

to-government basis. In accordance with S.O. 3206 of June 5, 1997 (“American Indian Tribal Rights, Federal-Tribal Trust Responsibilities, and the Endangered Species Act”), we readily acknowledge our responsibilities to work directly with Tribes in developing programs for healthy ecosystems, to acknowledge that Tribal lands are not subject to the same controls as Federal public lands, to remain sensitive to Indian culture, and to make information available to Tribes.

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.)

This rule does not contain any new collection of information that requires approval by the OMB under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.). An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.)

We have analyzed this rule in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), the Department of the Interior (DOI) NEPA implementing regulations at 43 CFR 46.210, and the DOI Handbook of National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures (516 DM 1).

We have determined that there will be no significant individual or cumulative effect on the environment with the revision of the definition of “shellfish” in 50 CFR 10.12 and have applied the Department of the Interior categorical exclusion for “Policies, directives, regulations, and guidelines: that are of an administrative, financial, legal, technical, or procedural nature; or whose environmental effects are too broad, speculative, or conjectural to lend themselves to meaningful analysis and will later be subject to the NEPA process, either collectively or case-by-case” (43 CFR 46.210(i)). We have also determined the extraordinary circumstances listed in 43 CFR 46.215 do not apply to the direct effects of this rule.

Energy Supply, Distribution, or Use (E.O. 13211)

On May 18, 2001, the President issued E.O.13211 on regulations that significantly affect energy supply, distribution, and use. E.O.13211 requires agencies to prepare Statements of Energy Effects when undertaking certain actions. This rule is not expected to significantly affect energy supplies, distribution, or use. Therefore, this

action is not a significant energy action, and no Statement of Energy Effects is required.

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 10

Exports, Fish, Imports, Law enforcement, Plants, Transportation, Wildlife.

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, we amend part 10, subchapter B of chapter 1, title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations as follows:

PART 10—GENERAL PROVISIONS

■ 1. The authority citation for part 10 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 668a–d, 703–712, 742a–j–l, 1361–1384, 1401–1407, 1531–1543, 3371–3378; 18 U.S.C. 42; 19 U.S.C. 1202.

Subpart B—Definitions

■ 2. Amend § 10.12 by revising the definition of “Shellfish” to read as follows:

§ 10.12 Definitions.

* * * * *

Shellfish means an aquatic invertebrate animal of the following taxa:

- (1) Phylum Mollusca, including but not limited to, oysters, clams, squid, octopus, or cuttlefish; and
- (2) Order Decapoda, including, but not limited to, lobsters, crabs, crayfish, shrimp or other crustaceans; and
- (3) Any part, product, egg or offspring thereof, or the dead body or parts thereof (excluding fossils), of any species included in paragraphs (1)–(2) of this definition, whether or not included in a manufactured product or in a processed food product.

* * * * *

Kevin Lilly,

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Exercising the Delegated Authority of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

[FR Doc. 2026–12578 Filed 6–22–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4333–15–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 92

[Docket No. FWS–R7–MB–2025–1694; FXMB12610700000–267–FF07M01000]

RIN 1018–BI70

Migratory Bird Subsistence Harvest in Alaska

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), are revising the migratory bird subsistence harvest regulations in Alaska. Subsistence harvest regulations allow for the continuation of customary and traditional subsistence uses of migratory birds in Alaska and establish when and where the harvesting of certain migratory birds may occur within each subsistence region. Subsistence harvest regulations, including the changes set forth in this document, were developed through a cooperative process involving the Service, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and Alaska Native representatives.

DATES: This rule takes effect on June 23, 2026.

ADDRESSES: You may inspect the comments received on the March 9, 2026, proposed rule at the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov> in Docket No. FWS–R7–MB–2025–1694.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Wendy Loya, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 E. Tudor Road, Mail Stop 201, Anchorage, AK 99503; (907) 227–2942. Individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services. Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered within their country to make international calls to the point of contact in the United States.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA, 16 U.S.C. 703 et seq.) was enacted to protect migratory birds and gives the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) the authority to regulate the harvest of certain migratory birds. The law further authorizes the Secretary to issue regulations to ensure that the indigenous inhabitants of the State of Alaska may take certain migratory birds and collect their eggs for nutritional and other essential needs during seasons established by the Secretary to provide for the preservation and maintenance of these migratory birds (16 U.S.C. 712(1)).

