



IDAHO FISH AND GAME GOLDSHEET

May 29th, 2026, Commission Conference Call

Agenda Item: Waterfowl Zone Modifications (Action)

Presented by: Jeffrey Knetter

**Position/Title: Upland Game and Migratory Game Bird
Program Coordinator**

**Agenda Item No.: 2
Supervisor Approval: SR**

Background:

Waterfowl zones are regulatory tools used to distribute hunting opportunities based on differences in waterfowl abundance across time, geography, and hunter use patterns. Federal guidelines define how states may use zones and splits. A zone is any contiguous geographic area within a state where season dates may be set independently. States may only change duck zones once every five years but may revise goose zones annually.

The Commission most recently updated goose zones in July 2024 and duck zones in July 2025. Although the deadline for announcing duck zone changes was August 31, 2025, ongoing federal review of on frameworks provides a one-time opportunity to adjust configurations further before the 2026–2027 seasons.

Early-fall concentrations of Canada geese in the upper Bear River (Alexander Reservoir upstream to Bear Lake) can cause crop damage. These areas in Bear Lake and Caribou counties were not included in the early-season goose zones approved by the Commission in July 2024. Additionally, the Bear River downstream of Alexander Dam can provide better late-season hunting opportunities when migratory birds are more abundant. Adjusting goose and duck zone boundaries in this area would allow earlier hunting opportunities to address agricultural conflicts with geese and better align duck and goose seasons with hunter opportunity and preferences.

Additionally, the Department took this opportunity to review all duck and goose zone boundaries in eastern Idaho simultaneously to improve consistency among zones, where possible.

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 the taking of wildlife. IDAPA 13.01.09.301 establishes rules regarding the take of migratory game birds. Idaho's migratory game bird seasons are set within a framework established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service after meeting with all state fish and wildlife agencies.

Public Involvement Process:

In 2024 and 2025, the Department conducted online surveys of goose and duck hunters to gather input on preferred season structures and zone configurations, within the confines of



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the federal framework. These survey results were used to guide Department recommendations to the Commission.

After the 2025–2026 seasons, the Department received additional direct feedback from landowners and hunters in Bear Lake and Caribou counties—areas that had low participation in the surveys. This feedback highlighted local concerns and helped inform Department recommendations to modify waterfowl zone configurations.

Justification:

Commission action is required to modify waterfowl zones.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff will present recommendations at the Commission meeting. Any duck and goose zone configurations would be in effect and apply to the Commission’s season-setting action for the 2026–2027 waterfowl seasons (action taken in May 2026). Duck zone configurations would remain in place through the 2030–2031 seasons.

Suggested Motion:

The Commission adopt staff recommendations for duck and goose zone configurations beginning with the 2026–2027 hunting seasons.



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Proposed changes to duck and goose hunting zones in Idaho

In each of the following sections, the map on the left depicts the zones last approved by the Commission and the map on the right depicts the proposed changes pending Commission approval (highlighting describes the proposed changes between the two maps)

