



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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Megan Durham (202) 343-5634

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE REQUESTS PUBLIC COMMENTS ON LEAD SHOT BAN PROPOSED BY NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

The Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is asking the public to comment on a proposal by the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) that would ban lead shot for waterfowl hunting throughout the lower 48 States beginning with the 1987-88 hunting season.

NWF proposed the ban in a letter to Secretary of the Interior Don Hodel on January 14. In its petition, NWF requested that the Fish and Wildlife Service, within 30 days, impose a ban on all use of lead shot for waterfowl hunting in the lower 48 States.

On February 13, William P. Horn, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, notified NWF that the Interior Department had decided to treat NWF's request as a petition for rulemaking and to make it available for public comment. The Fish and Wildlife Service published a notice requesting public comment on NWF's petition in the February 19, 1986, Federal Register.

The Fish and Wildlife Service is currently preparing a Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) regarding the use of lead shot for waterfowl hunting.

Although the public comment period on the EIS closed February 19, the Service has decided to accept public comments on the NWF proposal for consideration during preparation of the final EIS. To expedite this process, the Service is asking the public to submit comments on the NWF proposal by March 6, 1986.

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The Fish and Wildlife Service wishes to hear the public's views on this proposal, and, in particular, on whether the petitioned action: (1) is likely to prove of benefit to eagle populations, and if so, to what degree; (2) is reasonable under the circumstances; (3) is practical within the designated timeframe; (4) can be accomplished without dislocation or, if not, the degree of such adverse economic impact to ammunition manufacturers; and (5) has other benefits or disadvantages.

The Fish and Wildlife Service requires waterfowl hunters to use nontoxic (steel) shot in areas where lead poisoning is a documented or potential problem for waterfowl or bald eagles. For the 1986-87 waterfowl hunting season, the Service has proposed requiring nontoxic shot in portions of 44 States to protect waterfowl and eagles. Under federal law, State approval is required before final nontoxic shot regulations may be enforced.

Comments on the NWF proposal should be addressed to Director (MBM0), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Migratory Bird Management, Matomic Building, Room 536, Washington, D.C. 20240.

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