Who to Contact for Your Area:

Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council - Regional Representatives

Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta Region
Myron Naneng
P.O. Box 219
Bethel, AK 99559
Tel: Wk 907/543-7300
Fax: 907-543-3596
Email: mnaneng@avcp.org

Bristol Bay Region
Molly Chythlook
P.O. Box 310
Dillingham, AK 99576
Tel: 907/842-5257; Fax: 907/842-5932
E-mail: mchythlook@bbna.com

Gulf of Alaska Region
Patrick Norman
P.O. Box 5510
Port Graham, AK 99603
Tel: 907/284-2227
Email: pnormanvc@hotmail.com

Upper Copper River Region
Joeneal Hicks
Box 241
Gakona, AK 99586
Tel: 907/822-3503; Fax: 907/822-5179
E-mail: jhicks@tribalnet.org

Bering Straits/Norton Sound Region
Sandra Tahbone
Box 948
Nome, AK 99762
Tel: 907/443-4265, Fax: 443-4452
E-mail: stahbone@kawerak.org

Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Region
Peter Devine
c/o Qagan Tayagungin Tribal Office
Sand Point, AK 99661
Tel: 907/383-5616, Fax: 907/383-5814

Kodiak Archipelago Region
Herman Squartsoff
P.O. Box 189
Ouzinkie, AK 99644
Tel: 907/680-2332, Fax: 680-2332
Email: sicharters@hotmail.com

Northwest Arctic Region
To Be Announced
Box 256
Kotzebue, AK 99752
Tel: 907/442-7690; Fax: 907/442-7678
E-mail:

North Slope Region
Taqulik Hepa
P.O. Box 69
Barrow, AK 99723
Tel: 907/852-0350; Fax: 907/852-0351/8948
E-mail: Taqulik.Hepa@north-slope.org

Interior Region
Michael Smith
122 First Avenue
Fairbanks, AK 99701
Tel: 907/452-8251ext. 3256; fax: 907/459-3851
E-mail: michael.smith@tananachiefs.org

Southeast Alaska Region
Matt Kookesh
PO Box 20161
Juneau, AK 99802
Tel: 907/463-7124; Fax: 907/463-7356
E-mail: mkookesh@gci.net

General Overview

This booklet is a simplified, informative summary of the 2008 Alaska subsistence spring/summer migratory bird harvest regulations contained in 50 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 92. There may be errors or omissions that have not been identified and regulatory changes that occur after printing. This booklet is intended as an informational guide only. To be certain of current regulations, refer to the official Code of Federal Regulations and the Federal Register publications, with pertinent parts available at the website http://alaska.fws.gov/ambcc/regulations.htm

These regulations will become effective upon publication of the Final Rule in the Federal Register. These regulations apply to the spring and summer subsistence harvest of migratory birds in Alaska, **valid April 2 through August 31, 2008**. The Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council (Council) reviews and recommends needed modifications to these regulations on an annual basis.

Migratory bird hunting from September 1, 2008 through March 10, 2009 is managed under separate Federal regulations in 50 CFR Part 20 and State regulations in 5 AAC 85. 065

For More Information Contact: Office of the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 1011 E. Tudor Rd., MS 201, Anchorage, AK 99503

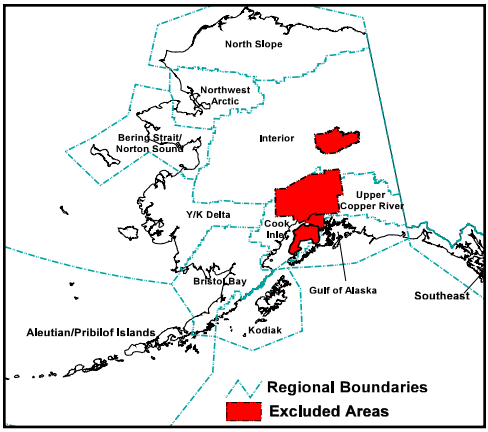
Voice: toll-free (877) 229-2344, Fax: (907) 786-3641, Email: ambcc@fws.gov

Who is Eligible to Participate?

If you are a **permanent** resident of a village within an included harvest area, you are eligible to harvest migratory birds and eggs for subsistence purposes.

Included Areas/Villages

Village areas located within the Alaska Peninsula, Kodiak Archipelago, the Aleutian Islands, or in areas north and west of the Alaska Range are subsistence harvest areas. The communities of: Gulkana, Gakona, Tazlina, Copper Center, Mentasta Lake, Chitina, Chistochina, Tatitlek, Chenega, Port Graham, Nanwalek, Tyonek and Hoonah were added in 2004. The communities of Craig, Hydaburg and Yakutat were added in 2005.



