

we cannot determine the impact that this information will have on the targeting matrix, or the number and percentage of detentions that would cause a charterer to be targeted. Depending on the information received, we may commence a rulemaking to amend the notification requirements in the Notice of Arrival regulations.

Of particular interest to the Coast Guard is an understanding of how chartering selections are made, the factors that are considered, how the process works, as well as economic influences.

### Questions

We especially need the public's assistance in answering the following questions, and any additional information provided on this topic is welcome. In responding to each question, please explain your reasons for each answer as specifically as possible so that we can carefully weigh the consequences and impacts of any future actions we may take. For the following questions we have defined charterer as: An individual or company who hires a vessel or portion of a vessel. A charterer may also be a shipping company employee or an employee at a shipbroker whose job it is to do business on the freight market.

In preparing your response to these questions please indicate your position in the maritime industry as well as the type of vessel, cargo, and charter agreement specific to your situation, if applicable.

1. What role do the charterer and cargo owner play in ensuring ships are in compliance with international safety and pollution regulations. To what extent should they be held accountable?

2. Would publication of a list of charterers and cargo owners that are associated with detentions improve compliance with international safety standards?

3. Should the charterer and cargo owner be included in the Coast Guard's Port State Control targeting matrix? If so, does the type of chartering agreement matter when a decision is being made to determine who should be associated with a detention?

4. What is the screening process used by your company prior to chartering a vessel? How is the final vessel selection made?

5. What factors are considered when you select a vessel for charter?

6. Do you consider a vessel's safety or casualty record, including its Port State Control history in your decision process?

7. Does a charterer or cargo owner ever change during a voyage? If yes,

what are the circumstances and in general how often does this occur?

8. In those instances where the charterer changes during the voyage or there are multiple cargo owners or cargo ownership changes how is responsibility for ensuring compliance with international maritime safety and pollution prevention standards determined?

9. What documentation does the vessel owner, agent, master, person-in-charge or operator have that identifies the charterer or cargo owner? Is this documentation available onboard the vessel?

10. How is the cost of a delay resulting from a Port State Control action or detention measured or determined? Who absorbs or pays for it?

11. Would requiring that the name of the charterer and cargo owner be provided as part of the notice of arrival have an impact on small businesses?

12. What would the cost be to your company of adding the name of the charterer and cargo owner to the information reported in the notice of arrival? Does this cost differ according to the type of charter, cargo owner or vessel type? What is the basis for your estimate?

13. What is your estimate of the total cost to industry of adding the name of the charterer and cargo owner to the information reported in the notice of arrival? What is the total cost by charterer, cargo owner or vessel type? What is the basis for your estimate?

Dated: August 4, 2000.

**R.C. North,**

*Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard, Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety and Environmental Protection.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### 50 CFR Part 20

#### RIN 1018-AG08

### Migratory Bird Hunting; Proposed Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations on Certain Federal Indian Reservations and Ceded Lands for the 2000-01 Season

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Proposed rule.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (hereinafter Service or we) proposes special migratory bird hunting

regulations for certain tribes on Federal Indian reservations, off-reservation trust lands, and ceded lands for the 2000-01 migratory bird hunting season.

**DATES:** To comment on these proposed regulations, you must do so by August 28, 2000.

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

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

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In the April 25, 2000, **Federal Register** (65 FR 24260), we requested proposals from Indian tribes wishing to establish special migratory bird hunting regulations for the 2000-01 hunting season, under the guidelines described in the June 4, 1985, **Federal Register** (50 FR 23467). In this supplemental proposed rule, we propose special migratory bird hunting regulations for 23 Indian tribes, based on the input we received in response to the April 25, 2000, proposed rule. As described in that rule, the promulgation of annual migratory bird hunting regulations involves a series of rulemaking actions each year. This proposed rule is part of that series.

We developed the guidelines for establishing special migratory bird hunting regulations for Indian tribes in response to tribal requests for recognition of their reserved hunting rights and, for some tribes, recognition of their authority to regulate hunting by both tribal and nontribal members on their reservations. The guidelines include possibilities for:

(1) On-reservation hunting by both tribal and nontribal members, with hunting by nontribal members on some reservations to take place within Federal frameworks but on dates different from those selected by the surrounding State(s);

(2) On-reservation hunting by tribal members only, outside of the usual Federal frameworks for season dates and length, and for daily bag and possession limits; and

(3) Off-reservation hunting by tribal members on ceded lands, outside of usual framework dates and season

length, with some added flexibility in daily bag and possession limits.

In all cases, the regulations established under the guidelines must be consistent with the March 10 to September 1 closed season mandated by the 1916 Convention Between the United States and Great Britain (for Canada) for the Protection of Migratory Birds (Treaty). The guidelines apply to those tribes having recognized reserved hunting rights on Federal Indian reservations (including off-reservation trust lands) and on ceded lands. They also apply to establishing migratory bird hunting regulations for nontribal members on all lands within the exterior boundaries of reservations where tribes have full wildlife management authority over such hunting or where the tribes and affected States otherwise have reached agreement over hunting by nontribal members on lands owned by non-Indians within the reservation.

Tribes usually have the authority to regulate migratory bird hunting by nonmembers on Indian-owned reservation lands, subject to Service approval. The question of jurisdiction is more complex on reservations that include lands owned by non-Indians, especially when the surrounding States have established or intend to establish regulations governing hunting by non-Indians on these lands. In such cases, we encourage the tribes and States to reach agreement on regulations that would apply throughout the reservations. When appropriate, we will consult with a tribe and State with the aim of facilitating an accord. We also will consult jointly with tribal and State officials in the affected States where tribes wish to establish special hunting regulations for tribal members on ceded lands.

Because of past questions regarding interpretation of what events trigger the consultation process, as well as who initiates it, we provide the following clarification. We routinely provide copies of **Federal Register** publications to all State Directors, tribes, and other interested parties. It is the responsibility of the States, tribes, and others to notify us of any concern regarding any feature(s) of any regulations. When we receive such notification, we will initiate consultation.

Our guidelines provide for the continued harvest of waterfowl and other migratory game birds by tribal members on reservations where such harvest has been a customary practice. We do not oppose this harvest, provided it does not take place during the closed season defined by the Treaty, and does

not adversely affect the status of the migratory bird resource.

Before developing the guidelines, we reviewed available information on the current status of migratory bird populations; reviewed the current status of migratory bird hunting on Federal Indian reservations; and evaluated the potential impact of such guidelines on migratory birds. We concluded that the impact of migratory bird harvest by tribal members hunting on their reservations is minimal.

One area of interest in Indian migratory bird hunting regulations relates to hunting seasons for nontribal members on dates that are within Federal frameworks, but which are different from those established by the State(s) where the reservation is located. A large influx of nontribal hunters onto a reservation at a time when the season is closed in the surrounding State(s) could result in adverse population impacts on one or more migratory bird species. The guidelines make this unlikely, however, because tribal proposals must include:

- (a) Harvest anticipated under the requested regulations;
- (b) methods that will be employed to measure or monitor harvest (such as bag checks, mail questionnaires, etc.);
- (c) steps that will be taken to limit level of harvest, where it could be shown that failure to limit such harvest would adversely impact the migratory bird resource; and
- (d) tribal capabilities to establish and enforce migratory bird hunting regulations. We may modify or establish regulations experimentally, after evaluation and confirmation of harvest information obtained by the tribes.

We believe the guidelines provide appropriate opportunity to accommodate the reserved hunting rights and management authority of Indian tribes while ensuring that the migratory bird resource receives necessary protection. The conservation of this important international resource is paramount. The guidelines should not be viewed as inflexible. In this regard, we note that they have been employed successfully since 1985. We believe they have been tested adequately and, therefore, made them final beginning with the 1988–89 hunting season. We should stress here, however, that use of the guidelines is not mandatory and no action is required if a tribe wishes to observe the hunting regulations established by the State(s) in which the reservation is located.

#### Population Status

The following paragraphs provide preliminary information on the status of

waterfowl and information on the status and harvest of migratory shore and upland game birds.

#### May Breeding Waterfowl and Habitat Survey

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

Winter and spring were also warm and dry in the Eastern survey area. A seemingly early spring cooled down markedly, especially in Labrador, Newfoundland, and Eastern Quebec. In these easternmost regions, spring was 2–3 weeks behind normal. Water levels in southwestern Ontario, Maine, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick are higher this year than last year. However, southern Ontario and southern Quebec are drier than normal. In southwest Ontario, Maine, and the Maritimes, heavy thunderstorms in May caused severe flooding and may have caused much renesting. Overall, habitat conditions in the east are generally good, with the exception of some areas of southern Ontario and southern/central Quebec, where low water levels resulted in fair to poor habitat conditions. Overall, the survey area was in generally good condition, and production is expected to be good this year.

