

## ***FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** February 11, 2016

**Agenda Item:** 2016-2017 Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons (contingent upon Federal framework)

**Division:** Wildlife

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed for this Presentation:** 5 minutes

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### **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. The federal frameworks that include season dates and bag limits are proposed by the USFWS at the federal level in mid-December and finalized in late February. 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 in late February.

For the 2016 and 2017 migratory bird regulations, FWP proposes to expand sandhill crane hunting opportunities by establishing 15 drawing-only permits valid in Carbon County. No other changes are proposed and all other elements of the 2015 season are proposed to remain unchanged except for calendar rotation.

**FWP proposes no change to those adopted in December.**

### **Public Involvement Process & Results**

Migratory bird season comments were received during scoping and included an interest in varying goose hunting opportunities. Public comment ran from Dec. 10 to Jan 22. We received 11 comments. Most spoke in support of the proposal while one wanted bonus points for the crane drawing and another wanted the season to be later. All comments are in the Commission packet.

### **Alternatives and Analysis**

Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions or no change from 2015 (status quo). No change would challenge the supporting justifications behind proposals.

### **Agency Recommendation & Rationale**

Rationale for individual proposals was included in the Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> Commission information packets and may be further articulated at the Feb. 11th Commission meeting.

### **Proposed Motion**

I move the Commission adopt the final 2016 and 2017 Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations as presented by FWP. I also move to adopt all other portions of the previous 2014-2015 migratory bird season regulations not affected by the Commission's actions today.