Ducks

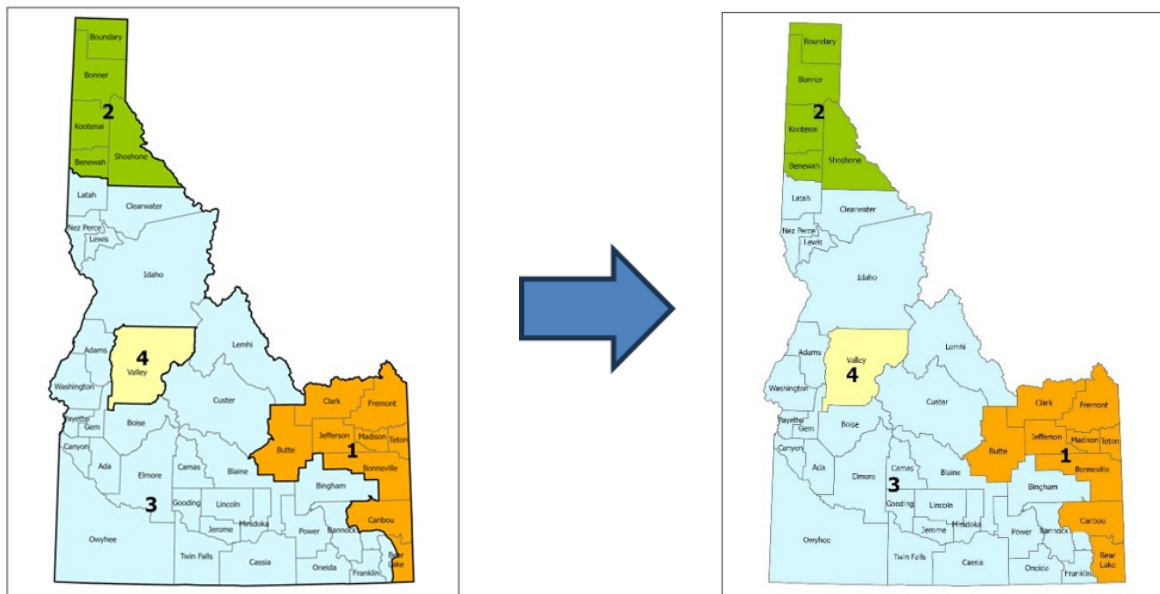
Zone 1: All of Bear Lake, Bonneville, Butte, Clark, Fremont, Jefferson, Madison, and Teton counties; that portion of Bingham County within the Blackfoot Reservoir drainage; and that portion of Caribou County north and east of the following boundary: beginning at Highway 30 on the Bannock-Caribou County line to Power Plant Road, then south across the Alexander dam on Alexander Reservoir to the northern boundary of the Caribou Targhee National Forest, and then south and east along the eastern border of the Caribou Targhee National Forest to the Bear Lake County line.

Zone 2: All of Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai, and Shoshone counties.

Zone 3: All of Ada, Adams, Bannock, Blaine, Boise, Camas, Canyon, Cassia, Clearwater, Custer, Elmore, Franklin, Gem, Gooding, Idaho, Jerome, Latah, Lemhi, Lewis, Lincoln, Minidoka, Nez Perce, Oneida, Owyhee, Payette, Power, Twin Falls, and Washington counties; that portion of Bingham County outside the Blackfoot Reservoir drainage; and that portion of Caribou County south and west of the following boundary: beginning at Highway 30 on the Bannock-Caribou County line to Power Plant Road, then south across the Alexander dam on Alexander Reservoir to the northern boundary of the Caribou Targhee National Forest, and then south and east along the eastern border of the Caribou Targhee National Forest to the Bear Lake County line.

Zone 4: All of Valley County.

Modification in the Southeast Region, along the boundary between zones 1 and 3 in Caribou and Bear Lake counties, to better align with hunter preferences:





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Canada Goose

Zone 1: All of Bonneville, Butte, Clark, Fremont, Jefferson, Madison, and Teton counties.

Zone 2: All of Bannock, Blaine, Cassia, Franklin, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka, Oneida, Power, and Twin Falls counties; that portion of Bingham County outside the Blackfoot Reservoir drainage; and that portion of Caribou County south and west of the following boundary: beginning at Highway 30 on the Bannock-Caribou County line to Power Plant Road, then south across the Alexander dam on Alexander Reservoir to the northern boundary of the Caribou Targhee National Forest, and then south and east along the eastern border of the Caribou Targhee National Forest to the Bear Lake County line.

