

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Migratory Bird Management, Region 7 Alaska

Migratory Bird Joint Ventures
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 15.637

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number: **F16AS00330**

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: September 26, 2016; 5:00PM Alaska Standard Time

Notice of Funding Opportunity

I. Description of Funding Opportunity

The Sea Duck Joint Venture (SDJV) is a conservation partnership under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. Its mission is to promote the conservation of all North American sea ducks through partnerships by providing greater knowledge and understanding for effective management. The SDJV has evolved from a broad-based science program to a more focused program intended to provide information most needed by managers to make informed decisions about sea duck management and conservation. The program's overall strategies and priorities are outlined in a strategic plan and an implementation plan and may be found at <http://seaduckjv.org/>. The SDJV is coordinated and administered by the USFWS. Funding is being made available to the SDJV through U.S. Congressional appropriations and some of this funding is used to address priority science needs of the SDJV. This funding opportunity is made under the authority of Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956; 16 U.S.C. 742.

The SDJV will accept proposals for the following priority science needs in FY2017:

1. Science Need: Develop or refine techniques to estimate detection probabilities, misidentification rates, and count biases during aerial sea duck surveys.

Background: Ongoing efforts that employ aerial platforms to survey sea ducks throughout their annual cycle have not adequately quantified sources of bias due to observation challenges. We do not have estimates of the number of birds missed on transects (due to detection or availability bias), the accuracy of our counts or species identification, or how group size influences enumeration or detection. As a result, we do not know if changes in abundance over time reflect actual changes in population abundance or changes in detection rates and other sources of bias. Visibility and detection can vary due to observer ability, environmental condition (wind, glare, swell, wave, etc.), habitat type, sampling platform (aircraft type), altitude and speed, and so on. Recent research on marine bird detection from boats indicates that, even within 150 m of the transect line in relatively calm conditions, anywhere between 10 and 75% of bird groups on the water are not detected depending on species, year and observer (e.g., Ronconi and Burger 2009). Fortunately, new methods have been developed to address detection estimation and to include covariates to minimize heterogeneity in detection probability (e.g., Thompson 2002). Advances in imaging technology are also providing tools to estimate wildlife abundance from aerial surveys (Hedley et al. 2007, Mellor and Maher, 2008, Shelden et al. 2008, Burt, et al. 2009,

Thaxter and Burton, 2009). Recent SDJV funded studies have utilized both distance sampling (Gilliland et al.; <http://seaduckjv.org/pdf/studies/pr115.pdf>) and photo methods (Badzinski et al.; <http://seaduckjv.org/pdf/studies/pr82.pdf>, Evenson & Silverman, ongoing) to explore these sources of bias, but significant work remains. There is a particular need for an assessment of identification probabilities for the three scoter species, as changes in probability of identification, or misidentification, could have important consequences for measuring the distribution and abundance of the individual species.

Desired Product: The SDJV would like to encourage and support research that (1) determines the relative direction and magnitude of survey bias due to misidentification, detection, and counting errors, as well as the covariates that affect these biases; (2) estimate these effects to allow for fixed correction factors, and (3) develops survey methods for survey and observer specific correction; this is needed for surveys conducted at all times of year and for all species, with a particular need for winter surveys of scoters, long-tailed duck, and common eider.

2. Science need: Support for the Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey WBPBS review including analyzing data with respect to reallocation of survey effort

The Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey (WBPBS), conducted annually by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), is the primary monitoring program for population abundance of waterfowl, and is a critical component in harvest regulation setting in both the U.S. and Canada. WBPBS data also have an important role in guiding internationally-coordinated habitat conservation efforts under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. But, the WBPBS does not cover the breeding ranges of all North American waterfowl and it is not optimally timed for some species, including most sea ducks.

Since the last major survey review in 1995, there have been substantial changes in: (i) the frameworks for managing and conserving waterfowl in the U.S. and Canada; (ii) the status of a number of waterfowl populations; and (iii) the technology used to conduct the survey. As a result, the FWS and CWS have committed to a comprehensive review of the survey. One critical component of this review is an analysis of current coverage relative to new information on the distribution and abundance of waterfowl outside the survey area, and consideration of reallocation of survey effort and timing to expand the usefulness of the survey for monitoring northern nesting species.

3. Science Need: Develop and/or evaluate methods for efficiently automating counts of birds in aerial photographs of large flocks, including birds with varying distribution and density patterns, and uniform vs dimorphic plumages

Background: Surveys of some waterfowl species have been increasingly relying on photographic techniques to obtain more accurate indices of abundance. Such surveys often result in large numbers of photographs in which birds must be counted, often manually or with the use of counting software such as Photoshop, which is labor intensive, slow, and costly. Computer-automating counts in photographs would reduce cost and time commitments, but previous efforts have met with varying success. Variation in plumage patterns, flock density, background, shadows, sea state, lighting, flying versus standing/swimming birds, and other factors have necessitated different approaches to different species and environmental contexts (AirTech UAV Solutions 2016, Badzinski et al 2013, Cunningham et al. 1996, Bajzak and Piatt 1990). Sea ducks are particularly challenging because sea duck species are dimorphic (i.e., males are mostly

or partly white, with females and subadults mostly brown) and occur in large flocks during the nonbreeding season when many surveys occur.

Desired Product: The Sea Duck Joint Venture is interested in methods or software for counting birds in flocks that can be applied to a variety of species and survey (photographic) conditions. A suitable method would provide high correlation between automated counts and manual counts. The project may involve the evaluation or use of existing software, or new software that would be available for use by other researchers. Given the possibility that one software package will not meet the needs for all image scenarios, we would entertain an approach wherein different software packages are compared and contrasted and recommendations are made, possibly by species or situational grouping (e.g., dense dimorphic flocks versus scattered birds with uniform plumage), and a cost-benefit analysis provided, that allows users to estimate relative time requirements and cost factors (e.g., development of scripts, photo processing time versus time for manual counting).

A library of aerial photos depicting various species, plumages, distributions, and lighting situations has been created at <http://seaduckjv.org/seaduckflockphotos> to provide applicants with a sense of the diversity of situations encountered during sea duck surveys. Numbers of birds in many of these photos have already been counted manually. Additional photos can be provided upon request.

