at Altamont, southeast along Route 146 to Main Street in Altamont, west along Main Street to Route 156, southeast along Route 156 to Albany County Route 307, southeast along Route 307 to Route 85A, southwest along Route 85A to Route 85, south along Route 85 to Route 443, southeast along Route 443 to Albany County Route 301 at Clarksville, southeast along Route 301 to Route 32, south along Route 32 to Route 23 at Cairo, west along Route 23 to Joseph Chadderdon Road, southeast along Joseph Chadderdon Road to Hearts Content Road (Greene County Route 31), southeast along Route 31 to Route 32, south along Route 32 to Greene County Route 23A, east along Route 23A to Interstate Route 87 (the NYS Thruway), south along Route 87 to Route 28 (Exit 19) near Kingston, northwest on Route 28 to Route 209, southwest on Route 209 to the New York–Pennsylvania boundary, southeast along the New York–Pennsylvania boundary to the New York–New Jersey boundary, southeast along the New York–New Jersey boundary to Route 210 near Greenwood Lake, northeast along Route 210 to Orange County Route 5, northeast along Orange County Route 5 to Route 105 in the Village of Monroe, east and north along Route 105 to Route 32, northeast along Route 32 to Orange County Route 107 (Quaker Avenue), east along Route 107 to Route 9W, north along Route 9W to the south bank of Moodna Creek, southeast along the

south bank of Moodna Creek to the New Windsor–Cornwall town boundary, northeast along the New Windsor–Cornwall town boundary to the Orange–Dutchess County boundary (middle of the Hudson River), north along the county boundary to Interstate Route 84, east along Route 84 to the Dutchess–Putnam County boundary, east along the county boundary to the New York–Connecticut boundary, north along the New York–Connecticut boundary to the New York–Massachusetts boundary, north along the New York–Massachusetts boundary to the New York–Vermont boundary, north to the point of beginning.

Eastern Long Island Goose Area (NAP High Harvest Area)—That area of Suffolk County lying east of a continuous line extending due south from the New York–Connecticut boundary to the northernmost end of Roanoke Avenue in the Town of Riverhead; then south on Roanoke Avenue (which becomes County Route 73) to State Route 25; then west on Route 25 to Peconic Avenue; then south on Peconic Avenue to County Route (CR) 104 (Riverleigh Avenue); then south on CR 104 to CR 31 (Old Riverhead Road); then south on CR 31 to Oak Street; then south on Oak Street to Potunk Lane; then west on Stevens Lane; then south on Jessup Avenue (in Westhampton Beach) to Dune Road (CR 89); then due south to international waters.

Western Long Island Goose Area (RP Area)—That area of Westchester County and its tidal waters southeast of Interstate Route 95 and that area of Nassau and Suffolk Counties lying west of a continuous line extending due south from the New York–Connecticut boundary to the northernmost end of the Sunken Meadow State Parkway; then south on the Sunken Meadow Parkway to the Sagtikos State Parkway; then south on the Sagtikos Parkway to the Robert Moses State Parkway; then south on the Robert Moses Parkway to its southernmost end; then due south to international waters.

Central Long Island Goose Area (NAP Low Harvest Area)—That area of Suffolk County lying between the Western and Eastern Long Island Goose Areas, as defined above.

South Goose Area—The remainder of New York State, excluding New York City.

Pennsylvania

Southern James Bay Population (SJB) Zone—The area north of I–80 and west of I–79, including in the city of Erie west of Bay Front Parkway to and including the Lake Erie Duck Zone

(Lake Erie, Presque Isle, and the area within 150 yards of the Lake Erie Shoreline).

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 VT 78 at Swanton; VT 78 to VT 36; VT 36 to Maquam Bay on Lake Champlain; along and around the shoreline of Maquam Bay and Hog Island to VT 78 at the West Swanton Bridge; VT 78 to VT 2 in Alburg; VT 2 to the Richelieu River in Alburg; along the east shore of the Richelieu River to the Canadian border.

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

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

Mississippi Flyway

Arkansas

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

Illinois

North September Canada Goose Zone—That portion of the State north of a line extending west from the Indiana border along Interstate 80 to I–39, south along I–39 to Illinois Route 18, west along Illinois Route 18 to Illinois Route 29, south along Illinois Route 29 to Illinois Route 17, west along Illinois Route 17 to the Mississippi River, and due south across the Mississippi River to the Iowa border.

Central September Canada Goose Zone—That portion of the State south of the North September Canada Goose Zone line to a line extending west from the Indiana border along I–70 to Illinois Route 4, south along Illinois Route 4 to Illinois Route 161, west along Illinois Route 161 to Illinois Route 158, south and west along Illinois Route 158 to Illinois Route 159, south along Illinois Route 159 to Illinois Route 3, south along Illinois Route 3 to St. Leo's Road, south along St. Leo's road to Modoc

Road, west along Modoc Road to Modoc Ferry Road, southwest along Modoc Ferry Road to Levee Road, southeast along Levee Road to County Route 12 (Modoc Ferry entrance Road), south along County Route 12 to the Modoc Ferry route and southwest on the Modoc Ferry route across the Mississippi River to the Missouri border.

