

Meeting Date: August 22, 2019

Agenda Item No. 4H

Agenda Item: Turkey Landowner Permission Hunt
(LPH) Proposals

Bureau Chief Approval: TB

Prepared by: Jeffrey Knetter

Background:

In recent years, localized turkey populations have expanded and created depredation conflicts on private lands. In addition to turkey depredation issues, landowners who provide valuable turkey habitat in controlled hunt areas have expressed frustration at being unable to hunt turkeys on their own property because of low controlled hunt drawing odds.

In 2018, the Department initiated rulemaking to create a rule to provide the Commission authority to establish Landowner Permission Hunts (LPH) for turkeys. Establishment of these rules now allows for implementation of LPH hunts for turkeys. This provides the Department and landowners with an additional tool and the latitude to help alleviate turkey depredation issues and increase social tolerance for turkey populations on private lands.

Staff recommendations for fall 2019 turkey LPH include:

- Add two new fall Landowner Permission Hunts in portions of GMUs 22, 31, 32 on private lands for hens only. Proposed tag limit is 50 tags for each hunt and seasons would run from December 1 – December 31 and January 1 – February 14, respectively.
- Add two new fall turkey Landowner Permission Hunts in GMU 38 on private lands for hens only. Proposed tag limit is 50 tags for each hunt and seasons would run from September 1 – December 31 and January 1 – March 30, respectively.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Idaho Code 36-104(b) 5(B) grants authority to the Commission to provide additional turkey tags to landowners who provide valuable habitat.

Idaho Administrative Rule 13.01.09.100.03 establishes rules regarding the use of tags and permits for wild turkey.

Public Involvement Process:

The Department provided an online comment period from July 12 – August 4. Staff will provide an overview of the comments received.

Justification:

Observations by staff, hunter harvest statistics, and increasing landowner complaints indicate a growing turkey population in these GMUs. The severe winter of 2016/17 did not appear to hamper this growth. Additionally, turkey depredation complaints have continued to increase over the last few years, particularly complaints in the winter on winter wheat and livestock feeding operations.

Hunter access to private property plays a large role in turkey harvest in GMU 38. The proposed hunt boundary reflects where the majority of turkey issues occur in GMU 38. The hunt dates encompass the bulk of the turkey nuisance and damage complaints.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Commission adopt turkey LPH seasons as presented.

Action Requested:

Approve the proposed LPH seasons for turkeys.

Suggested Motion:

That the Commission adopt staff recommendations to adopt the proposed LPH seasons for turkeys.