

Meeting Date: May 14, 2009

Agenda Item No. 17

Agenda Item: 2009 Early Goose, Mourning Dove, and Sandhill Crane Seasons (Action)

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jeffrey Knetter

Background:

Early goose, mourning dove, and sandhill crane seasons are set in the spring to allow permits to be issued during the summer, and for seasons to open as early as 1 September. Idaho's 2009 crane harvest allocation, as directed by the Pacific Flyway Council Rocky Mountain Population Crane Plan, is 449, similar to the 385 in 2008. Harvest in 2008 was 185.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

The early goose season has been used to manage problem goose populations. The mourning dove season is the earliest allowed by treaty and is unchanged since 1988. Sandhill crane depredation on grain crops is a problem in some areas; therefore, the season has been established to allow harvest of cranes that nest in Idaho before migration begins. The sandhill crane harvest allocation for Idaho has increased in recent years, but the number of birds harvested has remained relatively steady. The supply of sandhill cranes currently exceeds the demand by hunters. This may be due to the complexity and cost associated with harvesting a sandhill crane. Currently, potential sandhill crane hunters need to apply (\$6.25) for controlled hunt permits (\$7.75) to harvest cranes. Once obtained, hunters then need to purchase a sandhill crane tag (\$1.75). Overall, this totals \$15.75 per crane.

Public Involvement Process:

The Upper Snake and Southeast regions have issued news releases and held open houses concerning sandhill crane seasons. In addition, news releases and a copy of the draft 2009 sandhill crane brochure were posted on the IDFG website for comments.

Justification:

Early goose seasons are unnecessary with the recently-extended 107-day regular goose hunting season. The proposed mourning dove season is the earliest and most liberal allowed by federal framework. Sandhill crane seasons and tag allocation need to be simplified.

Action Requested:

Set the 2009 early goose, mourning dove, and sandhill crane seasons as recommended.

Staff Recommendation:

The Department's recommendations are:

- Do not offer any early goose seasons. The regular goose season is expected to be 107 days statewide and should provide adequate harvest of resident Canada geese.
- No change to the mourning dove season, which is 9/1-30 and a bag of 10 and 20.
- Adopt the sandhill crane season as follows with a daily limit of two and a season limit of nine. All tags (680) will be offered on a first-come first serve basis at any vendor as per the allocation below. Reduce the fees associated with obtaining a sandhill crane tag to \$15/tag.

Hunt Area	Season	Permits
1	9/1-9/30	400
2	9/1-9/15	100
3	9/1-9/15	100
4	9/1-9/15	40
5	9/1-9/15	40

- Area 1 – Includes all of Bear Lake County and all of Caribou County Except that portion downstream from the dam at Alexander Reservoir south of U.S. Highway 30, and that portion lying within the Grays Lake Basin.
- Area 2 – Includes all of Teton County Except that portion lying west of Highway 33 and south of Packsaddle Road (West 400 North) and north of the North Cedron Road (West 600 South) and east of the West bank of the Teton River.
- Area 3 – Includes all of Fremont County Except the Chester Wetlands Wildlife Management Area.
- Area 4 – Includes all of Bonneville County
- Area 5 – Includes all of Jefferson County.