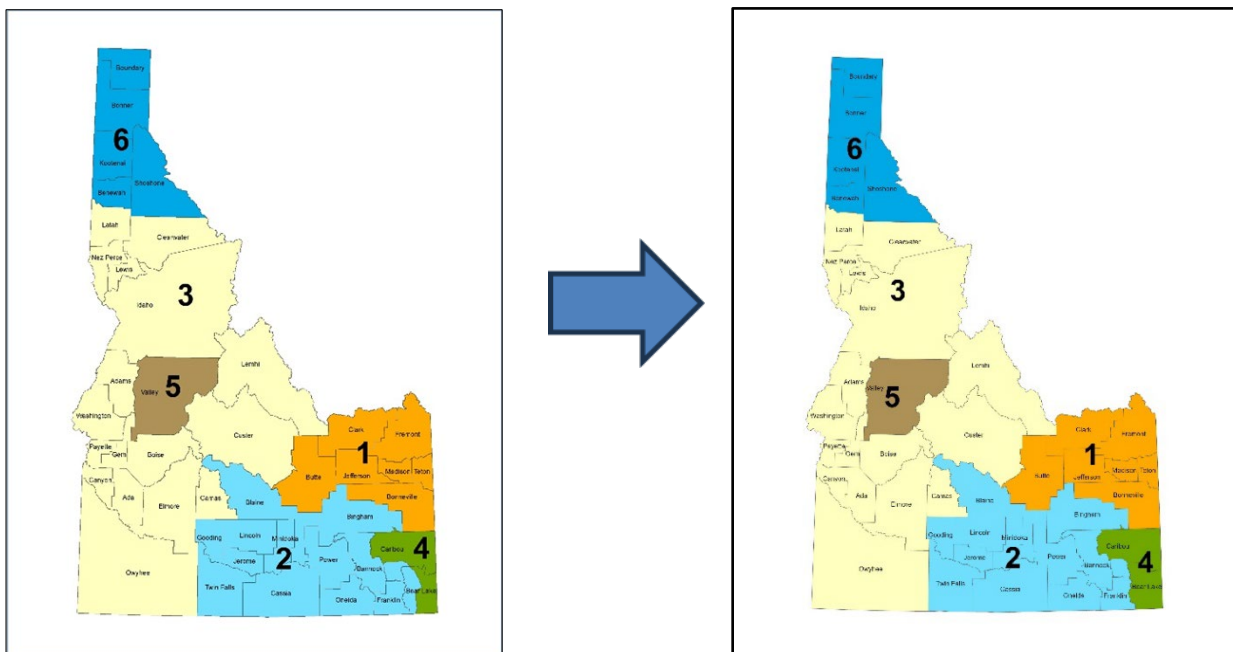
Zone 3: All of Ada, Adams, Boise, Camas, Canyon, Clearwater, Custer, Elmore, Gem, Idaho, Latah, Lemhi, Lewis, Nez Perce, Owyhee, Payette, and Washington counties.

Zone 4: All of Bear Lake County; that portion of Bingham County within the Blackfoot Reservoir drainage; and that portion of Caribou County north and east of the following boundary: beginning at Highway 30 on the Bannock-Caribou County line to Power Plant Road, then south across the Alexander dam on Alexander Reservoir to the northern boundary of the Caribou Targhee National Forest, and then south and east along the eastern border of the Caribou Targhee National Forest to the Bear Lake County line.

Zone 5: All of Valley County.

Zone 6: All of Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai, and Shoshone counties.

Modification in the Southeast Region, along the boundary between zones 2 and 4 in Caribou and Bear Lake counties, to better align with hunter preferences and address crop deprecations:





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Light Goose

Zone 1: All of Bear Lake, Fremont, Madison, and Teton counties; that portion of Bingham County within the Blackfoot Reservoir drainage; that portion of Bonneville County east of Interstate 15; that portion of Caribou County north and east of the following boundary: beginning at Highway 30 on the Bannock-Caribou County line to Power Plant Road, then south across the Alexander dam on Alexander Reservoir to the northern boundary of the Caribou Targhee National Forest, and then south and east along the eastern border of the Caribou Targhee National Forest to the Bear Lake County line; that portion of Clark County east of Interstate 15; and that portion of Jefferson County east of Interstate 15.

Zone 2: All of Bannock, Butte, Franklin, Oneida, and Power counties; that portion of Bingham County outside the Blackfoot Reservoir drainage; that portion of Bonneville County west of Interstate 15; that portion of Caribou County south and west of the following boundary: beginning at Highway 30 on the Bannock-Caribou County line to Power Plant Road, then south across the Alexander dam on Alexander Reservoir to the northern boundary of the Caribou Targhee National Forest, and then south and east along the eastern border of the Caribou Targhee National Forest to the Bear Lake County line; that portion of Clark County west of Interstate 15; and that portion of Jefferson County west of Interstate 15.

