

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

FWS - Migratory Birds

<https://seaduckjv.org/>

Sea Duck Joint Venture FY2021 Competitive Grants

Fiscal Year: 2020

F20AS00199

Due Date for Applications: 01/04/2021

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT:

OMB Control Number: 1018-0100, Expiration Date: 7/31/2021

We are collecting this information in accordance with the authorizing legislation identified above. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We will use the information you provide to conduct a competitive review and select projects for funding and, if awarded, to evaluate performance. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. We estimate that it will take you on average about 40 hours to complete an initial application, about 3 hours to revise the terms of an award, and about 8 hours per report to prepare and submit financial and performance reports, including time to maintain records and gather information. Actual time for these activities will vary depending on program-specific requirements. You may send comments on the burden estimate or any other aspect of this information collection to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

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A. Program Description

A1. Authority

This funding opportunity is made under the authority of Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 742a-754.

15.637

A2. Background, Purpose and Program Requirements

The Sea Duck Joint Venture (SDJV) is a conservation partnership under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). Its mission is to promote the conservation of North American sea ducks by providing greater scientific knowledge and understanding of sea duck biology and ecology to support more effective management. The joint venture is composed of federal and state/provincial wildlife agencies in Canada and the U.S., as well as non-governmental organizations and other entities committed to sea duck conservation. Joint venture projects are accomplished through efficient public/private partnerships and cooperative funding.

The SDJV is coordinated and administered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Canadian Wildlife Service. Primary funding is provided to the SDJV through U.S. Congressional appropriations; some of this funding is made available through competitive grants to solicit partnerships that can address priority science needs of the SDJV. [This funding opportunity is made under the authority of Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956; 16 U.S.C. 742.](#)

SDJV funding supports both the USFWS and Department of Interior (DOI) missions, and the DOI Secretary's priorities related to conservation stewardship, natural resource use, and striking a regulatory balance. One of the purposes of the SDJV is to prevent further listings of sea duck species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA), as two sea duck populations are already listed as threatened in the U.S., and the Species at Risk Act (SARA) in Canada. Funded projects contribute sound science about sea duck populations and habitat needs by helping to monitor their status and address factors that diminish their abundance. Healthy sea duck populations support waterfowl hunting opportunities for hunters in the U.S. and Canada, particularly in coastal areas of the Atlantic, Great Lakes and Pacific regions. Traditional harvests of sea ducks are important for recreational hunters across North America and more so for subsistence hunters in rural northern communities.

The SDJV has evolved from a broad-based science program aimed at basic understanding of this least-known group of waterfowl species, to strategies and objectives focused on several programmatic elements most needed by managers to make informed decisions about sea duck conservation. [The SDJV science program is focused on: \(1\) Delineation of sea duck populations](#)

throughout their annual cycle as a basis for management programs; (2) Development of methods to reliably assess and monitor the status and trends of sea duck populations; (3) Determining essential population dynamics parameters of sea duck species to support development of models for management applications; (4) Improvement of harvest assessments and development of management guidelines for sustainability; and (5) identification of important habitats and key sites for conservation. The joint venture's strategies and priorities are outlined in a strategic plan, implementation plans and other reports and products at <http://seaduckjv.org/>.

The SDJV has invested considerable time and resources toward delineating biogeographic populations that are needed to frame management units for multiple sea duck species. Defining and delineating sea duck populations is a difficult and slow process to be refined through analyses of documented geographic range maps, banding and marking re-encounters, telemetry data and genetic characterizations. While this work goes on, this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) emphasizes other critical management issues aimed at acquiring parameters, at a broad scale, for basic population modeling that can be used to assess management options, in particular harvest regulation strategies. The four key pieces of information needed for population modeling and associated harvest management are: (1) population size and trend, (2) recruitment rates, (3) survival rates, and (4) estimates of harvest and other sources of mortality. With this NOFO, there is greater interest on studies that apply at larger scales than on site-specific studies at non-randomly selected locations.

The SDJV will accept proposals for the following priority science needs in FY2021. Interested applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the SDJV Coordinators and JV associates in advance of submitting proposals to ensure that they understand the specific nature of the issues and consider advice on previous scientific work.

1. **Science Need: Improve understanding of population delineation, migratory connectivity and key habitat use of sea ducks by targeting geographic gaps from previous satellite telemetry studies. Gaps include, but are not limited to, scoters using the Great Lakes during migration, Long-tailed Ducks on large areas of Atlantic and Pacific coasts and better understanding of delineation (Pacific vs Atlantic) for key breeding areas where populations overlap.**

Background: The Sea Duck Joint Venture has made considerable progress on understanding population delineation, migratory connectivity, and key habitat use through its use of telemetry studies throughout the Atlantic coast and the Pacific Flyway. Products of this work have improved our understanding of the broad-scale connectivity of sea ducks across North America, but some large gaps are still evident and efforts to circumscribe population units are not sufficient to monitor population status and harvest.

Desired Product: Improvements of population delineation could be approached through larger sample sizes of marked birds in areas of low representation, or more detailed analysis of movement patterns in areas where populations overlap. Areas that have been identified as important include, but are not limited to, scoters migrating through the Great Lakes, Long-tailed Ducks throughout their annual cycle and interchange with Europe and Asia, and delineating

scoter distribution from mid-Arctic breeding areas to wintering flyways.

2. **Science Need:** Assessment of monitoring programs for American Common Eider (AmCOEI) across key periods of the annual cycle (breeding, molting, wintering) to determine best approaches to reliably measure abundance and trends for management.

Background: The current American Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima dresseri*) population is estimated at around 250,000 birds (NAWMP 2018) and is the most commonly harvested sea duck in several coastal regions of eastern Canada and U.S. Local trends in the Maritime Provinces and the Northeastern States show declining numbers of eiders. Although the distribution of American Common Eider has been well described in the past, some recent shifts have occurred during molting and wintering. Relative abundance is known in some part of its range, but there is no comprehensive monitoring program for this subspecies. Various state, federal and provincial agencies have intermittently conducted breeding surveys over the past 40 years within their jurisdictions in southeastern Canada and the northeastern U.S. Long-term ground counts have been conducted along the North Shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and within the St. Lawrence estuary, Quebec. The U.S. component of the wintering population has been partially surveyed on the Midwinter Inventories, and recent surveys in Canada have covered the Canadian component.

Desired Product: Analysis of historic surveys and development of an efficient comprehensive survey are needed to establish a benchmark for annual indexing abundance and trend for the entire AmCOEI population. The goal of this inquiry is a recommended design for a comprehensive and repeatable program to reliably assess the status and trends of AmCOEI through consideration of: (1) the most effective season and geographic coverage for a survey; (2) most effective platform(s) and economically feasible plan; (3) representative and repeatable sampling design; and (4) sound statistical analysis that can address sources of bias and variance. Favorable survey designs will contribute to establishment of population objectives that guide management priorities.

3. **Science Need:** **Determine information needs for management and conservation of sea ducks on the Great Lakes, based on previous conservation planning efforts and developing monitoring tools. Well-informed management plans require examining the nature and integrity of sea ducks that occur in the region, their relation to continental distributions and creating a monitoring regime to support population and habitat objectives and management actions (e.g., harvest regulations).**

Background: Sea duck use of the Great Lakes, particularly the Lower Great Lakes, during spring migration, fall migration and winter has increased considerably over the past few decades. In general, there is limited information about sea duck abundance and distribution and limited research for this group of waterfowl in the Great Lakes region. There are several major regional concerns for sea ducks, including commercial development projects, water quality, contaminants and outbreaks of diseases—all challenges that require sound baseline knowledge about seasonal abundance and distribution of sea ducks. In 2017, a wide range of stakeholders

were convened to evaluate current information on sea ducks on the Great Lakes in relation to the needs for monitoring and conservation management. The product of that conference (Straub and Schummer 2018; <https://seaduckjv.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/SDJV-PR153-Annual-Report-FY17-Straub-GrLakes-Sea-Ducks.pdf>) provides a substantial body of comments and ideas that should be used to advance planning and implementation of projects to monitor sea duck use of the Great Lakes to guide regional management efforts (e.g., harvest and habitat programs), evaluate Great Lakes waterfowl in relation to continental resources and to support important habitat restoration and protection initiatives (e.g., Upper Mississippi and Great Lakes Joint Venture).

