

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: December 10, 2015

Agenda Item: 2016-2017 Upland Bird Hunting Seasons, Quotas and HD Boundaries

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 40 Minutes

Background

Season structures and hunting district boundaries are adopted biennially for most game species every other year between December and final adoptions in February. FWP proposes adopting the existing (2015) structure except for specific changes. Proposals are based on population status and/or other circumstances.

For the 2016 and 2017 upland bird seasons FWP proposes a number of changes to simplify the turkey regulations and expand opportunity. These include combining the spring and fall regulations into one brochure (a draft 2016 regulation brochure is in the Commission packet) and eliminating permits but offering three license types:

- General Hunting Area License available over-the-counter
- Regional Turkey Area Licenses available over-the-counter and only valid in a specific region valid spring and fall except spring-only in Region 5. Additional fall Beardless Turkey-only licenses available in Region 1 and Missoula and Ravalli counties in Region 2, and
- Special Drawing Licenses valid in specific areas of Regions 2, 3 and 4. The four current Region 3 hunting districts are to be combined into one.

A hunter could hold up to nine licenses per year: one General Hunting Area License; one Regional Area License in each of Regions 1, 2, 5 & 7; one Beardless Turkey-only License in Region 1 and one for Missoula-Ravalli counties in Region 2; one Spring and one Fall Special Drawing-only License.

All other aspects except for calendar rotation are to remain unchanged from the 2015 regulations. All these changes are referenced in the Upland Game Bird Master List for the December meeting.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Upland bird season comments were received during scoping and included interest in expanded opportunities. In addition to public comment at the Dec. 10 Commission meeting, public comment will run through 5 p.m., Jan. 22, 2016. Any final adoptions will take place at the Feb. 11, 2016 Commission meeting.

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 is included in Commission information packets and may be further articulated at the Dec. 10 Commission meeting.

Proposed Motion

I move the Commission adopt for public comment the 2016 and 2017 Upland Bird Hunting Seasons and Hunting Districts as presented by FWP.