The 2000 total duck population estimate for the traditional survey area was  $41.8 \pm 0.7$  million birds. This was similar to last year's record estimate of

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

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

#### *Sandhill Cranes*

The Mid-Continent Population of Sandhill Cranes appears to have stabilized following dramatic increases in the early 1980's. The Central Platte River Valley 2000 preliminary spring index, uncorrected for visibility, was 488,000. The photo-corrected 3-year average for the 1997–99 period was 450,126, which was within the established population-objective range of 343,000–465,000 cranes. All Central Flyway States, except Nebraska, elected to allow crane hunting in portions of their respective States in 1999–2000. About 6,700 hunters participated in these seasons, which was 18 percent lower than the previous year's seasons. About 19,800 cranes were harvested in 1999–2000 in the Central Flyway, a 7 percent decrease from the previous year's high estimate. Harvests from the Pacific Flyway, Canada, and Mexico are estimated to be about 13,800 for the 1999–2000 sport-hunting seasons. The total North American sport harvest,

including crippling losses, was estimated to be about 37,207 for the Mid-Continent Population.

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

#### *Woodcock*

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

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

#### *Band-Tailed Pigeons and Doves*

The status of the Coastal population of band-tailed pigeons appears to be improving. While a significant decline occurred between 1968–99 as indicated by the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), no trend was indicated over the most recent 10 years. Additionally, mineral site counts at 10 selected sites in Oregon indicate a steady increase over the past 10 years. The count in 1999 was 65 percent above the previous 31-year average. Call-count surveys conducted

in Washington showed a nonsignificant decline between the 1975–99 and 1995–99 periods. Washington has opted not to select a hunting season for bandtails since 1991. The harvest of Coastal pigeons is estimated to be about 23,000 birds out of a population of about 3 million. The Interior band-tailed pigeon population is stable with no trend indicated by the BBS over the short- or long-term periods. Harvest estimates range from 1,300 to 1,900 birds.

Analyses of Mourning Dove Call-count Survey data indicated significant declines in doves heard over the most recent 10 years and the entire 35 years of the survey in all three management units. A project has been funded recently to develop mourning dove population models for each unit to provide guidance in what needs to be done to improve our decision-making process with respect to harvest management.

White-winged doves in Arizona are maintaining a fairly stable population since the 1970's.

Between 1999 and 2000, the average number of doves heard per route doubled from 25 to 50. A low harvest (142,000 in 1999) is being maintained compared with birds taken several decades ago. In Texas, the phenomenon of the white-winged dove expansion continues. The population in the Lower Rio Grande Valley increased 19 percent from 1999 to an estimated 507,000 birds; in Upper South Texas, the count increased 7 percent to 999,000; and, in West Texas, the count increased 94 percent to 33,000. The whitewing population may reach epidemic proportions in 5–10 years and could begin causing substantial damage to agricultural crops being grown near cities that have a large population of whitewings. Hunting does not appear to be having any effect upon these northern urban nesters.

#### **Hunting Season Proposals from Indian Tribes and Organizations**

For the 2000–01 hunting season, we received requests from 23 tribes and Indian organizations. We actively solicit regulatory proposals from other tribal groups that are interested in working cooperatively for the benefit of waterfowl and other migratory game birds. We encourage tribes to work with us to develop agreements for management of migratory bird resources on tribal lands. It should be noted that this proposed rule includes generalized regulations for both early- and late-season hunting. A final rule will be published in a late-August 2000 **Federal Register** that will include tribal regulations for the early-hunting season.

The early season begins on September 1 each year and most commonly includes such species as mourning doves and white-winged doves. A final rule will also be published in a September 2000 **Federal Register** that will include regulations for late-season hunting. The late season begins on or around October 1 and most commonly includes waterfowl species.

In this current rulemaking, because of the compressed timeframe for establishing regulations for Indian tribes and because final frameworks dates and other specific information are not available, the regulations for many tribal hunting seasons are described in relation to the season dates, season length, and limits that will be permitted when final Federal frameworks are announced for early- and late-season regulations. For example, daily bag and possession limits for ducks on some areas are shown as "Same as permitted in Pacific Flyway States under final Federal frameworks," and limits for geese will be shown as the same permitted by the State(s) in which the tribal hunting area is located.

The proposed frameworks for early-season regulations were published in the **Federal Register** on July 31, 2000 (65 FR 46840); early-season final frameworks will be published in mid-August. Proposed late-season frameworks for waterfowl and coots will be published in mid-August, and the final frameworks for the late seasons will be published in mid-September. We will notify affected tribes of season dates, bag limits, etc., as soon as final frameworks are established. As previously discussed, no action is required by tribes wishing to observe migratory bird hunting regulations established by the State(s) where they are located. The proposed regulations for the 23 tribes with proposals that meet the established criteria are shown below.

*(a) Colorado River Indian Tribes, Colorado River Indian Reservation, Parker, Arizona (Tribal Members and Nontribal Hunters)*

The Colorado River Indian Reservation is located in Arizona and California. The tribes own almost all lands on the reservation, and have full wildlife management authority.

In their 2000–01 proposal, dated July 10, 2000, the Colorado River Indian Tribes requested split dove seasons. They propose their early season begin September 1 and end September 15, 2000. Daily bag limits would be 10 mourning or 10 white-winged doves either singly or in the aggregate. The late season for doves is proposed to open

November 17, 2000, and close January 7, 2001. A daily bag limit would be 10 mourning doves. The possession limit would be twice the daily bag limit. Shooting hours would be from one-half hour before sunrise to noon in the early season and until sunset in the late season. Other special tribally set regulations would apply.

The tribes also propose duck hunting seasons. The season would likely open October 7, 2000, or on a Saturday and run until January 7, 2001, or for the maximum number of days allowed under the Pacific Flyway frameworks. The tribes propose the same season dates for coots and common moorhens. The daily bag limit for ducks, including mergansers, would be the same as that allowed in the Pacific Flyway, except that the daily bag limits for goldeneyes and cinnamon teal would be two. The possession limit would be twice the daily bag limit. The daily bag limit for coots and common moorhens would be 25, singly or in the aggregate. The possession limit for coots and common moorhens would be twice the daily bag limit. For geese, the Colorado River Indian Tribes propose a season of November 18, 2000, through January 14, 2001. The daily bag and possession limits for geese would be four, but could include no more than three light geese or two dark geese.

In 1996, the tribe conducted a detailed assessment of dove hunting. Results showed approximately 16,100 mourning doves and 13,600 white-winged doves were harvested by approximately 2,660 hunters who averaged 1.45 hunter-days. Field observations and permit sales indicate that fewer than 200 hunters participate in waterfowl seasons. Under the proposed regulations described here and, based upon past seasons, we and the tribes estimate harvest will be similar.

Hunters must have a valid Colorado River Indian Reservation hunting permit in their possession while hunting. As in the past, the regulations would apply both to tribal and non-tribal hunters, and nontoxic shot is required for waterfowl hunting.

We propose to approve the Colorado River Indian Tribes regulations for the 2000–01 hunting season.

*(b) Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Flathead Indian Reservation, Pablo, Montana (Nontribal Hunters)*

For the past several years, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the State of Montana have entered into cooperative agreements for the regulation of hunting on the Flathead Indian Reservation. The State

and the tribes are currently operating under a cooperative agreement signed in 1990 that addresses fishing and hunting management and regulation issues of mutual concern. This agreement enables all hunters to utilize waterfowl hunting opportunities on the reservation. The tribes proposed special regulations for waterfowl hunting were submitted in a May 15, 2000, proposal.

As in the past, tribal regulations for nontribal members would be at least as restrictive as those established for the Pacific Flyway portion of Montana. Goose season dates would also be at least as restrictive as those established for the Pacific Flyway portion of Montana. Shooting hours for waterfowl hunting on the Flathead Reservation are sunrise to sunset. Steel, bismuth-tin, or other Federally approved nontoxic shots are the only legal shotgun loads on the reservation for waterfowl or other game birds.

The requested season dates and bag limits are generally similar to past regulations. Harvest levels are not expected to change significantly. Standardized check station data from the 1993–94 and 1994–95 hunting seasons indicated no significant changes in harvest levels and that the large majority of the harvest is by non-tribal hunters.

We propose to approve the tribes' request for special migratory bird regulations for the 2000–01 hunting season.

*(c) Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, Crow Creek Indian Reservation, Fort Thompson, South Dakota (Tribal Members and Nontribal Hunters)*

The Crow Creek Indian Reservation has a checkerboard pattern of land ownership, with much of the land owned by non-Indians. Since the 1993–94 season, the tribe has selected special waterfowl hunting regulations independent of the State of South Dakota. The tribe observes migratory bird hunting regulations contained in 50 CFR part 20.

In their 2000 proposal, the tribe requested a duck and merganser season of October 9 to December 21, 2000, with a daily bag limit of six ducks, including no more than five mallards (one hen mallard), one canvasback, two redheads, two wood ducks, two scaup, and one pintail. The merganser daily bag limit would be five and include no more than one hooded merganser. For Canada geese, the tribe proposes an October 9, 2000, to January 9, 2001, season with a three bird daily bag limit. For white-fronted geese, the tribe proposes an October 2 to December 12, 2000, season with a daily bag limit of two. For snow

geese, the tribe proposes an October 2 to December 25, 2000, and February 19 to March 10, 2001, season with a daily bag limit of 20. Similar to the last several years, the tribe also requests a sandhill crane season from September 18 to October 24, 2000, with a daily bag limit of three. In all cases, except snow geese, the possession limits would be twice the daily bag limit. There would be no possession limit for snow geese. Shooting hours would be from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

The season and bag limits would be essentially the same as last year and as such the tribe expects similar harvest. In 1994–95, duck harvest was 48 birds, down from 67 in 1993–94. Goose harvest during recent past seasons has been less than 100 geese.

