

# Migratory Bird Hunting

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## PROPOSAL 85

### **5 AAC 92.013 Migratory bird hunting guide services.**

Change the definition for migratory bird hunting guide services to include transporter services as follows:

### **5 AAC 92.013 Migratory bird hunting guide services.**

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(c) For purposes of this section,

(1) “migratory bird hunting guide” means a person who provides migratory bird hunting guide services;

(2) “migratory bird hunting guide services” means to assist **or transport**, for compensation or with the intent to receive compensation, a migratory bird hunter to take or attempt to take migratory birds by accompanying, **transporting**, or personally directing the hunter in migratory bird hunting activities:

(3) “person” includes a business entity **or affiliated services such as water taxi, air taxi, fishing charter outfitters; combo hunting/fishing boats; or lodges; when serving small game hunters to, from, or in the field; their equipment; or migratory birds harvested.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** There are many different migratory bird hunting guide services not providing registration forms required by the department under 5 AAC 92.013 for basic information on who and where commercially compensated migratory bird hunting services are taking place.

**Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee?**

**PROPOSED BY:** Nancy Hillstrand (EG-F24-062)

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## PROPOSAL 86

### **5 AAC 92.010. Harvest tickets and reports.**

Require mandatory harvest reporting of sea ducks as follows:

I propose a mandatory harvest reporting of sea ducks in Alaska.

ADF&G should monitor changes in sea duck harvest through a regulation requiring sea duck harvest reporting. New management language could include:

- Required possession a paper or electronic harvest record card for sea ducks.
- After taking a sea duck into possession, required recording of all information on the harvest record card or through a mobile application.
- Consequences for not reporting.

Language could be modeled on the State of Washington’s management approach through Washington Admin. Code § 220-416-060 - 2023-2024, which reads: “Hunters must physically possess a special 2023-2024 paper or electronic hunting authorization and harvest record card for sea ducks when hunting scoter, long-tailed duck, and goldeneye in Western Washington. Immediately after taking a sea duck into possession, hunters must record all required information on the harvest record card. Hunters required to physically possess a paper harvest record card must enter all required information in ink. Hunters required to physically possess an electronic harvest record card must enter all required information through the licensing mobile application.”

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Accurate sea duck harvest numbers are needed to assure hunt opportunities now and in the future. Alaska’s current migratory bird harvest reporting system, known as HIP, uses randomized voluntary reporting and provides only slim and spotty information. As a result, Alaska has never adjusted bag limits on the basis of HIP reporting, according to ADF&G managers.

Alaska does not currently require sea duck harvest reporting, since sea ducks are classified as small game. Harvest reporting isn’t typically required for small game, because, in general, these species are evolved to recover quickly from big drops in population. But sea ducks are special and they do not recover quickly, which means there are long-term negative effects of over-harvest. According to the Sea Duck Joint Venture, populations are slow to recover for the following reasons:

1. Sea ducks are known to have a remarkable degree of site fidelity—around 5 miles or so—which means that if an area’s population is depressed, birds from other areas will not boost recovery.
2. In general, sea ducks do not breed until they are 2 or 3 or so years old, which is late in comparison darling ducks.
3. They lay only one clutch of eggs per year, in contrast with the 2 or 3 for many dabbling ducks.
4. They have significantly lower chick survival rates than other ducks.

Sea duck populations across the United States have fallen 30% since 1970, and they remain in decline, according to the U.S. Committee of the North American Bird Conservation Initiative’s “2022 State of Birds Report”. On the bright side, the report notes that efforts at conservation have been shown to be effective. This proposal is supported by three consecutive years of Kachemak Bay Community Science Sea Duck Surveys—a local annual effort of 10 boats and over 30 people. This survey effort started in 2020/21, because residents and hunters in Kachemak Bay noticed a significant increase to sea duck hunting pressure, as a result of the arrival of a few more guides. Local birders began monitoring populations to create a population index. Our population index does not aim to estimate total number of birds in Kachemak Bay, but by focusing on a few areas with dense sea duck populations, we are able to see population trends—an approach used by

ADF&G managers across many species in Alaska. Our data shows that populations have not bounced back after a significant harvest. Fish and Game has historically monitored sea duck populations in Kachemak Bay, but they have not surveyed in Kachemak Bay since several years before community science surveys began, so our data is the only record of this trend.

**Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee?** This proposal was submitted at the 2022 the Southcentral Board of Game meeting with support from the Homer AC. At that time, the BOG recommended that it be resubmitted as a statewide proposal.

**PROPOSED BY:** Penelope Haas (HQ-F24-030)

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**PROPOSAL 87**

**5 AAC 92.100. Unlawful methods of hunting waterfowl, snipe, and cranes.**

Restrict the use of boats for hunting waterfowl as follows:

5 AAC 92.100. Unlawful methods of hunting waterfowl, snipe, and cranes.

(a) The following methods and means of taking waterfowl, snipe, and cranes are prohibited, in addition to the prohibitions in 5 AAC 92.080:

(1) with a rifle or pistol, a shotgun larger than 10 gauge, or a shotgun not plugged to a three shell capacity;

(2) from a motor-driven boat unless the motor has been completely shut off and the boat's progress from the motor's power has ceased;

(3) from any mechanical vehicle; however, a power or sailboat may be used only as a direct means of retrieving a dead or injured bird; **all boats shall remain stationary throughout the duration of the hunt, beached or anchored, within 100 yards of those discharging firearms to eliminate driving, herding, or chasing migratory birds into hunters on land, or on other boats.**

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** While use of a moving vessel is legal for retrieval of dead or crippled waterfowl, this exception is used to justify continual movement of affiliated vessels during a hunt resulting in illegal driving, herding, or chasing migratory birds into single or multiple hunter parties on shore, or on other boats.

Consistent with resource conservation, please remove loopholes that invalidate fair chase purposes of 5 AAC 92.100 Unlawful methods of hunting waterfowl snipe and cranes.

**Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee?**

**PROPOSED BY:** Nancy Hillstrand (EG-F24-066)

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