South September Canada Goose Zone—That portion of the State south and east of a line extending west from the Indiana border along Interstate 70, south along U.S. Highway 45, to Illinois Route 13, west along Illinois Route 13 to Greenbriar Road, north on Greenbriar Road to Sycamore Road, west on Sycamore Road to N. Reed Station Road, south on N. Reed Station Road to Illinois Route 13, west along Illinois Route 13 to Illinois Route 127, south along Illinois Route 127 to State Forest Road (1025 N), west along State Forest Road to Illinois Route 3, north along Illinois Route 3 to the south bank of the Big Muddy River, west along the south bank of the Big Muddy River to the Mississippi River, west across the Mississippi River to the Missouri border.

South Central September Canada Goose Zone—The remainder of the State between the south border of the Central Zone and the North border of the South Zone

Iowa

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

South Zone—The remainder of Iowa.

Cedar Rapids/Iowa City Goose Zone—Includes portions of Linn and Johnson Counties bounded as follows: Beginning at the intersection of the west border of Linn County and Linn County Road E2W; then south and east along County Road E2W to Highway 920; then north along Highway 920 to County Road E16; then east along County Road E16 to County Road W58; then south along County Road W58 to County Road E34; then east along County Road E34 to Highway 13; then south along Highway 13 to Highway 30; then east along Highway 30 to Highway 1; then south along Highway 1 to Morse Road in Johnson County; then east along Morse Road to Wapsi Avenue; then south along Wapsi Avenue to Lower West Branch Road; then west along Lower West Branch Road to Taft Avenue; then south along Taft Avenue to County Road F62; then west along County Road F62 to Kansas Avenue; then north along Kansas Avenue to Black Diamond Road; then west on Black Diamond Road to Jasper Avenue; then north along Jasper Avenue to Rohert Road; then west along Rohert Road to Ivy Avenue; then north

along Ivy Avenue to 340th Street; then west along 340th Street to Half Moon Avenue; then north along Half Moon Avenue to Highway 6; then west along Highway 6 to Echo Avenue; then north along Echo Avenue to 250th Street; then east on 250th Street to Green Castle Avenue; then north along Green Castle Avenue to County Road F12; then west along County Road F12 to County Road W30; then north along County Road W30 to Highway 151; then north along the Linn–Benton County line to the point of beginning.

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

Cedar Falls/Waterloo Goose Zone—Includes those portions of Black Hawk County bounded as follows: Beginning at the intersection of County Roads C66 and V49 in Black Hawk County, then south along County Road V49 to County Road D38, then west along County Road D38 to State Highway 21, then south along State Highway 21 to County Road D35, then west along County Road D35

to Grundy Road, then north along Grundy Road to County Road D19, then west along County Road D19 to Butler Road, then north along Butler Road to County Road C57, then north and east along County Road C57 to U.S. Highway 63, then south along U.S. Highway 63 to County Road C66, then east along County Road C66 to the point of beginning.

Michigan

North Zone—Same as North duck zone.

Middle Zone—Same as Middle duck zone.

South Zone—Same as South duck zone.

Minnesota

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.

Intensive Harvest Zone—That portion of the State encompassed by a line extending east from the junction of US 2 and the North Dakota border, US 2 east to MN 32 N, MN 32 N to MN 92 S, MN 92 S to MN 200 E, MN 200 E to US 71 S, US 71 S to US 10 E, US 10 E to MN 101 S, MN 101 S to Interstate 94 E, Interstate 94 E to US 494 S, US 494 S to US 212 W, US 212 W to MN 23 S, MN 23 S to US 14 W, US 14 W to the South Dakota border, South Dakota Border north to the North Dakota border, North Dakota border north to US 2 E.

Rest of State: Remainder of Minnesota.

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

North Dakota

Missouri River Canada Goose Zone—The area within and bounded by a line starting where ND Hwy 6 crosses the South Dakota border; then north on ND Hwy 6 to I-94; then west on I-94 to ND Hwy 49; then north on ND Hwy 49 to ND Hwy 200; then north on Mercer County Rd. 21 to the section line between sections 8 and 9 (T146N-R87W); then north on that section line to the southern shoreline to Lake Sakakawea; then east along the southern shoreline (including Mallard Island) of Lake Sakakawea to US Hwy 83; then south on US Hwy 83 to ND Hwy 200; then east on ND Hwy 200 to ND Hwy 41; then south on ND Hwy 41 to US Hwy 83; then south on US Hwy 83 to I-94; then east on I-94 to US Hwy 83; then south on US Hwy 83 to the South Dakota border; then west along the South Dakota border to ND Hwy 6.