Excluded areas

Persons living in the Anchorage-Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Central Interior Excluded Area, or the Kenai Peninsula roaded area are excluded from participating. Maps are included in the regional sections of this book. In the Gulf of Alaska, Copper River, Cook Inlet or Southeast Alaska, only residents of previously listed included communities can participate in the harvest.

Anyone can petition the Council to change a community's exclusion/inclusion status. The petition must address how the area does or does not meet the qualifying criteria for inclusion. Upon receipt, the Council will seek regional input and submit a recommendation to the Service Regulations Committee to either include or exclude the community from the subsistence harvest.

Subsistence Harvest Areas

All lands within the included areas are open for harvest, although special requirements apply to National Park Service areas, as explained below.

Special Requirements for Natl. Parks & Preserves

Subsistence use on National Park Service areas is restricted to only those national monuments, parks, and preserves open to subsistence. Glacier Bay National Park, Katmai National Park, Kenai Fjords National Park, Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, "old" McKinley National Park and Sitka National Historical Park are closed to subsistence. National Park Service regulations govern which communities or individual residents qualify to subsistence harvest for specific National Parks and Monuments (50 CFR Part 13, Subparts A, B, and C). For more information about National Park Service areas contact: National Park Service, 240 West 5th Ave., Rm 114, Anchorage, AK 99501, (907) 644-3509.

Use and Possession of Migratory Birds

You may not sell, offer for sale, purchase, or offer to purchase migratory birds, their parts, or eggs.

- **Eligible persons**. You may take birds for human consumption only. Harvest and possession of birds must be done using nonwasteful taking. Nonedible byproducts of birds taken for food may be used for other purposes, except that taxidermy is not allowed.
- **Noneligible persons**. You may receive portions of birds or their eggs not kept for human consumption from eligible persons only if you have a valid U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service permit for scientific research or education.

Required Licenses and Stamps

- All waterfowl hunters 16 years or older are required to have a current Federal Duck Stamp and State hunting license.
- Waterfowl hunters over 16 years old are also required to have a State Duck Stamp, except disabled veterans, those 60 years or older and those that qualify for a low income license.
- Federal stamps are available at most post offices, National Wildlife Refuge offices, and some stores; or may be purchased by calling: 1-800-852-4897 or online at http://alaska.fws.gov/duckstamps.
- State stamps and hunting licenses are available from most State license vendors, ADF&G offices or online at: http://alaska.fws.gov/duckstamps.
- Both Federal and State Duck stamps must be signed in ink across the face and must be carried at all times while hunting waterfowl, but are not required for hunting non-waterfowl species.

Duck stamps work for you, and your children.

Federal duck stamps help purchase waterfowl habitat in the lower 48 states to sustain Alaska birds spending the winter there. Good wintering habitat is needed to keep birds healthy to return to Alaska each spring for nesting.

State stamp fees fund waterfowl conservation projects in Alaska.

Prohibited Harvest Methods and Means

You may not use the following devices and methods to harvest migratory birds:

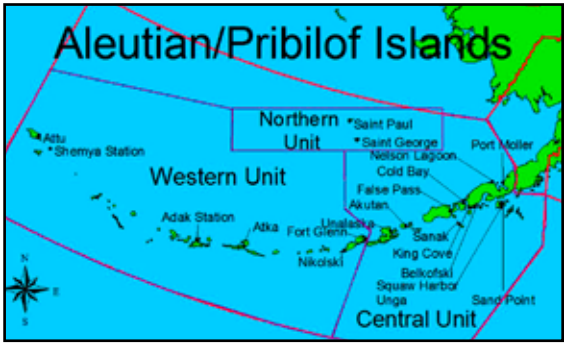
- Swivel guns, shotguns larger than 10 gauge; punt, battery or machine guns, fish hooks, poisons, drugs, explosives, or stupefying substances
- Shooting from a sinkbox or low-floating device that conceals the hunter beneath the surface of the water
- Hunting from any type of aircraft
- Using live birds as decoys, except for auklets on Diomede or St. Lawrence islands
- Hunting with the aid of recorded bird calls
- Using any type of vehicle, aircraft, or boat to concentrate, drive, rally, or stir up any migratory birds, except boats may be used to position a hunter
- The possession or use of lead or other toxic shot while hunting.
- Shooting from or across any road or highway
- Using an air boat or jet ski for hunting or transporting hunters (prohibited in Interior & Bristol Bay Regions only)
- Using private or chartered aircraft for hunting or transporting hunters, except for transportation between public airstrips (prohibited in Y/K Region Only)
- Hunting with the aid of baiting, or over any baited area, where a person knows or reasonably should know that the area has been baited.

Shooting Hours

The harvest is open 24-hours per day during the dates listed under each region, with the exception of special restrictions on the North Slope (See North Coastal Zone/North Slope for special shooting hours table - page 12).

