

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release March 1, 1975

McGarvey 202/343-5634

## COURT-PROMPTED ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT ISSUED ON BIRD HUNTING

A draft environmental statement of migratory bird hunting nationwide has been issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to comply with an out-of-court settlement of a lawsuit brought last fall to end duck hunting.

The public has until April 14, 1975, to comment on the draft environmental statement (DES). Public hearings will be held in seven locations nationwide between March 15 and 22. Copies of the several-hundred-page study and a summary of it are available to the public as explained below. A final environmental impact statement will be issued after all public comments are considered.

The DES describes the Interior Department's issuance of annual regulations permitting the sport hunting of migratory birds.

The five objectives of these regulations are listed in the DES as follows:

1. To provide protection of migratory bird populations by regulated management of harvest.
2. To provide outdoor recreational and harvest opportunities compatible with resource reproductive capabilities and maintenance of acceptable population levels.
3. To assist in the prevention of depredations of agricultural crops by migrating game birds.
4. To distribute hunting opportunity for migratory birds as equitably as possible among hunters along migration routes.
5. To limit the accidental taking of non-target species where there is a reasonable possibility that hunter confusion between target and non-target species might exist.

(more)

Regulations are set by the Department of the Interior in concert with Flyway Councils. They control the number and kinds of birds that may be taken, the period when hunting is permitted, the length of season within that period, the time of day when hunting may take place, and the legal methods by which birds may be hunted.

Each State then sets hunting regulations within these frameworks, often adopting more restrictive rules. State wildlife agencies select from various options and may hold public hearings in the process of establishing their regulations.

The DES discusses migratory bird hunting since 1918, when the Federal Government became responsible for protection and conservation of migratory birds. This includes information about the 56 species hunted, the hunting community, the economic and legal aspects of bird hunting, and the Federal and State land acquisition programs to provide living space for birds. The regulatory process is discussed, relating the international, national, and State wildlife management organizations, census programs, and law enforcement efforts to the annual setting of regulations. The impact of hunting on and the breeding potential of the various bird populations is discussed also, as are four alternatives to the present way of issuing annual regulations. These alternatives include issuing no regulations; permitting the individual States to establish regulations; permitting an international body to establish regulations; and, issuing regulations for periods longer than one year.

The size of the DES precludes wide public distribution; however, copies are available at more than 450 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service installations nationwide for public inspection. A limited number of single issues are available on a first-come basis. Lists of the locations of these facilities can be obtained by writing to the Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the following offices which also have copies available:

813 D Street  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Federal Building, Fort Snelling  
Twin Cities, Minnesota 55111

1500 Plaza Building  
Irving Street  
Portland, Oregon 97208

17 Executive Park Drive, N.E.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30329

500 Gold Avenue, S.W.  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103

John W. McCormack Post Office  
and Courthouse  
Boston, Massachusetts 02109

10597 West Sixth Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80215

A shortened summary version of the DES can be obtained by writing to any one of the above locations or the Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240.

Public hearings on the proposal and draft environmental statement will be held at the following places and times:

- Region I      Date: March 19, 1975  
Place: Bonneville Power Administration Auditorium  
100 N.E. Holladay Street  
Portland, Oregon  
Time: 7:30 p.m.
- Region II     Date: March 19, 1975  
Place: Acoma Room, City Convention Center  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
Time: 7:30 p.m.
- Region III    Date: March 15, 1975  
Place: Room 564, Federal Building, Fort Snelling  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
Time: 9:00 a.m.
- Region IV     Date: March 17, 1975  
Place: Lenox Square Auditorium  
Lenox Square Shopping Center  
3293 Peachtree Road  
Atlanta, Georgia  
Time: 1:00-5:30 p.m. and beginning again at 7:30 p.m.
- Region V      Date: March 22, 1975  
Place: Defense Industrial Supply Center, Building 4  
Robbins Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Time: 9:30 a.m.
- Region VI     Date: March 18, 1975  
Place: Room 269, Denver Post Office Building  
1823 Stout Street  
Denver, Colorado  
Time: 7:00 p.m.
- Alaska        Date: March 19, 1975  
Place: Council Chambers, Loussac Library  
Anchorage, Alaska  
Time: 7:00 p.m.

Persons wishing to make an oral presentation or to submit their views in writing at any of these hearings should deliver a notice to that effect to the appropriate Regional Director at the above address, no less than five working days before the date of the hearing at which the testimony is to be presented. A time limit of 10 minutes per witness is imposed in the case of oral testimony, although additional time may be granted at the discretion of the Hearing Officer.