Idaho Fish and Game Commission
April 14, 2022
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Conference Call
Boise, Idaho

A meeting of the Idaho Fish and Game Commission was held by telephone conference, attended by Commissioners Dave Bobbitt, Don Ebert, Tim Murphy, Greg Cameron, Lane Clezie, Derick Attebury and Ron Davies.

IDFG staff present: Director Ed Schriever, Deputy Director Jim Frederick, Deputy Attorneys General Kathleen Trever and Owen Moroney; Lance Hebden, Adam Park, Joey Ishida, Rick Ward, Jeff Knetter, Valerie Taro, Roger Phillips and Conner Liess. IDFG staff participating via phone: Deputy Director Scott Reinecker, Chip Corsi, JJ Teare, Josh Royse, Craig White, Dan Garren, Jim White, Tom Curet, Greg Wooten, Jon Rachael, Mark Carson and Ryan Hilton.

Members of the public attending in person: Garret Visser, Idaho Wildlife Federation.

Chairman Cameron called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. MDT.

SEASON SETTING

Season Settings: 2022 – 2023 Migratory Game Bird Seasons

Jeff Knetter, Upland Game and Migratory Game Bird Program Coordinator, presented the 2022-2023 Migratory Game Bird proposals (Appendix 55, Exhibit 12). Idaho’s migratory game bird seasons are set within a framework established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), after they consult with all state fish and wildlife agencies.

The Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) process determines the general duck season framework:

- Process adopted by Service in 1996; used to evaluate duck habitat and populations annually to select the optimal season framework for U.S. duck seasons.
- Special harvest strategies are used for some of the less common ducks (e.g., pintail, scaup).
- Goose seasons are determined by flyway management plans for each goose population.

The Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey was not conducted in 2020 or 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Adjustments to optimization methods and AHM decision frameworks developed to inform duck hunting regulations based on:
  - Predicted 2020 and 2021 breeding population size
  - Regulatory alternatives selected for the 2020 and 2021 hunting seasons.
Based on the liberal regulatory alternative selected for the 2021 – 2022 hunting season, and a predicted 2021 breeding population size of 1.17 million mallards – 640,000 mallards observed in Alaska, and 530,000 predicted in the southern Pacific Flyway – the optimal choice for the 2022 – 2023 hunting season in the Pacific Flyway is the liberal regulatory alternative, which is a 107 day season for all waterfowl except scaup, which is 86 days.

The Department has conducted hunter opinion surveys to assess hunter preferences on how to structure migratory game bird seasons and zones within the confines of the federal framework. The 2022 – 2023 migratory game bird season proposals were available for public comment on the Department’s website from March 11 – 23. There were no regional open houses held, however, there was a virtual open house on March 16 to provide an overview of the proposals and to answer questions. In addition, the Department conducted a survey on season preferences among migratory bird permit holders in Benewah, Bonner, Boundary, Kootenai, and Shoshone counties from March 4-24.

The Department recommends taking the maximum allowed number of hunting days and bag limits allowed by federal framework. The proposed daily duck bag limit is 7 ducks, including not more than 2 female mallards, 2 scaup, 2 redheads, 1 pintail, and 2 canvasbacks. The proposed daily bag limit for Wilson’s snipe is 8 and the proposed daily bag limit for coots is 25. The proposed daily bag limit for Canada geese is 5, the proposed daily bag limit for white-fronted geese is 10, and the proposed daily bag limit for snow and Ross’s geese is 20. The proposed possession limit is three times the daily bag limit.

There is no daily bag limit for American crows.

The proposed daily bag limit for doves is 15 mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate. The proposed daily and season limit for sandhill cranes is 2 cranes.

22-30 Commissioner Davies moved and Commissioner Clezie seconded a motion to adopt staff recommendations for the 2022-2023 migratory game bird seasons. Motion carries.

Kathleen Trever, Deputy Attorney General, explained that the remaining agenda items (grizzly bear update and executive session) were not necessary. They were included to allow discussion in case there was a ruling on the pending preliminary injunction motion in the lawsuit challenging wolf trapping or a U.S. Fish and Wildlife finding on state delisting petitions. At this time there is no set time frame for the ruling in the court case. There has also been no update from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the 3 state petitions for delisting grizzly bear.

Adjourn

Timothy M. Murphy
Chairman

Ed Schriever
Secretary