

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

**Meeting Date:** April 25, 2019

**Agenda Item:** 2019-20 All Migratory Bird Regulations

**Division:** Wildlife

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time for this Presentation:** 15 minutes

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## **Background:**

Migratory bird hunting regulations pertain to cranes, snipe, doves, ducks, geese, swans, and coots, which are managed on a flyway basis. Montana is in two flyways, with roughly the eastern half of the state in the Central Flyway and the western half in the Pacific Flyway. We must adhere to federal season frameworks established by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in cooperation with the flyway councils. States may be more conservative than these frameworks but may not exceed them. We look for final approval in April to meet USFWS deadlines for season selections. Other than normal calendar rotation and the exception noted below, all aspects of the 2018-19 season are to remain in place.

- The daily pintail bag limit would go from two to one in both flyways in accordance with the federal framework.

Proposed dates for ducks, coots, geese, and swans:

Pacific Flyway (PF) - Ducks, coots, and geese: Sept. 28 – Jan. 5 and Jan. 11-15 (closed five days, Jan. 6-10) (except scaup season closing Dec. 22); Swans: Oct. 5 - Dec. 1

Central Flyway (CF) - Ducks and coots: Zone 1 – Sept. 28 – Jan. 2; Zone 2 – Sept. 28 – Oct. 6 and Oct. 19 -Jan. 14 (closed for 12 days, Oct. 7-18). A bonus teal season Sept. 28 – Oct. 6 in the CF will allow hunters to take two additional blue-winged teal.

Central Flyway - Geese - Zone 1 – Sept. 28 – Jan. 5 and Jan. 11-15 (closed five days, Jan 6-10); Zone 2 – Sept. 28- Oct. 6 and Oct. 19 – Jan. 22 (closed 12 days, Oct. 7-18); CF Tundra swans: Sept. 28 – Jan. 2 (both zones, no split season).

Duck, coot, and goose daily and possession limits for both flyways are proposed to be the same as in 2018-19. The special two-day Youth Waterfowl Season will be Sept 21-22 in both flyway parts of the state.

Proposed season dates for “webless” migratory birds:

Mourning doves: Sept. 1 – Oct. 30

Common snipe: Sept. 1 – Dec. 16

RMP sandhill cranes (all special drawing permits): Sept. 1 (a Sunday) – Oct. 27 (57 days).

Mid-continent sandhill cranes in CF (over-the-counter permit): Sept. 28 – Nov. 24

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

Public comment will be heard during this meeting.

## **Agency Recommendation & Rationale:**

FWP recommends that the commission approve the proposed 2019-20 migratory bird regulations as presented by FWP.

## **Proposed Motion:**

I move the commission adopt final 2019-20 migratory bird regulations as presented by FWP, and that all other aspects of the 2018-19 season except for normal calendar rotation date changes are adopted.