

Meeting Date: November 17, 2017

Agenda Item No. 10

Agenda Item: 2017 Upland Game Bird & Furbearer Briefing; Upland game management plan

Bureau Chief Approval:

Prepared by: Jeffrey Knetter

Background:

Upland game bird, upland game animal, and furbearer season dates, bag, and possession limits are set on even-numbered years and cover a two-year period. The purpose of this agenda item is to brief the Commission on upland game and furbearer status, the timeline for season-setting, and discuss preliminary proposals. The Commission will set Idaho's upland game bird, upland game animal, and furbearer seasons during the January 2018 Commission meeting.

Staff will also provide a timeline and overview for revision of the Department's upland game management plan. The Department last revised and implemented its upland game management plan in 1991. Goals of this revision are expected to focus on maintaining or increasing current populations, largely through habitat enhancement.

An Upland Game opinion survey will be initiated during spring 2018. Results of this survey will be used to identify key issues and guide direction of the revision. A draft Plan will be introduced to the Commission during summer 2018, and a completed draft Plan will be submitted to Commission members for review in the fall. Staff anticipates requesting feedback from the Commission on the draft Plan at their November 2018 meeting. Edits will be incorporated into the Plan and a 30-day public comment period will be held. Staff will request Commission review and action to approve the final Plan during their January 2019 meeting.

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. Rules governing take can be found in Idaho Administrative Code: Game Birds (IDAPA 13, Title 01, Chapter 09), Upland Game Animals (IDAPA 13, Title 01, Chapter 07), Furbearing Animals (IDAPA 13, Title 01, Chapter 16), and Falconry (IDAPA 13, Title 01, Chapter 14).

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission is charged with administering state wildlife policy through supervision and management of IDFG (Idaho Code 36-104). Species Management Plans are the guiding documents to manage wildlife and are a direct reflection of the Department Strategic Plan. A Management Plan for Upland Game will function as the action plan for Upland Game management in Idaho.

Public Involvement Process:

This agenda item is for Commission information. Season proposals will be developed and posted to the Department website and the public will be provided opportunities to provide input online, at regional offices, and at the public hearing the evening prior to the January Commission meeting.

The Department will solicit input from the public on management of upland game through an opinion survey to guide development of the revision of the management plan during spring 2018 and will provide opportunities for public review and a 30 day input period on a draft plan in fall 2018. Completion of a final plan is expected in January 2019.

Justification:

This agenda item is to provide information to the Commission prior to the January season setting meeting and to provide background information on the process and timeline to revise the Department's upland game management plan.

Staff Recommendation:

This agenda is for information only. Staff recommendations will be presented in January.