

Meeting Date: March 24, 2009

Agenda Item No. 13

Agenda Item: Draft Pelican Management Plan
(Action)

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Rex Sallabanks, Conservation Sciences Program Manager

Background:

Numbers of American white pelicans, including adult nesting birds, have increased dramatically in southern Idaho since 2002. The increase in nesting birds has been documented at Idaho's two primary nesting colonies located on islands in Blackfoot Reservoir and Lake Walcott (Minidoka National Wildlife Refuge). Increases in pelican populations are generally considered as positive contributions to pelican conservation goals in the Western population segment, but the increased number of pelicans has also resulted in documented predation impacts on native cutthroat trout subspecies and other important recreational fisheries. The Department believes there is a need to develop an approach to manage conflicts in Idaho between pelicans and fish populations that balance conservation and recreation interests for both. This brief presentation will provide an overview of the changes made to the draft plan since the January Commission meeting when the plan was remanded back to staff for additional clarification. Having made further revisions, the Wildlife Bureau again seeks approval from the Commission to solicit public review of the draft plan.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

The draft plan establishes management direction and provides objectives for pelican conservation. The plan contains both non-lethal (hazing birds, physical deterrents) and lethal (shooting birds, oiling eggs) management actions. Non-lethal methods could be implemented at any time. Because the American white pelican is federally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, however, authorization from the USFWS will be required before lethal take beyond that already permitted could occur.

Public Involvement Process:

To date, there has been no public involvement in developing the draft plan. We are seeking Commission approval for a 30-day public review period. Following this public comment period, the Wildlife Bureau will analyze and summarize results for the Commission for future action on the management plan for pelicans.

Staff Recommendation:

The Wildlife Bureau seeks Commission approval for a 30-day public comment period on the draft plan.

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. In order for the Commission to consider adopting this document as an official Department species management plan, public review and input is necessary.