The take of migratory birds for subsistence uses in Alaska occurs primarily during the spring and summer, a timeframe not included in the fall and winter general migratory game bird hunting regulations for the United States. Regulations governing the subsistence harvest of migratory birds in Alaska are located in title 50 of the Code

of Federal Regulations (CFR) in part 92. These regulations allow for the continuation of customary and traditional subsistence uses of migratory birds and establish when and where the harvesting of certain birds in Alaska may occur within each subsistence region.

The migratory bird subsistence harvest regulations are developed cooperatively. The Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council (Council or AMBCC) consists of the Service, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG), and Alaska Native representatives. The Council's primary purpose is to develop recommendations pertaining to the subsistence harvest of migratory birds.

This rule incorporates changes to the subsistence harvest regulations that were recommended by the Council in 2025 as described below.

Comments Received on the Proposed Rule

Per the collaborative process described above, we published a proposed rule on March 9, 2026, to update the regulations for the taking of migratory birds for subsistence uses in Alaska during spring and summer (91 FR 11266). By the end of the comment period on April 8, 2026, we received six comments pertaining to the proposed rule. We made no changes to the proposed rule as a result of input we received via the public comments, however, we added further discussion to this rule regarding the regulatory revisions based on public comments we received. See Final Regulations, below, for more information.

Issue: One commenter believed that there should be no legal subsistence harvest opportunity for migratory birds in Alaska.

Response: For millennia, Indigenous peoples of Alaska have harvested migratory birds for subsistence purposes during the spring and summer months. The U.S. treaties with Canada and Mexico were amended for the express purpose of allowing subsistence harvest of migratory birds during these months. The MBTA allows for the lawful and sustainable harvest of migratory birds and their eggs per regulations.

Issue: Four commenters expressed support of the process presented in the proposed rule that was used to incorporate local input and Indigenous Knowledge in determining a meaningful region name and more appropriate harvest season dates.

Response: The Service appreciates the commenters' support for involvement of Tribal regional representatives in developing regulatory changes.

Issue: One commenter recommended the Service collect subsistence harvest data to measure the effect of the proposed regulatory change.

Response: Harvest of waterfowl and cranes by rural residents within the Upper Copper River/Ahtna Territory region represents less than 0.2 percent of the statewide harvest (Naves and Schamber 2024) and the population of the eight eligible communities in the region represents about 1.3 percent of the statewide population in eligible subsistence harvest areas (<https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/landing/popcen.html>). In addition, there are no threatened eiders or species of conservation concern (e.g., emperor geese) present in this region. These factors suggest that any increase in regional subsistence harvest due to the proposed change in season dates is unlikely to have any measurable effect on harvest or population size of migratory birds in Alaska. Past subsistence harvest surveys in Alaska have lacked the precision to detect small changes in statewide harvest and would incur an unnecessary burden on subsistence harvesters.

Issue: One commenter recommended implementation of flexible harvest closure dates based on annual environmental conditions.

Response: The use of static closure dates that approximate the primary nesting periods for their respective geographic areas may not align the timing of nesting activity with closure dates for some species in some years. However, static closure dates increase the clarity of regulations for subsistence harvesters and law enforcement and have been implemented successfully in 10 of the 12 regions, including the Upper Copper River/Ahtna Territory region. The co-management process allows a region to petition the AMBCC to change to a flexible closure date process, as two regions have already done, but the Upper Copper River/Ahtna Territory has not proposed such changes.

Issue: One commenter recommended that urban residents be restricted from the subsistence harvest of migratory birds and eggs during spring and summer.

Response: Residents of urban areas are generally restricted from harvest of migratory birds in spring and summer per regulation (50 CFR 92.5).

Issue: One commenter recommended records of all Tribal consultations be included in the final rule.

