

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: December 12, 2013

Agenda Item: Proposed 2014–2015 Migratory Bird Regulations

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 20 minutes

Background

Migratory bird hunting regulations pertain to cranes, snipe, ducks, geese, swans, and coots. Montana participates in both the Central and Pacific Flyways and adheres to the federal frameworks established by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in cooperation with the flyway councils. Frameworks that include season dates and bag limits are not finalized until late summer. States may be more conservative than these frameworks—to include local area closures—but may not exceed them. The inclusion here of migratory bird regulations in this biennial season setting process expands public process for season elements that may be adopted at this time pending confirmation or finalization of federal frameworks later this summer. In addition, the Commission will be presented with federal frameworks for late waterfowl seasons during the January Commission meeting to consider possible adjustments that would require approval through the flyway councils and USFWS.

For the 2014 and 2015 migratory bird regulations, FWP proposes to expand the 380 hunt area (Dillon/Twin Bridges/Cardwell area) to also include Madison and Gallatin Counties.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Migratory bird season comments were received during scoping and included an interest in adjusting goose season hunting opportunities. In addition to public comment at the Dec. 12 Commission meeting, public comment will run through 5 p.m., Jan. 24, 2014. Any final adoptions will take place at the Feb.13, 2014 Commission meeting.

Alternatives and Analysis

Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions or no change from 2013 (status quo). No change would challenge the supporting justifications behind proposals.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

Additional information for individual proposals have been included in Commission information packets and may be further articulated at the Dec.12 Commission meeting.

Proposed Motion

I move the Commission adopt the 2014 and 2015 Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations as proposed by FWP and pending compliance with federal frameworks.