We propose to approve the tribe's requested seasons. We also remind the tribe that all sandhill crane hunters are required to obtain a Federal sandhill crane permit. As such, the tribe should contact us for further information on obtaining the needed permits. In addition, as with all other groups, we request the tribe continue to survey and report harvest.

*(d) Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, Cloquet, Minnesota (Tribal Members Only)*

In 1996, for the first time, the Service and the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians cooperated to establish special migratory bird hunting regulations for tribal members. The Fond du Lac's May 26, 2000, proposal covers land set apart for the band under the Treaties of 1854 and 1837 in northeast and east-central Minnesota.

The band's proposal for 2000–01 is essentially the same as that approved last year. Specifically, the Fond du Lac Band proposes a September 15 to December 3, 2000, season on ducks, mergansers, coots and moorhens, and a September 1 to December 3, 2000, season for geese. For sora and Virginia rails, snipe, and woodcock, the Fond du Lac Band proposes a September 1 to December 3, 2000, season. Proposed daily bag limits would consist of the following:

Ducks: 18 ducks, including no more than 12 mallards (only 6 of which may be hens), 3 black ducks, 9 scaup, 6 wood ducks, 6 redheads, 3 pintails, and 3 canvasbacks.

Mergansers: 15 mergansers, including no more than 3 hooded mergansers.

Geese: 12 geese.

Coots and Common Moorhens (Common Gallinules): 20 coots and common moorhens, singly or in the aggregate.

Sora and Virginia Rails: 25 sora and Virginia rails singly, or in the aggregate. Common Snipe: Eight common snipe. Woodcock: Three woodcock.

The following general conditions apply:

1. While hunting waterfowl, a tribal member must carry on his/her person a valid tribal waterfowl hunting permit.

2. Except as otherwise noted, tribal members will be required to comply with tribal codes that will be no less restrictive than the provisions of Chapter 10 of the Model Off-Reservation Code. Except as modified by the Service rules adopted in response to this proposal, these amended regulations parallel Federal requirements in 50 CFR part 20 as to hunting methods, transportation, sale, exportation, and other conditions generally applicable to migratory bird hunting.

3. Band members in each zone will comply with State regulations providing for closed and restricted waterfowl hunting areas.

4. Possession limits for each species are double the daily bag limit, except on the opening day of the season, when the possession limit equals the daily bag limit, unless otherwise noted above. Possession limits are applicable only to transportation and do not include birds that are cleaned, dressed, and at a member's primary residence. For purposes of enforcing bag and possession limits, all migratory birds in the possession or custody of band members on ceded lands will be considered to have been taken on those lands unless tagged by a tribal or State conservation warden as having been taken on-reservation. All migratory birds that fall on reservation lands will not count as part of any off-reservation bag or possession limit.

The Band anticipates harvest will be fewer than 500 ducks and geese and 150 coots.

We propose to approve the request for special migratory bird hunting regulations for the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewas.

*(e) Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Suttons Bay, Michigan (Tribal Members Only)*

In the 1995–96 migratory bird seasons, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and the Service first cooperated to establish special regulations for waterfowl. The Grand Traverse Band is a self-governing, federally recognized tribe located on the west arm of Grand Traverse Bay in Leelanau County, Michigan. The Grand Traverse Band is a signatory tribe of the Treaty of 1836. We have approved special regulations for tribal members of

the 1836 treaty's signatory tribes on ceded lands in Michigan since the 1986–87 hunting season.

For the 2000–01 season, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians proposes identical regulations to those implemented last year. The tribal member duck season would run from September 20, 2000, through January 20, 2001. A daily bag limit of 10 would include no more than 1 pintail, 1 canvasback, 1 hooded merganser, 2 black ducks, 2 wood ducks, 2 redheads, and 5 mallards (only 2 of which may be hens). For Canada geese, the tribe proposes a September 1 through November 30, 2000, and a January 1 through February 8, 2001, season. For white-fronted geese, brant, and snow geese, the tribe proposes an October 1 through November 30, 2000, season. The daily bag limit for all geese (including brant) would be five birds. Based on our information, it is unlikely that any Canada geese from the Southern James Bay Population would be harvested by the tribe.

For woodcock, snipe, and sora rail, the tribe proposes a September 1 to November 14, 2000, season. The daily bag limit shall not exceed five birds per species.

All other Federal regulations contained in 50 CFR part 20 would apply. The tribe proposes to closely monitor harvest through game bag checks, patrols, and mail surveys. In particular, the tribe proposes monitoring the harvest of Southern James Bay Canada geese to assess any impacts of tribal hunting on the population. Last year, the tribe harvested approximately 250 ducks and 100 Canada geese.

We propose to approve the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indian's requested 2000–01 special migratory bird hunting regulations.

*(f) Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, Odanah, Wisconsin (Tribal Members Only)*

Since 1985, various bands of the Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians have exercised judicially recognized off-reservation hunting rights for migratory birds in Wisconsin. The specific regulations were established by the Service in consultation with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC, which represents the various bands). Beginning in 1986, a tribal season on ceded lands in the western portion of the State's Upper Peninsula was developed in coordination with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and we have approved special regulations for tribal members in

both Michigan and Wisconsin since the 1986–87 hunting season. In 1987, the GLIFWC requested, and we approved, special regulations to permit tribal members to hunt on ceded lands in Minnesota, as well as in Michigan and Wisconsin. The States of Michigan and Wisconsin concurred with the regulations, although Wisconsin has raised some concerns each year. Minnesota did not concur with the regulations, stressing that the State would not recognize Chippewa Indian hunting rights in Minnesota's treaty area until a court with jurisdiction over the State acknowledges and defines the extent of these rights. We acknowledge the State's concern, but pointed out that the U.S. Government has recognized the Indian hunting rights decided in the Voigt case, and that acceptable hunting regulations have been negotiated successfully in both Michigan and Wisconsin even though the Voigt decision did not specifically address ceded land outside Wisconsin. We believe this is appropriate because the treaties in question cover ceded lands in Michigan (and Minnesota), as well as in Wisconsin. Consequently, in view of the above, we have approved special regulations since the 1987–88 hunting season on ceded lands in all three States. In fact, this recognition of the principle of reserved treaty rights for band members to hunt and fish was pivotal in our decision to approve a special 1991–92 season for the 1836 ceded area in Michigan.

Recently, certain GLIFWC member bands have brought suit to resolve the issue of hunting, fishing, and gathering rights in the Minnesota ceded areas covered under the 1837 and 1854 treaties. The Federal Government has intervened in support of the bands.

In a June 1, 2000, letter, the GLIFWC proposed off-reservation special migratory bird hunting regulations for the 2000–01 seasons on behalf of the member tribes of the Voigt Intertribal Task Force of the GLIFWC (for the 1837 and 1842 Treaty areas) and the Bay Mills Indian Community (for the 1836 Treaty area). Member tribes of the Task Force are: the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians, The Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians, the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians, the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians, the St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin, the Sokaogon Chippewa Community (Mole Lake Band), the Mille Lacs Band of Chippewa Indians in Minnesota, and the Lac Vieux Desert Band of Chippewa Indians and the Keweenaw Bay Indian

Community in Michigan. Details of the proposed regulations are shown below. In general, the proposal is essentially the same as the regulations approved for the 1999–2000 season.

Results of the 1998–99 hunter survey show that 599 ducks and 177 geese were harvested under an anticipated harvest of 3,000 ducks and 900 geese. Under the proposed regulations, harvest is expected to be similar and most likely would not exceed 2,500 ducks and 800 geese.

We believe that regulations advanced by the GLIFWC for the 2000–01 hunting season are biologically acceptable and recommend approval. If the regulations are finalized as proposed, we would request that the GLIFWC closely monitor the member band duck harvest and take any actions necessary to reduce harvest if locally nesting populations are being significantly impacted.

The Commission and the Service are parties to a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) designed to facilitate the ongoing enforcement of Service-approved tribal migratory bird regulations. Its intent is to provide long-term cooperative application.

Also, as in recent seasons, the proposal contains references to Chapter 10 of the Migratory Bird Harvesting Regulations of the Model Off-Reservation Conservation Code. Chapter 10 regulations parallel State and Federal regulations and, in effect, are not changed by this proposal.

The GLIFWC's proposed 2000–01 waterfowl hunting season regulations are as follows:

#### Ducks

##### A. Wisconsin and Minnesota 1837 and 1842 Zones:

Season Dates: Begin September 15 and end December 1, 2000.

Daily Bag Limit: 20 ducks, including no more than 10 mallards (only 5 of which may be hens), 4 black ducks, 4 redheads, 4 pintails, and 2 canvasbacks.