Region-Specific Regulations (Open Seasons)

Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Region



Northern Unit (Pribilofs)

Season: April 2-June 30

Closure: July 1-Aug. 31

Central Unit (Port Moller west to include Unalaska Is)

Season: April 2- June 15 and July 16 - August 31

Closure: June 16 - July 15

Special Tundra Swan Closure: all hunting and egg gathering closed in Units 9(D) & 10.

Additional Black Brant Season Closure: August 16 - 31, only in Izembek and Moffet lagoons.

Western Unit (Umnak Island west to include Attu Island)

Season: April 2 - July 15 and August 16 - August 31.

Closure: July 16 - August 15.

Northwest Arctic Region

Seasons:

- April 2- June 9, Aug. 15 - Aug 31 (hunting - in general)
- May 20 - June 9 for waterfowl egg gathering
- May 20 - July 12 for seabird egg gathering
- July 1 - July 31 for hunting molting/non-nesting waterfowl

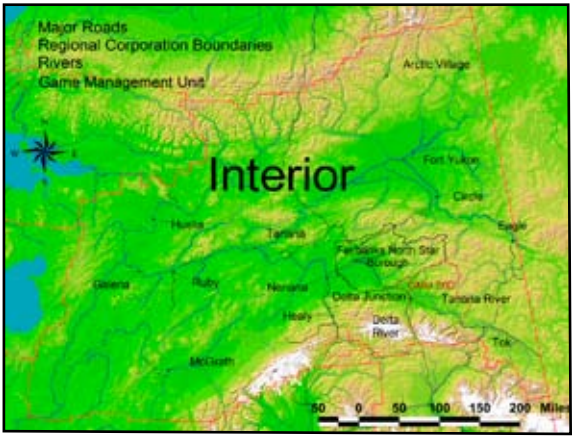
Closure: Anytime other than the above listed seasons

Interior Region

Season: April 2 - June 14 and July 16 - August 31

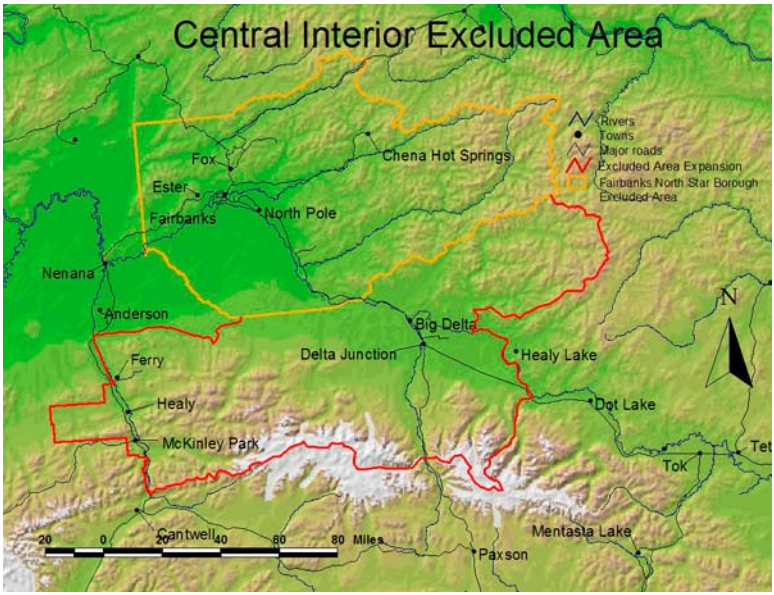
May 1 - June 14 for egg gathering only

Closure: June 15 - July 15



Note: The new Central Interior Excluded Area includes the Fairbanks-North Star Borough and was expanded to that portion of Unit 20 (A) east of the Wood River drainage and south of Rex Trail, including the upper Wood River drainage south of its confluence with Chicken Creek; that portion of Unit 20(C) east of Denali National Park north to Rock Creek and east to Unit 20(A), and that portion of Unit 20(D) west of the Tanana River between its confluence with the Johnson and Delta Rivers, west of the east bank of the Johnson River, and north and west of the Volkmar drainage, including the Goodpaster River drainage.

Area residents of the Fairbanks-North Star Borough, Delta Junction/Big Delta/ Fort Greely, Healy, McKinley Park/Village and Ferry are excluded from participating in this harvest



Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta Region

Season: April 2- August 31

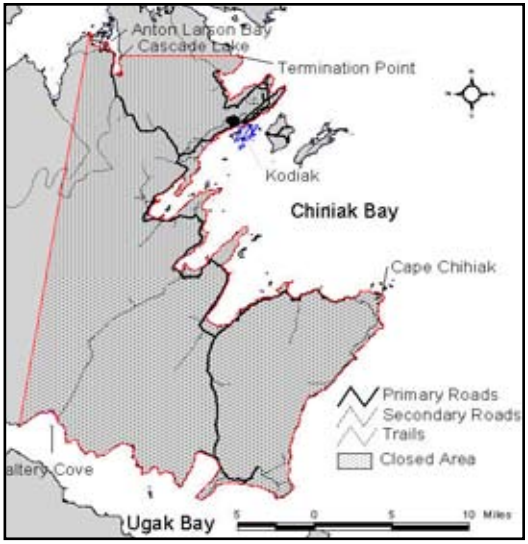
Closure: 30-day closure
Dates to be announced*

