



IDAHO FISH AND GAME GOLDSHEET

March 2025 Commission Meeting

Agenda Item: 2025 Migratory Game Bird Briefing

Presented by: Jeff Knetter

Position/Title: Program Coordinator – Upland Game & Migratory Game Birds

Agenda Item No.: 10

Bureau Chief Approval: SR

Background:

Idaho's migratory game bird seasons are set within a framework established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), after consulting with state fish and wildlife agencies. Regulatory decisions are made using biological data observed the previous year. This process and schedule allow for final season frameworks (e.g., outside dates, season lengths, bag limits) to be finalized early enough for state agencies to select and publish season dates well in advance of fall seasons. Furthermore, this process allows the Commission to set seasons for all migratory game birds concurrently.

The Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) process determines the general duck season framework. This process was adopted by the USFWS in 1996 and is used annually to evaluate duck habitat and populations. The AHM process informs the optimal season framework for U.S. duck seasons. Special harvest strategies are used for some of the less common ducks.

Goose seasons are determined by flyway management plans for each goose population.

American crow seasons are set by states as per the hunting regulations defined in the Federal Register (50 CFR 20.133).

Dove seasons are determined by the mourning dove harvest strategy for doves in the Western Management Unit, which is based on band returns.

Sandhill crane seasons are directed by the Pacific Flyway Council Rocky Mountain Population Crane Plan.

Staff will review the regulatory process at the meeting. Staff will also outline the frameworks finalized by the USFWS in October 2024 and review season proposals scoped with the public. The Commission will set Idaho's migratory game bird seasons during their April 15 conference call.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Idaho Code 36-104(2) grants authority to the Commission to determine when an open season may be declared for take of wildlife. IDAPA 13.01.09.301 establishes rules regarding the take of migratory game birds.



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Public Involvement Process:

Information on migratory bird hunting seasons has been collected by the Department through recent duck and goose hunter opinion surveys. Public will also have the opportunity to comment on migratory bird season proposals through the Department's website in March 2025.

Justification:

To inform the Commission on the migratory game bird season setting process and Idaho's zone structure in preparation for migratory game bird season setting during the April 2025 conference call.

Staff Recommendation:

Informational only.

Suggested Motion:

Informational only.