##### B. Michigan 1836 and 1842 Treaty Zones:

Season Dates: Begin September 15 and end December 1, 2000.

Daily Bag Limit: 10 ducks, including no more than 5 mallards (only 2 of which may be hens), 2 black ducks, 2 redheads, 2 pintails, and 1 canvasback.

#### Mergansers: All Ceded Areas

Season Dates: Begin September 15 and end December 1, 2000.

Daily Bag Limit: Five mergansers.

#### Geese: All Ceded Areas

Season Dates: Begin September 1 and end December 1, 2000. In addition, any portion of the ceded territory which is

open to State-licensed hunters for goose hunting after December 1 shall also be open concurrently for tribal members.

Daily Bag Limit: 10 geese.

#### Other Migratory Birds: All Ceded Areas

##### A. Coots and Common Moorhens (Common Gallinules)

Season Dates: Begin September 15 and end December 1, 2000.

Daily Bag Limit: 20 coots and common moorhens (common gallinules), singly or in the aggregate.

##### B. Sora and Virginia Rails

Season Dates: Begin September 15 and end December 1, 2000.

Daily Bag Limit: 25 sora and Virginia rails singly, or in the aggregate.

##### C. Common Snipe

Season Dates: Begin September 15 and end December 1, 2000.

Daily Bag Limit: Eight common snipe.

##### D. Woodcock

Season Dates: Begin September 5 and end December 1, 2000.

Daily Bag Limit: Five woodcock.

#### General Conditions

1. While hunting waterfowl, a tribal member must carry on his/her person a valid tribal waterfowl hunting permit.

2. Except as otherwise noted, tribal members will be required to comply with tribal codes that will be no less restrictive than the provisions of Chapter 10 of the Model Off-Reservation Code. Except as modified by the Service rules adopted in response to this proposal, these amended regulations parallel Federal requirements in 50 CFR Part 20 as to hunting methods, transportation, sale, exportation and other conditions generally applicable to migratory bird hunting.

3. Tribal members in each zone will comply with tribal regulations providing for closed and restricted waterfowl hunting areas. These regulations generally incorporate the same restrictions contained in parallel State regulations.

4. Possession limits for each species are double the daily bag limit, except on the opening day of the season, when the possession limit equals the daily bag limit, unless otherwise noted above. Possession limits are applicable only to transportation and do not include birds that are cleaned, dressed, and at a member's primary residence. For purposes of enforcing bag and possession limits, all migratory birds in the possession or custody of tribal members on ceded lands will be considered to have been taken on those lands unless tagged by a tribal or State

conservation warden as having been taken on-reservation. In Wisconsin, such tagging will comply with applicable State laws. All migratory birds that fall on reservation lands will not count as part of any off-reservation bag or possession limit.

5. Minnesota and Michigan—Duck Blinds and Decoys. Tribal members hunting in Michigan and Minnesota will comply with tribal codes that contain provisions that parallel applicable State laws concerning duck blinds and/or decoys.

*(g) Jicarilla Apache Tribe, Jicarilla Indian Reservation, Dulce, New Mexico (Tribal Members and Nontribal Hunters)*

The Jicarilla Apache Tribe has had special migratory bird hunting regulations for tribal members and nonmembers since the 1986–87 hunting season. The tribe owns all lands on the reservation and has recognized full wildlife management authority. In general, the proposed seasons would be more conservative than allowed by the Federal frameworks of last season and by States in the Pacific Flyway.

In a May 24, 2000, proposal, the tribe proposed a 2000–01 waterfowl season opening date of October 7 and a closing date of November 30, 2000. Daily bag and possession limits would be the same as Pacific Flyway States. The tribe proposes a season on Canada geese with a two bird daily bag limit. Other regulations specific to the Pacific Flyway guidelines for New Mexico would be in effect.

The Jicarilla Game and Fish Department's annual estimate of waterfowl harvest is relatively small. In the 1999–2000 season, estimated duck harvest was 1,317, a significant increase from 608 in 1998–99, but within the historical range. The species composition in the past has included mainly mallards, gadwall, wigeon, and teal. Northern pintail comprised only 1 percent of the total harvest in 1999. The estimated harvest of geese was 53 birds.

The proposed regulations are essentially the same as were established last year. The tribe anticipates the maximum 2000–01 waterfowl harvest would be around 1,200 ducks and 50 geese.

We propose to approve the tribe's requested 2000–01 hunting seasons.

*(h) Kalispel Tribe, Kalispel Reservation, Usk, Washington (Tribal Members and Nontribal Hunters)*

The Kalispel Reservation was established by Executive Order in 1914, and currently comprises approximately 4,600 acres. The tribe owns all Reservation land and has full

management authority. The Kalispel Tribe has a fully developed wildlife program with hunting and fishing codes. The tribe enjoys excellent wildlife management relations with the State. The tribe and the State have an operational Memorandum of Understanding with emphasis on fisheries but also for wildlife. The nontribal member seasons described below pertain to a 176-acre waterfowl management unit. The tribe is utilizing this opportunity to rehabilitate an area that needs protection because of past land use practices, as well as to provide additional waterfowl hunting in the area. Beginning in 1996, the requested regulations also included a proposal for Kalispel-member-only migratory bird hunting on Kalispel-ceded lands within Washington, Montana, and Idaho.

For the 2000–01 migratory bird hunting seasons, the Kalispel Tribe proposed, in a May 24, 2000, letter, tribal and nontribal member waterfowl seasons. For nontribal members, the tribe requests seasons that begin September 1, 2000 and end January 31, 2001. In that period, nontribal hunters would be allowed to hunt approximately 114 days. Hunters should obtain further information on days from the Kalispel Tribe. Daily bag and possession limits would be the same as those for the State of Washington.

The tribe reports a 1999–2000 nontribal harvest of 160 ducks and 0 geese. Under the proposal, the tribe expects harvest to be similar to last year and less than 100 geese and 200 ducks.

All other State and Federal regulations contained in 50 CFR part 20, such as use of steel shot and possession of a signed migratory bird hunting stamp, would be required.

For tribal members on Kalispel-ceded lands, the Kalispel proposes outside frameworks for ducks and geese of September 1, 2000, through January 31, 2001. However, during that period, the tribe proposes that the season run continuously. Daily bag and possession limits would be the same as those for the States of Washington and Idaho.

The tribe reports that there was no 1999–2000 tribal harvest. Under the proposal, the tribe expects harvest to be less than 200 geese and 300 ducks. Tribal members would be required to possess a signed Federal migratory bird stamp and a tribal ceded lands permit.

We propose to approve the regulations requested by the Kalispel Tribe provided that the nontribal seasons conform to Treaty limitations and final Federal frameworks for the Pacific Flyway. For the 2000–01 season, outside Federal frameworks for ducks in the Pacific Flyway are September 30,

2000, through January 21, 2001. For geese, frameworks for special early Canada goose seasons are September 1 through September 15, 2000, while regular seasons frameworks are September 30, 2000, through January 21, 2001. All seasons for nontribal hunters must conform with the 107-day maximum season length established by the Treaty.

*(i) Klamath Tribe, Chiloquin, Oregon (Tribal Members Only)*

The Klamath Tribe currently has no reservation, per se. However, the Klamath Tribe has reserved hunting, fishing, and gathering rights within its former reservation boundary. This area of former reservation, granted to the Klamaths by the Treaty of 1864, is over 1 million acres. Tribal natural resource management authority is derived from the Treaty of 1864, and carried out cooperatively under the judicially enforced Consent Decree of 1981. The parties to this Consent Decree are the Federal Government, the State of Oregon, and the Klamaths. The Klamath Indian Game Commission sets the seasons. The tribal biological staff and tribal Regulatory Enforcement Officers monitor tribal harvest by frequent bag checks and hunter interviews.

In a June 16, 2000, letter, the Klamath Tribe proposed season dates of October 1, 2000, through January 28, 2001. Daily bag limits would be nine for ducks and six for geese, with possession limits twice the daily bag limit. The daily bag and possession limit for coots would be 25. Shooting hours would be one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. Steel shot is required.

Based on the number of birds produced in the Klamath Basin, the tribe expects that this year's harvest will be similar to last year's. Information on tribal harvest suggests that more than 70 percent of the annual goose harvest is local birds produced in the Klamath basin.

We propose to approve the Klamath Tribe's requested regulations.

*(j) Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, Manistee, Michigan (Tribal Members Only)*

For the first time, the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians and the Service are cooperating to establish special regulations for migratory game birds. The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians is a self-governing, federally recognized tribe located in Manistee, Michigan, and a signatory tribe of the Treaty of 1836. We have approved special regulations for tribal members of the 1836 treaty's signatory tribes on ceded lands in Michigan since the 1986–87 hunting



season. Ceded lands are located in Lake, Mason, Manistee, and Wexford Counties.