Desired Product: The SDJV encourages continued collaboration among the contiguous wildlife agencies in the U.S. and Canada, and the Mississippi Flyway Council, to develop integrated and adaptive management plans and conservation initiatives for sea ducks and other waterfowl. In particular, the joint venture supports the development of a comprehensive monitoring program for the region, in conjunction with a catalogue of key sites and habitat protection needs.

4. **Science Need:** [Develop or refine techniques to estimate detection probabilities, misidentification rates, and count biases during aerial sea duck surveys. Evaluate methods to improve the accuracy and reliability of aerial, boat and ground survey methods, especially aspects relevant to sea and diving ducks and for areas outside of traditional survey areas.](#)

Background: Historically, estimates of abundance for sea duck populations has been hampered by (1) the absence of surveys over vast breeding areas and offshore wintering areas not covered by traditional aerial and ground surveys; (2) surveys that are ineffectively timed to seasonal phenology of sea duck; (3) errors in species identification and aggregate estimation of species groups (goldeneyes, scoters, mergansers); (4) the need for accurate detection rates and visibility correction factors relevant to large and complex environments (tundra, taiga, marine waters, complex coastlines); and (5) comparability among fixed-wing, helicopter, boat and shore surveys.

The SDJV has invested in studies that are exploring survey methods for challenging environments, means to reduce bias and increase accuracy for survey platforms and provide implications for continental survey coverage—essential issues impeding meaningful estimates of abundance and trends for sea duck populations. Recent SDJV funded studies include work on coastal wintering birds (<https://seaduckjv.org/pdf/studies/pr81.pdf>; <https://seaduckjv.org/pdf/studies/pr136.pdf>), surveys of molting aggregations (<http://seaduckjv.org/pdf/studies/pr82.pdf>) and experimental surveys of remote breeding grounds in Canada (<http://seaduckjv.org/pdf/studies/pr115.pdf>; <http://seaduckjv.org/pdf/studies/pr154.pdf>)

Desired Product: The SDJV is seeking expansion and enhancement of studies on effective survey designs for sea ducks, sources of error and bias in aerial, ground and boat surveys; and analytical tools that improve estimation of abundance. Rather than local or specific projects, we are interested in synthesis of methods that will provide broadly applicable criteria for survey designs, standard operating procedures and analytical tools that will result in reliable population indexing and a basis for long-term monitoring and management planning. Development of

survey standards and assessments of geographic scope of sea duck surveys will be an important contribution to the currently ongoing review of the North American Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey (WBPBS) aimed at improving the scope, diversity and efficiency of continental surveys.

5. **Science Need:** Develop and/or evaluate methods for efficiently automating counts of birds in aerial photographs, including birds with varying distributions and density patterns, and uniform vs. dimorphic plumages.

Background: At times during their annual cycle, sea ducks gather in aggregations that are difficult to enumerate (staging, molt and winter) and often are found in smaller groups distributed over large areas on the water. Surveys of some waterfowl species have increasingly tested photographic techniques to obtain more accurate indices of abundance. Such surveys often result in large numbers of photographs in which birds must be counted, often manually or with the use of counting software such as Photoshop, which is labor intensive, slow, and costly. Computer-automating counts in photographs would reduce cost and time commitments, but previous efforts have met with varying success. Sea ducks are particularly challenging because species are dimorphic (i.e., males are mostly or partly white, with females and subadults mostly brown) and occur in large flocks during the nonbreeding season when many surveys occur.

Desired Product: The Sea Duck Joint Venture is interested in methods or software for detecting, counting, and speciating birds in photographs that can be applied to a variety of species, flock densities, habitats, survey platforms and ambient conditions. In FY 20, the SDJV is supporting a project to review current approaches and test datasets to obtain high correlations between automated counts and manual counts. The goal in FY 21 is to build on previous studies, software, and contemporary results to broaden the applicability of automated counting systems over a wide range of locations and conditions, and test accurate, practical and cost-effective systems.

6. **Science Need:** Determine if recruitment or survival rates, particularly survival of sub-adults, is a negatively affecting the American Common Eider (AmCOEI) over a large portion of its range. If so, identify the limiting factors. This broad topic includes elements that could affect fecundity (e.g. breeding propensity, clutch size, nest success, hatching success), duckling survival (direct: duckling predation; indirect: habitat, disease) and sub-adult survival and harvest rates.

Background: Recent concerns about declines in American Common Eiders and assessments of current and potential harvest indicate that the abundance of AmCOEI is most influenced by adult survival, as well as several components of fecundity (clutch size, hatching success and duckling survival). Fecundity and recruitment are collectively expressed in the ratios of juvenile to adult wings in samples submitted by hunters (age ratio). Substantial uncertainty and wide probability distributions are associated with age ratios, likely reflecting annual hatching success and duckling survival that may differ across the breeding range.

Current knowledge of demographic parameters for this subspecies (Gulf of Maine, Maritimes, and the St. Lawrence Estuary in Quebec), suggests a very limited growth potential for this segment of the AmCOEI population and a high potential for overharvest of birds that originate from this portion of their breeding range. Studies directed toward quantifying and reducing uncertainty in recruitment parameters, determining spatial and temporal variation of recruitment, and describing factors affecting recruitment would be most useful. Results would inform a more robust population model, as well as an assessment of sustainable harvest levels. This information is a high priority for the SDJV and Atlantic Coast managers.

Desired Products: The SDJV will consider proposals to investigate topics related to AmCOEI productivity, with a goal of identifying management actions that would improve recruitment. The SDJV is interested in studies that will: (1) measure key parameters of fecundity and identify means to reduce uncertainty in estimates; (2) provide estimates of duckling survival from different portions of the AmCOEI range; (3) determine whether duckling survival is currently limiting population growth; (4) determine whether predator control or other management actions can improve duckling survival; and (5) determine whether climate regime shifts in the Gulf of Maine and the Maritimes are affecting the apparent low population growth potential. Studies that lead to applied strategies (e.g., management of predators, disturbance and harvest guidelines) are desirable, as well as approaches involving multiple sites that may be applicable to other colonies or populations.

7. **Science Need:** Studies that enhance our understanding of population dynamics of scoters (Black, Surf and White-wing) and Long-tail Ducks. Specifically, studies that focus on breeding propensity, nesting phenology, clutch size, nesting success, fledging success and factors affecting these, are of interest.

Background: Scoters and Long-tailed Ducks breed in remote areas that are difficult for researchers to access, hence limiting historic studies of breeding ecology of these species. Though their breeding grounds are remote, those habitats are under increasing pressure from numerous anthropogenic activities. There is very little baseline information about breeding parameters, and hence researchers and managers cannot determine which factors may influence these parameters as the environment changes.

Desired Product: The SDJV needs information on all aspects of the breeding ecology of scoters and Long-tailed Ducks. Though information at any scale is helpful, the joint venture is most interested in measures of breeding parameters at multiple sites to represent a variety of breeding conditions. Our understanding of breeding ecology, and the factors affecting it, would be greatly enhance with studies from multiple locations during the same years.

8. **Science Need:** Determine annual adult survival rates for scoters (Black, Surf, White-winged) and Long-tailed Ducks in eastern and western North America (emphasis on adults).

Background: To date, estimates of survival and longevity of scoters primarily have been based on hunter harvest returns of banded scoters. Currently, available banding and recovery data for

scoters is extremely limited as a result of relatively small-scale and intermittent banding efforts at a few widely separated locations. In addition, recovery and recapture data are scarce, largely derived from recoveries by hunters in a context of low harvest and low hunter participation. The initiation of larger and longer-term capture and banding efforts of scoters would provide insightful information but has its limitations due to the costs and effort required to perform sea duck banding projects and the dependency on hunters reporting banded birds.