Response: To date, no requests for formal or informal Tribal consultation on the proposed rule have been requested.

Issue: One commenter recommended that sources of Indigenous Knowledge be credited under the discussion in *Revisions to Subpart D* in the final rule.

Response: The Service appreciates the commenter's suggestion to recognize the source of Indigenous Knowledge in the development of harvest regulations. The source of Indigenous Knowledge that supports the proposed change in harvest season dates was submitted in a proposal to the AMBCC in December 2025 (AMBCC Proposal No. 2026–02) and originated from members of the Copper River Migratory Bird Co-Management Council, through the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission. Oral testimony from the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission in support of the proposal was presented at the May 9, 2025, AMBCC meeting in Anchorage, Alaska.

Issue: One commenter recommended the Service ensure adaptive management strategies are in place to respond to climate-driven shifts in nesting chronology.

Response: The Service adapts its management strategies for the spring-summer subsistence harvest of migratory birds and their eggs through participation in the AMBCC. The AMBCC meets twice annually and provides an opportunity for regional Alaska Native representatives to describe observations from the communities they represent. Such observations include changes in the abundance and species of birds, harvest, climate, bird migration patterns, and nesting activity. From these observations and other supporting data, the Council can identify where regulatory proposals may be needed to change 30-day closure dates to adequately protect birds during the principal nesting period.

Issue: One commenter recommended the Service implement a 3-year evaluation period to measure the effect of the proposed change in subsistence harvest season dates on migratory bird species harvested during the spring-summer season in this region.

Response: The Service does not believe a 3-year evaluation period is necessary to assess the effect of the proposed change in subsistence harvest season dates on migratory bird populations in this region. This region has low harvest levels and few hunters, making any increase in subsistence harvest due to the proposed changes unlikely to have any population level effects (see response above to third issue for additional information). Implementation of a 3-year evaluation period would incur an unnecessary burden on subsistence hunters and cost

to the public. The Service evaluates the status of migratory birds annually throughout North America using aerial waterfowl population surveys (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2025), including within the region described in the proposed action, and together with partners in the AMBCC will evaluate all available information and propose regulatory changes where warranted.

Final Regulations

We are making no changes to the regulatory revisions proposed in our March 9, 2026, proposed rule (91 FR 11266) as a result of the input we received via the public comments.

The rule sets forth the following revisions to the regulations for the taking of certain migratory birds for subsistence uses in Alaska during the spring and summer.

Revisions to Subpart A

In 50 CFR part 92, subpart A (general provisions), we change the name of the Upper Copper River region to the Ahtna Territory region in § 92.5. The Upper Copper River region is one of 12 geographic regions (called regional management areas) in Alaska based on common subsistence resource use patterns and the 12 Alaska Native regional corporation boundaries established under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA, 43 U.S.C. 1606). The Upper Copper River region has eight eligible communities whose harvest area includes Alaska State Game Management Units (GMUs) 11, 12, and 13. The Copper River Migratory Bird Co-Management Council submitted a proposal to the AMBCC requesting their region be renamed Ahtna Territory to reflect the desires of member communities to self-identify with an appropriate regional name. The current name inaccurately reflects the region's community membership and eligible harvest area, as the community of Cantwell is not located in the Copper River drainage and its traditional hunting areas are within the watersheds of other major rivers (e.g., the Yukon and Susitna). Renaming this region as the Ahtna Territory will help clarify Ahtna Tribal communities included in the region and better identify those eligible to participate in the spring-summer subsistence harvest.

The AMBCC recommended an amendment to the regulations to change the name of the Upper Copper River region to the Ahtna Territory region on April 9, 2025. This regulatory amendment was supported by the Pacific Flyway Council on September 12, 2025, and the SRC on December 16, 2025, and intended for implementation

beginning with the 2026 subsistence season.

Revision to Subpart B

In 50 CFR part 92, subpart B (program structure), we change the name of the Upper Copper River region to the Ahtna Territory region in § 92.11 as described above for subpart A.