Literature Cited

AirTech UAV Solutions. 2016. Assessment of the feasibility and prospects of using computer-automated analysis to count Canadian Arctic breeding lesser snow geese in aerial imagery. Report for Canadian Wildlife Service.

Bazinski, S. 2013. James and Hudson Bays molting black scoter survey. Progress report to Sea Duck Joint Venture. Available at <http://seaduckjv.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/SDJV-PR82-Badzinski-annrpt-FY13.pdf>.

Cunningham, D. J., W. H. Anderson, and R. M. Anthony. 1996. An image-processing program for automated counting. Wildlife Society Bulletin 24:345-346.

Bajzak, D. and J. F. Piatt. 1990. Computer-aided procedure for counting waterfowl on aerial photographs. Wildlife Society Bulletin 18:125-129.

4. **Science Need: Determine population monitoring and information needs for management and conservation of sea ducks on the Great Lakes.**

Background: Sea duck use of the Great Lakes, particularly the Lower Great Lakes, during spring migration, fall migration and winter has increased considerably over the past few decades. In general, there is limited information about sea duck abundance and distribution and limited research for this group of waterfowl in the Great Lakes region. There are several major obvious concerns for sea ducks in this region, including potential for offshore wind farms, contaminant-related issues due to shipping and industrialization, disease (Botulism Type E) outbreaks that may require at least some baseline knowledge about seasonal abundances and distributions of sea

ducks on the Great Lakes. There has been limited exchange of information about conservation of sea ducks among the US and Canadian agencies that share responsibility for management of migratory birds in the Great Lakes region. Specifically, there has been limited dialogue about identifying the overarching and agency-specific current and future potential threats or challenges for sea duck management and conservation, sharing information among jurisdictions about past and current population monitoring activities, identifying major information gaps, research needs and impediments for management or conservation action. Identifying these issues would help the SDJV direct effort and funds toward priority research, monitoring, habitat and harvest-related needs in this region.

Desired Product: The SDJV is interested in determining what monitoring programs currently are being conducted in the Great Lakes region that provide information on abundance and distribution of sea ducks as well as identifying major information gaps that need to be addressed in order to advance and meet duck-related management and conservation objectives within and among jurisdictions.

One product that would be beneficial would be a comprehensive list and relevant metadata for each survey that document sea duck abundance and distribution that are currently underway by various jurisdictions in the Great Lakes Region. The survey summary would at a minimum include the survey title, geographic scope, responsible organization(s), contact info for survey lead(s), start/end years, survey season(s), periodicity (annual, 3-yr interval, etc.), target/focal species, target habitat(s), survey platform(s), along with brief description of methodology / survey protocols, type(s) of data collected and use of data including a map of surveyed areas and bird distribution by species. Interested parties should contact state agencies, federal agencies, non-government organizations in the US and Canada that have jurisdiction or involvement in the Great Lakes region to solicit information required to produce a report, which essentially would be a compilation of all existing population monitoring metadata. Potential contacts should include, but are not limited to: US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Geological Survey, Great Lakes Commission, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Pennsylvania Game Commission, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Canadian Wildlife Service, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Biodiversity Research Institute, Bird Studies Canada, Long Point Waterfowl, Ducks Unlimited Inc., Ducks Unlimited Canada, Delta Waterfowl, Winous Point Marsh Conservancy, Michigan Natural Features Institute, Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory and The Nature Conservancy.

Another product that would be beneficial would be a synthesis of agency views on current threats or challenges faced by sea ducks, major information gaps, research needs, monitoring (population, habitat, harvest-related) needs, challenges / impediments for progressing sea duck management / conservation. Interested parties could create a questionnaire / survey that asks for information stated above from individuals responsible for sea duck management / conservation representing various agencies in the Great Lakes region. Alternatively, or maybe additionally, interested parties would convene and facilitate a workshop / meeting, inviting individuals responsible for sea duck issues from various organizations, to open a dialogue and foster / guide discussion around the above stated issues with the end product being a report summarizing major themes and messages and a potential path forward for advancing sea duck management and conservation in the region.

Applicants should clearly indicate which of the above products they intend to pursue and include all costs associated with each. Assume that, if a workshop is planned, partner agencies would provide travel costs for their attendees.

5. Science Need: Evaluate and modify veterinary and/or husbandry techniques to improve post-release survival of sea ducks, particularly surf scoter, white-winged scoter, and long-tailed duck, marked with implantable transmitters.

Background: Our ability to manage and conserve North American sea ducks is largely dependent on being able to delineate demographically or spatially independent sub-units. Satellite telemetry is the primary tool currently being used in population delineation. Information from satellite telemetry studies is important for understanding basic population structure, which can be used to inform development of monitoring surveys, assess harvest potential, and identify important seasonal habitats. For sea ducks, transmitters are surgically implanted into the body cavity with a percutaneous antenna exiting the lower back.

While satellite telemetry has proven extremely valuable in the study of sea ducks, it has several drawbacks. First, transmitters and data acquisition are costly. Second, short-term post-marking mortality of birds marked with satellite transmitters has been relatively high (20-70%) for some species (most notably scoters and long-tailed ducks) and capture events. Causes of mortality after birds are released are nearly always impossible to determine, but may be related to stress associated with capture and marking, behavioral changes after marking, greater susceptibility to predation, hypothermia, or other factors. Attempts to analyze survival data and possible causes of mortality from previous markings have been hindered due to differences in species, seasons, age and sex, surgical techniques, and husbandry procedures that confound comparisons among studies. Thus, we can only speculate on potential causes of mortality. We are interested in studies that would investigate direct or indirect causes of mortality and/or, ideally, identify practical techniques to improve post-release survival of wild birds.

Desired Product: The SDJV is interested in studies or experiments on surgical techniques for implantation of transmitters in sea ducks, pre- or post-operative husbandry procedures, or physiological studies that will provide insights into causes of mortality and result in practical recommendations for improving survival of marked wild sea ducks. Studies focused on surf scoter, white-winged scoter, or long-tailed duck would be of most interest to the SDJV because these are all species of high conservation concern, have exhibited relatively poor survival after marking, and will be subjects of additional satellite telemetry over the next few years. Proposed studies may be either lab- or field-based, and may be conducted on captive or wild birds. Sample sizes should be adequate to ensure statistical rigor. Proposed studies should evaluate methodologies that are practical in field situations, recognizing that studies of wild sea ducks are often conducted under relatively primitive conditions in adverse environments.

