

Meeting Date: May 17, 2017

Agenda Item No. 5D

Agenda Item: 2017-2018 Migratory Game Bird
Proclamation Addition (**Action**)

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jeffrey Knetter

Background:

The Commission set seasons and bag limits for ducks, geese, sandhill cranes, doves, and American crows during their April 11 conference call. During this call, seasons and bag limits for Wilson's snipe and coots were inadvertently omitted. Furthermore, through consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department has determined there are additional days available for scaup hunting.

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 2016 the Department conducted mail and web-based surveys to obtain input from hunters on how to structure the waterfowl seasons and zones, within the confines of the federal framework, which includes flexibility in the start and end dates between the Saturday nearest September 24 and the last Sunday in January. This information will be used to guide Idaho waterfowl seasons for the 2016-2020 seasons, rather than re-defining the seasons each year.

Justification:

The Adaptive Harvest Management process determines the general duck season framework. Data collected in 2016 indicate breeding habitat conditions and populations are at levels that can support a 107-day season for all waterfowl, except scaup (86 days). The maximum number of hunting days and bag limits allowed by the federal framework can be taken with no long-term impacts on Idaho's migratory game bird resources.

Staff Recommendation:

The Department's recommendation is to take the maximum hunting days and bag limits allowed by federal framework. The proposed daily Wilson's snipe bag limit would be eight, and the proposed daily bag limit for coots would be 25. The proposed possession limit would be three times the daily bag limit. Seasons would be concurrent with each duck zone in Idaho, respectively. Bag limits and seasons for coots and Wilson's snipe would be unchanged from previous years.

The scaup season will have two additional days in each duck zone than those set by the Commission on April 11.

Final recommendations will be presented at the Commission meeting.

Action Requested:

Approve 2017-2018 migratory game bird seasons.

Suggested Motion:

The Commission adopt staff recommendations for the 2017-2018 migratory game bird seasons.