For the 2000–01 season, the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians proposes regulations to parallel those of the State of Michigan. The tribal member duck, merganser, and coots and common moorhens season from October 7 through December 5, 2000. A daily bag limit of six ducks would include no more than one pintail, one canvasback, one black duck, two wood ducks, two redheads, three scaup, and four mallards (only one of which may be a hen). The daily bag limit for mergansers would be five, of which only one could be a hooded merganser. The daily bag limit for coots and common moorhens would be 15. Possession limits would be twice the daily bag limit.

For Canada geese, the tribe proposes a September 1 through September 15, 2000, and a September 24 through October 8, 2000, season. Daily bag limits would be five geese in the early season and two geese in the later portion of the season. The possession limit would be twice the daily bag limit. For white-fronted geese, brant, and snow geese, the tribe proposes an October 7 through December 5, 2000, season. The daily bag limit for all geese (including brant) would be 10 birds, which could include no more than 2 whitefronts or 2 brant. Possession limits would be 30.

For snipe, woodcock, and rails, the tribe proposes a September 15 to November 14, 2000, season. The daily bag limit would be 8 common snipe, 3 woodcock, and 25 rails. Possession limits for snipe and woodcock would be twice the daily bag limit. The possession limit for rails would be 25.

All other Federal regulations contained in 50 CFR part 20 would apply. The tribe proposes to monitor harvest through mail surveys. Last year, the tribe issued approximately 100 licenses.

We propose to approve Little River Band of Ottawa Indians' requested 2000–01 special migratory bird hunting regulations.

*(k) The Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, Petoskey, Michigan (Tribal Members Only)*

For the first time, the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians and the Service are cooperating to establish special regulations for migratory game birds. The Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians is a self-governing, federally recognized tribe located in Petoskey, Michigan, and a signatory tribe of the Treaty of 1836. We have approved special regulations for tribal members of the 1836 treaty's signatory

tribes on ceded lands in Michigan since the 1986–87 hunting season.

For the 2000–01 season, the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians propose regulations similar to other tribes in the 1836 treaty area. The tribal member duck season would run from September 20, 2000, through January 20, 2001. A daily bag limit of 10 would include no more than 1 pintail, 1 canvasback, 1 hooded merganser, 2 black ducks, 2 wood ducks, 2 redheads, and 5 mallards (only 2 of which may be hens). For Canada geese, the tribe proposes a September 1 through November 30, 2000, and a January 1 through February 8, 2001, season. For white-fronted geese, brant, and snow geese, the tribe proposes an October 1 through November 30, 2000, season. The daily bag limit for all geese (including brant) would be five birds. Based on our information, it is unlikely that any Canada geese from the Southern James Bay Population would be harvested by the tribe.

For woodcock, snipe, and sora rail, the tribe proposes a September 1 to November 14, 2000, season. The daily bag limit shall not exceed five birds per species.

All other Federal regulations contained in 50 CFR part 20 would apply. The tribe proposes to closely monitor harvest through game bag checks, patrols, and mail surveys. In particular, the tribe proposes monitoring the harvest of Southern James Bay Canada geese to assess any impacts of tribal hunting on the population.

We propose to approve the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians' requested 2000–01 special migratory bird hunting regulations.

*(l) Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Cass Lake, Minnesota (Tribal Members Only)*

The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe is a federally recognized tribe located in Cass Lake, Minnesota. The reservation employs conservation officers to enforce conservation regulations. The Service and the tribe cooperatively established migratory bird hunting regulations for the first time last year.

For the 2000–01 season, we have not yet heard from the tribe regarding this season's proposal.

Based on last year, we assume the tribe would request a tribal member duck and goose season that would run from September 25 through November 28, 2000. Daily bag limits for both ducks and geese would be 10. Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

Based on past harvest surveys, the tribe expects fewer than 200 tribal

hunters to participate and a harvest of less than 2,000 birds.

We propose to approve the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe's requested 2000–01 special migratory bird hunting regulations, provided the tribe provides the appropriate confirmation for the seasons.

*(m) Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Reservation, Lower Brule, South Dakota (Tribal Members and Nontribal Hunters)*

The Lower Brule Sioux Tribe first established tribal migratory bird hunting regulations for the Lower Brule Reservation in 1994. The Lower Brule Reservation is about 214,000 acres in size and is located on and adjacent to the Missouri River, south of Pierre. Land ownership on the reservation is mixed, and until recently, the Lower Brule Tribe had full management authority over fish and wildlife via a MOA with the State of South Dakota. The MOA provided the tribe jurisdiction over fish and wildlife on reservation lands, including deeded and Corps of Engineers taken lands. For the 2000–01 season, the two parties have come to an agreement which allow the public a clear understanding of the Lower Brule Sioux Wildlife Department license requirements and hunting season regulations. The Lower Brule Reservation waterfowl season is open to tribal and non-tribal hunters.

For the 2000–01 migratory bird hunting season, the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe proposes a duck, merganser, and coot season length of 97 days, the same number of days tentatively allowed in the High Plains Management Unit for this season. The tribe's proposed season would run from October 7, 2000, through January 18, 2001. The daily bag limit would be six birds, including no more than five mallards (only one of which may be a hen), one pintail, two redheads, two wood ducks, three scaup, one canvasback, and one mottled duck. The daily bag limit for mergansers would be five, only one of which could be a hooded merganser. The daily bag limit for coots would be 15. Possession limits would be twice the daily bag limits. The tribe also proposes a youth waterfowl hunt on September 30, 2000.

The tribe's proposed Canada goose season would run from October 14, 2000, through January 16, 2001, with a daily bag limit of three Canada geese. The tribe's proposed white-fronted goose season would run from October 14, 2000, through January 7, 2001, with a daily bag limit of two white-fronted geese. The tribe's proposed light goose season would run from October 14, 2000, through January 14, 2001, and



February 24 through March 9, 2001. The light goose daily bag limit would be 20. Possession limits would be twice the daily bag limits.

In the 1998–99 season, hunters harvested an estimated 1,971 geese and 355 ducks. In 1994, duck harvest species composition was primarily mallard (57 percent), gadwall (10 percent), and green-winged teal (10 percent). Goose harvest is traditionally 98 percent Canada geese.

The tribe anticipates a duck harvest similar to last year and a goose harvest below the target harvest level of 3,000 to 4,000 geese. All basic Federal regulations contained in 50 CFR part 20, including the use of steel shot, Migratory Waterfowl Hunting and Conservation Stamp, etc., would be observed by the tribe's proposed regulations. In addition, the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe has an official Conservation Code that was established by Tribal Council Resolution on June 1982 and updated in 1996.

We propose to approve the tribe's requested regulations for the Lower Brule Reservation.

*(n) Navajo Nation, Navajo Indian Reservation, Window Rock, Arizona (Tribal Members and Nontribal Hunters)*

Since 1985, we have established uniform migratory bird hunting regulations for tribal members and nonmembers on the Navajo Indian Reservation (in parts of Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah). The Navajo Nation owns almost all lands on the reservation and has full wildlife management authority.

In a July 18, 2000 proposal, the tribe proposed special migratory bird hunting regulations on the reservation for both tribal and nontribal members for the 2000–01 hunting season for ducks (including mergansers), Canada geese, coots, band-tailed pigeons, and mourning doves. For waterfowl, the Navajo Nation requests the earliest opening dates and longest seasons, and the same daily bag and possession limits, permitted Pacific Flyway States under final Federal frameworks.

For both mourning dove and band-tailed pigeons, the Navajo Nation proposes seasons of September 1 through 30. The Navajo Nation also proposes daily bag limits of 10 and 5 for mourning dove and band-tailed pigeon, respectively. Possession limits would be twice the daily bag limits.

In addition, the nation proposes to require tribal members and nonmembers to comply with all basic Federal migratory bird hunting regulations in 50 CFR part 20 pertaining to shooting hours and manner of taking. In addition,

each waterfowl hunter 16 years of age or over must carry on his/her person a valid Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (Duck Stamp) signed in ink across the face of the stamp. Special regulations established by the Navajo Nation also apply on the reservation.

The tribe anticipates a total harvest of less than 300 mourning doves, 100 band-tail pigeons, 500 ducks, coots, and mergansers, and 300 Canada geese.

We propose to approve the Navajo Nation request for these special regulations for the 2000–01 migratory bird hunting seasons.

*(o) Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin, Oneida, Wisconsin (Tribal Members Only)*

Since 1991–92, the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin and the Service have cooperated to establish uniform regulations for migratory bird hunting by tribal and non-tribal hunters within the original Oneida Reservation boundaries. Since 1985, the Oneida Tribe's Conservation Department has enforced their own hunting regulations within those original reservation limits. The Oneida Tribe also has a good working relationship with the State of Wisconsin and the majority of the seasons and limits are the same for the tribe and Wisconsin.

In a May 25, 2000, letter, the tribe proposed special migratory bird hunting regulations. For ducks, the tribe described the general "outside dates" as being September 16 through November 17, 2000, inclusive. The tribe proposes a daily bag limit of six birds, which could include no more than five mallards (one hen mallard), five wood ducks, one canvasback, one redhead, two pintails, and one hooded merganser.