Desired Products: The SDJV supports increased banding of scoters at every opportunity and across the widest range of breeding areas. There is value in considering development of a large-scale banding plan and a cooperative network to share data and collaborate on analyses. There are other approaches to estimating survival rates through emerging technology and analytical methods—these innovations are important and highly valued by the joint venture.

9. **Science Need:** Test feasibility of determining age and sex ratios over a broad range of species using ground surveys and/or aerial photos on fall/wintering areas to obtain an index of annual productivity (e.g., Surf and Black Scoters) in eastern and/or western North America.

Background: Assessing annual productivity of waterfowl is difficult, requiring access to aggregations of birds at the right times and appropriate locations for visual or photographic classification. The accuracy of observations is dependent on getting large representative samples of a known target population that is transient, and detectability of adults vs. juveniles and females in dimorphic species. Interpretation of age and sex ratios is confounded by changing patterns and duration of migrations, and, in fall and winter, by ongoing harvests that are changing the composition of subject populations (e.g., reducing vulnerable juveniles and selected males) cumulatively into and during winter. Even the traditionally used age and sex ratios in the harvest reflect the result of hunter selection bias, population attrition during fall and nominal estimates derived over hunting seasons several months long.

Desired Product: The potential value of measuring sex and age ratios in sea ducks is high if sources of bias can be addressed. The SDJV strongly supports efforts to improve the accuracy and utility of composition surveys designed to sample appropriately defined populations of interest, with accurate classification techniques, sampled with sufficient effort either locally or across a range of locations and resulting in findings that are interpreted in light of factors that have acted on populations throughout their annual cycles.

10. Identify and characterize ecological attributes of key wintering and staging areas for scoters and Long-tailed Ducks at flyway or continental scale to determine critical dependencies and vulnerabilities to anthropomorphic and climatic changes.

Background: Long-tailed Ducks are somewhat unique among sea ducks because they have a circumpolar distribution, exhibit little geographic structuring of population units and they show less fidelity to breeding and wintering areas than most waterfowl. As a consequence, conservation of Long-tailed Ducks is based on the abundance, trends and distribution of the species as a whole in North America. The variable distribution and mobility of the species

warrants management and conservation of all major use areas and an understanding of key habitat attributes that support staging and wintering aggregations along the Atlantic, Pacific, and Great Lakes coasts, as well as important wintering areas in Asia and Greenland.

Desired Product: The SDJV is very interested in ecological studies that investigate the habitat attributes, food resources and deleterious effects on use from adjacent activities for key use areas. Habitat use models that could be applied to a broad range of sites would be highly valued. Basic ecological information is needed to evaluate sites, but conservation and management strategies are also needed. Ideally, studies should support collaboration with wildlife agencies, non-governmental organizations, regional conservation initiatives and habitat joint ventures of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

11. **Science Need: Determine biological effects of climate change on the distribution and abundance marine food resource and potential resulting shifts in species distributions and change in body condition of North American sea ducks. Such research on American Common Eider is a top priority. Other important effects to be studied include changes in habitats on northern breeding areas and coastal staging and wintering habitats, altered phenology of life history patterns, changes in foraging and food resources and other factors that degrade or enhance productivity and survival.**

Background: Among waterfowl, sea ducks are notably vulnerable to a broad array of effects from climate warming and associated phenomena that are causing dramatic changes to their Arctic and subarctic breeding habitats, as well as to the coastal environments that they inhabit nearly year round. Average warming of Arctic and other northern areas is increasing at a faster rate than at lower latitudes, melting tundra surfaces and drying permafrost wetlands. Across the vast north, warming and changing geomorphology is altering plant communities and invertebrate prey bases that are critical factors in waterfowl breeding success. Long-term climatic shifts present sea ducks with less predictable conditions (perhaps positive and negative) for migration, nesting and the coincidence of food availability for broods.

Along the coastal molting, staging and wintering areas, rising sea levels and increasing coastal erosion, as well as altered ocean chemistry, are affecting rich intertidal and subtidal prey that sea ducks depend on.

Research that describes changes in climatic or ocean conditions and the resulting shift in food resources or birds is of great interest. In particular, despite the wide array of ocean monitoring networks, the primary prey species of many wintering sea ducks are not well monitored. Bivalves in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans are studied locally, but data on presence and abundance on the landscape are needed to assess the importance of these foods to sea duck distribution, body condition, and demographic parameters.

Desired Products: The SDJV is especially interested documenting seasonal distribution shifts and ecological changes affecting American Common Eiders. The distribution of this subspecies seems to be shifting in relation to changing conditions in the Gulf of Maine. The relationship between ocean conditions, food availability/quality, and body condition are of particular interest

to managers as they may reflect lower productivity and/or survival.

Though effects on American Common Eiders are top priority, we are interested in projects that document shifts in ecological conditions and distributions for all priority sea duck species. Knowledge of species distributions are important elements of conservation planning, resource management and monitoring programs. Climate change is expected to affect phenology and result in poleward shifts in species distributions as new habitats become available and marine communities reorganize. Identifying shifts in sea duck distribution, and the underlying factors causing those shifts, will allow managers to focus resources to conserve those species

12. **Science Need: Improve harvest estimates for North American sea ducks by increasing the amount and quality of information from hunters and applying analytical techniques to reliably estimate the size and composition of harvests. The level and composition of the harvest, derivation and distribution of the harvest and an assessment of the values and concerns of stakeholders are all necessary elements of effective harvest strategies and regulatory framework that ensure sustainable harvests. Estimating harvest of American Common Eiders is a top priority.**

Background: Accurately estimating harvests of sea ducks and effects on populations is complicated by broad geographical array of species and populations, and diverse traditions of harvest. Most populations of sea ducks are subject to subsistence harvests in remote northern regions during spring migration and nesting, and during fall and winter they are harvested largely during recreational hunting. The primary challenge is to understand the seasonal distributions of sea ducks and, through necessarily different approaches, accurately characterize the nature harvest across regions.

Improving harvest data involves expansion of national and state/provincial harvest surveys that are fairly effective in reaching urban communities and hunters that comply with regulations and reporting systems. Under this approach, the primary challenges are identifying and sampling enough hunters that participate in sea duck hunting—intensifying data collection through the established system. National and state mail questionnaires poll a sample of hunters to determine rates of hunting participation; days in the field; harvests of geese, ducks, sea ducks; and other basic data. From average harvests per day and the number of active hunters, total harvest of taxonomic classes (geese, ducks, etc.) and hunter activity are estimated by state, province and country. Parts Collection Surveys (PCS) in the U.S. and Canada determine the species, age and sex composition of the harvest from samples of duck wings and goose tails and apply the proportions to total harvests.

Though the traditional harvest surveys are quite effective for most waterfowl, they are dependent on getting good survey participation—but they do not provide sufficient data on sea duck harvests for a variety of reasons: (1) sea duck hunters represent a small portion of all waterfowl hunters so sea duck hunters must be identified and they must be responsive to surveys; (2) sea duck harvest is small (especially for some species) compared to other ducks, so few wings occur annually in the PCS—this both precludes accurate annual estimates of species harvest and sex and age composition. In essence, most data on sea duck hunters and their harvest are not

adequate for analyses.

For many species of sea ducks, subsistence hunting by indigenous inhabitants of the north comprises a majority of the annual harvest. In contrast to harvest surveys under established regulatory systems, harvest surveys in rural northern areas must overcome sampling low numbers of hunters across large areas and tailoring survey methods that are culturally appropriate and supported by local residents. Historically, subsistence surveys across Alaska and Canada have not been consistent, robust or frequent enough to get reliable harvest estimates.