Special Black Brant and Cackling Goose Season Closure: From the period when egg laying begins until young birds are fledged. Dates to be announced *

*ALL closure dates to be announced by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Regional Director or his designee, after consultation with field biologists and the Association of Village Council Presidents's Waterfowl Conservation Committee. Announcements will be broadcast over the local public radio stations.

Kodiak Archipelago Region

Kodiak Island Roaded Area Closure: the closed area consists of all lands and water (including exposed tidelands) east of a line extending from Crag Point in the north to the west end of Saltery Cove in the south and all lands and water south of a line extending from Termination Point along the north side of Cascade Lake extending to Anton Larson Bay. Marine waters adjacent to the closed area are closed to harvest within 500 feet from the water's edge. The offshore islands are open to harvest, for example: Woody, Long, Gull and Puffin islands.



Season: April 2- June 20 and July 22 -Aug 31, general season
May 1 - June 20 for egg gathering

Closure: June 21 - July 21

Gulf of Alaska Region

Prince William Sound Area

Harvest area: Unit 6 (D)

Eligible communities: Chenega Bay and Tatitlek

Season: April 2 - May 31 and July 1 - Aug 31

Closure: June 1 - 30

Kachemak Bay Area

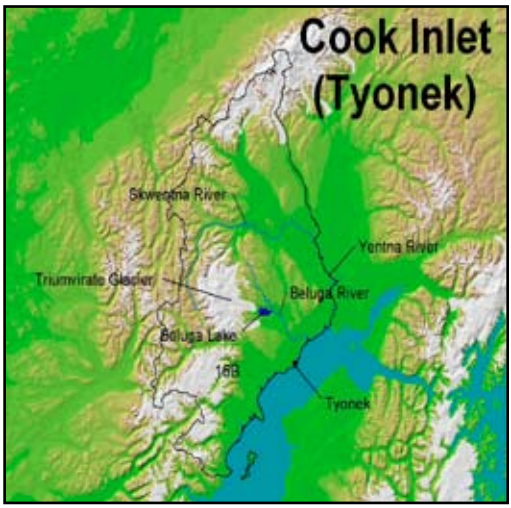
Harvest area: Unit 15[C] South of a line connecting the tip of Homer Spit to the mouth of Fox River

Eligible Communities: Port Graham, Nanwalek

Season: April 2 - May 31 and July 1 - Aug 31

Closure: June 1 - 30

Cook Inlet



Harvest Area: portions of Unit 16(B)

Eligible community:Tyonek

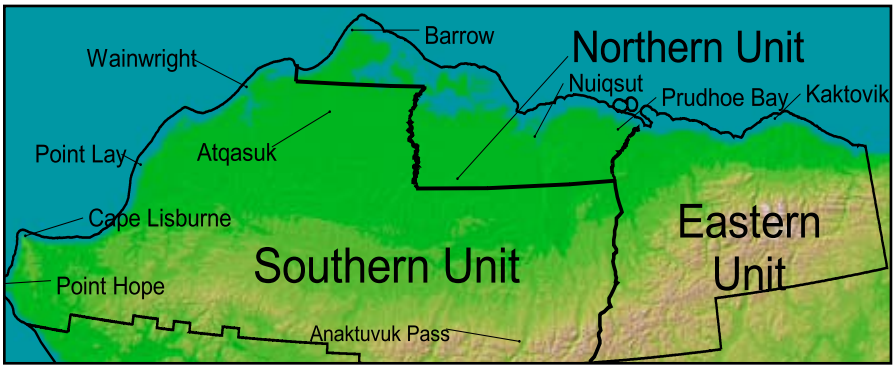
Season: April 2-May 31: That portion of Unit 16(B) south of the Skwentna River and west of the Yentna River and

August 1-31: That portion of Unit 16(B) south of the Beluga River, Beluga Lake, and the Triumvirate Glacier.

Closure: June 1 - July 31

North Slope Region

All Units: Yellow-billed loons - Yellow-billed loons that are inadvertently entangled in fishing gill nets can be kept for subsistence use. Individuals must report each yellow-billed loon found entangled in fishing nets to the North Slope Borough Dept. of Wildlife by the end of the season (August 31).



