

COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA BRIEFING

Meeting Date: March 8, 2024

Agenda Number: 9

Presenter: Stewart Liley

Corroborator: N/A

Agenda Title: Initiation of Migratory Game Bird Rule (19.31.6 NMAC) for the 2024 – 2025 Hunting Season.

1. Summary of Agenda Item

The Department will present proposed changes to the Migratory Game Bird Rule (19.31.6 NMAC) based on public comment, the latest information from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), recent survey information, and management goals. Season selections and bag limits are determined in conjunction with the USFWS working through the Central and Pacific Flyway Councils. We are currently analyzing data and reaching out to migratory bird hunters to evaluate alternatives, and to help inform the rule development process.

2. Background Information

The Migratory Game Bird Rule is amended annually, ensuring compliance with Flyway recommendations and Federal guidelines. In New Mexico, season selections and bag limits are determined in conjunction with the Central and Pacific Flyways and the USFWS. The process for setting migratory bird hunting regulations is described briefly below.

Migratory game bird management in the US is a cooperative effort between state and federal governments. The US and Canada are divided into four regulatory flyways and each has a Flyway Council consisting of representatives from state and provincial wildlife agencies. Flyway Councils are advised by technical committees made up of state and provincial biologists. These technical committees make management recommendations to the Councils based on population, harvest, and hunter data. After considering technical committee input, the Flyway Councils then recommend migratory bird hunting regulations to the USFWS. The USFWS evaluates these recommendations and presents them to the Service's Regulations Committee for decision. These decisions are then forwarded to the USFWS director and Assistant Secretary of the Interior for approval. Once approved, these proposed annual migratory bird hunting frameworks are published in the Federal Register for public comment. After considering public comment, final recommendations and frameworks are developed and published in the Federal Register. After publication of these final migratory bird hunting frameworks, states can select their hunting seasons.

3. Strategic Plan References and Possible Impacts of Agenda Item

The process as presented to the Commission meets the Conservation Services Program Objectives 1, 2 and 5 of the Department's Strategic Plan: FY 2019 – FY 2023

4. Considerations Regarding Duplications and/or Conflicts with Existing Rules or Statutes

None

5. Description and Summary of Public Involvement Process and Results

The Department is at the beginning of the public involvement process. Proposed changes to the migratory game bird rule will be posted on the Department's website. Input will be gathered from mail, email, and public meetings with interested members of the public. A virtual public meeting will be held to gather public comments on the proposed changes to the migratory game bird rule.

Suggested Motion

This is a discussion item and no motion is necessary, unless Commission discretion dictates otherwise.