Historically, subsistence harvest information was developed from cultural and anthropological studies, without much quantitative data on size or composition of the harvest. During the 1970s and 1980s, more focused subsistence harvest surveys were conducted in Alaska and across northern Canada, providing some general estimates of the harvest of swans, geese, ducks and other wildlife. Since then, the coverage and level of effort has increased to document subsistence harvest in relation to land claim settlements and co-management agreements in Canada, and to assess spring and summer harvests of birds first authorized in Alaska in 2003. The Alaska Migratory Bird Co-management Council established a statewide harvest survey in 2001 that has evolved into an efficient survey of all rural communities that rely on waterfowl throughout the year.

Despite the growing emphasis on documenting these important harvests and expanding regional data collections, there are still large geographic gaps in survey coverage and frequency in northern and eastern Canada. In addition, North American sea duck populations are subject to harvest in Greenland, Russia and other areas of northeast Asia. Data on harvests of eiders in Greenland have been essential in understanding the dynamics of shared populations. Data from Russia and Asia, however, are scarce and largely focused on few local areas.

Desired Product: Review, redesign and expanded effort is required to overcome current shortcomings of established harvest surveys: (1) improve the process of identifying sea duck hunters—state and national surveys needs to maximize efforts to build a large sample frame of sea duck hunters—either from voluntary data collection or mandatory permit/registration systems; (2) sea duck hunters must be encouraged to participate (personally or through guides) in harvest surveys—a broad outreach program can demonstrate the value of survey data to population monitoring and perpetuating hunter opportunity and local traditions; (3) increase the quantity of wing samples in the annual PCS and evaluate to accuracy of species composition, as well as age and sex ratios that indicate annual productivity of sea ducks; (4) studies of differential vulnerability of sex and age classes in harvests are needed to interpret age ratios that are biased by hunter selectivity; and (5) an integrated human dimensions and outreach program, involving managers, hunters and guides is needed to disseminate conservation status information and management objectives, and to gather information on factors influencing hunter activity and public perceptions about sea duck hunting.

The improvements above are particularly needed to estimate harvest of AmCOEI.

Data on the level, composition and seasonality of subsistence harvests are considered essential to the SDJV and management agencies because integration with traditional survey data from fall and winter is necessary to quantify the effects of all harvest on populations. In addition, regional

survey data illustrate the nature and importance of diverse harvest traditions across North America that inform regulatory and other management programs. Our understanding of harvest effects would be greatly enhanced by more comprehensive coverage and frequency of subsistence harvest surveys in remote regions; collection of reliable information on the age, sex and species composition of the harvests; local conditions and practices that affect sea duck harvests and direct involvement of subsistence communities in biological and ecological studies of local sea ducks.

B. Federal Award Information

B1. Total Funding

Estimated Total Funding

\$ 400,000

B2. Expected Award Amount

Maximum Award

\$ 200,000

Minimum Award

\$ 5,000

B3. Expected Award Funding and Anticipated Dates

Expected Award Funding

Expected Award Date

February 19, 2021

Most awards in previous years have been in the \$20,000 to \$100,000 range. We anticipate that notification of awards will occur in February 2021. Projects will be considered for multi-year funding up to 5 years, contingent on demonstration of progress and availability of funds. Awards may be made under this Notice to other federal agencies. Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are eligible to compete with applications for new awards.

B4. Number of Awards

Expected Number of Awards

5

Expected Number of Awards: One, multiple, or no awards may be made for each of the science needs identified in this Notice.

B5. Type of Award

Funding Instrument Type

G - Grant

CA - Cooperative Agreement

O - Other

Funding Instrument Type: One or more awards may be issued in the form of Cooperative Agreements, Grants, or Inter- and Intra-agency Agreements. A Cooperative Agreement award requires substantial involvement on the part of the USFWS for the successful completion of the project. USFWS involvement may include, but is not limited to, direct participation in the project, reviewing and approving one stage of work before another stage can begin, directing or redirecting the work because of interrelationships with other projects, reserving the right to halt an activity if detailed performance specifications are not met. Actual FWS substantial involvement will be determined for each project and final tasking will be determined before the official award is executed.

C. Eligibility Information

C1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible Applicants

99 – Unrestricted (i.e. open to any type of entity above), subject to any clarification in the text field entitled "Additional Information on Eligibility"

Additional Information on Eligibility

No restrictions; all potential applicants are eligible including government agencies, educational institutions, Native American tribal organizations, other non-profit organizations and commercial entities. U.S. non-profit, non-governmental organizations **must** provide a copy of their Section 501(c)(3) or (4) status determination letter received from the Internal Revenue Service.

C2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement

No

Percentage of Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement

Cost sharing, including in-kind costs, is strongly encouraged but is not required. Joint Ventures under the NAWMP are founded on the principles of leveraging Congressionally appropriated funds by forming public-private partnerships that apply cooperative funding to accomplish priority conservation projects. Projects that are to be funded collaboratively with partners and those that most efficiently use SDJV funds will be rated most favorably.

Applicants may attribute some or all of their allowable indirect costs as cost-share/match, however recipients may only charge to the Federal award the indirect costs calculated against the allowable direct costs charged to the Federal award. Recipients may not charge to the Federal award indirect costs calculated against: (1) any portion of the recipient's direct costs; or (2) any portion of the direct costs charged to any other Federal or non-Federal partner.

C3. Other

Prohibition on Issuing Awards to Entities that Require Certain Internal Confidentiality

Agreements: Domestic (U.S.) non-Federal entities requiring their employees or contractors to sign internal confidentiality agreements or statements that prohibit, or otherwise restrict, such employees or contractors from lawfully reporting waste, fraud, or abuse to a designated investigative or law enforcement representative of a Federal department or agency authorized to receive such information are not eligible to compete for or receive a Federal award. See [Pub. L. 113-235, Title VII, Division E, Section 743](#) for more information.

Excluded Parties: FWS conducts a review of the SAM.gov Exclusions database for all applicant entities and their key project personnel prior to award. The Bureau cannot award funds to entities or their key project personnel identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or otherwise excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits, as their ineligibility condition applies to this Federal program.

State Sponsors of Terrorism: This program will not fund projects in [countries determined by the U.S. Department of State to have repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism](#) and therefore are subject to sanctions restricting receipt of U.S. foreign assistance and other financial transactions.

Office of Foreign Assets Control Sanctions: This program will not fund projects in countries subject to comprehensive sanction programs administered by the [U.S. Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Asset Control](#) without proper licenses.

In-Country Licenses, Permits, or Approvals: Entities conducting activities outside the U.S. are responsible for coordinating with appropriate U.S. and foreign government authorities as necessary to obtain all required licenses, permits, or approvals before undertaking project activities. The Service does not assume responsibility for recipient compliance with the laws, regulations, policies, or procedures of the foreign country in which they are conducting work.

Foreign Entities or Projects:

This program may provide funding to foreign entities or for projects conducted outside the United States.

Excluded Parties: FWS conducts a review of the SAM.gov Exclusions database for all applicant entities and their key project personnel prior to award. The Bureau cannot award funds to entities or their key project personnel identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or otherwise excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits, as their ineligibility condition applies to this Federal program.

D. Application and Submission Information

D1. Address to Request Application Package

Applicants that wish to receive a paper application should request one from: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sea Duck Joint Venture, 1011 E. Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. For information regarding paper submissions, contact the Sea Duck Joint Venture at (907) 786-

3908. Applicants should request paper applications sufficiently in advance of the deadline for submission (see below).

Program Website Link

<https://seaduckjv.org/>

D2. Content and Form of Application Submission

SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance

Applicants must submit the appropriate Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance. Individuals applying as a private citizen (i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization you may own or operate in your name), must complete the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance-Individual form. All other applicants must complete the standard SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance. The required application forms are available with this announcement on Grants.gov. The SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance must be complete, and signed and dated. Please note: Enter only the amount requested from this Federal program in the “Federal” funding box on the SF-424 Application form. Include any other Federal sources of funding in the “Other” box and provide details on those Federal source(s) and funding amount(s) in the required Budget Narrative (see the “Budget Narrative” section below).