Southern Unit (Southwestern North Slope regional boundary east to Peard Bay, everything west of the longitude line 158°30'N and south of the latitude line 70°45'E to west bank of the Ikpikpuk River, and everything south of the latitude line 69°45'E between the west bank of the Ikpikpuk River to the east bank of Sagavinirktok River)

Season: April 2 - June 29 and July 30 - Aug 31 <u>for seabirds</u>
April 2 - June 19 and July 20 - Aug 31 <u>for all other birds</u>

Closure: June 30 - July 29 <u>for seabirds</u> and June 20 - July 19 <u>for all other birds</u>

Special Black Brant Hunting Opening: From June 20 - July 5. The open area consists of the coastline, from mean high water line outward to include open water, from Nokotlek Point east to Longitude 158° 30'W. This includes Peard Bay, Kugrua Bay, and Wainwright Inlet, but not the Kuk and Kugrua river drainages.

Eastern Unit (East of east bank of the Sagavanirktok River)

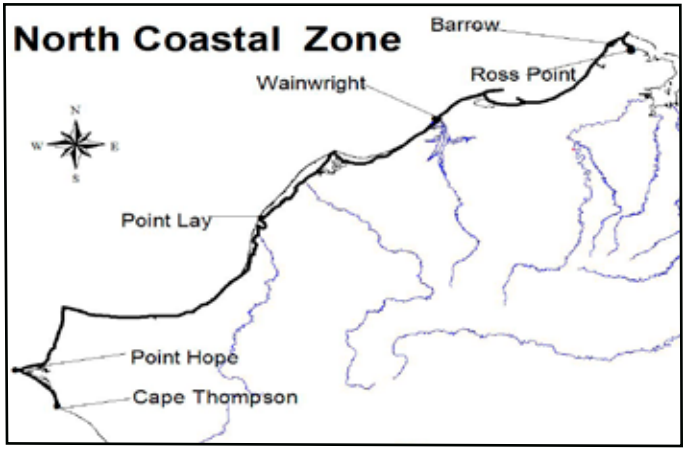
Season: April 2 - June 19 and July 20 - August 31

Closure: June 20 - July 19

Northern Unit (At Peard Bay, everything east of the longitude line 158°30'N and north of the latitude line 70°45'E to west bank of the Ikpikpuk River, and everything north of the latitude line 69°45'E between the west bank of the Ikpikpuk River to the east bank of the Sagavinirktok River)

Season: April 2-June 6 and July 7-August 31 for king & common eiders
April 2 - June 15 and July 16 - August 31 for all other birds

Closure: June 7- July 6 for king & common eiders
June 16 - July 15 for all other birds.



North Coastal Zone (Cape Thompson north to Point Hope and east along the Arctic Ocean coastline around Point Barrow to Ross Point, including Iko Bay, and 5 miles inland).

1) Upon request by a Service law enforcement officer, hunters must present any migratory birds taken, for species identification.

2) No person may possess any migratory bird or part not taken legally within these regulations.

3) Migratory bird hunting is permitted from 1/2 hour before sunrise until sunset (sunrise/sunset time tables on next page).

How to read August shooting hours table: times highlighted in yellow are in the morning of the next day. Ending times in "pm" are in bold print.

Date	Point Hope		Point Lay		Wainwright		Barrow	
	Start (am)	End (am/pm)	Start (am)	End (am/pm)	Start (am)	End (pm)	Start (am)	End (pm)
August 10	5:33	12:33	****	****	****	****	****	****
August 11	5:37	12:18	****	****	****	****	****	****
August 12	5:42	12:13	****	****	****	****	****	****
August 13	5:46	12:09	5:17	12:08	****	****	****	****
August 14	5:51	12:04	5:22	12:00	****	****	****	****
August 15	5:55	**11:54**	5:26	**11:52**	****	****	****	****
August 16	5:59	**11:50**	5:31	**11:47**	****	****	****	****
August 17	6:04	**11:45**	5:36	**11:42**	5:11	**11:43**	****	****
August 18	6:08	**11:40**	5:41	**11:37**	5:16	**11:37**	****	****
August 19	6:12	**11:36**	5:45	**11:32**	5:21	**11:32**	****	****
August 20	6:16	**11:31**	5:50	**11:27**	5:27	**11:26**	5:07	**11:22**
August 21	6:20	**11:27**	5:55	**11:22**	5:32	**11:21**	5:12	**11:16**
August 22	6:24	**11:22**	5:59	**11:17**	5:37	**11:15**	5:17	**11:10**
August 23	6:28	**11:18**	6:04	**11:12**	5:41	**11:10**	5:23	**11:04**
August 24	6:32	**11:13**	6:08	**11:07**	5:47	**11:05**	5:28	**10:59**
August 25	6:36	**11:09**	6:12	**11:02**	5:51	**10:59**	5:33	**10:53**
August 26	6:40	**11:04**	6:17	**10:58**	5:56	**10:54**	5:38	**10:48**
August 27	6:44	**11:00**	6:21	**10:53**	6:01	**10:49**	5:43	**10:42**
August 28	6:48	**10:55**	6:25	**10:48**	6:05	**10:44**	5:48	**10:37**
August 29	6:52	**10:51**	6:29	**10:43**	6:10	**10:39**	5:53	**10:32**
August 30	6:56	**10:47**	6:34	**10:38**	6:14	**10:33**	5:57	**10:26**
August 31	7:00	**10:42**	6:38	**10:34**	6:19	**10:28**	6:02	**10:21**