Revisions to Subpart D

In 50 CFR part 92, subpart D (annual regulations governing subsistence harvest), we make several changes for the Upper Copper River region: changing the region's name, clarifying language regarding the harvest area, and modifying the season dates.

First, we change the name of the Upper Copper River region to the Ahtna Territory region in § 92.31(i) as described above for subpart A.

Second, we clarify and simplify the language in § 92.31(i) regarding which GMUs are included in the harvest area for the Upper Copper River region. Currently, § 92.31(i) states that the harvest area for the eight eligible communities—Gulkana, Chitina, Tazlina, Copper Center, Gakona, Mentasta Lake, Chistochina, and Cantwell—includes GMUs 11 and 13. However, § 92.31(i)(3) later adds GMU 12 as a harvest area for the Copper River Basin communities listed in § 92.31(i). This creates confusion, as one of the communities (Cantwell) is not located in the Copper River Basin. The current language implies that GMUs 11, 12, and 13 are open for the seven Copper River Basin communities, while Cantwell's harvest area is limited to GMUs 11 and 13. However, Cantwell is located north of the Alaska Range, which qualifies it as an "included area" under § 92.5(a). As such, its residents are eligible to harvest birds during the spring-summer season in areas north of the Alaska Range, like GMU 12. To clarify the regulations, we add GMU 12 to the list of GMUs in § 92.31(i) for all eight communities. We also remove § 92.31(i)(3), as it would become redundant following this change and the season date revisions described below.

Third, we modify the season dates within the Upper Copper River region listed in § 92.31(i)(1) and (i)(2). This change will simplify the regulations and better align season dates with bird presence in the region. The Upper Copper River region's harvest area includes GMUs 11, 12, and 13 as described above, but currently the hunting and egg gathering seasons for GMUs 11 and 13 are different from those in GMU 12. The Copper River Migratory Bird Co-Management Council proposed changing the season dates for

GMUs 11 and 13 (currently: April 15–May 26 and June 27–August 31; closure: May 27–June 26) to match those in GMU 12 (season: April 2–June 14 and July 16–August 31; egg gathering May 1–June 14 only; closure: June 15–July 15). The change will better align the season dates in GMUs 11 and 13 with the availability of birds in the region and improve alignment of the 30-day nesting closure with the principal nesting period. The change would also simplify regulations for the region by establishing consistent season dates in all three GMUs (11, 12, and 13) and, along with the clarification described above, allows the removal of § 92.31(i)(3).

Harvest of waterfowl and cranes by rural residents within the Upper Copper River/Ahtna Territory region represents less than 0.2 percent of the statewide harvest (Naves and Schamber 2024) and the population of the eight eligible communities in the region represents about 1.3 percent of the statewide population in eligible subsistence harvest areas (<https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/landing/pop-cen.html>). In addition, there are no threatened eiders or species of conservation concern (e.g., emperor geese) present in this region. These factors suggest that any increase in harvest due to these changes is unlikely to have any population level effects. The AMBCC relied on Indigenous Knowledge from the region to substantiate the necessity of adjusting season dates.

On April 9, 2025, the AMBCC recommended an amendment to the regulations to change the season dates for GMUs 11 and 13 in the Upper Copper River region to April 2–June 14 and July 16–August 31; egg gathering May 1–June 14 only; closure: June 15–July 15 to match those in GMU 12. The word "only" is used after the egg gathering season dates to be consistent with the current regulations, e.g., at § 92.31(h) for the Interior region. This regulatory amendment was supported by the Pacific Flyway Council on September 12, 2025, and the SRC on December 16, 2025, and intended for implementation beginning with the 2026 subsistence season.

Compliance With the MBTA and the Endangered Species Act

The Service has dual objectives and responsibilities for authorizing a subsistence harvest while protecting migratory birds and threatened species. Although these objectives are challenging, they are not irreconcilable, provided that: (1) regulations continue to protect threatened species, (2) measures to address documented threats are implemented, and (3) the

subsistence community and other conservation partners commit to working together.

Mortality, sickness, and poisoning from lead exposure have been documented in many waterfowl species, including threatened spectacled eiders (*Somateria fischeri*) and the Alaska-breeding population of Steller's eiders (*Polysticta stelleri*). While lead shot has been banned nationally for waterfowl hunting since 1991, Service staff have documented the availability of lead shot in waterfowl ammunition for sale in communities on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and North Slope. The Service continues to work with partners to increase education, outreach, and enforcement efforts to ensure that subsistence waterfowl hunting is conducted using nontoxic shot.

Conservation Under the MBTA

Based on long-term monitoring of harvest and population size of the migratory bird species taken for subsistence, we find that this final rule will provide for the preservation and maintenance of migratory birds as required by the MBTA. Communication and coordination with the AMBCC and the Pacific Flyway Council have aided in the establishment of hunting regulations to ensure the long-term viability of the migratory birds exposed to harvest.

Endangered Species Act Consideration

Spectacled eiders and the Alaska-breeding population of Steller's eiders are listed as threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). Their migration and breeding distribution overlap with areas where the spring and summer subsistence migratory bird harvest is open in Alaska. However, neither eider species is present in the Upper Copper River region where this final rule applies. In addition, both species are closed to subsistence harvest and under §§ 92.21 and 92.32 the Service may implement emergency closures, if necessary, to protect Steller's eiders or any other endangered or threatened species or migratory bird population.

Section 7 of the ESA requires the Secretary to review other programs administered by the Department of the Interior and utilize such programs in furtherance of the purposes of the ESA. The Secretary is further required to ensure that any action authorized, funded, or carried out by the Department of the Interior is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered species or threatened

species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat.

The Service's Alaska Region Migratory Bird Management Program conducted an intra-agency consultation with the Service's Northern Alaska Fish and Wildlife Field Office on the proposed rule (91 FR 11266; March 9, 2026). Given the absence of listed eiders in the action area, a no effect determination was made. Therefore, the Service will not need to issue a letter of concurrence or biological opinion, and we have determined that this rule complies with the ESA.

Immediate Effective Date

This rule takes effect on the date set forth above in **DATES**. To respect the subsistence hunt of many rural Alaskans, either for their cultural or religious exercise, for providing sustenance, or for acquiring materials for cultural use (e.g., handicrafts), the Department of the Interior finds that it is in the public interest to make this rule effective as soon as possible. Delaying the effective date for 30 days would have detrimental effects on Alaskans seeking to conduct subsistence harvest of migratory birds. Within the terms of 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(1) of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), the regulations in 50 CFR part 92 recognize a statutory exemption provided to rural Alaskans for the subsistence harvest of migratory birds. For these reasons, under the authority of the APA and the MBTA, this rule takes effect immediately upon publication in the **Federal Register**.

Required Determinations

Regulatory Planning and Review (Executive Orders (E.O.s) 12866 and 13563)

E.O. 12866 provides that the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will review all significant rules. OIRA has determined that this rule is not significant.

E.O. 13563 reaffirms the principles of E.O. 12866 while calling for improvements in the Nation's regulatory system to promote predictability, to reduce uncertainty, and to use the best, most innovative, and least burdensome tools for achieving regulatory ends. E.O. 13563 directs agencies to consider regulatory approaches that reduce burdens and maintain flexibility and freedom of choice for the public where these approaches are relevant, feasible, and consistent with regulatory objectives. E.O. 13563 emphasizes further that regulations must be based on the best available science and that the rulemaking process must allow for

public participation and an open exchange of ideas. We have developed these revisions to the CFR in a manner consistent with these requirements.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Department of the Interior certifies that this rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities as defined under the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*). A regulatory flexibility analysis is not required.

Accordingly, a small entity compliance guide is not required. The regulations at 50 CFR part 92 legalize a preexisting subsistence activity. The commodities that are regulated under these regulations are migratory birds, and the resources harvested are consumed. This final rule makes only modest changes to the current regulations.