Rest of State—Remainder of North Dakota.

South Dakota

Special Early Canada Goose Unit—The Counties of Campbell, Marshall, Roberts, Day, Clark, Codington, Grant, Hamlin, Deuel, Walworth; that portion of Perkins County west of State Highway 75 and south of State Highway 20; that portion of Dewey County north of Bureau of Indian Affairs Road 8, Bureau of Indian Affairs Road 9, and the section of U.S. Highway 212 east of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Road 8 junction; that portion of Potter County east of U.S. Highway 83; that portion of Sully County east of U.S. Highway 83; portions of Hyde, Buffalo, Brule, and Charles Mix counties north and east of a line beginning at the Hughes-Hyde County line on State Highway 34, east to Lees Boulevard, southeast to the State Highway 34, east 7 miles to 350th Avenue, south to Interstate 90 on 350th Avenue, south and east on State Highway 50 to Geddes, east on 285th Street to U.S. Highway 281, and north on U.S. Highway 281 to the Charles Mix-Douglas County boundary; that portion of Bon Homme County north of State Highway 50; McPherson, Edmunds, Kingsbury, Brookings, Lake, Moody, Miner, Faulk, Hand, Jerauld, Douglas, Hutchinson, Turner, Union, Clay, Yankton, Aurora, Beadle, Davison, Hanson, Sanborn, Spink, Brown,

Harding, Butte, Lawrence, Meade, Shannon, Jackson, Mellette, Todd, Jones, Haakon, Corson, Ziebach, and McCook Counties; and those portions of Minnehaha and Lincoln counties outside of an area bounded by a line beginning at the junction of the South Dakota-Minnesota state line and Minnehaha County Highway 122 (254th Street) west to its junction with Minnehaha County Highway 149 (464th Avenue), south on Minnehaha County Highway 149 (464th Avenue) to Hartford, then south on Minnehaha County Highway 151 (463rd Avenue) to State Highway 42, east on State Highway 42 to State Highway 17, south on State Highway 17 to its junction with Lincoln County Highway 116 (Klondike Road), and east on Lincoln County Highway 116 (Klondike Road) to the South Dakota-Iowa State line, then north along the South Dakota-Iowa and South Dakota-Minnesota border to the junction of the South Dakota-Minnesota State line and Minnehaha County Highway 122 (254th Street).

Texas

Eastern Goose Zone—East of a line from the International Toll Bridge at Laredo, north following IH-35 and 35W to Fort Worth, northwest along U.S. Hwy. 81 and 287 to Bowie, north along U.S. Hwy. 81 to the Texas-Oklahoma State line.

Pacific Flyway

Oregon

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

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

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

Washington

Area 1—Skagit, Island, and Snohomish Counties.

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

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

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

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

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

Salmon River that are not included in Area 4.

Wyoming

Teton County Zone—All of Teton County.

Balance of State Zone—Remainder of the State.

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 Keeseville; south along NY 22 to the west shore of South Bay, along and around the shoreline of South Bay to NY 22 on the east shore of South Bay; southeast along NY 22 to U.S. 4, northeast along U.S. 4 to the Vermont border.

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

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

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

Southeastern Zone—The remaining portion of New York.

Maryland

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

Mississippi Flyway

Indiana

North Zone—That part of Indiana north of a line extending east from the Illinois border along State Road 18 to U.S. 31; north along U.S. 31 to U.S. 24; east along U.S. 24 to Huntington; southeast along U.S. 224; south along

State Road 5; and east along State Road 124 to the Ohio border.

Central Zone—That part of Indiana south of the North Zone boundary and north of the South Zone boundary.

South Zone—That part of Indiana south of a line extending east from the Illinois border along U.S. 40; south along U.S. 41; east along State Road 58; south along State Road 37 to Bedford; and east along U.S. 50 to the Ohio border.

Iowa

North Zone—That portion of Iowa north of a line beginning on the South Dakota–Iowa border at Interstate 29, southeast along Interstate 29 to State Highway 175, east along State Highway 175 to State Highway 37, southeast along State Highway 37 to State Highway 183, northeast along State Highway 183 to State Highway 141, east along State Highway 141 to U.S. Highway 30, and along U.S. Highway 30 to the Illinois border.

Missouri River Zone—That portion of Iowa west of a line beginning on the South Dakota–Iowa border at Interstate 29, southeast along Interstate 29 to State Highway 175, and west along State Highway 175 to the Iowa–Nebraska 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 State line 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, easterly along U.S. 10 BR to U.S. 10, easterly along U.S. 10 to Interstate Highway 75/U.S. Highway 23, northerly along I–75/U.S. 23 to the U.S. 23 exit at Standish, easterly along U.S. 23 to the centerline of the Au Gres River, then southerly along the centerline of the Au Gres River to Saginaw Bay, then on a line directly east 10 miles into Saginaw Bay, and from that point on a line directly northeast to the Canadian border.