**** Shooting hours are not restricted.

Bering Strait/Norton Sound Region

Stebbins/St. Michael Area (Point Romanof to Canal Point)

Season: April 15 - June 14 and July 16 - August 31

Closure: June 15 - July 15

Remainder of the region

Season: April 2 - June 14 and July 16 - Aug 31 for waterfowl

April 2 - July 19 and August 21 - August 31 for all other birds

Closure: June 15 - July 15 for waterfowl
July 20 - August 20 for all other birds

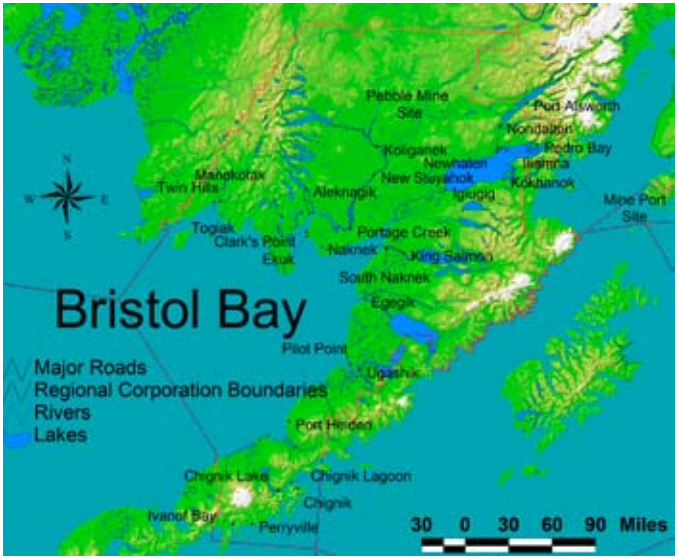
Bristol Bay Region

Season: April 2- June 14 and July 16 - Aug 31 general season

April 2-July 15 for seabird egg gathering only

Closure: June 15 - July 15 general season

July 16 - August 31 for seabird egg gathering



Upper Copper River Region

Harvest Area: State of Alaska Game Management Units 11 and 13

Eligible communities: Gulkana, Chitina, Tazlina, Copper Center, Gakona, Mentasta Lake, Chistochina and Cantwell

Season: April 15 - May 26 and June 27 - August 31.

Closure: May 27 - June 26.

Note: The Copper River Basin Communities listed above are also eligible to hunt in Unit 12 using the Interior Region seasons.

Regulations for Southeast Alaska

Communities Restricted to Egg Gathering Only

Community of Hoonah

Harvest area: National Forest lands in Icy Strait and Cross Sound including Middle Pass Rock near the Inian Islands, Table Rock in Cross Sound, and other traditional locations on the coast of Yakobi Island. All lands and waters within Glacier Bay National Park are closed to harvest.

Season: glaucous-winged gull egg gathering only: May 15 - June 30

Closure: July 1 - August 31

Communities of Craig and Hydaburg

Harvest area: small islands west of Prince of Wales Island within Unit 2; including Warren Island to Cape Chacon

Season: glaucous-winged gull egg gathering only: May 15 - June 30

Closure: July 1 - August 31

Community of Yakutat

Harvest area: Icy Bay [Icy Cape to Pt. Riou], and coastal lands and islands bordering the Gulf of Alaska from Pt. Manby southeast to and including Dry Bay.

Season: glaucous-winged gull, arctic and aleutian tern egg gathering: May 15 - June 30

Closure: July 1 - August 31

Protect Our Threatened *Steller's Eiders*

Don't Shoot them!

Steller's Eiders are illegal to hunt or harvest eggs statewide/year-round!

David Sibley

Drawing:
David Sibley

Photo: Glen Smart, USFWS

Steller's Eiders:

caqiar, caqiaraq, ijniqauqtuq, aglekesegaq, igniqauqtuq

Photo:
Tasha DiMarzio

David Sibley

Drawing:
David Sibley

Photo: Becky Howard

Steller's Eiders are illegal to hunt or harvest eggs statewide/year-round!

Migratory Birds Open for Harvest

You may harvest birds or gather eggs from the following species within all open regions, except southeast Alaska. All bird species not listed are closed. Some bird species were excluded from the list purely on the basis of current population concerns, and will be reopened if the population status improves.

