

Meeting Date: November 17, 2017

Agenda Item No. 5E

Agenda Item: Sandhill Crane & Wild Turkey Tag discounts (**Action**)

Bureau Chief Approval:

Prepared by: Jeffrey M. Knetter

Background:

Turkey tags

There are three types of Turkey tags: General tags, Extra tags, and Special Unit tags. A *General tag* is valid for spring and fall general seasons and may also be used during spring or fall controlled hunts in combination with a controlled hunt permit. If the general tag is not used to harvest a Turkey during the spring season, it may be used in the fall season. The *Extra tag* is a second tag available for use in spring or fall general hunt seasons; it may not be used currently for controlled hunts. A *Special Unit tag* is valid for the fall season in Game Management Units 1, 2, 3, or 5, and also for any designated Turkey depredation hunt in the state.

In 2004, the Commission discounted the price of resident Extra Turkey tags from \$19.75 to \$ 12.25 (including vendor fee) with the intent to increase hunting opportunity, reduce Turkey populations, and eliminate spring Controlled Hunt Turkey tags. The price of the nonresident Extra tags was not discounted. The Department sells approximately 1,400 Extra Turkey tags annually. Extra Turkey tags account for about 14% of the overall Turkey harvest. Nearly 75% of the harvest with Extra tags occurs in the Panhandle and Clearwater regions.

In 2008, the Commission discounted the price of Special Unit Turkey tags from \$19.75 to \$5.00 for residents, and from \$80.00 to \$5.00 for nonresidents, with the intent to reduce Turkey populations in Units 1, 2, 3, and 5, and in designated depredation hunts statewide. During fall 2015, hunters harvested nearly 700 Turkeys with Special Unit tags in the Panhandle Region.

Current 2017 season prices for resident and nonresident General, Extra, and Special Unit Turkey tags (including vendor fee):

	Non-discounted statutory tag price	General Tag	Extra Tag (discounted)	Special Unit Tag (discounted)
Resident	\$19.75	\$19.75	\$12.25	\$5.00
Nonresident	\$80.00	\$80.00	\$80.00	\$5.00

Staff proposes the current discount for resident Extra Turkey tags not be continued in 2018. Staff proposes to continue the discount for both resident and nonresident Special Unit Turkey tags.

Sandhill Crane tags

Sandhill Crane tags have been available for sale over-the-counter, first-come, first-served since 2009, when they were converted from the Controlled Hunt application process. The Commission discounted Sandhill Crane tags from \$19.75 to \$15.00 for residents, and from \$67.50 to \$15.00 for nonresidents (including vendor fee), with the intent to increase hunting opportunity. Idaho receives an annual harvest allocation for Sandhill Cranes that is directed by the Pacific Flyway Council Rocky Mountain Population Crane

Plan. As a result, the number of Crane tags available varies annually. Over the past 5 years, nonresidents have purchased approximately 19% of available tags.

Current 2017 season prices for resident and nonresident Sandhill Crane tags (including vendor fee):

	Non-discounted statutory tag price	Sandhill Crane Tag (discounted)
Resident	\$19.75	\$15.00
Nonresident	\$67.50	\$15.00

Staff proposes to not continue the discount in 2018 for resident Sandhill Crane tags and proposes to modify the discount for nonresident Sandhill Crane tags.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

The Commission is authorized to order a discount in tag fees under the authority of Idaho Code Section 36-415, based on a finding of biological and public need to encourage participation in hunting.

Public Involvement Process:

The Department has not directly engaged the public on these topics but this Commission action item was publicly noticed.

Justification:

Turkey populations remain strong in north Idaho. Special Unit tags are a valuable and effective tool for managers to use in areas where Turkey populations have exceeded social tolerance. The Department believes a discount for the Extra Turkey tag is no longer necessary to increase hunting opportunity or reduce turkey populations from a statewide perspective.

Sandhill Crane hunting is a limited opportunity available on a first-come, first-served basis, and hunters are limited to 2 tags per season. In recent years, nearly all available Crane tags have sold out – 2017 was the first year since 2011 that tags did not sell out. The Department believes a discount to resident tag prices is no longer necessary to increase hunting opportunity or minimize crop depredations. However, a discount from the undiscounted statutory \$67.50 nonresident price is likely necessary to encourage nonresident participation in Sandhill Crane hunting.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends not continuing the current discounts for resident Extra Turkey tags and resident Sandhill Crane tags. Staff proposes to continue the existing discounts for resident and nonresident Special Unit Turkey tags. Staff proposes a modification of the current discount for nonresident Sandhill Crane tags to discount the price from \$67.50 to \$25.00 (\$23.25 tag fee + \$1.75 vendor fee) instead of the current discounted price of \$15.00.

Staff recommendations for 2018 season prices for resident and nonresident General, Extra, and Special Unit Turkey tags (all prices include \$1.75 vendor fee):

	Nondiscounted statutory tag price	General Tag	Extra Tag	Special Unit Tag
Resident w/ Pricelock	\$19.75	\$19.75	\$19.75	\$5.00
Resident w/out Pricelock	\$22.75	\$22.75	\$22.75	\$5.00
Nonresident	\$80.00	\$80.00	\$80.00	\$5.00

Staff recommendations for 2018 season prices for resident and nonresident Sandhill Crane tags (all prices include \$1.75 vendor fee):

	Non-discounted statutory tag price	Sandhill Crane Tag
Resident w/Pricelock	\$19.75	\$19.75
Resident w/out Pricelock	\$22.75	\$22.75
Nonresident	\$67.50	\$25.00

Suggested Motions:

- Commission adopt staff recommendations to not continue the discount for resident Extra Turkey tags beginning in 2018 and to continue the discount price of \$5.00 for both resident and nonresident Special Unit Turkey tags.
- Commission adopt staff recommendations to not continue the discount for resident Sandhill Crane tags beginning in 2018, and to modify the discount for nonresident Sandhill Crane tags to a price of \$25.00.