South Zone—The remainder of Michigan.

Wisconsin

North Zone—That portion of the State north of a line extending east from the Minnesota State line along U.S.

Highway 10 into Portage County to County Highway HH, east on County Highway HH to State Highway 66 and then east on State Highway 66 to U.S. Highway 10, continuing east on U.S. Highway 10 to U.S. Highway 41, then north on U.S. Highway 41 to the Michigan State line.

Mississippi River Zone—That area encompassed by a line beginning at the intersection of the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railway and the Illinois State line in Grant County and extending northerly along the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railway to the city limit of Prescott in Pierce County, then west along the Prescott city limit to the Minnesota State line.

South Zone—The remainder of Wisconsin.

Central Flyway

Colorado

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

Kansas

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

Early Zone—That part of Kansas bounded by a line from the Nebraska–Kansas State line south on K–128 to its junction with U.S.–36, then east on U.S.–36 to its junction with K–199, then south on K–199 to its junction with Republic County 30 Rd, then south on Republic County 30 Rd to its junction with K–148, then east on K–148 to its junction with Republic County 50 Rd, then south on Republic County 50 Rd to its junction with Cloud County 40th Rd, then south on Cloud County 40th Rd to its junction with K–9, then west on K–9 to its junction with U.S.–24, then west on U.S.–24 to its junction with U.S.–281, then north on U.S.–281 to its junction with U.S.–36, then west on U.S.–36 to its junction with U.S.–183, then south on U.S.–183 to its junction with U.S.–24, then west on U.S.–24 to its junction with K–18, then southeast on K–18 to its junction with U.S.–183, then south on U.S.–183 to its junction with K–4, then east on K–4 to its junction with I–135, then south on I–135 to its junction with K–61, then southwest on K–61 to McPherson County 14th Avenue, then south on McPherson County 14th Avenue to its junction with Arapaho Rd, then west on Arapaho Rd to its junction with K–61, then southwest on K–61 to its junction with K–96, then northwest on K–96 to its junction with U.S.–56, then southwest on U.S.–56 to its junction with K–19, then east on K–19 to its junction with U.S.–281, then south on

U.S.–281 to its junction with U.S.–54, then west on U.S.–54 to its junction with U.S.–183, then north on U.S.–183 to its junction with U.S.–56, then southwest on U.S.–56 to its junction with Ford County Rd 126, then south on Ford County Rd 126 to its junction with U.S.–400, then northwest on U.S.–400 to its junction with U.S.–283, then north on U.S.–283 to its junction with the Nebraska–Kansas State line, then east along the Nebraska–Kansas State line to its junction with K–128.

Late Zone—That part of Kansas bounded by a line from the Nebraska–Kansas State line south on K–128 to its junction with U.S.–36, then east on U.S.–36 to its junction with K–199, then south on K–199 to its junction with Republic County 30 Rd, then south on Republic County 30 Rd to its junction with K–148, then east on K–148 to its junction with Republic County 50 Rd, then south on Republic County 50 Rd to its junction with Cloud County 40th Rd, then south on Cloud County 40th Rd to its junction with K–9, then west on K–9 to its junction with U.S.–24, then west on U.S.–24 to its junction with U.S.–281, then north on U.S.–281 to its junction with U.S.–36, then west on U.S.–36 to its junction with U.S.–183, then south on U.S.–183 to its junction with U.S.–24, then west on U.S.–24 to its junction with K–18, then southeast on K–18 to its junction with U.S.–183, then south on U.S.–183 to its junction with K–4, then east on K–4 to its junction with I–135, then south on I–135 to its junction with K–61, then southwest on K–61 to 14th Avenue, then south on 14th Avenue to its junction with Arapaho Rd, then west on Arapaho Rd to its junction with K–61, then southwest on K–61 to its junction with K–96, then northwest on K–96 to its junction with U.S.–56, then southwest on U.S.–56 to its junction with K–19, then east on K–19 to its junction with U.S.–281, then south on U.S.–281 to its junction with U.S.–54, then west on U.S.–54 to its junction with U.S.–183, then north on U.S.–183 to its junction with U.S.–56, then southwest on U.S.–56 to its junction with Ford County Rd 126, then south on Ford County Rd 126 to its junction with U.S.–400, then northwest on U.S.–400 to its junction with U.S.–283, then south on U.S.–283 to its junction with the Oklahoma–Kansas State line, then east along the Oklahoma–Kansas State line to its junction with U.S.–77, then north on U.S.–77 to its junction with Butler County, NE 150th Street, then east on Butler County, NE 150th Street to its junction with U.S.–35, then northeast on U.S.–35 to its junction with K–68,

then east on K-68 to the Kansas-Missouri State line, then north along the Kansas-Missouri State line to its junction with the Nebraska State line, then west along the Kansas-Nebraska State line to its junction with K-128.