Individuals applying for and receiving funds separate from a business or non-profit organization he/she may own or operate and any entity waived from the SAM.gov registration requirements by the funding bureau or office must submit the signed and dated SF-424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs form. The SF-424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs are available at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html>

When requesting support for a non-construction project, *individuals* applying for and receiving funds separate from a business or non-profit organization he/she may own or operate *and any entity waived by the Service from the SAM.gov registration requirements* must submit a signed and dated [SF-424B, “Assurances for Non-Construction Programs”](#) form. All of the required application forms are available on with this announcement on Grants.gov.

Project Narrative

Project Title

Names and Contact Information of Proposers

Target Species and Science Topics

Project Summary (Abstract)

- In less than one page, summarize the need for the project, objectives, approaches to the work and anticipated products and outcomes.

Project Description

- **Statement of Need:** Describe why this project is necessary (significance/value) and include supporting information. What new information will be generated by the study that you are proposing and how will it help solve the problems outlined in the Notice of Funding Opportunity? Provide some perspective about how your work will contribute to overall management or conservation of sea ducks or the species. Summarize previous or on-going efforts (of you/your organization, and other organizations or individuals) that are relevant to the proposed

work. Explain the successes or failures of past efforts and how your proposed project builds on them. If you have received funding previously (from the Service or any other donor) for this specific project work or site, provide a summary of the funding, associated activities and products/outcomes.

- **Project Goals and Objectives:** State the long-term, overarching goal(s) of the project. Clearly state the objectives of the project. Objectives are the specific outcomes to be accomplished in order to reach the stated goal(s). The project objectives must be specific, measurable, and realistic (attainable within the project's period of performance).
- **Project Activities, Methods and Timetable:** List the proposed project activities and describe how they relate to the stated objectives. Activities are the specific actions to be undertaken to fulfill the project objectives and reach the project goal(s). The proposed project activities narrative must be detailed enough for reviewers to make a clear connection between the activities and the proposed project costs. Specify sample sizes and provide power analyses if applicable; describe specific statistical treatments intended to support conclusions. Provide a detailed description of the method(s) to be used to carry out each activity.

As applicable, describe how the project will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the UNESCO World Heritage List and other legal designations.

Provide a timetable indicating roughly when activities or project milestones are to be accomplished. Include any resulting tables, spreadsheets or flow charts within the body of the project narrative (do not include as separate attachments). The timetable should not propose specific dates but instead group activities by month for each month over the entire proposed project period.

- **Stakeholder Coordination/Involvement:** As applicable, describe how you/your organization has coordinated with and involved other relevant organizations or individuals in planning the project, and detail if/how they will be involved in conducting project activities, disseminating project results and/or incorporating your results/products into their activities.
- **Project Monitoring and Evaluation:** Detail the monitoring and evaluation plan for the project. Building on the stated project objectives, which must be specific and measurable, identify what you will measure (i.e., quantitative/quantifiable indicators) and how you will measure (i.e., methods, sample size, survey tools). Reference the stated project timetable (i.e., process indicators) and budget information (i.e., input indicators). Describe how and when the results of the project will be made available to the management community, scientific community, or other stakeholders.

- **Description of Entities Undertaking the Project:** Provide a brief description of the applicant organization, all participating entities and key personnel. Identify which of the proposed activities each agency, organization, group, or individual is responsible for conducting or managing. Provide complete contact information for the individual within the organization that will oversee/manage the project activities on a day-to-day basis.
- **Sustainability:** As applicable, describe which project activities will continue beyond the proposed project period, who will continue the work or act on the results, and how and at what level future activities will be funded. If not applicable to your proposal please mark this is Not Applicable.
- **Literature Cited:** Provide citations for literature related to the need for the project in relation to previous work, specific methods for data collection and analysis and literature that will be relevant to interpreting the value of findings and products.
- **Map of Project Area:** Map should clearly delineate the project area and be large enough to be legible. Label any sites referenced in the project narrative or, if not applicable to your proposal please mark this is Not Applicable.

Applicants must submit the appropriate SF-424 Budget Information form and Budget Narrative. For non-construction programs or projects, applicants must complete and submit the SF-424A, “Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs” form. All of the required application forms are available with this announcement on Grants.gov. Federal award recipients and subrecipients are subject to Federal award cost principles in 2 CFR 200. Applicants must show funds requested from this Federal program separately from any other Federal sources of funding. In the “Budget Summary” section of the appropriate SF-424 budget form, use the first row for funding requested from this Federal program. Use subsequent row(s) for funding requested from this Federal program. Use subsequent row(s) for other Federal funding. Enter each Federal program’s CFDA number(s) in the corresponding fields on the form. The CFDA number(s) for this program appears on the first page of this announcement.

Budget Narrative

Describe and justify requested budget items and costs. Detail how the SF-424 Budget Information, Object Class Category totals were determined. For personnel salary costs, include the baseline salary figures and the estimates of time. Describe any item of cost that requires prior approval under the Federal cost principles. See [2 CFR 200.407](#) “Prior written approval (prior approval)” for more information. If equipment purchased previously with Federal funds is available for the project, provide a list of that equipment and identify the Federal funding source. Identify any cash or in-kind contributions that a partner or other entity will contribute to the project and describe how the contributions directly and substantively benefit completion of the project. For in-kind contributions, include the source, the amount, and the valuation methodology used to determine the total value. See 2 CFR 200.306 “Cost sharing or matching” for more information.

Though matching funds are not required to qualify for SDJV funding, it is important that applicants clearly identify all of the sources of funding for the project (including in-kind contributions), and how that funding will complement use of SDJV funds.

Provide a Budget Summary Table, consistent with the information in form SF-424A, concisely showing cost categories, major line items, sources of funding and project totals.

Describe and justify requested budget items and costs. Detail how the SF-424 Budget Information, Object Class Category totals were determined. For personnel salary costs, include baseline salary figures, benefits and estimates of time dedicated to the project. Clearly identify the rate and basis for required indirect costs. Describe any item of cost that requires prior approval under the Federal cost principles. See [2 CFR 200.407](#) “Prior written approval (prior approval)” for more information. If equipment purchased previously with Federal funds is available for the project, provide a list of that equipment and identify the Federal funding source. Identify any cash or in-kind contributions that a partner or other entity will contribute to the project and describe how the contributions directly and substantively benefit completion of the project. For in-kind contributions, include the source, the amount, and the valuation methodology used to determine the total value. See [2 CFR 200.306](#) “Cost sharing or matching” for more information.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), [2 CFR §1402.112](#),

applicants must state in their application if any actual or potential conflict of interest exists at the time of submission.

(a) Applicability.

(1) This section intends to ensure that non-Federal entities and their employees take appropriate steps to avoid conflicts of interest in their responsibilities under or with respect to Federal financial assistance agreements.

(2) In the procurement of supplies, equipment, construction, and services by recipients and by sub recipients, the conflict of interest provisions in 2 CFR 200.318 apply.

(b) Notification.

(1) Non-Federal entities, including applicants for financial assistance awards, must disclose in writing any conflict of interest to the DOI awarding agency or pass-through entity in accordance with 2 CFR 200.112.

(2) Recipients must establish internal controls that include, at a minimum, procedures to identify, disclose, and mitigate or eliminate identified conflicts of interest. The recipient is responsible for notifying the Financial Assistance Officer in writing of any conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of the award, including those that have been reported by sub recipients.

(c) *Restrictions on lobbying.* Non-Federal entities are strictly prohibited from using funds under a grant or cooperative agreement for lobbying activities and must provide the required certifications and disclosures pursuant to 43 CFR part 18 and 31 U.S.C. 1352.

(d) *Review procedures.* The Financial Assistance Officer will examine each conflict of interest disclosure on the basis of its particular facts and the nature of the proposed grant or cooperative

agreement, and will determine whether a significant potential conflict exists and, if it does, develop an appropriate means for resolving it.