We are particularly interested in a study evaluating the use and effectiveness of the sedative midazolam to reduce stress and improve post-release survival of sea ducks marked with transmitters. This drug was administered intra-nasally during a capture event in Quebec in 2013 using adult female surf scoters, and preliminary analyses suggest that survival to 60 days post-marking was significantly higher for birds treated with midazolam than for those treated with saline. We would like to repeat this experiment on scoters or long-tailed ducks using injectable

midazolam (breast muscle) in a field setting. Complementary field or lab-based experiments would also be considered, for example, evaluating the stress response (e.g., corticosteroid levels or body temperature) of sea ducks treated with midazolam versus controls, or evaluating dosage considerations for wild-caught ducks.

6. Science Need: Demonstrate the spatial resolution of stable isotope analysis of sea duck feather samples to determine breeding and molting areas in the absence of reference samples, particularly for scoters and long-tailed ducks.

Background: For years, SDJV partners have been opportunistically collecting feathers from captured sea ducks, and more recently from harvested birds, to enable stable isotope (SI) analyses as an alternative to costly satellite telemetry studies, or for populations where satellite telemetry is not practical. This method has been shown to accurately identify wintering locations from feathers collected on breeding grounds for species such as king eider (Oppel and Powell 2008), but has not yet been demonstrated to be able to identify breeding areas of sea ducks from samples collected on wintering areas, particularly on a scale useful to managers. The utility of SIs to identify breeding or molting areas is uncertain, in part because known-location reference samples are not available and difficult to obtain from most remote, high latitude breeding and molting areas. However, reference samples of known origin may not be critical if using environmentally derived isotopic references (e.g., rainfall). A study using existing feather samples collected from winter-caught or sport-harvested birds could provide insights into the spatial resolution and thus utility of the technique for assigning birds to specific source locations, and could evaluate the need to obtain reference samples. For example, can samples be assigned only to eastern versus western North American breeding areas, or can samples be assigned to more specific geographic locations with some confidence limits (e.g., +/- 200 km)? This is particularly important for sea duck species that breed over a large geographic area such as scoter species and long-tailed ducks. The SDJV currently has wing feather samples collected from both young (<1 yr old) and adult (>1 yr old) sea ducks from sport harvest parts collection surveys (BLSC = 66; SUSC = 124; WWSC = 59; LTDU = 65) and from locations in the Atlantic and Pacific flyways where sea ducks were live-captured during winter or early spring. These feather samples are available for a pilot study. We are interested in assigning samples from young birds to breeding areas, and from adult birds to molting areas, reflecting when these feathers were grown for each age class. This information is important not only for understanding basic population delineation, but also for improving our understanding of harvest potential and geographic composition of the harvest for these species.

Desired Product: The SDJV is interested in a demonstration of how, and at what scale, SI analysis can predict breeding and molting locations of wintering sea ducks *in the absence of reference samples*. The utility of a desired product would be greatly increased at a smaller, regional, scale than at a continental (e.g., east vs west) scale. Studies focused on black scoter, surf scoter, white-winged scoter, or long-tailed duck would be of most interest to the SDJV and the product would be of greater utility using at least two species in the analyses. The results of this work will be used to link wintering areas to important breeding and molting areas.

7. Science Need: Determine if recruitment is a problem for the American Common Eider (ACOEI) and if so, identify the limitations. This broad topic includes elements that could

affect fecundity (e.g. breeding propensity, clutch size, nest success, hatching success), duckling survival (direct: duckling predation; indirect: habitat, disease, etc.), etc.

Background: The recent sea duck harvest potential assessment, completed by the Sea Duck Joint Venture (SDJV) Harvest Management subcommittee, indicated that uncertainty surrounding comparisons of average harvest potential (allowable harvest) and contemporary harvest levels (observed harvest) for ACOEI is most influenced by adult survival, as well as several components of fecundity including duckling survival, the ratio of juvenile to adult female wings in samples submitted by hunters (i.e., age ratio), hatching success and clutch size. Of these, substantial uncertainty and wide probability distributions are associated with age ratio, duckling survival, and hatching success, and they are categorized as the highest priorities for research or monitoring for this subspecies. The harvest assessment was based on current knowledge of demographic parameters for this subspecies (Gulf of Maine, Maritimes, and the St. Lawrence Estuary in Quebec), suggesting a very limited growth potential for this segment of the ACOEI population and a high potential for overharvest of birds that originate from this portion of their breeding range. Furthermore, some estimates may not be representative of conditions in other areas. Studies directed toward quantifying and reducing uncertainty in recruitment parameters, determining spatial and temporal variation of recruitment, and describing factors affecting recruitment would be of the most use. Results would inform a more robust population model and harvest potential assessment which would greatly help the SDJV identify the most effective conservation and management efforts for the ACOEI.

Desired Products: The SDJV will consider proposals to investigate topics related to ACOEI productivity, with a goal of identifying management actions that would improve recruitment. Below are some avenues of research related with the science need stated above, but other ways of answering this need are welcome and will be considered. The SDJV is interested in studies that will: 1) determine and/or reduce uncertainty in key parameters relative to ACOEI fecundity; 2) provide estimates of duckling survival from different portions of the ACOEI range; 3) determine whether duckling survival is currently limiting population growth; 4) determine whether predator control or other management actions can improve duckling survival; 5) determine whether climate regime shifts in the Gulf of Maine and the Maritimes could account for the apparent low population growth potential in this portion of their breeding range. Applied research is desired; for example, researchers could control predators or human disturbance on various nesting islands and be able to monitor nesting and hatching success of female ACOEI and fledging success of ducklings. Studies at multiple sites, with greater potential applicability to other populations or colonies of nesting eiders, would be desirable.