Southeast Zone—That part of Kansas bounded by a line from the Missouri-Kansas State line west on K-68 to its junction with U.S.-35, then southwest on U.S.-35 to its junction with Butler County, NE 150th Street, then west on NE 150th Street until its junction with K-77, then south on K-77 to the Oklahoma-Kansas State line, then east along the Kansas-Oklahoma State line to its junction with the Missouri State line, then north along the Kansas-Missouri State line to its junction with K-68.

Nebraska

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

Special Teal Season Area (north)—The remainder of the State.

High Plains—That portion of Nebraska lying west of a line beginning at the South Dakota-Nebraska border on U.S. Hwy. 183; south on U.S. Hwy. 183 to U.S. Hwy. 20; west on U.S. Hwy. 20 to NE Hwy. 7; south on NE Hwy. 7 to NE Hwy. 91; southwest on NE Hwy. 91 to NE Hwy. 2; southeast on NE Hwy. 2 to NE Hwy. 92; west on NE Hwy. 92 to NE Hwy. 40; south on NE Hwy. 40 to NE Hwy. 47; south on NE Hwy. 47 to NE Hwy. 23; east on NE Hwy. 23 to U.S. Hwy. 283; and south on U.S. Hwy. 283 to the Kansas-Nebraska border.

Zone 1—Area bounded by designated Federal and State highways and political boundaries beginning at the South Dakota-Nebraska border west of NE Hwy. 26E Spur and north of NE Hwy. 12; those portions of Dixon, Cedar and Knox Counties north of NE Hwy. 12; that portion of Keya Paha County east of U.S. Hwy. 183; and all of Boyd County. Both banks of the Niobrara River in Keya Paha and Boyd counties east of U.S. Hwy. 183 shall be included in Zone 1.

Zone 2—The area south of Zone 1 and north of Zone 3.

Zone 3—Area bounded by designated Federal and State highways, County Roads, and political boundaries beginning at the Wyoming-Nebraska border at the intersection of the Interstate Canal; east along northern borders of Scotts Bluff and Morrill Counties to Broadwater Road; south to

Morrill County Rd 94; east to County Rd 135; south to County Rd 88; southeast to County Rd 151; south to County Rd 80; east to County Rd 161; south to County Rd 76; east to County Rd 165; south to County Rd 167; south to U.S. Hwy. 26; east to County Rd 171; north to County Rd 68; east to County Rd 183; south to County Rd 64; east to County Rd 189; north to County Rd 70; east to County Rd 201; south to County Rd 60A; east to County Rd 203; south to County Rd 52; east to Keith County Line; east along the northern boundaries of Keith and Lincoln Counties to NE Hwy. 97; south to U.S. Hwy 83; south to E Hall School Rd; east to N Airport Road; south to U.S. Hwy. 30; east to Merrick County Rd 13; north to County Rd O; east to NE Hwy. 14; north to NE Hwy. 52; west and north to NE Hwy. 91; west to U.S. Hwy. 281; south to NE Hwy. 22; west to NE Hwy. 11; northwest to NE Hwy. 91; west to U.S. Hwy. 183; south to Round Valley Rd; west to Sargent River Rd; west to Sargent Rd; west to Milburn Rd; north to Blaine County Line; east to Loup County Line; north to NE Hwy. 91; west to North Loup Spur Rd; north to North Loup River Rd; east to Pleasant Valley/Worth Rd; east to Loup County Line; north to Loup-Brown county line; east along northern boundaries of Loup and Garfield Counties to Cedar River Rd; south to NE Hwy. 70; east to U.S. Hwy. 281; north to NE Hwy. 70; east to NE Hwy. 14; south to NE Hwy. 39; southeast to NE Hwy. 22; east to U.S. Hwy. 81; southeast to U.S. Hwy. 30; east to U.S. Hwy. 75; north to the Washington County line; east to the Iowa-Nebraska border; south to the Missouri-Nebraska border; south to Kansas-Nebraska border; west along Kansas-Nebraska border to Colorado-Nebraska border; north and west to Wyoming-Nebraska border; north to intersection of Interstate Canal; and excluding that area in Zone 4.