For geese, the tribe requests a season between September 1 and December 31, 2000, with a daily bag limit of five brant, three Canada geese, and five snow geese. Hunters will be issued eight tribal tags for geese in order to monitor goose harvest. Additional tags will be issued when birds are registered. The tribe will also close the season during the gun deer season of November 18 to 26, 2000. If a quota of 150 geese is attained before the season concludes, the tribe will recommend closing the season early.

For woodcock, the tribe proposes a season between September 16 and November 17, 2000, with a daily bag and possession limit of 5 and 10, respectively.

The tribe proposes shooting hours be one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. Tribal members and nontribal members hunting on the Reservation or on lands

under the jurisdiction of the tribe will observe all basic Federal migratory bird hunting regulations found in 50 CFR, with the following exceptions: Indian hunters would be exempt from the purchase of the Migratory Waterfowl Hunting and Conservation Stamp (Duck Stamp); and shotgun capacity would not be limited to three shells.

The Service proposes to approve the request for special migratory bird hunting regulations for the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin.

*(p) Point No Point Treaty Tribes, Kingston, Washington (Tribal Members Only)*

For the first time, in 1996, the Service and the Point No Point Treaty Tribes, consisting of the Skokomish, Port Gamble S'klallam, Jamestown S'klallam, and Elwha S'klallam tribes, cooperated to establish special regulations for migratory bird hunting. The four tribes have reservations located on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington. All four tribes have successfully administered tribal hunting regulations since 1985 and each tribe has a comprehensive hunting ordinance.

The tribes' May 23, 2000, proposal requests seasons for ducks, geese, brant, coots, snipe, and mourning doves. For ducks, coots, geese, brant, and snipe, the tribes request a September 15, 2000, to January 15, 2001, season with a daily bag limit of 7 ducks, 25 coots, 4 geese (including no more than 3 light geese), 2 brant, and 8 snipe. The duck daily bag limit would include mergansers and could include no more than two hen mallards, two pintails, one canvasback, and two redheads. The season is closed on harlequin ducks and Aleutian Canada geese. All possession limits would be twice the daily bag limit. For mourning doves, the tribes propose a September 1, 2000, to January 15, 2001, season with a daily bag limit of 10.

The tribes require that all hunters authorized to hunt migratory birds on the reservation obtain a tribal hunting permit from the respective tribe. Hunters are also required to adhere to a number of special regulations available at the tribal office. Tribal harvest last year under similar regulations was approximately 185 ducks, 22 geese, and 15 coots.

We propose to approve the Point No Point Treaty Tribes requested 2000–01 regulations.

*(q) Seminole Tribe of Florida, Big Cypress Seminole Reservation, Clewiston, Florida (Tribal Members and Nontribal Hunters)*

The Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Service have cooperated since 1995 to

establish regulations for the 70,000-acre Big Cypress Seminole Reservation. Located northwest of Miami, the Big Cypress Seminole Reservation is totally tribally owned and the tribe has full wildlife management authority.

For the 2000–01 season, the Seminole Tribe proposes establishing a mourning dove season from September 17, 2000, through January 20, 2001. Hunting would be allowed for tribal and non-tribal members, but would be on Sundays only. Daily bag limits would be the same as those allowed within the Federal frameworks for the State of Florida. All other Federal regulations contained in 50 CFR part 20 would apply. In 1997, under identical regulations, hunters harvested 2,078 doves on the reservation. The tribe controls all entry to the hunt area.

We propose to approve the Seminole Tribe's requested 2000–01 special migratory bird hunting regulations.

*(r) Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, Fort Hall Indian Reservation, Fort Hall, Idaho (Nontribal Hunters)*

Almost all of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation is tribally owned. The tribes claim full wildlife management authority throughout the reservation, but the Idaho Fish and Game Department has disputed tribal jurisdiction, especially for hunting by non-tribal members on reservation lands owned by non-Indians. As a compromise, since 1985, we have established the same waterfowl hunting regulations on the reservation and in a surrounding off-reservation State zone. The regulations were requested by the tribes and provided for different season dates than in the remainder of the State. We agreed to the season dates because they seemed to provide additional protection to mallards and pintails. The State of Idaho concurred with the zoning arrangement. We have no objection to the State's use of this zone again in the 2000–01 hunting season, provided the duck and goose hunting season dates are the same as on the reservation.

In a June 6, 2000, proposal for the 2000–01 hunting season, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes requested a continuous duck (including mergansers) season with the maximum number of days and the same daily bag and possession limits permitted Pacific Flyway States, under final Federal frameworks. The tribes propose that, if the same number of hunting days are permitted as last year, the season would have an opening date of October 4, 2000, and a closing date of January 4, 2001. Coot and snipe season dates would be the same as for ducks, with the same daily bag and

possession limits permitted Pacific Flyway States. The tribes anticipate harvest will be between 2,000 and 5,000 ducks.

The tribes also requested a continuous goose season with the maximum number of days and the same daily bag and possession limits permitted Idaho under Federal frameworks. The tribes propose that, if the same number of hunting days are permitted as in previous years, the season would have an opening date of October 4, 2000, and a closing date of January 11, 2001. The tribes anticipate harvest will be between 4,000 and 6,000 geese.

Nontribal hunters must comply with all basic Federal migratory bird hunting regulations in 50 CFR part 20 pertaining to shooting hours, use of steel shot, and manner of taking. Special regulations established by the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes also apply on the reservation.

We note that the requested regulations are nearly identical to those of last year and propose they be approved for the 2000–01 hunting season.

*(s) Squaxin Island Tribe, Squaxin Island Reservation, Shelton, Washington (Tribal Members Only)*

The Squaxin Island Tribe of Washington and the Service have cooperated since 1995 to establish special tribal migratory bird hunting regulations. These special regulations apply to tribal members on the Squaxin Island Reservation, located in western Washington near Olympia, and all lands within the traditional hunting grounds of the Squaxin Island Tribe.

The Squaxin Island Tribe usually outlines their migratory bird hunting proposal through the Service's Region 1 Office, however, this year has not provided confirmatory information. The tribe would normally request establishing duck, coot, and snipe seasons that would run from September 15, 2000, through January 15, 2001. The daily bag limit for ducks would be five per day and could include only one canvasback. The season on harlequin ducks would be closed. For coots and snipe, the daily bag limit would be 25 and 8, respectively. For geese, the tribe would propose establishing a season that would run from September 15, 2000, through January 15, 2001. The daily bag limit for geese would be four per day and could include only two snow geese and one dusky Canada goose. The season on Aleutian and Cackling Canada geese would be closed. For brant, the tribe normally would propose establishing a September 15 to December 31, 2000, season with a daily bag limits of two birds per day. The tribe also would propose a September

15 to December 1, 2000, season for band-tailed pigeons with a daily bag limit of two per day.

In all cases, the possession limit would be twice the daily bag limit. Shooting hours would be from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset, and steel shot would be required for migratory bird hunting. Further, the tribe requires all harvest be reported to their Natural Resources Office within 72 hours.

In 1995, the tribe reported no harvest of any species. Tribal regulations are enforced by the tribe's Law Enforcement Department. We propose to approve the Squaxin Island Tribe's 2000–01 special migratory bird hunting regulations, provided the tribe provides the appropriate confirmation for the seasons.

*(t) Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, LaConner, Washington (Tribal Members Only)*

In 1996, the Service and the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community began cooperating to establish special regulations for migratory bird hunting. The Swinomish Indian Tribal Community is a federally recognized Indian tribe consisting of the Suittle, Skagit, and Kikialos tribes. The Swinomish Reservation was established by the Point Elliott Treaty of 1855 and lies in the Puget Sound area north of Seattle, Washington.

The Tribal Community usually outlines their migratory bird hunting proposal through the Service's Region 1 Office, however, this year has not provided confirmatory information. The tribe would normally request establishing an off-reservation duck, merganser, Canada goose, brant, and coot season opening on the earliest possible date allowed by the final Federal frameworks for the Pacific Flyway and closing 30 days after the State of Washington closes. Daily bag and possession limits would be the same as those allowed by the State except that the Swinomish request an additional three birds of each species over that allowed by the State.

The Community normally anticipates that the regulations will result in the harvest of approximately 200 to 300 ducks, 25 to 50 Canada geese, 75 mergansers, 100 brant, and 50 coot. The Swinomish also utilize a tag and permit system to monitor harvest and will implement steps to limit harvest where conservation is needed. All tribal regulations will be enforced by tribal fish and game officers.

On reservation, the Tribal Community would propose a hunting season for the above-mentioned species beginning on

the earliest possible opening date and closing March 9, 2001. The Swinomish manage harvest by a tagging system and anticipate harvest will be similar to that expected off reservation.

We believe the estimated harvest by the Swinomish will be minimal and will not adversely affect migratory bird populations. We propose to approve the Tribal Community's regulations for the 2000–01 season, provided the tribe provides the appropriate confirmation for the seasons.

*(u) The Tulalip Tribes of Washington, Tulalip Indian Reservation, Marysville, Washington (Tribal Members and Nontribal Hunters)*

The Tulalip Tribes are the successors in interest to the tribes and bands signatory to the Treaty of Point Elliott of January 22, 1855. The Tulalip Tribes' government is located on the Tulalip Indian Reservation at Marysville, Washington. The tribes or individual tribal members own all of the land on the reservation, and they have full wildlife management authority. All lands within the boundaries of the Tulalip Tribes Reservation are closed to nonmember hunting unless opened by Tulalip Tribal regulations.