8. Science Need: Determine whether sufficient population structure exists across the range of priority sea duck species to assess whether their populations should be managed as stocks or sub-populations, and ensure that research directed at reducing uncertainty in key demographic rates for population modeling efforts are applied at the appropriate geographic scales

Background: A recent assessment of the harvest potential of American common eiders (*Somateria mollissima dresseri*) and long-tailed Ducks (*Clangula hyemalis*), completed by the Sea Duck Joint Venture (SDJV) Harvest Management subcommittee, suggested that under current harvest policies and with our limited understanding of demographic information throughout the range of these species, there is a substantial risk of overharvest. For American common eiders, uncertainty surrounding demographic estimates of fecundity associated with

duckling survival and age ratio (juveniles per adult female wings submitted by hunters) were identified as having the greatest influence on the differences between allowable and observed harvest at a range-wide level. However, demographic rates may not be the same across the range of American common eiders; Maine & Nova Scotia eider populations are perceived to be decreasing, the Gulf of St. Lawrence population appears to be stable, and the Newfoundland population may be increasing. For long-tailed ducks, information on the genetic structure may help determine whether the Great Lakes wintering aggregation is distinct and separate from those wintering in the Atlantic and Pacific Flyways, and should therefore be managed as a distinct segment relative to harvest. Studies to determine the breeding origin of common eiders harvested in the U.S. and Canada based on country-specific harvest surveys may help reduce uncertainty in age ratios, and help evaluate whether differences in eider production and recruitment exist among different geographic areas (sub-populations). Such information will help support harvest management decision-making and future research to assist habitat & harvest managers in making decisions at the appropriate (and detectable) scales.

Desired Product: The SDJV will consider proposals that use molecular markers (microsatellite, mtDNA and/or single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs)) to probabilistically assign harvested birds to breeding areas or examine structure among wintering segments. A preference will be given to studies that address long-tailed ducks and American common eiders, although determining the genetic structure of other sea ducks to support management decisions and future demographic research is welcome. The SDJV is specifically interested in projects that; 1. Generate a multi-locus genetic database of breeding locations for the assignment of harvested birds, 2. Assign harvested birds from the U.S. and Canadian Parts Collection Survey to breeding localities based on their genetic signature, and 3. Examine genetic structure among harvested birds from the U.S. and Canadian Parts Collection Survey.

II. Federal Award Information

The SDJV expects to have up to \$180,000 available to support projects in FY2017. One or more awards may be issued in the form of Cooperative Agreements, Grants, or Intra-agency Agreements. One, multiple, or no awards may be made for each of the science needs identified in this Notice. Awards may range in amounts from \$5000 to \$100,000; most awards in previous years have been in the \$20,000 to \$40,000 range. We anticipate that notification of awards will occur in December 2016. Projects will be considered for multi-year funding up to 5 years, contingent on demonstration of progress and availability of funds. Awards may be made under this Notice to other federal agencies.

When a cooperative agreement award is made then substantial involvement on the part of the USFWS is required for the successful completion of the activities to be funded. USFWS involvement may include, but is not limited to, direct participation in the project, reviewing and approving one stage of work before another stage can begin, directing or redirecting the work because of interrelationships with other projects, reserving the right to halt an activity if detailed performance specifications are not met. Actual FWS substantial involvement would be determined for each project and final tasking will be determined before the official award is executed.

III. Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants: No restrictions; all potential applicants are eligible.

U.S. non-profit, non-governmental organizations **must** provide a copy of their Section 501(c)(3) or (4) status determination letter received from the Internal Revenue Service.

Applicants must ensure that activities occurring outside the United States are coordinated as necessary with appropriate U.S. and foreign government authorities and that any necessary licenses, permits, or approvals are obtained prior to undertaking proposed activities. The Service does not assume responsibility for recipient compliance with the laws and regulations of the country in which the work is to be conducted.

Federal law mandates that all entities applying for Federal financial assistance must have a valid Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number and have a current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM). See Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 25 for more information. Exemptions: The SAM registration requirement does not apply to individuals submitting an application on their own behalf and not on behalf of a company or other for-profit entity, state, local or Tribal government, academia or other type of organization.

Federal Award may not be made to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements additionally if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Service is ready to make the award, the Service may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

A. DUNS Registration

Request a DUNS number online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. U.S.-based entities may also request a DUNS number by telephone by calling the Dun & Bradstreet Government Customer Response Center, Monday – Friday, 7 AM to 8 PM CST at the following numbers:

U.S. and U.S Virgin Islands: 1-866-705-5711

Alaska and Puerto Rico: 1-800-234-3867 (Select Option 2, then Option 1)

For Hearing Impaired Customers Only call: 1-877-807-1679 (TTY Line)

Once assigned a DUNS number, entities are responsible for maintaining up-to-date information with Dun & Bradstreet.

B. Entity Registration in SAM

All applicants (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR §25.110(b) or (c) or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR §25.110(d) is required to:

- i. Be registered in SAM before submitting its application;
- ii. Provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and
- iii. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

Register in SAM online at <http://www.sam.gov/>. Once registered in SAM, entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least every 12 months from the date previously registered. Entities are strongly urged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure that their information is up to date and in synch with changes that may have been made to DUNS and IRS information. Foreign entities who wish to be paid directly to a United States bank account must enter and maintain valid and current banking information in SAM.

C. Excluded Entities

Applicant entities or their key project personnel identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits will not be considered for Federal funding, as applicable to the funding being requested under this Federal program.

D. Cost Sharing or Matching:

Cost sharing including in-kind costs is encouraged but is not required.

Applicants may attribute some or all of their allowable indirect costs as cost-share/match, however recipients may only charge to the Federal award the indirect costs calculated against the allowable direct costs charged to the Federal award. Recipients may not charge to the Federal award indirect costs calculated against: 1) any portion of the recipient's direct costs; or 2) any portion of the direct costs charged to any other Federal or non-Federal partner.

IV. Application Requirements

To be considered for funding under this funding opportunity, an application must contain:

A. Application for Federal Assistance form

A completed, signed and dated Application for Federal Assistance form. Individuals applying on their own (unrelated to any business or non-profit organization s/he may own or operate in his/her own name) must use the SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance-Individual Form (<http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=12>). All other applicants must use the SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance form (<http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>)

Do not include other Federal sources of funding, requested or approved, in the total entered in the "Federal" funding box on the Application for Federal Assistance form. Enter only the amount being requested under this program in the "Federal" funding box. Include any other Federal sources of funding in the total funding entered in the "Other" box.

B. Project Summary

Briefly summarize the project, in one page or less. Include the title of the project, geographic location, and a brief overview of the need for the project. Goal(s), objectives, specific project activities, anticipated outputs and outcomes can also be included in this section.