Zone 4—Area encompassed by designated Federal and State highways and County Roads beginning at the intersection of NE Hwy. 8 and U.S. Hwy. 75; north to U.S. Hwy. 136; east to the intersection of U.S. Hwy. 136 and the Steamboat Trace (Trace); north along the Trace to the intersection with Federal Levee R-562; north along Federal Levee R-562 to the intersection with the Trace; north along the Trace/Burlington Northern Railroad right-of-way to NE Hwy. 2; west to U.S. Hwy. 75; north to NE Hwy. 2; west to NE Hwy. 43; north to U.S. Hwy. 34; east to NE Hwy. 63; north to NE Hwy. 66; north and west to U.S. Hwy. 77; north to NE Hwy. 92; west to NE Hwy. Spur 12F;

south to Butler County Rd 30; east to County Rd X; south to County Rd 27; west to County Rd W; south to County Rd 26; east to County Rd X; south to County Rd 21 (Seward County Line); west to NE Hwy. 15; north to County Rd 34; west to County Rd J; south to NE Hwy. 92; west to U.S. Hwy. 81; south to NE Hwy. 66; west to Polk County Rd C; north to NE Hwy. 92; west to U.S. Hwy. 30; west to Merrick County Rd 17; south to Hordlake Road; southeast to Prairie Island Road; southeast to Hamilton County Rd T; south to NE Hwy. 66; west to NE Hwy. 14; south to County Rd 22; west to County Rd M; south to County Rd 21; west to County Rd K; south to U.S. Hwy. 34; west to NE Hwy. 2; south to U.S. Hwy. I-80; west to Gunbarrel Rd (Hall/Hamilton county line); south to Giltner Rd; west to U.S. Hwy. 281; south to U.S. Hwy. 34; west to NE Hwy. 10; north to Kearney County Rd R and Phelps County Rd 742; west to U.S. Hwy. 283; south to U.S. Hwy 34; east to U.S. Hwy. 136; east to U.S. Hwy. 183; north to NE Hwy. 4; east to NE Hwy. 10; south to U.S. Hwy. 136; east to NE Hwy. 14; south to NE Hwy. 8; east to U.S. Hwy. 81; north to NE Hwy. 4; east to NE Hwy. 15; south to U.S. Hwy. 136; east to NE Hwy. 103; south to NE Hwy. 8; east to U.S. Hwy. 75.

New Mexico (Central Flyway Portion)

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

South Zone—The remainder of New Mexico.

Pacific Flyway

California

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

Highway 395 to the point of intersection with the California-Nevada State line; north along the California-Nevada State line to the junction of the California-Nevada-Oregon State lines west along the California-Oregon State line to the point of origin.

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

Southern Zone—That portion of southern California (but excluding the Colorado River Zone) south and east of a line extending from the Pacific Ocean east along the Santa Maria River to CA 166 near the City of Santa Maria; east on CA 166 to CA 99; south on CA 99 to the crest of the Tehachapi Mountains at Tejon Pass; east and north along the crest of the Tehachapi Mountains to CA 178 at Walker Pass; east on CA 178 to U.S. 395 at the town of Inyokern; south on U.S. 395 to CA 58; east on CA 58 to I-15; east on I-15 to CA 127; north on CA 127 to the Nevada border.

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

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

Canada Geese

Michigan

North Zone—Same as North duck zone.

Middle Zone—Same as Middle duck zone.

South Zone—Same as South duck zone.

Tuscola/Huron Goose Management Unit (GMU)—Those portions of Tuscola and Huron Counties bounded on the south by Michigan Highway 138 and Bay City Road, on the east by Colwood

and Bay Port Roads, on the north by Kilmanagh Road and a line extending directly west off the end of Kilmanagh Road into Saginaw Bay to the west boundary, and on the west by the Tuscola-Bay County line and a line extending directly north off the end of the Tuscola-Bay County line into Saginaw Bay to the north boundary.

Allegan County GMU—That area encompassed by a line beginning at the junction of 136th Avenue and Interstate Highway 196 in Lake Town Township and extending easterly along 136th Avenue to Michigan Highway 40, southerly along Michigan 40 through the city of Allegan to 108th Avenue in Trowbridge Township, westerly along 108th Avenue to 46th Street, northerly along 46th Street to 109th Avenue, westerly along 109th Avenue to I-196 in Casco Township, then northerly along I-196 to the point of beginning.

Saginaw County GMU—That portion of Saginaw County bounded by Michigan Highway 46 on the north; Michigan 52 on the west; Michigan 57 on the south; and Michigan 13 on the east.

Muskegon Wastewater GMU—That portion of Muskegon County within the boundaries of the Muskegon County wastewater system, east of the Muskegon State Game Area, in sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 17, 18, 19, 20, 29, 30, and 32, T10N R14W, and sections 1, 2, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 24, and 25, T10N R15W, as posted.

Wisconsin

Same zones as for ducks but in addition:

Horicon Zone—That area encompassed by a line beginning at the intersection of State 21 and the Fox River in Winnebago County and extending westerly along State 21 to the west boundary of Winnebago County, southerly along the west boundary of Winnebago County to the north boundary of Green Lake County, westerly along the north boundaries of Green Lake and Marquette Counties to State 22, southerly along State 22 to State 33, westerly along State 33 to I-39, southerly along I-39 to I-90/94, southerly along I-90/94 to State 60, easterly along State 60 to State 83, northerly along State 83 to State 175, northerly along State 175 to State 33, easterly along State 33 to U.S. 45, northerly along U.S. 45 to the east shore of the Fond Du Lac River, northerly along the east shore of the Fond Du Lac River to Lake Winnebago, northerly along the western shoreline of Lake Winnebago to the Fox River, then westerly along the Fox River to State 21.

Exterior Zone—That portion of the State not included in the Horicon Zone.

Mississippi River Subzone—That area encompassed by a line beginning at the intersection of the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railway and the Illinois State line in Grant County and extending northerly along the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe Railway to the city limit of Prescott in Pierce County, then west along the Prescott city limit to the Minnesota State line.

Brown County Subzone—That area encompassed by a line beginning at the intersection of the Fox River with Green Bay in Brown County and extending southerly along the Fox River to State 29, northwesterly along State 29 to the Brown County line, south, east, and north along the Brown County line to Green Bay, due west to the midpoint of the Green Bay Ship Channel, then southwest along the Green Bay Ship Channel to the Fox River.

Sandhill Cranes

Mississippi Flyway

Minnesota

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.

Tennessee

Hunt Zone—That portion of the State south of Interstate 40 and east of State Highway 56.

Closed Zone—Remainder of the State.

Central Flyway

Colorado—The Central Flyway portion of the State except the San Luis Valley (Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Hinsdale, Mineral, Rio Grande, and Saguache Counties east of the Continental Divide) and North Park (Jackson County).

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

Montana—The Central Flyway portion of the State except for that area

south and west of Interstate 90, which is closed to sandhill crane hunting.

New Mexico

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

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

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

Southwest Zone—Area bounded on the south by the New Mexico/Mexico border; on the west by the New Mexico/Arizona border north to Interstate 10; on the north by Interstate 10 east to U.S. 180, north to N.M. 26, east to N.M. 27, north to N.M. 152, and east to Interstate 25; on the east by Interstate 25 south to Interstate 10, west to the Luna county line, and south to the New Mexico/Mexico border.

North Dakota

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

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

Oklahoma—That portion of the State west of I-35.

South Dakota—That portion of the State west of U.S. 281.

Texas

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

Zone B—That portion of Texas lying within boundaries beginning at the junction of U.S. Highway 81 and the Texas-Oklahoma State line, then southeast along U.S. Highway 81 to its junction with U.S. Highway 287 in Montague County, then southeast along U.S. Highway 287 to its junction with Interstate Highway 35W in Fort Worth, then southwest along Interstate Highway 35 to its junction with

Interstate Highway 10 in San Antonio, then northwest along Interstate Highway 10 to its junction with U.S. Highway 83 in the town of Junction, then north along U.S. Highway 83 to its junction with U.S. Highway 62, 16 miles north of Childress, then east along U.S. Highway 62 to the Texas-Oklahoma State line, then south along the Texas-Oklahoma State line to the south bank of the Red River, then eastward along the vegetation line on the south bank of the Red River to U.S. Highway 81.

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

Closed areas—(A) That portion of the State lying east and north of a line beginning at the junction of U.S. Highway 81 and the Texas-Oklahoma State line, then southeast along U.S. Highway 81 to its junction with U.S. Highway 287 in Montague County, then southeast along U.S. Highway 287 to its junction with Interstate Highway 35W in Fort Worth, then southwest along Interstate Highway 35 to its junction with U.S. Highway 290 East in Austin, then east along U.S. Highway 290 to its junction with Interstate Loop 610 in Harris County, then south and east along Interstate Loop 610 to its junction with Interstate Highway 45 in Houston, then south on Interstate Highway 45 to State Highway 342, then to the shore of the Gulf of Mexico, and then north and east along the shore of the Gulf of Mexico to the Texas-Louisiana State line.

(B) That portion of the State lying within the boundaries of a line beginning at the Kleberg-Nueces County line and the shore of the Gulf of Mexico, then west along the County line to Park Road 22 in Nueces County, then north and west along Park Road 22 to its junction with State Highway 358 in Corpus Christi, then west and north along State Highway 358 to its junction with State Highway 286, then north along State Highway 286 to its junction with Interstate Highway 37, then east along Interstate Highway 37 to its junction with U.S. Highway 181, then north and west along U.S. Highway 181 to its junction with U.S. Highway 77 in Sinton, then north and east along U.S. Highway 77 to its junction with U.S. Highway 87 in Victoria, then south and east along U.S. Highway 87 to its junction with State Highway 35 at Port Lavaca, then north and east along State Highway 35 to the south end of the Lavaca Bay Causeway, then south and east along the shore of Lavaca Bay to its junction with the Port Lavaca Ship Channel, then south and east along the Lavaca Bay Ship Channel to the Gulf of Mexico, and then south and west along

the shore of the Gulf of Mexico to the Kleberg-Nueces County line.