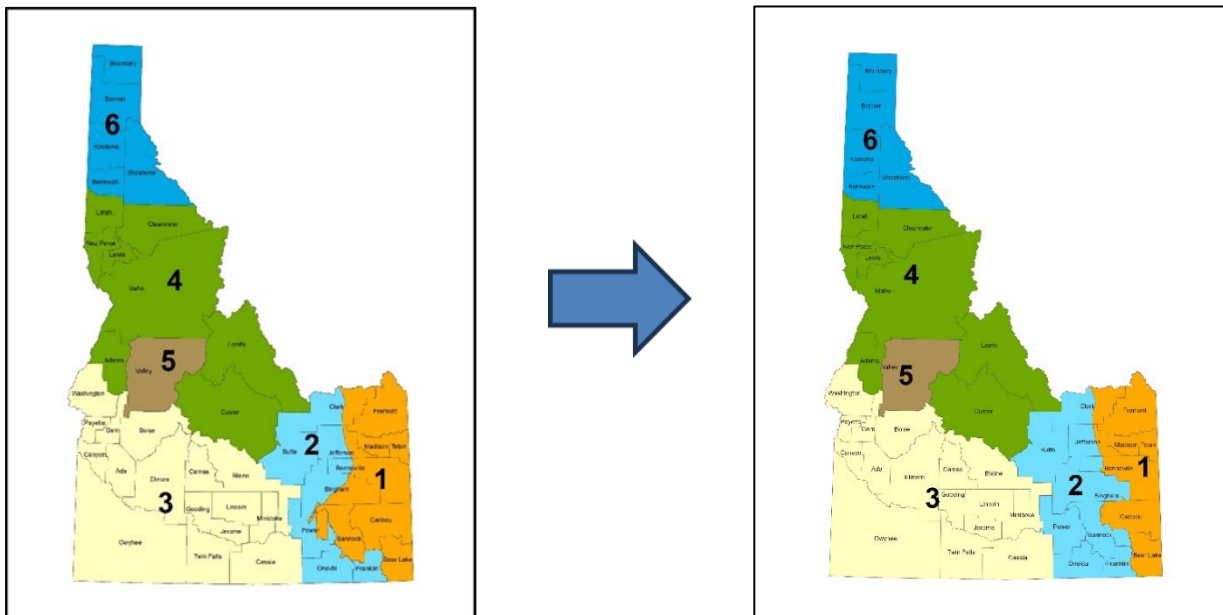
Zone 3: All of Ada, Blaine, Boise, Camas, Canyon, Cassia, Elmore, Gem, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka, Owyhee, Payette, Twin Falls, and Washington counties.

Zone 4: All of Adams, Clearwater, Custer, Idaho, Latah, Lemhi, Lewis, and Nez Perce counties.

Zone 5: All of Valley County.

Zone 6: All of Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai, and Shoshone counties.

Modification in the Southeast and Upper Snake regions, along the boundary between zones 1 and 2, to improve consistency among duck and goose zones:





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White-fronted Goose

Zone 1: All of Bear Lake, Bonneville, Butte, Clark, Fremont, Jefferson, Madison, and Teton counties; that portion of Bingham County within the Blackfoot Reservoir drainage; and that portion of Caribou County north and east of the following boundary: beginning at Highway 30 on the Bannock-Caribou County line to Power Plant Road, then south across the Alexander dam on Alexander Reservoir to the northern boundary of the Caribou Targhee National Forest, and then south and east along the eastern border of the Caribou Targhee National Forest to the Bear Lake County line.

Zone 2: All of Adams, Bannock, Blaine, Camas, Clearwater, Custer, Franklin, Idaho, Latah, Lemhi, Lewis, Nez Perce, Oneida, and Power counties; that portion of Bingham County outside the Blackfoot Reservoir drainage; and that portion of Caribou County south and west of the following boundary: beginning at Highway 30 on the Bannock-Caribou County line to Power Plant Road, then south across the Alexander dam on Alexander Reservoir to the northern boundary of the Caribou Targhee National Forest, and then south and east along the eastern border of the Caribou Targhee National Forest to the Bear Lake County line.

Zone 3: All of Ada, Boise, Canyon, Cassia, Elmore, Gem, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka, Owyhee, Payette, Twin Falls, and Washington counties.

Zone 4: All of Valley County.

Zone 5: All of Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai, and Shoshone counties.

Modification in the Southeast and Upper Snake regions, along the boundary between zones 1 and 2, to improve consistency among duck and goose zones:

