

Meeting Date: July 28, 2022

Agenda Item No. 5.J.

Agenda Item: Second Application Period for Swan
Controlled Hunt Tags (**Action**)

Bureau Chief Approval: JR

Prepared by: Jeffrey Knetter, Upland Game and Migratory Game Bird Coordinator

Background:

Idaho's first swan hunt was held during fall 2020. Tags (50) were offered on a first-come, first-served basis and sold out very quickly. During 2021, tags (50) were issued through a controlled hunt drawing following an application period that coincided with the second big game controlled hunt application period, August 5-15.

This spring, the application period published in the migratory game bird hunting proclamation identified the swan controlled hunt application period as May 1 - June 5, concurrent with other fall controlled hunts (i.e., deer, elk). Unfortunately, the proclamation was not printed and available for distribution until after the June 5 application deadline; consequently, very few constituents were aware of the application period. Only 13 applications were received for the 50 available tags.

Under existing frameworks for controlled hunts, applications for fall controlled hunts may be submitted electronically through the automated licensing system at any vendor location, including Department offices, through the Internet, or via telephone, not later than June 5 (or an alternate date specified by the Commission when this date is impractical) for fall hunts, annually. Further, in any controlled hunt, not more than ten percent (10%) of the tags will be issued to nonresidents.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

The federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act regulates the hunting of migratory game birds, including swans and other waterfowl. The Commission previously endorsed seeking federal agency approval for a swan hunting season in the Panhandle Region. The Pacific Flyway Council recommended a change to the swan season framework for the Pacific Flyway to allow a swan season in northern Idaho with up to 50 tags and a one-bird bag limit. This change was approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in October 2019.

IDAPA 13.01.09 contains the rules governing the taking of game birds.

Public Involvement Process:

The Department sought public input on a potential controlled hunt for swan tags via the Department website during 2021. Interested stakeholders were able to comment on this topic from April 12-23, 2021. There were 127 individuals who participated in the public comment period; 28 of the comments were outside the scope of the question and were not relevant (i.e., opposition to any kind of swan hunting). Of the remaining 99 comments relevant to the proposal, 77% (76) supported a controlled hunt framework.

After the proclamation was printed and distributed in 2022, several constituents contacted Department staff to express their displeasure with the lack of notification associated with the change in the swan controlled hunt application dates.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Commission adopt a second Controlled Hunt drawing to distribute the remaining swan tags (37) for the 2022 season. The application period would coincide with the second big game controlled hunt application period from August 5-15.

Action Requested:

Adopt staff recommendation to establish a second application period and controlled hunt drawing for swan tags for the 2022 fall hunt.

Suggested Motion: Commission adopt staff recommendation to implement a second Controlled Hunt drawing to distribute swan tags for the 2022 season.