Wyoming

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

Riverton-Boysen Unit—Portions of Fremont County.

Park and Big Horn County Unit—All of Big Horn, Hot Springs, Park and Washakie Counties.

Pacific Flyway

Arizona

Special Season Area—Game Management Units 28, 30A, 30B, 31, and 32.

Idaho

Area 1—All of Bear Lake County and all of Caribou County except that portion downstream from the dam at Alexander Reservoir south of U.S. Highway 30, and that portion lying within the Grays Lake Basin.

Area 2—All of Teton County except that portion lying west of state Highway 33 and south of Packsaddle Road (West 400 North) and north of the North Cedron Road (West 600 South) and east of the west bank of the Teton River.

Area 3—All of Fremont County except the Chester Wetlands Wildlife Management Area.

Area 4—All of Jefferson County.

Area 5—All of Bannock County east of Interstate 15 and south of U.S. Highway 30; and Franklin County west of U.S. Highway 91 from the Utah State line north to the junction of State Highway 34 in Preston and everything west of state Highway 34 north to the Franklin County-Caribou County line.

Montana

Zone 1 (Warm Springs Portion of Deer Lodge County)—Those portions of Deer Lodge County lying within the following described boundary: Beginning at the intersection of I-90 and Highway 273, then westerly along Highway 273 to the junction of Highway 1, then southeast along said highway to Highway 275 at Opportunity, then east along said highway to East Side County road, then north along said road to Perkins Lake, then west on said lane to I-90, then north on said interstate to the junction of Highway 273, the point of beginning. Except for sections 13 and 24, T5N, R10W; and Warm Springs Pond number 3.

Zone 2 (Ovando-Helmville Area)—That portion of the Pacific Flyway, located in Powell County lying within the following described boundary: beginning at the junction of State Routes

141 and 200, then west along Route 200 to its intersection with the Blackfoot River at Russell Gates Fishing Access Site (Powell—Missoula County line), then southeast along said river to its intersection with the Ovando—Helmville Road (County Road 104) at Cedar Meadows Fishing Access Site, then south and east along said road to its junction with State Route 141, then north along said route to its junction with State Route 200, the point of beginning.

Zone 3 (Dillon/Twin Bridges/Cardwell Areas)—That portion of Beaverhead, Madison and Jefferson counties lying within the following described boundaries: Beginning at Dillon, then northerly along US Hwy 91 to its intersection with the Big Hole River at Brown's Bridge north of Glen, then southeasterly and northeasterly along the Big Hole River to High Road, then east along High Road to State Highway 41, then east along said highway to the Beaverhead River, then north along said river to the Jefferson River and north along the Jefferson River to the Ironrod Bridge, then northeasterly along State Highway 41 to the junction with State Highway 55, then northeasterly along said highway to the junction with I-90, then east along I-90 to Cardwell and Route 359 then south along Route 359 to the Parrot Hill/Cedar Hill Road then southwesterly along said road and the Cemetery Hill Road to the Parrot Ditch road to the Point of Rocks Road to Carney Lane to the Bench Road to the Waterloo Road and Bayers Lanes, to State Highway 41, then east along State Highway 41 to the Beaverhead River, then south along the Beaverhead River to the mouth of the Ruby River, then southeasterly along the Ruby River to the East Bench Road, then southwesterly along the East Bench Road to the East Bench Canal, then southwesterly along said canal to the Sweetwater Road, then west along Sweetwater Road to Dillon, the point of beginning, plus the remainder of

Madison County and all of Gallatin County.

Zone 4 (Broadwater County)—All of Broadwater County.

Utah

Cache County—All of Cache County. East Box Elder County—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.

Rich County—All of Rich County.

Uintah County—All of Uintah County.

Wyoming

Area 1 (Bear River)—All of the Bear River and Ham's Fork River drainages in Lincoln County.

Area 2 (Salt River Area)—All of the Salt River drainage in Lincoln County south of the McCoy Creek Road.

Area 3 (Eden Valley Area)—All lands within the Bureau of Reclamation's Eden Project in Sweetwater County.

Area 5 (Uintah County Area)—All of Uinta County.

All Migratory Game Birds in Alaska

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

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

Southeast Zone—State Game Management Units 1-4.

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

Kodiak Zone—State Game Management Unit 8.

All Migratory Game Birds in the Virgin Islands

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

All Migratory Game Birds in Puerto Rico

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

Desecheo Island Closure Area—All of Desecheo Island.

Mona Island Closure Area—All of Mona Island.

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

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

REGULATORY ALTERNATIVES FOR DUCK HUNTING DURING THE 2015-16 SEASON

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

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