

Meeting Date: January 24, 2019

Agenda Item No. 9

Agenda Item: Upland Game Management Plan Update

Bureau Chief Approval: 

Prepared by: Jeffrey M. Knetter

Background:

The upland game hunting resources in Idaho are recognized nationally for the variety of species available to hunters. In general, seasons are structured to maximize hunter opportunity. This provides abundant opportunities for youth hunting and mentoring, as upland game hunting is considered a good way to introduce young people to hunting.

In the Department's prior upland game management plan, adopted by the Commission in 1990, priority issues and strategies focused on maintaining and improving habitat quality and quantity, developing consistent harvest strategies, and improving population monitoring techniques.

This revision of the upland game management plan will provide guidance to the Department and their partners to implement management actions that will enhance upland game habitat and populations in Idaho. This plan will function as the action plan for upland game management. Major issues that affect upland game species are identified, which set overall direction for upland game management during the next 6 years (2019-2024). This plan will guide the Department in annual work plan development and program prioritization, and will provide guidance on development of regulatory recommendations.

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 March.

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 Upland Game Management Plan will function as the action plan for upland game management in Idaho.

Public Involvement Process:

To inform management guidance for this upland game planning process, the Department conducted an opinion survey of hunting license buyers during August 2018. An email requesting participation was sent to nearly 74,000 individuals, followed by 2 reminder emails requesting participation. In total, 14,301 people completed the survey – 9,750 Idaho residents and 4,551 non-residents – and 56% of respondents reported hunting upland game in Idaho.

This draft Upland Game Management Plan will be posted on the Department's website in late January for three weeks, to provide the public an opportunity to 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:

This agenda item is an update for Commission information. No action required.