C. Project Narrative

- 1. Statement of Need:** Describe why this project is necessary (significance/value) and include supporting information. What new information will be generated by the study that you are proposing and how will it help solve the problem outlined in the Notice of Funding Opportunity? Provide some perspective about how your work will contribute to overall management or conservation of sea ducks or the species. Summarize previous or on-going efforts (of you/your organization, and other organizations or individuals) that are relevant to the proposed work. Explain the successes or failures of past efforts and how your proposed project builds on them. If you have received funding previously (from the Service or any other donor) for this specific project work or site, provide a summary of the funding, associated activities and products/outcomes.
- 2. Project Goals and Objectives:** State the long-term, overarching goal(s) of the project. Clearly state the objectives of the project. Objectives are the specific outcomes to be accomplished in order to reach the stated goal(s). The project objectives must be specific, measurable, and realistic (attainable within the project's proposed project period).

3. Project Activities, Methods and Timetable:

List the proposed project activities and describe how they relate to the stated objectives. Activities are the specific actions to be undertaken to fulfill the project objectives and reach the project goal(s). The proposed project activities narrative must be detailed enough for reviewers to make a clear connection between the activities and the proposed project costs. Specify sample sizes, and provide power analyses if applicable; describe specific statistical treatments intended to demonstrate success. For projects being conducted within the United States, the narrative must provide enough detail so that reviewers are able to determine project compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Provide a detailed description of the method(s) to be used to carry out each activity. Provide a timetable indicating roughly when activities or project milestones are to be accomplished. Include any resulting tables, spreadsheets or flow charts within the body of the project narrative (do not include as separate attachments). The timetable should not propose specific dates but instead group activities by month for each month over the entire proposed project period.

4. Stakeholder Coordination/Involvement:

As applicable, describe how you/your organization has coordinated with and involved other relevant organizations or individuals in planning the project, and detail if/how they will be involved in conducting project activities, disseminating project results and/or incorporating your results/products into their activities or if not applicable to your proposal please mark this is Not Applicable.

5. Project Monitoring and Evaluation: Detail the monitoring and evaluation plan for the project. Building on the stated project objectives, which must be specific and measurable, identify what you will measure (i.e., quantitative/quantifiable indicators) and how you will measure (i.e., methods, sample size, survey tools). Reference the stated project timetable (i.e., process indicators) and budget information (i.e., input indicators). Describe how and when the results of the project be made available to the management community, scientific community, or other stakeholders.

6. Description of Entities Undertaking the Project: Provide a brief description of the applicant organization and all participating entities and/or individuals. Identify which of the proposed activities each agency, organization, group, or individual is responsible for conducting or managing. Provide complete contact information for the individual within the organization that will oversee/manage the project activities on a day-to-day basis.

7. Sustainability: As applicable, describe which project activities will continue beyond the proposed project period, who will continue the work or act on the results achieved, and how and at what level you expect these future activities will be funded or if not applicable to your proposal please mark this is Not Applicable.

8. Literature Cited: if not applicable to your proposal please mark this is Not Applicable.

9. Map of Project Area: Map should clearly delineate the project area and be large enough to be legible. Label any sites referenced in the project narrative or if not applicable to your proposal please mark this is Not Applicable.

10. Statement(s) Regarding Single Audit Reporting: Input the applicable statement from Section F. Single Audit Reporting Statements of this document.

D. Budget Form

Complete the **Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF 424A)** or **Budget Information for Construction Programs (SF 424C) form**. Use the SF 424A if your project does not include construction and the SF 424C if the project includes construction or land acquisition. The budget forms are available on the Internet at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>. When developing your budget, keep in mind that financial assistance awards and subawards are subject to the Federal cost principles in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, as applicable to the recipient organization type.

Links to the full text of the Federal cost principles are available on the Internet at <http://www.ecfr.gov/>.

Multiple Federal Funding Sources: If the project budget includes multiple Federal funding sources, you must show the funds being requested from this Federal program *separately* from any other requested/secured Federal sources of funding on the budget form. For example, enter the funds being requested from this Federal program in the first row of the Budget Summary section of the form and then enter funding related to other Federal programs in the subsequent row(s). Be sure to enter each Federal program's CFDA number in the corresponding fields on the form. The CFDA number for this Federal program appears on the first page of this funding opportunity.

E. Budget Justification

In a separate narrative titled "**Budget Justification**", explain and justify all requested budget items/costs. Detail how the SF 424 Budget Object Class Category totals were determined and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities. For personnel salary costs, include the base-line salary figures and the estimates of time (as percentages) to be directly charged to the project. Describe any item that under the applicable Federal cost principles requires the Service's approval and estimate its cost.

If Federally-funded equipment will be used for the project, provide a list of that equipment including the Federal funding source. Provide a Budget Justification for the base year and all subsequent years for which the project is proposed.

Required Indirect Cost Statement: All applicants except individuals applying for funds separate from a business or non-profit organization he/she may operate **must** include in the budget justification narrative one of the following statements and attach to their application any required documentation identified in the applicable statement:

"We are:

1. A U.S. state or local government entity receiving more than \$35 million in direct Federal funding each year with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We submit our indirect cost rate proposals to our cognizant agency. A copy of our most recently approved rate agreement/certification is attached.
2. A U.S. state or local government entity receiving less than \$35 million in direct Federal funding with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We are required to prepare and retain for audit an indirect cost rate proposal and related documentation to support those costs.
3. A [insert your organization type; U.S. states and local governments, please use one of the statements above or below] that has previously negotiated or currently has an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. A copy of our most recently approved rate agreement is attached.
4. A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our

cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. In the event an award is made, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award is made.

5. A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. However, in the event an award is made, we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat de minimus indirect cost rate of 10% of modified total direct costs as defined in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, section 200.68. We understand that the 10% de minimus rate will apply for the life of the award, including any future extensions for time, and that the rate cannot be changed even if we do establish an approved rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period
6. A [insert your organization type] that is submitting this proposal for consideration under the [insert either "Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit Program" or "Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Network"], which has a Department of the Interior-approved indirect cost rate cap of [insert program rate]. If we have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that we must apply this reduced rate against the same direct cost base as identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement. If we do not have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that the basis for direct costs will be the modified total direct cost base defined in 2 CFR 200.68 "Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)". We understand that we must request prior approval from the Service to use the MTDC base instead of the base identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement, and that Service approval of such a request will be based on: 1) a determination that our approved base is only a subset of the MTDC (such as salaries and wages); and 2) that use of the MTDC base will still result in a reduction of the total indirect costs to be charged to the award.
7. A [insert your organization type] that will charge all costs directly.

All applicants are hereby notified of the following:

- Recipients without an approved indirect cost rate are prohibited from charging indirect costs to a Federal award. Accepting the 10% *de minimus* rate as a condition of award is an approved rate.
- Failure to establish an approved rate during the award period renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs unallowable under the award.
- Only the indirect costs calculated against the Federal portion of the total direct costs may be charged to the Federal award. Recipients may not charge to their Service award any indirect costs calculated against the portion of total direct costs charged to themselves or charged to any other project partner, Federal and non-Federal alike.
- Recipients must have prior written approval from the Service to transfer unallowable indirect costs to amounts budgeted for direct costs or to satisfy cost-sharing or matching requirements under the award.
- Recipients are prohibited from shifting unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation."

Applicants who are individuals applying for funds separate from a business or non-profit organization he/she may operate are not eligible to charge indirect costs to their award. If you are an individual applying for funding, do not include any indirect costs in your proposed budget.

For more information on indirect cost rates, see the Service's **Indirect Costs and Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements** guidance document on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/grants/>.

Negotiating an Indirect Cost Rate with the Department of the Interior:

Entities that do not have a NICRA, must have an open, active Federal award before they can submit an indirect cost rate proposal to their cognizant agency. The Federal awarding agency that provides the largest amount of direct funding to your organization is your cognizant agency, unless otherwise assigned by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). If the Department of the Interior is your cognizant agency, your indirect cost rate will be negotiated by the Interior Business Center (IBC). For more information, contact the IBC at:

Indirect Cost Services
Acquisition Services Directorate, Interior Business Center
U.S. Department of the Interior
2180 Harvard Street, Suite 430
Sacramento, CA 95815
Phone: 916-566-7111
Email: ics@nbc.gov
Internet address: <http://www.aqd.nbc.gov/Services/ICS.aspx>

- F. Single Audit Reporting Statements:** As required in **Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 200, Subpart F, Audit Requirements**, all U.S. states, local governments, federally-recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending \$750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in a fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System.

All U.S. state, local government, federally-recognized Indian tribal government and non-profit applicants must provide a statement regarding if your organization was or was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the organization's most recently closed fiscal year. If required, state that the report is available on the Federal Audit Clearinghouse Single Audit Database website (<http://harvester.census.gov/sac/>) and provide the EIN under which that report was submitted.

See the following statements **and include all applicable statements at the end of the Project Narrative in number 10, titled: Statement(s) Regarding Single Audit Reporting**

Single Audit Report was required:

My organization was required to submit a Single Audit report last year. The reporting period covered was from (insert date) to (insert date). This report, filed under EIN #(insert EIN), is available on the Federal Audit Clearinghouse Single Audit Database website (<http://harvester.census.gov/sac/>) or will be by (insert date).

OR

Single Audit Report was not required:

My organization was not required to submit a Single Audit report last year.

G. Assurances

Include the appropriate signed and dated Assurances form available online at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>. Use the **Assurances for Construction Programs (SF 424D)** for construction and land acquisition projects. Use the **Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF 424B)** for all other types of projects. . Signing this form does not mean that all items on the form are applicable. The form contains language that states that some of the assurances may not be applicable to your organization and/or your project or program.

H. Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities:

Under Title 31 of the United States Code, Section 1352, an applicant or recipient must not use any federally appropriated funds (both annually appropriated and continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a grant or cooperative agreement award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is defined as influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress connection with the award. Submission of an application also represents the applicant's Certification Regarding Lobbying. If you/your organization have/has made or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with this project AND the project budget exceeds \$100,000, complete and submit the **SF LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities** form. See 2 CFR 200.245, Lobbying and 2 FR 200.415, Certifications, for additional information.

Application Checklist

(All applicants expect Federal Entities; Federal Entities see checklist below)

- DUNS Registration (see requirement in Section III Basic Eligibility Requirements, A Duns Registration)
- SAM active registration (see requirement in Section III Basic Eligibility Requirements, B Entity Registration in SAM)
- Evidence of non-profit status:** If a non-profit organization, a copy of their Section 501(c)(3) or (4) status determination letter received from the Internal Revenue Service.
- SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance:** A complete, signed and dated SF 424, SF 424-Mandatory, or SF 424- Individual form
- SF 424 Budget form:** A complete SF 424A or SF 424C Budget Information form
- SF 424 Assurances form:** Signed and dated SF 424B or SF 424D Assurances form
- Project summary**
- Project narrative**
- Timetable**
- Single Audit Reporting statement:** If a U.S. state, local government, federally-recognized Indian tribal government, or non-profit organization, statements regarding applicability of and compliance with 2 CFR 200, Subpart F, Audit Requirement
- Budget justification**
- Federally-funded equipment list:** If Federally-funded equipment will be used for the project, a list of that equipment
- NICRA:** When applicable, a copy of the organization's current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
- Conflict of Interest Disclosures:** When applicable, written notification of any actual or potential conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of this award.
- SF LLL form:** If applicable, completed SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form

Federal Applicant Checklist (Federal Agency Applicants only)

- Project Summary
- Conflict of Interest Disclosures: When applicable, written notification of any actual or potential conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of this award.

- Project Narrative
- Timetable
- Budget Justification and a detailed budget Table
- Description of key personnel qualifications, if applicable
- Federally funded equipment, if applicable

Failure to provide complete information may cause delays, postponement, or rejection of the application.

V. Submission Instructions

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: All application materials must be received by September 26, 2016; 5:00 PM Alaska Standard Time. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure confirmation of delivery by any means (e.g., electronic, mail, or personal/courier delivery). If application is sent by email, please request an email confirmation from Service Project Officer acknowledging receipt of application. Applications received after that date will be considered only under extraordinary circumstances.