In a June 6, 2000, letter, the Tulalip Tribes proposed tribal and nontribal hunting regulations for the 2000–01 season. For ducks and coot, the proposed season for tribal members would be from September 15, 2000, through February 1, 2001. In the case of nontribal hunters hunting on the reservation, the season would be the latest closing date and the longest period of time allowed for the State of Washington under final Pacific Flyway Federal frameworks. Daily bag and possession limits for Tulalip Tribal members would be 6 and 12 ducks, respectively, except that for blue-winged teal, canvasback, harlequin, pintail, and wood duck, the bag and possession limits would be the same as those established for the State of Washington in accordance with final Federal frameworks. For nontribal hunters, bag and possession limits would be the same as those permitted the State of Washington under final Federal frameworks. Nontribal members should check with the Tulalip tribal authorities regarding additional conservation measures which may apply to specific species managed within the region.

For geese, tribal members are proposed to be allowed to hunt from September 15, 2000, through February 1, 2001. Non-tribal hunters would be allowed the longest season and the latest closing date permitted for the

State of Washington under final Federal frameworks. For tribal hunters, the goose daily bag and possession limits would be 6 and 12, respectively, except that the bag limits for brant, cackling Canada geese, and dusky Canada geese would be those established for the Pacific Flyway in accordance with final Federal frameworks. For nontribal hunters hunting on reservation lands, the daily bag and possession limits would be those established in accordance with final Federal frameworks for the State of Washington. The Tulalip Tribes also set a maximum annual bag limit on ducks and geese for those tribal members who engage in subsistence hunting.

All hunters on Tulalip Tribal lands are required to adhere to shooting hour regulations set at one-half hour before sunrise to sunset, special tribal permit requirements, and a number of other tribal regulations enforced by the tribe. Nontribal hunters 16 years of age and older, hunting pursuant to Tulalip Tribes' Ordinance No. 67, must possess a valid Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp and a valid State of Washington Migratory Waterfowl Stamp. Both stamps must be validated by signing across the face of the stamp.

Although the season length requested by the Tulalip Tribes appears to be quite liberal, harvest information indicates a total take by tribal and nontribal hunters under 1,000 ducks and 500 geese, annually.

We propose approval of the Tulalip Tribe's request for the above seasons. We request that harvest be monitored closely and regulations be reevaluated for future years if harvest becomes too great in relation to population numbers.

*(v) Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head, Aquinnah, Massachusetts (Tribal Members Only)*

The Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head is a federally-recognized tribe located on the island of Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts. The tribe has approximately 560 acres of land which it manages for wildlife through its natural resources department. The tribe also enforces its own wildlife laws and regulations through the natural resources department.

For the 2000–01 season, the tribe proposes a duck season of October 10, 2000, to January 20, 2001. The tribe proposes a daily bag limit of six birds, which could include no more than two hen mallards, two black ducks (one black duck from December 2 to December 9, 2000), two mottled ducks, one fulvous whistling duck, four mergansers, three scaup, one hooded

merganser, two wood ducks, one canvasback, two redheads, one pintails, and one hen eider. The season for harlequins would be closed. A daily bag limit of six teal would be in addition to the daily bag limit for ducks.

For sea ducks, the tribe proposes a season between October 14, 2000, and January 6, 2001, with a daily bag limit of seven, which could include no more than four of any one species.

For geese, the tribe requests a season between September 19, 2000, and January 20, 2001, with a daily bag limit of 4 Canada geese and 15 snow geese.

For woodcock, the tribe proposes a season between October 14 and November 15, 2000, with a daily bag limit of three.

The tribe currently has 20 registered tribal hunters and estimates harvest to be no more than 125 geese and 925 ducks. Tribal members hunting on the Reservation will observe all basic Federal migratory bird hunting regulations found in 50 CFR.

The Service proposes to approve the request for special migratory bird hunting regulations for the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head and requests that the tribe closely monitor harvest in this first season of establishing special migratory bird hunting regulations.

*(w) White Earth Band of Chippewa, White Earth, Minnesota (Tribal Members Only)*

The White Earth Band of Chippewa is a federally-recognized tribe located in northwest Minnesota and encompasses all of Mahnom County and parts of Becker and Clearwater Counties. The reservation employs conservation officers to enforce conservation regulations. For the first time in the 2000–01 season, the tribe proposes to establish migratory bird hunting seasons on reservation lands.

Last year was the first year the tribe and the Service cooperated to establish special tribal regulations. This year, however, the tribe has not provided confirmatory information.

Based on last year, we assume the tribe would request a duck, merganser, and coot season of September 18 to November 30, 2000. The daily bag limit of seven could include no more than two mallards and one canvasback through September 24 and no more than two hen mallards and two canvasbacks through the remainder of the season. The merganser daily bag limit would be 5 with no more than 2 hooded mergansers, and the coot daily bag limit would be 20. For geese, the tribe would propose a September 1 to November 30, 2000, season with a daily bag limit of five geese.

For dove, rail, woodcock, and snipe, the tribe would propose a September 11 to December 1, 2000, season with daily bag limits of 25 rails, 10 snipe, 10 woodcock, and 25 doves. Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. Nontoxic shot is required.

Based on past harvest surveys, we expect a harvest of less than 500 Canada geese and 1,000 ducks.

We propose to approve the White Earth Band of Chippewa's requested 2000–01 special migratory bird hunting regulations, provided the tribe provides the appropriate confirmation for the seasons.

*(x) White Mountain Apache Tribe, Fort Apache Indian Reservation, Whiteriver, Arizona (Tribal Members and Nontribal Hunters)*

The White Mountain Apache Tribe owns all reservation lands, and the tribe has recognized full wildlife management authority. The White Mountain Apache Tribe has requested regulations that are essentially unchanged from those agreed to since the 1997–98 hunting year.

The hunting zone for waterfowl is restricted and is described as: the entire length of the Black River west of the Bonito Creek and Black River confluence and the entire length of the Salt River forming the southern boundary of the reservation; the White River, extending from the Canyon Day Stockman Station to the Salt River; and all stock ponds located within Wildlife Management Units 4, 5, 6, and 7. Tanks located below the Mogollon Rim, within Wildlife Management Units 2 and 3 will be open to waterfowl hunting during the 2000–01 season. All other waters of the reservation would be closed to waterfowl hunting for the 2000–01 season.

For nontribal and tribal hunters, the tribe proposes a continuous duck, coot, merganser, gallinule and moorhen hunting season, with an opening date of October 21, 2000, and a closing date of January 22, 2001. The tribe proposes a daily duck (including mergansers) bag limit of four, which may include no more than two redheads or one canvasback and one redhead, one pintail, and three mallards (including no more than one hen mallard). The daily bag limit for coots, gallinules and moorhens would be 25 singly, or in the aggregate. For geese, the tribe is proposing a season from October 21, 2000, through January 12, 2001. Hunting would be limited to Canada geese, and the daily bag limit would be three.

Season dates for band-tailed pigeons and mourning doves would run

concurrently from September 6 through September 20, 2000, in Wildlife Management Unit 10 and all areas south of Y10 in Wildlife Management Unit 7, only. Proposed daily bag limits for band-tailed pigeons and mourning doves would be 3 and 10, respectively.

Possession limits for the above species are twice the daily bag limits. Shooting hours would be from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. There would be no open season for sandhill cranes, rails, and snipe on the White Mountain Apache lands under this proposal. A number of special regulations apply to tribal and nontribal hunters, which may be obtained from the White Mountain Apache Tribe Game and Fish Department.

We propose to approve the regulations requested by the tribe for the 2000–01 seasons provided that the nontribal seasons conform to Treaty limitations and final Federal frameworks for the Pacific Flyway. For the 2000–01 season, outside Federal frameworks for ducks in the Pacific Flyway are September 30, 2000, through January 21, 2001.

*(y) Yankton Sioux Tribe, Marty, South Dakota (Tribal Members and Nontribal Hunters)*

On May 11, 2000, the Yankton Sioux Tribe submitted a waterfowl hunting proposal for the 2000–01 season. The Yankton Sioux tribal waterfowl hunting season would be open to both tribal members and nontribal hunters. The waterfowl hunting regulations would apply to tribal and trust lands within the external boundaries of the reservation.

For duck (including mergansers) and coots, the Yankton Sioux Tribe proposes a season starting October 14, 2000, and running for the maximum amount of days allowed under the final Federal frameworks. Daily bag and possession limits would be the same as those adopted by the State of South Dakota. For geese, the tribe has requested a dark geese (Canada geese, brant, white-fronts) season starting October 28, 2000, and run for the maximum amount of days allowed under the final Federal frameworks. The daily bag limit would be three geese (including no more than one whitefront or brant). Possession limits would be twice the daily bag limit. For snow geese, the proposed hunting season would start October 28, 2000, and run for the maximum amount of days allowed under the final Federal frameworks. Daily bag and possession limits would be the same as those adopted by the State of South Dakota.

All hunters would have to be in possession of a valid tribal license while

hunting on Yankton Sioux trust lands. Tribal and nontribal hunters must comply with all basic Federal migratory bird hunting regulations in 50 CFR part 20 pertaining to shooting hours and the manner of taking. Special regulations established by the Yankton Sioux Tribe also apply on the reservation.

During the 1999–2000 hunting season, the tribe reported that 85 nontribal hunters took 170 Canada geese, 3 snow geese, and 100 ducks. Tribal members harvested less than 50 geese and 500 ducks.

We concur with the Yankton Sioux proposal for the 2000–01 hunting season.

#### Public Comment Invited

We intend that adopted final rules be as responsive as possible to all concerned interests and, therefore, desire to obtain the comments and suggestions of the public, other governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and other private interests on these proposals. However, special circumstances are involved in the establishment of these regulations, which limit the amount of time that we can allow for public comment. Specifically, two considerations compress the time in which the rulemaking process must operate: (1) The need to establish final rules at a point early enough in the summer to allow affected State agencies to appropriately adjust their licensing and regulatory mechanisms; and (2) the unavailability, before mid-June, of specific, reliable data on this year's status of some waterfowl and migratory shore and upland game bird populations. Therefore, we believe that to allow the comment period past the date specified is contrary to the public interest.

The Department of the Interior's policy is, whenever practicable, to afford the public an opportunity to participate in the rulemaking process. Accordingly, we invite interested persons to submit written comments, suggestions, or recommendations regarding the proposed regulations. Before promulgation of final migratory game bird hunting regulations, we will take into consideration all comments received. Such comments, and any additional information received, may lead to final regulations that differ from these proposals. We invite interested persons to participate in this rulemaking by submitting written comments to the address indicated under the caption **ADDRESSES**. You may inspect comments received on the proposed annual regulations during normal business

hours at the Service's office in room 634, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Arlington, Virginia.

Our practice is to make comments, including names and addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from the rulemaking record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. In some circumstances, we would withhold from the rulemaking record a respondent's identity, as allowable by law. If you wish for us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. However, we will not consider anonymous comments. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.

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

#### NEPA Consideration

Pursuant to the requirements of section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(C)), the "Final Environmental Statement for the Issuance of Annual Regulations Permitting the Sport Hunting of Migratory Birds (FES-75-74)" was filed with the Council on Environmental Quality on June 6, 1975, and notice of availability was published in the **Federal Register** on June 13, 1975 (40 FR 25241). A supplement to the final environmental statement, the "Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement: Issuance of Annual Regulations Permitting the Sport Hunting of Migratory Birds (SEIS 88-14)" was filed on June 9, 1988, and notice of availability was published in the **Federal Register** on June 16, 1988 (53 FR 22582), and June 17, 1988 (53 FR 22727). Copies of these documents are available from us at the address indicated under the caption **ADDRESSES**. In addition, an August 1985 Environmental Assessment titled "Guidelines for Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations on Federal Indian Reservations and Ceded Lands" is available from the same address.

#### Endangered Species Act Considerations

Prior to issuance of the 2000-01 migratory game bird hunting regulations, we will consider provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543; hereinafter the Act), to ensure that hunting is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any species designated as endangered or threatened or modify or destroy its critical habitat and that the proposed action is consistent with conservation programs for those species. Consultations under Section 7 of this Act may cause us to change proposals in this and future supplemental proposed rulemakings.

We will include findings from these consultations in a biological opinion and may cause modification of some regulatory measures proposed in this document. The final rule will reflect any modifications. Our biological opinion resulting from the Section 7 consultation are public documents available for public inspection in the Service's Division of Endangered Species and Division of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, at the address indicated under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

#### Regulatory Flexibility Act

These regulations have a significant economic impact on substantial numbers of small entities under the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*). We analyzed the economic impacts of the annual hunting regulations on small business entities in detail and issued a Small Entity Flexibility Analysis (Analysis) in 1998. The Analysis documented the significant beneficial economic effect on a substantial number of small entities. The primary source of information about hunter expenditures for migratory game bird hunting is the National Hunting and Fishing Survey, which is conducted at 5-year intervals. The Analysis was based on the 1996 National Hunting and Fishing Survey and the U.S. Department of Commerce's County Business Patterns, from which it was estimated that migratory bird hunters would spend between \$429 million and \$1,084 million at small businesses in 1998. Copies of the Analysis are available upon request from the address indicated under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

#### Executive Order (E.O.) 12866

While this individual supplemental rule was not reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the migratory bird hunting regulations are economically significant and are

annually reviewed by OMB under E.O. 12866.

E.O. 12866 requires each agency to write regulations that are easy to understand. We invite comments on how to make this rule easier to understand, including answers to questions such as the following: (1) Are the requirements in the rule clearly stated? (2) Does the rule contain technical language or jargon that interferes with its clarity? (3) Does the format of the rule (grouping and order of sections, use of headings, paragraphing, etc.) aid or reduce its clarity? (4) Would the rule be easier to understand if it were divided into more (but shorter) sections? (5) Is the description of the rule in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of the preamble helpful in understanding the rule? What else could we do to make the rule easier to understand?

#### Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act

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

#### Paperwork Reduction Act

We examined these regulations under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. We utilize the various recordkeeping and reporting requirements imposed under regulations established in 50 CFR part 20, Subpart K, in the formulation of migratory game bird hunting regulations. Specifically, OMB has approved the information collection requirements of the Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program and assigned clearance number 1018-0015 (expires 9/30/2001). This information is used to provide a sampling frame for voluntary national surveys to improve our harvest estimates for all migratory game birds in order to better manage these populations. OMB has also approved the information collection requirements of the Sandhill Crane Harvest Questionnaire and assigned clearance number 1018-0023 (expires 9/30/2000). The information from this survey is used to estimate the magnitude and the geographical and temporal distribution of harvest, and the portion it constitutes of the total population. A Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of

information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

#### **Unfunded Mandates Reform Act**

We have determined and certify, in compliance with the requirements of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, 2 U.S.C. 1502 *et seq.*, that this rulemaking will not “significantly or uniquely” affect small governments, and will not produce a Federal mandate of \$100 million or more in any given year on local or State government or private entities. Therefore, this proposed rule is not a “significant regulatory action” under the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

#### **Civil Justice Reform—Executive Order 12988**

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

#### **Takings Implication Assessment**

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

#### **Federalism Effects**

Due to the migratory nature of certain species of birds, the Federal Government has been given responsibility over these species by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. We annually prescribe frameworks from which the States make selections and employ guidelines to establish special

regulations on Federal Indian reservations and ceded lands. This process preserves the ability of the States and Tribes to determine which seasons meet their individual needs. Any State or Tribe may be more restrictive than the Federal frameworks at any time. The frameworks are developed in a cooperative process with the States and the Flyway Councils. This process allows States to participate in the development of frameworks from which they will make selections, thereby having an influence on their own regulations. These rules do not have a substantial direct effect on fiscal capacity, change the roles or responsibilities of Federal or State governments, or intrude on State policy or administration. Therefore, in accordance with Executive Order 13132, these regulations do not have significant federalism effects and do not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

#### **Government-to-Government Relationship With Tribes**

Due to the migratory nature of certain species of birds, the Federal Government has been given responsibility over these species by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Thus, in accordance with the President’s memorandum of April 29, 1994, “Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments” (59 FR 22951) and 512 DM 2, we have evaluated possible effects on Federally recognized Indian tribes and have determined that there are no effects on Indian trust resources. However, by virtue of the tribal proposals contained in this proposed rule, we have consulted with all the tribes affected by this rule.

#### **List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 20**

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

Based on the results of soon-to-be-completed migratory game bird studies, and having due consideration for any data or views submitted by interested parties, this proposed rulemaking may result in the adoption of special hunting regulations for migratory birds beginning as early as September 1, 2000, on certain Federal Indian reservations, off-reservation trust lands, and ceded lands. Taking into account both reserved hunting rights and the degree to which tribes have full wildlife management authority, the regulations only for tribal members or for both tribal and nontribal members may differ from those established by States in which the reservations, off-reservation trust lands, and ceded lands are located. The regulations will specify open seasons, shooting hours, and bag and possession limits for rails, coot, gallinules (including moorhen), woodcock, common snipe, band-tailed pigeons, mourning doves, white-winged doves, ducks (including mergansers), and geese.

The rules that eventually will be promulgated for the 2000–01 hunting season are authorized under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of July 3, 1918 (40 Stat. 755; 16 U.S.C. 703 *et seq.*), as amended. The MBTA authorizes and directs the Secretary of the Interior, having due regard for the zones of temperature and for the distribution, abundance, economic value, breeding habits, and times and lines of flight of migratory game birds, to determine when, to what extent, and by what means such birds or any part, nest, or egg thereof may be taken, hunted, captured, killed, possessed, sold, purchased, shipped, carried, exported, or transported.

Dated: August 15, 2000.

**Stephen C. Saunders,**

*Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.*

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