(e) Enforcement. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the government may be cause for termination of the award. Failure to make required disclosures may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338, Remedies for noncompliance, including suspension or debarment (see also 2 CFR part 180).

Single Audit Reporting Statement

All U.S. states, local governments, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending \$750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in the applicant's fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System](#). U.S. state, local government, federally recognized Indian tribal government, and non-profit applicants must state if your organization was or was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year. If your organization was required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year, provide the EIN associated with that report and state if it is available through the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse](#) website.

All U.S. states, local governments, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending \$750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in the applicant's fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System](#). U.S. state, local government, federally recognized Indian tribal government, and non-profit applicants must state if your organization was or was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year. If your organization was required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year, provide the EIN associated with that report and state if it is available through the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse website](#).

Certification Regarding Lobbying

Applicants requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funding must certify to the statements in [43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying](#). If this application requests more than \$100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Official's signature on the appropriate SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance form also represents the entity's certification of the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A.

Applicants requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funding must certify to the statements in [43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying](#). If this application requests more than \$100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Official's signature on the appropriate SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance form also represents the entity's certification of the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A.

Applicants and recipients must not use any federally appropriated funds (annually appropriated or continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a Federal award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any U.S. agency, a Member of the U.S. Congress, an officer or employee of the U.S. Congress, or an employee of a Member of the U.S. Congress connection with the award. Applicants and recipients must complete and submit the [SF-LLL, "Disclosure of](#)

[Lobbying Activities](#)” form if the Federal share of the proposal or award is more than \$100,000 and the applicant or recipient has made or has agreed to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with the application or award. The SF-LLL form is available with this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. See 43 CFR, Subpart 18.100 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

Applicants and recipients must not use any federally appropriated funds (annually appropriated or continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a Federal award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any U.S. agency, a Member of the U.S. Congress, an officer or employee of the U.S. Congress, or an employee of a Member of the U.S. Congress connection with the award. Applicants and recipients must complete and submit the [SF-LLL, “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities” form](#) if the Federal share of the proposal or award is more than \$100,000 and the applicant or recipient has made or has agreed to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with the application or award. The SF-LLL form is available with this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. See 43 CFR, Subpart 18.100 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement

Applicants must provide a statement indicating if there is any overlap between this Federal application and any other Federal application, or funded project, in regards to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel. If no such overlap or duplication exists, state, “There are no overlaps or duplication between this application and any of our other Federal applications or funded projects, including in regards to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel”. If any such overlap exists, provide a complete description of overlaps or duplications between this proposal and any other federally funded project or application in regards to activities, costs, and time commitment of key personnel, as applicable. Provide a copy of any overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity and identify when that proposal was submitted, to whom (entity name and program), and when you anticipate being notified of their funding decision. When overlap exists, your statement must end with “We understand that if at any time we receive funding from another source that is duplicative of the funding we are requesting from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in this application, we will immediately notify the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service point of contact identified in this Funding Opportunity in writing.”

Applicants must provide a statement indicating if there is any overlap between this Federal application and any other Federal application, or funded project, in regards to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel. If no such overlap or duplication exists, state, “There are no overlaps or duplication between this application and any of our other Federal applications or funded projects, including in regards to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel”. If any such overlap exists, provide a complete description of overlaps or duplications between this proposal and any other federally funded project or application in regards to activities, costs, and time commitment of key personnel, as applicable. Provide a copy of any overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity and identify when that proposal was submitted, to whom (entity name and program), and when you anticipate being notified of their funding decision. When overlap exists, your statement must end with “We

understand that if at any time we receive funding from another source that is duplicative of the funding we are requesting from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in this application, we will immediately notify the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service point of contact identified in this Funding Opportunity in writing.”

D3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Registration: This requirement does not apply to individuals applying for funds as individual (i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization you may own or operate) or any entity with an exception approved by the funding bureau or office in accordance with bureau or office policy. All other applicants are required to obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet and then register in SAM.gov prior to submitting a Federal award application. Federal award recipients must continue to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information through the life of their Federal award(s). See the “Submission Requirements” section of this document below for more information on SAM.gov registration. We may not make a Federal award to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the program is ready to make an award, the program may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. The program can use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant. **There is no cost to register with Dun & Bradstreet or SAM.gov.** There are third-party vendors who will charge a fee in exchange for registering entities with Dun & Bradstreet and SAM.gov; **please be aware you can register and request help for free.**

Obtain a DUNS Number

Request a DUNS Number through the Dun & Bradstreet website. For technical difficulties, send an email to the D&B SAM Help Desk. Please ensure that you are able to receive emails from SAMHelp@dnb.com. The Grants.gov “Obtain a DUNS Number” webpage also provides detailed instructions. Once assigned a DUNS number, your organization must maintain up-to-date information with Dun & Bradstreet. Applicants must enter their DUNS number in the “Organizational DUNS” field on the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance form.

Register with the System for Award Management (SAM)

Register on the SAM.gov website. “Help” tab on the website contains User Guides and other information to assist you with registration. The Grants.gov Register with SAM page also provides detailed instructions. You can also contact the supporting Federal Service Desk for help registering in SAM. Once registered in SAM, entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least once every 12 months from the date previously registered. Entities are strongly encouraged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure their information is up to date and reflects changes that may have been to the entity’s DUNS or IRS information.

Foreign entities who want to receive payment directly to a U.S. bank account must enter and maintain valid, current banking information in SAM.

D4. Submission Dates and Times

Due Date for Applications

01/04/2021

Application Due Date Explanation

Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m., Alaska Time, on the listed application due date. All application materials must be received no later than 01/04/2021; 5:00PM Alaska Standard Time. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure confirmation of delivery by any means (e.g., electronic, mail, or personal/courier delivery). If applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the deadline is 9:00PM Eastern Time. If application is sent by email, please request an email confirmation from Service Project Officer acknowledging receipt of application. Applications received after that date will be considered only under extraordinary circumstances.

D5. Intergovernmental Review

Prior to application submission, U.S. state and local government applicants should visit the [OMB Office of Federal Financial Management website](#) and view the "State Point of Contact (SPOC) List" to determine whether their application is subject to the state intergovernmental review process under Executive Order (E.O.) 12372 "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." States not on the list do not participate in the intergovernmental review process, and therefore do not have a SPOC. If you are located within a State that does not have a SPOC, you may send application materials directly to a Federal awarding agency. If your state is on the list, contact the designated entity for more information on the state's prior review requirements for Federal assistance applications.

D6. Funding Restrictions

Pre-award costs up to 90 days prior to award require approval of the FASO Manager. Cooperative agreements issued to Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) Network partners that will qualify as CESU projects will be subject to the CESU indirect cost rate cap (currently 17.5%).

Indirect Costs: Individuals

Individuals applying for and receiving funds separate from a business or non-profit organization he/she may operate are not eligible to charge indirect costs to their award. If you are an individual applying for funding, you must not include any indirect costs in your proposed budget. Individuals are not required to submit any of the following statements regarding indirect costs.

Indirect Costs: Organizations

The Federal awarding agency that provides the largest amount of direct funding to your organization is your cognizant agency for indirect costs, unless otherwise assigned by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). If the Department of the Interior is your organization's cognizant agency, the Interior Business Center will negotiate your indirect cost rate. Contact the Interior Business Center by phone 916-930-3803 or using the [IBC Email Submission Form](#). See the [IBC Website](#) for more information.

Organizations must have an active Federal award before they can submit an indirect cost rate proposal to their cognizant agency. Failure to establish an approved rate during the award period renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs unallowable under the award. Recipients must have prior written approval from the Service to use amounts budgeted for direct costs to satisfy cost-share or match requirements or to cover unallowable indirect costs. Recipients shall not shift unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.