Waterfowl

- Greater White-fronted Goose
- Snow Goose
- Lesser Canada Goose
- Taverner's Cackling Goose
- Aleutian Cackling Goose - except closed in the Semidi Islands
- Cackling Goose - except no egg gathering is permitted anywhere.
- Black Brant - except no egg gathering in theYukon-Kuskokwim Delta and the North Slope.
- Tundra Swan - except closed in Units 9(D) and 10.
- Gadwall
- Eurasian Wigeon
- American Wigeon
- Mallard
- Blue-winged Teal
- Northern Shoveler
- Northern Pintail
- Green-winged Teal
- Canvasback
- Redhead
- Ring-necked Duck
- Greater Scaup
- Lesser Scaup
- King Eider
- Common Eider
- Harlequin Duck
- Surf Scoter
- White-winged Scoter
- Black Scoter
- Long-tailed Duck
- Bufflehead
- Common Goldeneye
- Barrow's Goldeneye
- Hooded Merganser
- Common Merganser
- Red-breasted Merganser

Waterbirds

- Red-throated Loon
- Arctic Loon
- Pacific Loon
- Common Loon
- Yellow-billed Loon - Restricted opportunity only in the North Slope region - See regional regulations
- Horned Grebe
- Red-necked Grebe

Shorebirds

- Black-bellied Plover
- Common Ringed Plover
- Black Oystercatcher
- Greater Yellowlegs
- Lesser Yellowlegs
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Ruddy Turnstone
- Long-billed Dowitcher
- Bar-tailed Godwit
- Semipalmated Sandpiper
- Western Sandpiper
- Least Sandpiper
- Baird's Sandpiper
- Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
- Dunlin
- Wilson's Snipe
- Red Phalarope
- Red-necked phalarope

Seabirds

•Northern Fulmar
•Double-crested Cormorant
•Pelagic Cormorant
•Pomarine Jaeger
•Parasitic Jaeger
•Long-tailed Jaeger
•Bonaparte's Gull
•Mew Gull
•Herring Gull
•Slaty-backed Gull
•Glaucous-winged Gull
•Glaucous Gull
•Sabine's Gull
•Black-legged Kittiwake
•Red-legged Kittiwake
•Ivory Gull
•Arctic Tern
•Aleutian Tern
•Common Murre
•Thick-billed Murre
•Black Guillemot
•Pigeon Guillemot
•Cassin's Auklet
•Parakeet Auklet
•Least Auklet
•Whiskered Auklet
•Crested Auklet
•Rhinoceros Auklet
•Horned Puffin
•Tufted Puffin

Cranes

•Sandhill Crane

Owls

•Great Horned Owl
•Snowy Owl

Legislative History

As early as 1916, Migratory Bird Treaties with Canada and Mexico failed to recognize Alaska's traditional spring/summer subsistence harvest. After years of negotiations, the treaties were amended in 1997 to recognize this customary and traditional harvest. The Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council was created, which included representatives from the Alaska Native community, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service acting as equal partners. The Council's primary purpose is to develop recommendations for the subsistence migratory bird harvest regulations. Eleven regional management bodies were created to provide local input to the Council on the bird harvest list, regional season dates, methods and means and other annual regulatory recommendations. Additional information on the Migratory Bird Treaties, the Council, harvest surveys, press releases and hunter bulletins can be found at: http://alaska.fws.gov/ambcc/index.htm

Definitions

Eligible person means a permanent resident of an included village within a subsistence harvest area.

Immediate family means spouse, children, parents, grandchildren, grandparents, and siblings.

Game Management Unit, also referred to as Unit, means 1 of the 26 geographical areas listed in the codified State of Alaska hunting and trapping regulations and on maps of the Alaska State Game Management Units.

Non-wasteful taking means making a reasonable effort to retrieve all birds killed or wounded, and retaining such birds in possession from the place where taken to the hunter's permanent or temporary place of residence, or to the location where the birds will be consumed or preserved for food.

Permanent resident means any person whose primary, permanent home for the previous 12 months was within a subsistence harvest area in Alaska. Whenever absent from this primary permanent home, the person has the intention of returning to it. Factors demonstrating a person's primary, permanent home may include: the address on your Alaska Permanent Fund application; an Alaska driver's license or hunting license; voter registration; location of residences owned, rented or leased residence of spouse, minor children or dependents; tax documents; not claiming residence in another location for any purpose; or membership of a tribe in a subsistence harvest area.

Seabirds refers to all bird species within the families Alcidae, Laridae, Procellariidae, and Phalacrocoracidae (in general: gulls, kittiwakes, jaegers, murres, puffins, auklets, fulmars and cormorants).

Shorebirds refers to all bird species within the families Charadriidae, Haematopodidae, and Scolopacidae (in general: sandpipers, plovers, oystercatchers, dunlin, godwits, turnstones, knots, and phalaropes).

