



IDAHO FISH AND GAME GOLDSHEET

July 2026 Commission Meeting

Agenda Item: Sage-grouse Tag Discount Order – Falconry

(Action)

Presented by: Jennifer Struthers

Position/Title: Wildlife Staff Biologist

Agenda Item No.: 5. I.

Supervisor Approval: SR

Background:

Sage-grouse were added to the list of species requiring game tags under Idaho Code 36-409 in 2021 with the goal of better regulation of sage-grouse harvest and distribution of hunting activity.

At its July 2026 meeting, the Commission will set sage-grouse season dates and tag limits by zone based on spring 2026 biological data, with a requirement that hunters purchase tags specific to the zone they choose to hunt. This includes tags for falconry hunting of sage-grouse from August 15, 2026 – March 15, 2027.

Under Idaho Code Section 36-403(a), all game tags are valid only during the time the corresponding annual license is valid. As such, 2026 sage-grouse tags will expire December 31, 2026. The Commission has adopted sage-grouse tag discount orders annually since the 2021-2022 falconry season (Order No. 21-67, 22-64, 24-19, and 25-19), with discounted tags issued to falconers for the first quarter of the calendar year expiring March 15 of the same calendar year.

Staff present a discount order for Commission consideration to address sage-grouse tag use for the remainder of the 2026–2027 falconry sage-grouse season. This discount order would allow the Department to issue tags for the winter portion of the 2026–2027 season at no charge to falconers who do not fill their 2026 sage-grouse tag(s) by the end of the calendar year. Newly issued tags would be valid for the 2027 portion of the 2026–2027 falconry season: January 1 – March 15, 2027.

A falconer who has a license and falconry permit valid for hunting in 2027 but who did not purchase a sage-grouse tag for the fall portion of the 2026–2027 falconry season, or who does not surrender an unused sage-grouse tag, is eligible to purchase an undiscounted sage-grouse tag valid through March 15, 2027, subject to the applicable tag limits set for the season and other applicable requirements.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Idaho Code 36-403 and 36-409, along with related administrative rules, establish the valid dates and requirements for use of game tags for sage-grouse and other identified species. Idaho Code 36-415 authorizes the Commission to discount tags for specific species, units, areas, zones or gender to encourage license sales or to encourage hunting, fishing or trapping.



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Public Involvement Process:

The public has had an opportunity to comment on this issue during season-setting for upland game and falconry and during the rulemaking process.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Commission adopt a discount order for sage-grouse tags effective for the winter portion of the 2026–2027 season for falconers who do not fill their 2026 tag(s) by the end of the calendar year. Discounted tags would be valid for the 2027 portion of the 2026–2027 falconry season: January 1 – March 15, 2027.

Suggested Motion:

I move the Commission adopt a discount order for sage-grouse tags for falconry as presented.