Congressional Review Act

This final rule is not a major rule under 5 U.S.C. 804(2), the Congressional Review Act. This final rule:

(a) Would not have an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more. The regulations at 50 CFR part 92 legalize the subsistence harvest of migratory birds and, as such, do not involve commodities traded in the marketplace. This final rule would not result in a substantial increase in subsistence harvest or a significant change in harvesting patterns.

(b) Would not cause a major increase in costs or prices for consumers; individual industries; Federal, State, or local government agencies; or geographic regions. This final rule does not deal with traded commodities and, therefore, would not have an impact on prices for consumers.

(c) Would not have significant adverse effects on competition, employment, investment, productivity, innovation, or the ability of U.S.-based enterprises to compete with foreign-based enterprises. This final rule deals with the harvesting of wildlife for personal consumption. It would not regulate the marketplace in any way to generate substantial effects on the economy or the ability of businesses to compete.

Unfunded Mandates Reform Act

We have determined and certified under the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (2 U.S.C. 1501 *et seq.*) that this final rule would not impose a cost of \$100 million or more in any given year on local, State, or Tribal governments or private entities. The final rule would not have a significant or unique effect on local, State, or Tribal governments or the private sector. A statement

containing the information required by the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act is not required. Participation on regional management bodies and the Council requires travel expenses for some Alaska Native organizations and local governments. In addition, they assume some expenses related to coordinating involvement of village councils in the regulatory process. Total coordination and travel expenses for all Alaska Native organizations are estimated to be less than \$300,000 per year. When funding permits, the Service makes annual grant agreements available to the partner organizations and the ADFG to help offset their expenses. However, this final rule would not revise any regulations pertaining to participation in the regulatory process.

Takings (E.O. 12630)

Under the criteria in E.O. 12630, this final rule would not have significant takings implications. The changes to the regulations at 50 CFR part 92 are not specific to particular landownership but instead apply to the harvesting of migratory bird resources in portions of Alaska. A takings implication assessment is not required.

Federalism (E.O. 13132)

In accordance with E.O. 13132 (Federalism), this final rule does not have significant federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a federalism summary impact statement. The Service worked with the State of Alaska to develop these regulations. Therefore, a federalism summary impact statement is not required.

Civil Justice Reform (E.O. 12988)

The Department, in promulgating this final rule, has determined that it would not unduly burden the judicial system and that it meets the requirements of sections 3(a) and 3(b)(2) of E.O. 12988.

Government-to-Government Relations With Native American Tribal Governments

In accordance with E.O. 13175 (“Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments”), and the Department of the Interior’s manual chapters at 512 DM 2, 512 DM 4, and 512 DM 6, we readily acknowledge our responsibility to communicate meaningfully with federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations on a government-to-government basis. We sent letters via electronic mail to all 229 federally recognized Indian Tribes in Alaska. Consistent with 512 DM 5 and 512 DM 7, we also sent letters to approximately 200 Alaska Native Corporations and other Tribal entities in

Alaska soliciting their input as to whether or not they would like the Service to consult with them on the proposed changes to the migratory bird subsistence harvest regulations.

We implemented the amended treaty with Canada with a focus on local involvement. The treaty calls for the creation of management bodies to ensure an effective and meaningful role for Alaska’s indigenous inhabitants in the conservation of migratory birds. According to the Letter of Submittal, management bodies are to include Alaska Native, Federal, and State of Alaska representatives as equals. They develop recommendations for, among other things: seasons and bag limits, methods and means of take, law enforcement policies, population and harvest monitoring, educational programs, research and use of traditional knowledge, and habitat protection. The management bodies involve village councils to the maximum extent possible in all aspects of management. To ensure maximum input at the village level, we required each of the 11 participating regions to create regional management bodies consisting of at least one representative from the participating villages. The regional management bodies meet up to twice annually to review and/or submit proposals to the statewide body.

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA)

This final rule does not contain any new collection of information that requires approval by the OMB under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*). An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. OMB has previously approved the information collection requirements associated with subsistence harvest reporting and assigned the following OMB control numbers:

- Alaska Migratory Bird Subsistence Harvest Household Survey, OMB Control Number 1018–0124 (expires July 31, 2027), and
- Regulations for the Taking of Migratory Birds for Subsistence Uses in Alaska, 50 CFR part 92, OMB Control Number 1018–0178 (expires July 31, 2027).

*National Environmental Policy Act Consideration (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*)*

The regulations at 50 CFR part 92 and options are considered in the Finding of No Significant Impact, “Migratory Bird Subsistence Harvest in Alaska; Harvest Regulations for Migratory Birds in Alaska During the 2026 Spring/Summer

Season.” Copies are available online at: <https://www.fws.gov/media/usfws-finding-no-significant-impact-2026>.

Energy Supply, Distribution, or Use (E.O. 13211)

E.O. 13211 requires agencies to prepare statements of energy effects when undertaking certain actions. This final rule is not a significant regulatory action under this E.O.; it allows only for traditional subsistence harvest and improves conservation of migratory birds by allowing effective regulation of this harvest. This final rule would not have any effect on energy supplies, distribution, or use. Therefore, this action is not a significant energy action under Executive Order 13211, and a statement of energy effects is not required.

References Cited

- Naves, Liliana C. and Jason L. Schamber. 2024. Harvest of waterfowl and Sandhill Crane in rural Alaska: Geographic and seasonal patterns. *PLoS ONE* 19(7): e0307135.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2025. Waterfowl population status, 2025. U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC USA.

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 92

Hunting, Treaties, Wildlife.

Regulation Promulgation

For the reasons set out in the preamble, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service amends 50 CFR part 92 as set forth below:

PART 92—MIGRATORY BIRD SUBSISTENCE HARVEST IN ALASKA

- 1. The authority citation for part 92 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 703–712.

§ 92.5 [Amended]

- 2. In § 92.5 amend paragraphs (a)(2)(i) and (d)(2) by removing the words “Upper Copper River Region” and adding in their place the words “Ahtna Territory Region”.

§ 92.11 [Amended]

- 3. In § 92.11 amend paragraph (a)(11) by removing the words “Upper Copper River” and adding in their place the words “Ahtna Territory”.

- 4. Amend § 92.31 by revising paragraph (i) to read as follows:

§ 92.31 Region-specific regulations.

* * * * *

- (i) *Ahtna Territory region* (Harvest Area: Game Management Units 11, 12, and 13) (Eligible communities: Gulkana, Chitina, Tazlina, Copper Center,

Gakona, Mentasta Lake, Chistochina and Cantwell).

(1) Season: April 2–June 14 and July 16–August 31; egg gathering May 1–June 14 only.

(2) Closure: June 15–July 15.

* * * * *

Kevin Lilly,

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Exercising the Delegated Authority of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

[FR Doc. 2026–12576 Filed 6–22–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4333–15–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 660

[Docket No. 260615–0144]

RIN 0648–BN95

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Fisheries off West Coast States; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; Cordell Bank Groundfish Conservation Area Revisions

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: NMFS is issuing final regulations to remove the Cordell Bank Groundfish Conservation Area off central California for all groundfish fisheries and implement a new Groundfish Exclusion Area for all groundfish fisheries to protect sensitive habitat. The purpose of this action is to simplify regulatory complexity associated with overlapping fishery closures in the Cordell Bank area, and to increase fishing opportunities while still protecting the Cordell Bank ecosystem.

DATES: Effective June 23, 2026.

ADDRESSES: Information relevant to this action, including the integrated analysis that addresses the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Presidential Executive Order 12866, the Regulatory Flexibility Act, and the statutory requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act or MSA) (collectively referred to as “the Analysis”), may be obtained from the NMFS West Coast Region Groundfish website at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/cordell-bank-area-revisions>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lynn Massey, phone: 562–900–2060, or email: Lynn.Massey@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Pacific Coast groundfish fishery in the U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ) seaward of Washington, Oregon, and California is managed under the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (hereafter, Groundfish FMP). The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) developed the Groundfish FMP pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Act, 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.* The Secretary of Commerce approved the Groundfish FMP and implemented the provisions of the plan at 50 CFR part 660, subparts C through G. Species managed under the Groundfish FMP include roundfish, flatfish, rockfish, sharks, and skates.

This final rule (also referred to as the “action”) includes regulations that remove the Cordell Bank Groundfish Conservation Area (GCA) off central California for all groundfish fisheries and implement a new Groundfish Exclusion Area (GEA) for all groundfish fisheries to protect sensitive habitat. GEAs are authorized as an area closure type under section 6.8.10 of the Groundfish FMP; therefore no further changes to the Groundfish FMP are necessary to designate a new GEA.

For information on the development of this action, refer to the “Background” section of the proposed rule (91 FR 4485; February 2, 2026).

Removal of the Cordell Bank GCA

This final rule removes the Cordell Bank GCA closure from the Federal regulations at § 660.70, as well as the associated groundfish prohibitions for the trawl, limited entry fixed gear, open access, and recreational fishery sectors specified at §§ 660.130, 660.230, 660.330, and 660.360, respectively. Although the former GCA was 64 square miles (sq mi) (165.8 square kilometers (sq km)), only 40.1 sq mi (104 sq km) is being opened, including 10.2 sq mi (26.4 sq km) to almost all trawl gear and the full 40.1 sq mi (104 sq km) to non-trawl gear. The former GCA overlapped with two other closures: (1) the Cordell Bank Biogenic Essential Fish Habitat Conservation Area (EFHCA), which prohibits fishing with bottom trawl gear (except for demersal seine) by all fisheries (hereafter referred to as the “bottom trawl EFHCA”); and (2) the Cordell Bank (50-fm isobath) EFHCA, which prohibits fishing with bottom contact gear by all fisheries (hereafter referred to as the “bottom contact EFHCA”). The former GCA bordered a third closure at the 100 fathom (fm) line—the Non-Trawl Rockfish

Conservation Area (Non-Trawl RCA), which prohibits commercial groundfish fishing with most types of non-trawl gear. These closures can be viewed on figure 1 of the Analysis (see **ADDRESSES**). These three closures and their associated prohibitions remain in place, and a GEA now overlays the exact geographic footprint of the bottom contact EFHCA (see next section).

The coordinates for the former Cordell Bank GCA include coordinates commonly referred to as the “100-fm ring.” These coordinates are distinct from the 100 fm (183 meter (m)) depth contour line defined at § 660.73. Per the trawl management measure regulations at § 660.130(c)(1)(ii), trawling with large footrope gear is prohibited in the area south of 46°16′ North latitude (N lat.) and shoreward of 100 fm (183 m). Removing the Cordell Bank GCA coordinates from Federal regulations entirely would default to allow trawling with large footrope gear in the 10.2 sq mi (26.4 sq km) opened to trawl gear. In order to maintain this prohibition, the coordinates for the 100 fm ring have been transferred to § 660.73, which is where the coordinates for the coastwide 100 fm (183 m) line and other lines around islands and banks are defined.

Creation of the Cordell Bank GEA

GEAs were first created by and used via Amendment 32 (88 FR 83830, December 1, 2023), which implemented eight GEAs in the Southern California Bight to protect sensitive coral ecosystems from groundfish fishing impacts when the Cowcod Conservation Areas were removed for non-trawl commercial and recreational groundfish fisheries. The Groundfish FMP authorizes the creation of additional GEAs via rulemaking (see section 6.8.10). GEAs are a different type of closure from GCAs in that their primary purpose is not to protect groundfish species, but to protect habitat. GEAs are different from EFHCAs in that GEAs do not necessarily protect groundfish-specific essential fish habitat (EFH). Rather, a GEA may be established to protect other types of oceanic and seafloor habitats.

As described in the prior section, there are currently a number of overlapping or bordering fishery closures in the Cordell Bank area, including the bottom contact and bottom trawl EFHCAs, and the Non-Trawl RCA. Each closure has different regulations that prohibit different fisheries from operating and different gear types from being used (see table 1 of the Analysis), consequently creating confusion among fishermen and challenges for enforcement officers. The