Subsistence means the customary and traditional harvest or use of migratory birds and their eggs by eligible users for their own nutritional and other essential needs.

Subsistence harvest areas encompass customary and traditional hunting areas or villages in Alaska that qualify for a spring or summer subsistence harvest of migratory birds.

T**axidermy** refers to birds preserved and mounted in life-like representations. Taxidermy does not include preserving bird parts to be integrated into traditional arts and crafts, such as use of skin or feathers for the making of clothing or ceremonial fans.

Waterfowl refers to all species within the family Anatidae (in general: ducks, geese, swans).

Village (or Community) is defined as a permanent settlement with one or more year-round residents.

H5N1 Virus (Bird Flu)

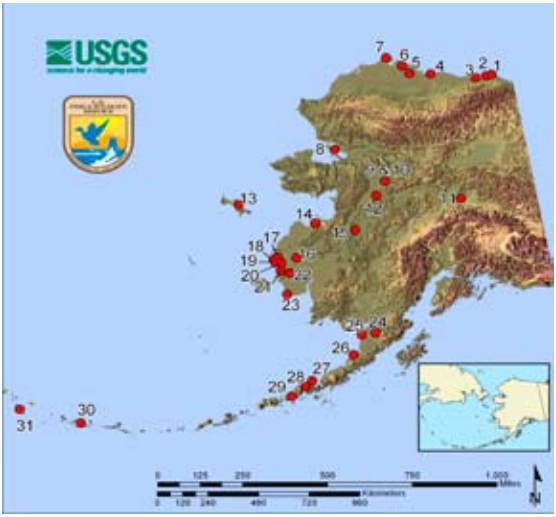
What is bird flu?

"Bird Flu" is a general term for avian influenza viruses that occur naturally in birds with most types not harming birds or people. The highly pathogenic H5N1 strain however, is a very serious type of bird virus that has been deadly to domestic birds. Infected birds can pass it to other birds – including wild migrating birds. H5N1 began to spread in Southeast Asia where a small number of people caught it from close contact with heavily infected poultry. It is now spreading to birds in many countries, but has not yet been found in Alaska or North America.

Do we have highly pathogenic H5N1 bird flu in Alaska?

No. FWS and their partner agencies collected and tested almost 11,600 samples for avian influenza from live caught and subsistence harvested birds in 2008. The samples were collected from over 87 species of wild birds and tested for avian influenza viruses. None of the samples tested positive for H5N1. Low pathogenic avian influenza was found in 10 species of wild birds or <1% of the samples. Over 3,840 of the samples came from subsistence harvest birds and about <1% of these samples did have some type of avian influenza. These low pathogenic forms of avian influenza are natural and do not pose a significant risk to people if safe and clean hunting and preparation practices are followed.

Sampling locations of the 2008 avian influenza early detection effort in Alaska are illustrated in the map. Sampling efforts in 2009 will focus on the same geographic regions. The tesing of birds will resume this spring. You notice numerous people testing live birds and subsistence caught birds. Please cooperate in any way requested and feel free to ask questions. Rural subsistence users would likely be the first to notice sick or dying wild birds, so please help our monitoring effort by reporting any of these observations by calling toll-free 1-866-5BRDFLU (1-866-527-3358).



H5N1 Virus (Bird Flu)

Can we get sick from the birds we hunt and eat?

No one has been infected with the H5N1 strain from eating properly cooked wild birds. However, wildlife have many kinds of influenzas and other diseases and most are spread mainly through skin contact or ingestion. So in general, hunters and other people who handle wildlife should always try to avoid direct contact with any body fluids by handling animals cleanly, cooking what they eat, and following the guidelines below.

What are the handling precautions for wild birds?

Even though there is a very low risk of getting the current H5N1 strain, you still should practice good handling procedures while hunting or gathering eggs to stay safe. We can avoid this and other viruses by following the guidelines below—use clean hunting habits, wash eggs, and cook the foods we get from birds.

— Don't handle birds that appear sick or you find dead.

— Use rubber gloves when cleaning birds.

— Don't eat, drink or smoke while cleaning birds; keep dirty hands away from your face and mouth.

— Wash your hands with soap and water, alcohol wipes, or gel after cleaning birds.

— Clean all tools and surfaces with hot soapy water first, then disinfect using water mixed with 10% chlorine bleach.

— Keep dead birds cool, clean and dry.

— Cook your eggs and birds thoroughly (165°F) or until body juices run clear.

Contact Information

If you find dead or sick wild birds, and no cause is obvious, such as hitting a power line or building, call toll-free 1-866-5BRDFLU (1-866-527-3358). Please note the location, species of bird, and the date and time that you found them. Do not handle any sick or dead birds you find.

Final Note: the avian influenza information will continue to be updated as needed. See: http://alaska.fws.gov/media/avian_influenza/index.htm for these updates and reports from past sampling.