



Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council
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**Your Comments Requested on Proposed Regulations for
2003 Alaska Spring/Summer Migratory Bird Subsistence Harvest**

For Immediate Release

Contact: Doug Alcorn, Chair, Alaska Co-
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Today the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published in the Federal Register a Proposed Rule which would formally recognize and regulate a 2003 Alaska Spring/Summer Migratory Bird Subsistence Harvest. The Rule, a product of the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council, sets dates between which such harvesting could occur, lists species that could be taken, describes means and methods of take that would be prohibited, and details areas of the state where residents are eligible to participate. Regulations, published in August 2002, have already established who is eligible to harvest, what areas of the state are open to harvest and how migratory birds can be possessed.

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 amendment set the stage for the creation of the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council and today's action.

The Council, which includes representatives from the Alaska indigenous inhabitants, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service acting as equal partners, was formed with the specific purpose of developing "recommendations related to the spring/summer subsistence harvest of migratory birds." The result of almost 2 years of work by the Council, this Proposed Rule aims to not only recognize this traditional harvest, but also develop annual regulations and include this harvest within the continental system of migratory bird management and conservation.

The regulations proposed for 2003 are not intended to be a complete and inclusive set of guidelines, but rather a first step in what will be an annual process which the Council will use to further refine the regulations, as needed. The full text of the Proposed Rule is available on the internet at (<http://alaska.fws.gov/media/ambcc.html>). Interested parties without access to the internet can receive a copy by calling (toll-free 1-877-229-2344, William Ostrand). Public

comments on the Rule will be accepted through March 12, 2003. The Final Rule, as advised by comments received on the Proposed Rule, will be published upon conclusion of the comment period.

The Alaska Spring/Summer Migratory Bird Subsistence Harvest is scheduled to open on April 2, 2003 in most parts of the state. The publication of the Final Rule in the Federal Register will be followed by distribution of a 2003 Harvest Regulations Booklet by the Service.

Partner Members: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association, Bristol Bay Native Association, Association of Village Council Presidents, Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes, Copper River Native Association, Chugach Regional Resources Commission, Kodiak Area Native Association, Kawerak Inc, Maniilaq Association, North Slope Borough, Tanana Chiefs Conference