Intergovernmental Review: Before submitting an application, **U.S. state and local government** applicants should visit the following website (http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc/) to determine whether their application is subject to the state intergovernmental review process under Executive Order (E.O.) 12372 "Intergovernmental review of Federal Programs." E.O. 12372 was issued to foster the intergovernmental partnership and strengthen federalism by relying on state and local processes for the coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance and direct Federal development. The E.O. allows each state to designate an entity to perform this function. The official list of designated entities is posted on the website. Contact your state's designated entity for more information on the process the state requires to be followed when applying for assistance. States that do not have a designated entity listed on the website have chosen not to participate in the review process.

Funding Restrictions: Pre-award costs up to 90 days prior to award date will be authorized.

Other Submission Requirements:

Download the Application Package linked to this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov to begin the application process. Downloading and saving the Application Package to your computer makes the required government-wide standard forms fillable and printable. Completed applications may be submitted by mail, by email, electronically through Grants.gov, or as otherwise described in the Grants.gov funding opportunity. Please select **ONE** of the submission options:

To submit an application by mail:

Number all pages of your printed application. Mail one, single-sided, unbound copy (do not staple or otherwise permanently bind pages) of your complete application to the Service program point of contact identified in the Grants.gov funding opportunity.

The required SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance and Assurances forms and any other required standard forms **MUST** be signed by your organization's authorized official. The Signature and Date fields on the standard forms downloaded from Grants.gov are pre-populated with the text "Completed by Grants.gov upon submission" or "Completed on submission to Grants.gov". **Remove this text (manually or digitally) before signing the forms.**

To submit an application by e-mail:

Format all of your documents to print on Letter size (8 ½" x 11") paper. Format all pages to display and print page numbers. Scanned documents should be scanned in Letter format, as black and white images

only. Where possible, save scanned documents in .pdf format. E-mail your application to the Service program point of contact identified in the Grants.gov funding opportunity.

The required SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance and Assurances forms and any other required standard forms MUST be signed by your organization’s authorized official. The Signature and Date fields on the standard forms downloaded from Grants.gov are pre-populated with the text “Completed by Grants.gov upon submission” or “Completed on submission to Grants.gov”. Remove this text (manually or digitally) before signing the forms.

To submit an application through Grants.gov:

Go to the Grants.gov Apply for Grants page (http://www07.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp) for an overview of the process to apply through Grants.gov. You/your organization must complete the Grants.gov registration process before submitting an application through Grants.gov. Registration can take between three to five business days, or as long as two weeks if all steps are not completed in a timely manner.

Important note on Grants.gov application attachment file names: Please do not assign application attachments file names longer than 20 characters, including spaces. Assigning file names longer than 20 characters will create issues in the automatic interface between Grants.gov and the Service’s financial assistance management system.

Federal Agency Applicants may submit proposal for funding under this NOFO as authorized under the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956; 16 U.S.C. 742 and must submit their proposals directly to the granting agency point of contact identified in Section VIII. Agency Contacts. Submission must be either by mail or email as described above (*Federal agencies will be rated using the same merit review process as all other applicants*).

NOTE: *In the event a Fish and Wildlife Service Program submits a proposal and is awarded funding, if they intend to issue a subaward or contract, they MUST go through the applicable standard procurement process. They CANNOT use this announcement for the purpose of awarding a separate contract or financial assistance award!*

VI. Application Review

Criteria: To be considered for funding, applications must address one of the science needs identified in this Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria
Evaluation Criteria and Relative Category Weights, in descending order of importance:
1) Relation to Priorities Identified in NOFO (WEIGHT = 6)
a) Does the proposal clearly address a priority or information need(s) identified in the NOFO?
b) Background and justification
- is the importance to management or conservation of sea ducks clearly articulated?
- will the results be broadly applicable? (i.e., appropriate geographic scale and/or results applicable across species)
c) Objectives
- are objectives clear and realistically achievable?
2) Methodology and Approach (WEIGHT =5)

a) Methodology and approach
-are the methods or general approach appropriate?
-if applicable, are sample sizes adequate?
-is the project timeline realistic?
-is the study being conducted in an appropriate location(s)?
b) What is the likelihood of success for this project and what are the risks?
- do PIs have a proven track record of successful investigations?
c) How will the results of the project be made available to the management community, scientific community, or other stakeholders?
-will results be communicated effectively and in a timely manner?
3) Funding (WEIGHT =3)
a) Is the study cost effective/ logistically efficient?
b) Are cost estimates reasonable and allowable?
c) Will the project provide good return on investment?
4) Other Considerations (WEIGHT =3)
a) Does the study significantly complement other ongoing studies (i.e., is there an added value to the study)?
b) Does the study involve multiple partners?
c) Will this study bring on new partners to the SDJV?
d) Is this a one-time or unique opportunity?

Evaluation Category Score	Definition of Score
1	meets none or few criteria in Evaluation Category
2	meets most criteria in Evaluation Category, but exceptional at none
3	meets most criteria in Evaluation Category, but exceptional in few
4	meets all criteria in Evaluation Category, and exceptional for several
5	meets all criteria in Evaluation Category at consistently high level

The sum of weighted scores for the four evaluation categories will equal the total score.

Review and Selection Process:

Applications will be reviewed and numerically scored by up to 16 members of the SDJV Continental Technical Team. Applications will be scored based on announced criteria. The Continental Technical Team will make recommendations for project funding to the SDJV Management Board, which will make final decisions on funding. Application selection will be based upon scores, available funding, and best overall value to the Service and Sea Duck Joint Venture program. Proposals for multi-year funding will be considered but funding in out-years will be conditional on acceptable performance and availability of future funds and appropriations.

Prior to participating in any review or evaluation process, all staff and peer reviewers, evaluators, panel members, and advisors must complete applicable Conflict of Interest form; either Conflict of Interest FWS FA Source Selection form or Conflict of Interest Form Other than FWS FA Source Selection.

Risk Assessment:

As part of the review process, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is required in accordance with the Department of Interior Guidance (DIG 2011-03), to conduct a risk assessment prior to the award of a Financial Assistance Agreement or a revision to increase funding.. The requirement states that once a Fiscal Year (FY) each recipient, who will be awarded one or more grant or cooperative agreement award(s), will have a risk assessment conducted. The risk assessment will include, but is not limited to the following areas:

- Potential for Implementation problems
- Financial Management Systems and Funds Management Records
- Performance Track Record
- Staff Level and Key Qualifications
- Project Delivery Experience
- Award Administration and Reporting Compliance
- Single Audit Submissions and Results
- Other Factors that may Impact Risk Level

The results of the assessment will determine the appropriate level of monitoring activities that the Service will require for successful project/award completion. If you are selected for award under this NOFO, all applicable monitoring protocols will be incorporated into your Notice of Award Letter (NOAL).

VII. Federal Award Administration

Federal Award Notices: Following review, applicants may be requested to revise the project scope and/or budget before an award is made. You may receive an information notice of intent from the Service program Project Officer stating that your application has been selected for the intent to award, this is not the official Notice of Award. Successful applicants will receive written notice in the form of a notice of award document. Notices of award are typically sent to recipients by e-mail. If e-mail notification is unsuccessful, the documents will be sent by courier mail (e.g., FedEx, DHL or UPS). Award recipients are not required to sign/return the Notice of Award document. Acceptance of an award is defined as starting work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to, and as approved by, the Service. The notice of award document will include instructions specific to each recipient on how to request payment. If applicable, the instructions will detail any additional information/forms required and where to submit payment requests. Applicants whose projects are not selected for funding will receive written notice, most often by e-mail, within 30 days of the final review decision.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

- i. **Domestic Recipient Payments:** Prior to award, the Service program office will contact you/your organization to either enroll in the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) system or, if eligible, obtain approval from the Department of the Interior to be waived from using ASAP.

Domestic applicants subject to the SAM registration requirement (see Section III B.) who receive a waiver from receiving funds through ASAP must maintain current banking information in SAM. Domestic applicants exempt from the SAM registration requirement who receive a waiver from receiving funds through ASAP will be required to submit their banking information directly to the Service program. However, ***do NOT submit any banking information to the Service until it is requested from you by the Service program!***

Foreign Recipient Payments: Foreign recipients receiving funds to a bank outside of the United States will be paid electronically through U.S. Treasury's International Treasury Services (ITS) system.

Foreign recipients receiving funds electronically to a bank in the United States will be paid by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) through the Automated Clearing House network. Foreign recipients who wish to be paid to a bank account in the United States must enter and maintain current banking information in SAM (see Section III).

The Notice of Award document from the Service will include instructions specific to each recipient on how to request payment. If applicable, the instructions will detail any additional information/forms required and where to submit payment requests.

- ii. **Transmittal of Sensitive Data:** Recipients are responsible for ensuring any sensitive data being sent to the Service is protected during its transmission/delivery. The Service strongly recommends that recipients use the most secure transmission/delivery method available. The Service recommends the following digital transmission methods: secure digital faxing; encrypted emails; emailing a password protected zipped/compressed file attachment in one email followed by the password in a second email; or emailing a zipped/compressed file attachment. The Service strongly encourages recipients sending sensitive data in paper copy to use a courier mail service. Recipients may also contact their Service Project Officer and provide any sensitive data over the telephone.
- iii. **Award Terms and Conditions:** Acceptance of a financial assistance award (i.e., grant or cooperative agreement) from the Service carries with it the responsibility to be aware of and comply with the terms and conditions applicable to the award. Acceptance is defined as the start of work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to and approved by the Service and are subject to the terms and conditions incorporated into the notice of award either by direct citation or by reference to the following: Federal regulations; program legislation or regulation; and special award terms and conditions. The Federal regulations applicable to Service awards are available on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/grants/>. If you do not have access to the Internet and require a full text copy of the award terms and conditions, contact the Service point of contact identified in the Agency Contacts section below.
- iv. By submission of an application, the applicant represents that it does not require employees or contractors seeking to report fraud, waste, or abuse to sign internal confidentiality agreements or statements prohibiting or otherwise restricting such employees or contractors from lawfully reporting such waste, fraud, or abuse to a designated investigative or law enforcement representative of a Federal department or agency authorized to receive such information. Applicants out of compliance with this condition are ineligible to compete for or receive an award.

Recipient Reporting Requirements:

- i. **Financial and Performance Reports:** Interim financial reports and performance reports may be required. Interim reports will be required no more frequently than quarterly, and no less frequently than annually. A final financial report and a final performance report will be required and are due within 90 calendar days of the end date of the award. Performance reports must contain: 1) a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals and objectives of the award as detailed in the approved scope of work; 2) a description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and 3) any other pertinent information relevant to the project results.
- ii. **Significant Development Reports:** Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates that have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Service in writing as soon as the following types of conditions become known:

- Problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the Federal award. This disclosure must include a statement of any corrective action(s) taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation.
- Favorable developments that enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

The Service will specify in the notice of award document the reporting and reporting frequency applicable to the award.

iii. Conflict of Interest Disclosures:

The recipient must establish safeguards to prohibit its employees and subrecipients from using their positions for purposes that constitute or present the appearance of a personal or organizational conflict of interest. The recipient is responsible for notifying the Grants Officer in writing of any actual or potential conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of this award. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter which might place the recipient or its employees in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under the agreement and any other outside interests. Conflicts of interest may also include, but are not limited to, direct or indirect financial interests, close personal relationships, positions of trust in outside organizations, consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization, or decision-making affecting the award that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the recipient and/or recipient's employees and subrecipients in the matter.

The Grants Officer and the servicing Ethics Counselor will determine if a conflict of interest exists. If a conflict of interest exists, the Grants Officer will determine whether a mitigation plan is feasible. Mitigation plans must be approved by the Grants Officer in writing. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the government may be cause for termination of the award.

Failure to make required disclosures may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338; including suspension or debarment (see also 2 CFR part 180).

iv. Other Mandatory Disclosures:

Recipients and their subrecipients must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Service or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting this award. Non-Federal entities that have received a Federal award including the term and condition outlined in 2 CFR 200, Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to SAM. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338, Remedies for noncompliance, including suspension or debarment (See 2 CFR 200.113, 2 CFR Part 180, 31 U.S.C. 3321, and 41 U.S.C. 2313).

VIII. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

Contact the following individuals for questions about the application process:

Tim Bowman, Sea Duck Joint Venture Coordinator
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 1011 East Tudor Road
 Anchorage, AK 99503
tim_bowman@fws.gov
 (907) 786-3569