Required Indirect Cost Statement to be submitted with Application

All organizations must include the applicable statement from the following list in their application, and attach to their application any documentation identified in the applicable statement:

We are:

- A U.S. state or local government entity receiving more than \$35 million in direct Federal funding each year with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We submit our indirect cost rate proposals to our cognizant agency. Attached is a copy of our most recently approved rate agreement/certification.
- A U.S. state or local government entity receiving less than \$35 million in direct Federal funding with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We have prepared and will retain for audit an indirect cost rate proposal and related documentation.
- A [insert your organization type; U.S. states and local governments, do not use this statement] that has previously negotiated or currently has an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. [Insert either: “Attached is a copy of our most recently approved but expired rate agreement. In the event an award is made, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award is made.” or “Attached is a copy of our current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement.”]
- A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. If we receive an award, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award date.
- A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is lower than 10%. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate; must be lower than 10%]. However, if we receive an award we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat indirect cost rate of [insert rate; must be lower than 10%] against [insert a clear description of the direct cost base against which your rate is charged (e.g., salaries; salaries and fringe benefits; or modified total direct costs). However, please note that your organization cannot charge indirect costs in excess of the indirect costs that would be recovered if applied against modified total direct costs as defined in [§2 CFR 200.68](#)]. We understand that we must notify the Service in writing if we establish an approved rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period.
- A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is 10% or higher. Our indirect cost

rate is [insert your organization's indirect rate; must be 10% or higher]. However, if we receive an award we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat *de minimis* indirect cost rate of 10% to be charged against modified total direct project costs as defined in [2 CFR §200.68](#). We understand that we must notify the Service in writing if we establish a negotiated rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period. We understand that additional Federal funds may not be available to support an unexpected increase in indirect costs during the project period and that such changes are subject to review, negotiation, and prior approval by the Service.

- A [insert your organization type] that is submitting this proposal for consideration under the [insert either "Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit Program" or "Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Network"], which has a Department of the Interior-approved indirect cost rate cap of [insert program rate]. If we have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that we must apply this reduced rate against the same direct cost base as identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement per [2 CFR §1402.414](#). If we do not have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that we must charge indirect costs against the modified total direct cost base defined in 2 CFR §200.68 "Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)". We understand that we must request prior approval from the Service to use the 2 CFR 200 MTDC base instead of the base identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement. We understand that Service approval of such a request will be based on: 1) a determination that our approved base is only a subset of the MTDC (such as salaries and wages); and 2) that use of the MTDC base will still result in a reduction of the total indirect costs to be charged to the award. In accordance with 2 CFR §200.405, we understand that indirect costs not recovered due to a voluntary reduction to our federally negotiated rate are not allowable for recovery via any other means.
- A [insert your organization type] that will charge all costs directly.

D7. Other Submission Requirements

Download the Application Package linked to this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov to begin the application process. Downloading and saving the Application Package to your computer makes the required government-wide standard forms fillable and printable. Completed applications may be submitted by mail, by email, electronically through Grants.gov, or as otherwise described in the Grants.gov funding opportunity. The Sea Duck Joint Venture encourages applicants to submit their applications online directly through Grants.gov. Please select **ONE** of the submission options:

1. **Submit an Application Through Grants.gov.** Applicants must first [register an account with Grants.gov](#) and complete all steps of the registration process before they can apply through Grants.gov. Grants.gov registration requires the entity to create an account, create an account profile, and establish authorized profile roles, including the applicant's authorized representative. Registration can take three to five business days or longer, if you do not complete the required steps in a timely manner.

Grants.gov Workspace Application. Grants.gov applicants apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement, you can create individual instances of a workspace. To apply, the applicant will [create, complete, and submit a Workspace application package for this Funding Opportunity directly on Grants.gov](#). Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date to allow time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission. When attaching files to the Grants.gov application, please do not assign file names longer than 20 characters, including spaces. File names longer than 20 characters will prevent your application received by Grants.gov from automatically downloading into the Service's financial assistance management system. Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that the transmission of the application to Grants.gov takes time. Grants.gov sends either an error message or a "successfully received" message by email to the applicant's authorized representative once the transmission is complete. Please do not end the transmission process before receiving that message.

Proof of Timely Submission. Grants.gov automatically generates an electronic date and time stamp in the system upon application receipt. Grants.gov sends an acknowledgement of receipt with the date and time stamp and a unique Grants.gov application tracking number to the authorized representative by email. This email from Grants.gov serves as your proof of timely submission.

2. To submit an application by mail:

Number all pages of your printed application. Mail one, single-sided, unbound copy (do not staple or otherwise permanently bind pages) of your complete application to the Service program point of contact identified in the Grants.gov funding opportunity.

The required SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance and Assurances forms and any other required standard forms **MUST** be signed by your organization's authorized official. The Signature and Date fields on the standard forms downloaded from Grants.gov are pre-populated with the text "Completed by Grants.gov upon submission" or "Completed on submission to Grants.gov". **Remove this text (manually or digitally) before signing the forms.**

Format all of your documents to print on Letter size (8 ½" x 11") paper. Format all pages to display and print page numbers. Scanned documents should be scanned in Letter format, as black and white images only. Where possible, save scanned documents in .pdf format. E-mail your application to the Service program point of contact identified in the Grants.gov funding opportunity.

The required SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance and Assurances forms and any other required standard forms **MUST** be signed by your organization's authorized official. The Signature and Date fields on the standard forms downloaded from Grants.gov are pre-populated with the text "Completed by Grants.gov upon submission" or "Completed on submission to Grants.gov". Remove this text (manually or digitally) before signing the forms.

- 3. Federal Agency Applicants** may submit proposal for funding under this NOFO as authorized under Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956; 16 U.S.C. 742 and must submit their

proposals directly to the granting agency point of contact identified in Section VIII. Agency Contacts. Submission must be either by mail or email as described above (Federal agencies will be rated using the same merit review process as all other applicants).

NOTE: *In the event a Fish and Wildlife Service Program submits a proposal and is awarded funding, if they intend to issue a subaward or contract, they MUST go through the applicable standard procurement process. They CANNOT use this announcement for the purpose of awarding a separate contract or financial assistance award.*

E. Application Review Information

E1. Criteria

Evaluation Criteria and Relative Category Weights

Maximum Points: 20

To be considered for funding, applications must address at least one of the science needs identified in this Notice of Funding Opportunity. Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria and Relative Category Weights, in descending order of importance:	
1. Relation to Priorities Identified in NOFO (WEIGHT = 6)	
a. Does the proposal clearly address a priority or information need(s) identified in the NOFO?	
b. Background and justification	
- is the importance to management or conservation of sea ducks clearly articulated?	
- will the results be broadly applicable? (i.e., appropriate geographic scale and/or results applicable across species)	
c. Objectives	
- are objectives clear and realistically achievable?	
2. Methodology and Approach (WEIGHT =5)	
a. Methodology and approach	
-are the methods or general approach appropriate?	
-if applicable, are sample sizes adequate?	
-is the project timeline realistic?	
-is the study being conducted in an appropriate location(s)?	
b. What is the likelihood of success for this project and what are the risks?	
- do PIs have a proven track record of successful investigations?	

c. How will the results of the project be made available to the management community, scientific community, or other stakeholders?	
-will results be communicated effectively and in a timely manner?	
3. Funding (WEIGHT =3)	
a. Is the study cost effective/ logistically efficient?	
b. Are cost estimates reasonable and allowable?	
c. Are there cash or in-kind contributions from cooperating partners?	
Will the project provide good return on investment?	
4. Other Considerations (WEIGHT =3)	
a. Does the study significantly complement other ongoing studies (i.e., is there an added value to the study)?	
b. Does the study involve multiple partners?	
c. Will this study bring on new partners to the SDJV?	
d. Is this a one-time or unique opportunity?	
Evaluation Category Score	Definition of Score
1	meets none or few criteria in Evaluation Category
2	meets most criteria in Evaluation Category, but exceptional at none
3	meets most criteria in Evaluation Category, but exceptional in few
4	meets all criteria in Evaluation Category, and exceptional for several
5	meets all criteria in Evaluation Category at consistently high level

E2. Review and Selection Process

Prior to award, the program will review any applicant statement regarding potential overlap or duplication between the project to be funded and any other funded or proposed project in terms of activities, funding, or time commitment of key personnel. Depending on the circumstances, the program may request modification to the application, other pending applications, or an active award, as needed to eliminate any duplication of effort, or the Bureau may choose not to fund the selected project.

The program may not make a Federal award to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the Bureau is ready to make an award, the program may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. The program can use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Prior to award, the program will evaluate the risk posed by applicants as required in 2 CFR 200.205. Programs document applicant risk evaluations using the Bureau's "Financial Assistance Recipient Risk Assessment" form. Prior to approving awards for Federal funding in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), the Bureau is required to review and consider any information about or from the applicant found in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System. The Bureau will consider this information when completing the risk review. The Bureau uses the results of the risk evaluation to establish monitoring plans, recipient reporting frequency requirements, and to determine if one or more of the specific award conditions in 2 CFR 200.207 should be applied to the award.

Applications will be reviewed and numerically scored by up to 16 members of the SDJV Continental Technical Team. Applications will be scored based on announced criteria. The Continental Technical Team will make recommendations for project funding to the SDJV Management Board, which will make final decisions on funding. Application selection will be based upon scores, available funding, and best overall value to the Service and Sea Duck Joint Venture program. Proposals for multi-year funding will be considered but funding in out-years will be conditional on acceptable performance and availability of future funds and federal appropriations.

Prior to participating in any review or evaluation process, all staff and peer reviewers, evaluators, panel members, and advisors must complete applicable Conflict of Interest form; either Conflict of Interest FWS FA Source Selection form or Conflict of Interest Form Other than FWS FA Source Selection.

Prior to award, the program will review any applicant statement regarding potential overlap or duplication between the project to be funded and any other funded or proposed project in terms of activities, funding, or time commitment of key personnel. Depending on the circumstances, the program may request modification to the application, other pending applications, or an active award, as needed to eliminate any duplication of effort, or the Bureau may choose not to fund the selected project. The program may not make a Federal award to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the Bureau is ready to make an award, the program may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. The program can use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

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E3. CFR – Regulatory Information

See the [Service's General Award Terms and Conditions](#) for the general administrative and national policy requirements applicable to Service awards. The Service will communicate any other program- or project-specific special terms and conditions to recipients in their notices of award.

E4. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

Proposal selection will be determined in February 2021, followed by administrative review. Awards will be announced in late February 2021. Fund obligation and disbursement will be done upon completion of a financial agreement, likely late in Fiscal year 2021 (September 2021). In the event of delayed agency budget approvals or delays in establishing agreements, funds may not be available for spending until after September 2021. Applicants should carefully consider critical scheduling needs for funds and coordinate closely with program managers.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

F1. Federal Award Notices

F2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Data Availability

Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), [2 CFR §1402.315](#):

(a) All data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, valuation products or other scientific assessments in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual, resulting from a financial assistance agreement is available for use by the Department of the Interior, including being available in a manner that is sufficient for independent verification.

(b) The Federal Government has the right to:

(1) Obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, produced under a Federal award; and

(2) Authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, for Federal purposes, including to allow for meaningful third-party evaluation.

See the [Service's General Award Terms and Conditions](#) for the general administrative and national policy requirements applicable to Service awards. The Service will communicate any other program- or project-specific special terms and conditions to recipients in their notices of award.

F3. Reporting

Financial Reports

All recipients must use the [SF-425, Federal Financial Report](#) form for financial reporting. At a minimum, all recipients must submit a **final** financial report. Final reports are due no later than 90 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim** financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award. The only exception to the interim financial reporting requirement is if the recipient is required to use the SF 270/271 to request payment and requests payment at least once annually through the entire award period of performance. We will describe all financial reporting requirements in the Notice of Award.

Performance Reports

Performance reports must contain a comparison of actual accomplishments with the established goals and objectives of the award; a description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and any other pertinent information relevant to the project results. Final reports are due no later than 90 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim** financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award.

Significant Development Reports

Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates which have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Bureau in writing as soon as the recipient becomes aware of any problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the Federal award. This disclosure must include a statement of any corrective action(s) taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation. The recipient should also notify the Service in writing of any favorable developments that enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

Real Property Reports

Recipients and subrecipients are required to submit status reports on the status of real property acquired under the award in which the Federal government retains an interest. The required frequency of these reports will depend on the anticipated length of the Federal interest period. The Bureau will include recipient-specific real property reporting requirements, including the required data elements, reporting frequency, and report due dates, in the Notice of Award when applicable.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures

Recipients must notify the program immediately in writing of any conflict of interest that arise during the life of their Federal award, including those reported to them by any subrecipient under the award. Recipients must notify the program in writing if any employees, including subrecipient and contractor personnel, are related to, married to, or have a close personal relationship with any Federal employee in the Federal funding program or who otherwise may have been involved in the review and selection of the award. The term employee means any individual engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the Federal award. Recipients may not have a former Federal employee as a key project official, or in any other substantial role related to their award, whose participation put them out of compliance with the legal authorities addressing post-Government employment restrictions. See the [U.S. Office of Government Ethics](#)

[website](#) for more information on these restrictions. The Service will examine each conflict of interest disclosure based on its particular facts and the nature of the project and will determine if a significant potential conflict exists. If it does, the Service will work with the recipient to determine an appropriate resolution. Failure to disclose and resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the Service may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance, including termination of the award.

Other Mandatory Disclosures

The Non-Federal entity or applicant for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Non-Federal entities that receive a Federal award including the terms and conditions outlined in 2 CFR 200, Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to SAM. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance, including suspension or debarment.

Reporting Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance

If the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all Federal awarding agencies exceeds \$10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of this Federal award, then you as the recipient during that period of time must maintain the currency of information reported to the System for Award Management (SAM) that is made available in the designated integrity and performance system (currently the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)) about civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings in accordance with Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

G1. Program Technical Contact

For **programmatic technical assistance**, contact:

First Name:

David

Last Name:

Safine

Address:

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Alaska Region, 1011 E. Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 95503

Telephone:

(907) 786-3908 Office

Email:

david_Safine@fws.gov

G2. Program Administration

For **program administration assistance**, contact:

First Name:

Willard

Last Name:

Lacy

Address:

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Alaska Region, 1011 E. Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 95503

Telephone:

(907) 786-3392

Email:

willard_lacy@fws.gov

G3. Application System Technical Support

For **Grants.gov technical registration and submission, downloading forms and application packages**, contact:

Name:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Telephone:

1-800-518-4726

Email:

Support@grants.gov

For **GrantSolutions technical registration and submissions, downloading forms and application packages**, contact:

Name:

GrantSolutions Customer Support

Telephone:

1-866-577-0771

Email:

Help@grantsolutions.gov

H. Other Information

Payments

Domestic recipients are required to register in and receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP), unless approved for a waiver by the Service program. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank outside the U.S. are required to receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's International Treasury Services (ITS) System. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank in the U.S. are required to enter and maintain current banking details in their SAM.gov entity profile and

receive payment through the Automated Clearing House network by electronic funds transfer (EFT). The Bureau will include recipient-specific instructions on how to request payment, including identification of any additional information required and where to submit payment requests, as applicable, in all Notices of Award.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT:

OMB Control Number: 1018-0100, Expiration Date: 7/31/2021

We are collecting this information in accordance with the authorizing legislation identified above. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We will use the information you provide to conduct a competitive review and select projects for funding and, if awarded, to evaluate performance. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. We estimate that it will take you on average about 40 hours to complete an initial application, about 3 hours to revise the terms of an award, and about 8 hours per report to prepare and submit financial and performance reports, including time to maintain records and gather information. Actual time for these activities will vary depending on program-specific requirements. You may send comments on the burden estimate or any other aspect of this information collection to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.