

**Meeting Date:** November 16, 2021

**Agenda Item No. 5E**

**Agenda Item:** Draft Wild Turkey Management Plan  
**(Action)**

**Bureau Chief Approval:** mw

**Prepared by:** Jeff Knetter, Upland Game and Migratory Game Bird Coordinator

**Background:**

Wild turkey populations in Idaho provide excellent hunting opportunities, with some of the highest success rates in the United States. In general, seasons are structured to maximize hunter opportunity. This provides abundant opportunities for youth hunting and mentoring, as wild turkey hunting is often considered a good way to introduce young people to hunting.

Staff have developed a draft plan for wild turkey management in Idaho. The Commission has not previously approved a wild turkey management plan. This plan outlines the major issues affecting wild turkey management and provides overall direction for wild turkey management, including guidance for damage/nuisance turkeys and winter feeding, for the next 6 years (2022-2027). This plan will guide the Department in annual work plan development and program prioritization, and provide guidance on development of harvest recommendations.

With Commission approval, the current draft will be posted on the department website to provide the public an opportunity to review and comment. After consideration of public input, a final plan will be prepared to present to the Commission for adoption in January.

**Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:**

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission administers state wildlife policy through supervision and management of the Department (Idaho Code 36-104). Species management plans are the guiding documents to manage wildlife and are a direct reflection of the Department Strategic Plan. The Wild Turkey Management Plan will function as the action plan for wild turkey management in Idaho.

**Public Involvement Process:**

To inform management guidance for this wild turkey management planning process, the Department conducted an opinion survey of all wild turkey tag holders, with a valid email address, from 2016 to 2020. Department staff sent emails to 42,871 hunters and received responses from 6,944 individuals (16% response).

This draft Wild Turkey Management Plan will be posted on the Department website in late November for a three week period to provide opportunity for public review and comment.

**Justification:**

The Commission sets policy and provides direction, considers input from the public, and has the authority to adopt, amend, or reject Department-recommended plans.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff recommends the Commission approve the release of the draft Wild Turkey Management Plan to solicit public comment.

Suggested Motion: Commission approve the staff recommendation to release the draft Wild Turkey Management Plan for public review.