

from the proposed expansion in hunting and sport fishing opportunities is \$199,614. However, this estimate is seriously flawed, since it includes only the gains from increased hunting and fishing opportunities, but excludes the losses in consumer surplus of non-consumptive users due to a decline in wildlife watching opportunities. Before any rule changes are considered, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should conduct a new economic analysis of changes to the consumer surplus, which takes all relevant factors, including changes in non-consumptive uses, into consideration."

Response: Increased hunting and fishing opportunities may impact wildlife watching opportunities in two ways. First, increased hunting would decrease the wildlife population that is being hunted (*e.g.*, deer, migratory birds, *etc.*). As such, the quality of a wildlife watching activity may slightly decline because a visitor may be less likely to view wildlife. However, we would expect this impact to only be a small decrease to consumer surplus. Second, some wildlife watching visitors may choose not to visit during hunting season. Instead, they may choose to visit before or after the hunting season or choose to visit a different area for their wildlife watching activities. Again, we would expect this impact to be a small decrease to consumer surplus because the quality of the visit may be impacted. If the visitor chooses to no longer view wildlife at all, then there would be a loss of consumer surplus and visitor expenditures to the region. While these are valid impacts to wildlife watching

opportunities, we do not have the data to properly quantify them. For example, we do not know how a slight change to wildlife populations will influence wildlife watching behavior. Because this information is not available, and we believe these shifts in visitation to be small, we are unable to conduct an economic analysis that addresses this concern.

Other changes from the proposed rule were as follows: We clarified the issue of only allowing specific breeds of dogs on Grand Cote National Wildlife Refuge and Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge (§ 32.37), in the State of Louisiana. We also made several administrative changes for clarity under North Platte and Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuges (§ 32.46) in the State of Nebraska.

Effective Date

This rule is effective upon publication in the **Federal Register**. We have determined that any further delay in implementing these refuge-specific hunting and sport fishing regulations would not be in the public interest, in that a delay would hinder the effective planning and administration of the hunting and fishing programs. We provided a 30-day comment period for the August 14, 2003, proposed rule. An additional delay would jeopardize holding the hunting and/or fishing programs this year or shorten their duration and thereby lessen the management effectiveness of this regulation. This rule does not impact the public generally in terms of requiring lead time for compliance.

Rather it relieves restrictions in that it allow activities on refuges that we would otherwise prohibit. Therefore, we find good cause under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3) to make this rule effective upon publication.

New Hunting and Fishing Programs

In preparation for opening additional refuges to hunting and fishing, or to initiating new hunting or fishing programs on refuges already open, we document appropriate compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) through an Environmental Assessment with a finding of No Significant Impact, an Environmental Impact Statement with a Record of Decision, or determine and document that the action qualifies for a Categorical Exclusion. We also conduct and document internal consultations under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and coordinate with the State(s), and if appropriate, Tribe(s) in or near the refuge.

Upon review of these documents, we have determined that the opening of these National Wildlife Refuges to hunting and/or fishing is compatible with the purpose of the refuge and the mission of the system, and not inconsistent with applicable State laws. A copy of the compatibility determinations for each respective refuge is available upon request from the Regional Office noted under the heading "Available Information for Specific Refuges."

We allow the following wildlife-dependent recreational activities:

Refuge	State	Migratory bird hunting	Upland game hunt- ing	Big game hunting	Sport fishing
Wapanocca	Arkansas	X	.....	X	.....
Grand Cote	Louisiana	X	X	X	.....
Northern Tallgrass Prairie	Minnesota/Iowa	X	X	X	.....
Boyer Chute	Nebraska	X	.....	X	.....
DeSoto	Iowa .....	.....	X	.....	.....
Big Branch Marsh	Louisiana .....	.....	X	.....	.....
North Platte	Nebraska .....	.....	X	X	.....
Coldwater	Mississippi .....	.....	.....	.....	X
Bandon Marsh	Oregon .....	.....	.....	.....	X
Rappahannock River Valley	Virginia .....	.....	.....	.....	X

Lands acquired as "waterfowl production areas," which we generally manage as part of Wetland Management Districts, are open to the hunting of migratory game birds, upland game, big game, and sport fishing subject to the provisions of State law and regulations (*see* 50 CFR 32.1 and 32.4). This year we are adding Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District in Minnesota to

the list of refuges open for all four of these activities.

We are correcting an administrative error in 50 CFR part 32 that occurred with regard to Bandon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon. It has come to our attention that the CFR does not indicate that the refuge is open to sport fishing. We opened the refuge to sport fishing in 1986 (55 FR 30655, 30663; August 28, 1986). It appears that a

clerical error was made when the rules adopted in 1986 were being published in the subsequent edition of the CFR. We are correcting that error and part 32 will now reflect that the refuge is open to sport fishing. Coldwater National Wildlife Refuge was part of Tallahatchie National Wildlife Refuge (both in Mississippi) and is an area of the System that we opened by reason of its having been included in Tallahatchie's