



DOI Priority Goal Action Plan

Expand Hunting and Fishing Opportunities

Goal Leader: Aurelia Skipwith, Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)

Deputy Goal Leader: Cynthia Martinez, Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System, FWS

Overview

Goal Statement

- By September 30, 2021, the FWS will expand hunting and fishing opportunities on 2.25 million acres of National Wildlife Refuges and National Fish Hatcheries, and open or expand an estimated 1,200 opportunities.

Challenge

- FWS proposes to align federal regulations with state regulations whenever possible, and streamline requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Through engagement with the regional hunting and fishing chiefs and through the rule-making process, comments and recommendations by states and partners regarding hunting access will be addressed.
- Publishing of the annual 2020-2021 Hunting and Fishing Rule by July 31, 2020.
- Publishing of the annual 2021-2022 Hunting and Fishing Rule by July 31, 2021.

Opportunity

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is engaged in a national effort to implement Secretarial Order (S.O.) 3347 and S.O. 3356 to enhance public access and recreation on public lands and to promote recruitment, retention, and reactivation of hunters and anglers.
- The Service's Hunt/fish Opportunity Tool (SHOT) Station Reports provide a resource for guiding regional efforts in developing opening and expansion packages, identifying potential opportunities for increased access, and promoting greater alignment to state hunting and fishing regulations.

FWS Hunting and Fishing Leadership

Aurelia Skipwith, Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Cynthia Martinez, Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System

Chiefs of Hunting and Fishing

- Kate Harrigan, National Chief of Hunting and Fishing, Headquarters
- Noah Kahn, Regional Chief of Hunting and Fishing, Interior Region 1
- Tamar Kavaldjian-Liskey, Regional Chief of Hunting and Fishing, Interior Region 2/4
- Brandon Jones, Regional Chief of Hunting and Fishing, Interior Region 3
- Aaron Mize, Regional Chief of Hunting and Fishing, Interior Region 5/7
- Carl Millegan, Regional Chief of Hunting and Fishing, Interior Region 6/8
- Laila Lienesch, Regional Chief of Hunting and Fishing, Interior Region 9/12
- Carl Lunderstadt, Regional Chief of Hunting and Fishing, Interior Region 10
- Ryan Mollnow, Regional Chief of Hunting and Fishing, Interior Region 11

Goal Structure & Strategies

- Each year the FWS issues a Federal Register Notice to advise the public of new or expanded acres and opportunities available for hunting and fishing at National Wildlife Refuges and National Fish Hatcheries.
- During the rule making process, the FWS will receive public comments that can affect the final rule to open and expand hunting and fishing.
- The Department reviews the proposed rule for the Federal Register in April and will clear the final rule for the Federal Register in July.

Summary of Progress – FY 2020 Q3

- **Level of Results Achieved**

- FWS delivered the proposed rule to the Federal Register on March 20, 2020. The Federal Register published the proposed rule on April 9, 2020. The proposed rule was open to public comments for 60 days, closing on June 8, 2020. FWS received 3,177 public comments on this rule. This rule opens or expands 859 hunting and sport fishing opportunities on over 2.3 million acres.

- **Likelihood of Success**

- High

- **Basis for the Assessment**

- This goal is on target for accomplishment based on past experience with this process.

- **Actions planned to ensure achievement of the goal**

- FWS Headquarters reviewed and developed responses to public comments and made all needed responsive changes in a draft Final Rule. This draft Final Rule was reviewed by PRB, FWS Director, Solicitor, and the Department. The surnaming and clearance process for the draft is on track with the planned timeline that will ensure the final rule publishes prior to fall hunting seasons.

Key Milestones

FY 2020									
Key Milestones	Q1 Plan	Q1 Actual	Q2 Plan	Q2 Actual	Q3 Plan	Q3 Actual	Q4 Plan	Q4 Actual	Comments
FWS complete Hunt/Fish Opportunity Tool Report									
Stations submit hunting and fishing opening packages to NWRS HQ			1/31/20	1/24/20					
Proposed Rule prepared for Federal Register									
Proposed Rule cleared by DOI for Federal Register				3/20/20	4/3/20	*			
Final Rule Publication									
The final rule cleared by DOI for publication							7/17/20		

*The milestone “Proposed Rule cleared by DOI for Federal Register” was met in Q2 rather than Q3 as planned, therefore the date has been listed under Q2 Actual.

Data Accuracy and Reliability

The Service's Hunt/fish Opportunity Tool (SHOT) is a web-based assessment tool developed by the FWS to assess all FWS lands and waters for alignment to state hunting and fishing regulations. Hunting data was captured geospatially at the hunt-unit level and fishing was captured at the field station level. This assessment data has been used to generate SHOT Station Reports, which provide a resource for guiding regional efforts in developing opening and expanding packages, identifying potential opportunities for increased access, and promoting greater alignment to state hunting and fishing regulations.

The FWS works closely with the Solicitor's Office on finalizing the Hunting and Fishing rule to open or expand hunting and fishing across FWS lands and waters.

Additional Information

Contributing Programs

Organizations:

- U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), National Wildlife Refuge System - Lead

Program Activities:

- The National Wildlife Refuge System has Hunting and Fishing Chiefs assigned to lead this program.
- The Fish and Aquatic Conservation program provides input on opportunities at National Fish Hatcheries.

President's Management Agenda

- Opening and expanding recreational opportunities improves the customer experience with federal services.

Regulations:

- This rule provides an annual update and revision to 50 CFR Part 32.

Policies:

- Supports S.O. 3347 and S.O. 3356

Stakeholder / Congressional Consultations

This program is being pursued to collaborate with States and better align our hunting and fishing regulations with state regulations. The annual rule making process requires public engagement before the rule is finalized. The FWS provides an opportunity for public comment on any new hunting or fishing opportunity.