

**Report to the Commission:**  
**Summary of Potential Changes to Early Migratory Bird Seasons, 2009/2010**  
(Background Report – May 15, 2009)  
Consent Agenda Item 1

*(Note – This report addresses only early migratory bird seasons, which include dove, rail, gallinule, woodcock, snipe, September Canada goose, and special September duck seasons. Potential changes to the regular waterfowl season will be covered at the September Commission meeting.)*

Federal regulations are amended annually to establish the maximum number of days and dates within which individual species and groups of species of migratory birds can be hunted. These regulations also establish the maximum bag limits for taking migratory birds. States are required to select dates and bag limits for taking migratory birds within these “frameworks.” The federal schedule for establishing the frameworks precludes the Commission from taking timely action to adapt Commission rules to changes in the frameworks. Our protocol, therefore, has been to advise the Commission in May or June of anticipated changes to federal frameworks for early migratory bird seasons, make recommendations, solicit Commission guidance, and, subsequently, make any necessary changes to Commission rules by executive order after federal frameworks are finalized. When changes are made by executive order, the pertinent rules are changed during a subsequent Commission meeting to codify in rule the changes established by order.

This is to advise you that we anticipate one change in the federal frameworks for the 2009/2010 early migratory bird seasons. These seasons include dove, rail, gallinule, woodcock, snipe, September Canada goose, and special September duck seasons. Florida has the option to select either a special September teal season, during which teal are the only species legal to take, or a 5-day special September duck season, when both wood ducks and teal are legal. Historically, we have selected the 5-day wood duck and teal season in order to provide early season hunting opportunities statewide. Teal are not equally distributed throughout the state, and selecting the teal-only season would greatly reduce opportunity for hunters in the northern portion of Florida. The anticipated change is associated with the length of the special September teal season option. This change would increase the special September teal season from 9 to 16 consecutive days.

We recommend retaining Florida’s current season selection, the 5-day special September duck season in order to provide opportunity throughout the state for Florida’s waterfowl hunters. Therefore, regardless of whether the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service finalizes the proposed change to the special September teal season, staff recommends no change to our rules. We plan to update you again on both early and late (regular waterfowl) seasons at the September Commission meeting. That update will describe developments occurring between now and then on anticipated or proposed changes in federal frameworks and our proposed rule changes for the 2009/2010 migratory bird seasons.

Table 1. Anticipated (2009/10) and previous (2008/09) season dates and bag and possession limits for migratory birds other than ducks and coots. Season dates and bag limits reflect anticipated federal frameworks. **Please note – these regulations are not final and are subject to change.**

Species	2008/09	2009/10	Bag/Possession
Mourning Dove and White-winged Dove	Oct. 4 – Oct. 27 <sup>1</sup> Nov. 15 – Nov. 30 Dec. 13 – Jan. 11	Oct. 3 – Oct. 26 <sup>1</sup> Nov. 14 – Nov. 29 Dec. 12 – Jan. 10	15/30 <sup>2</sup>
Rails and Gallinule	Sept. 1 - Nov. 9	Sept. 1 - Nov. 9	15/30 - Clapper Rail, King Rail, & Florida Gallinule; 25/25 - Virginia and Sora Rails
Snipe	Nov. 1 - Feb. 15	Nov. 1 - Feb. 15	8/16
Woodcock	Dec. 20 – Jan. 18	Dec. 19 – Jan. 17	3/6
Crow	Aug. 9 – Oct. 26 <sup>3</sup> Nov. 11 – Feb. 18	Aug. 8 – Oct. 25 <sup>3</sup> Nov. 11 – Feb. 18	None

<sup>1</sup> Shooting hours: noon until sunset.

<sup>2</sup> The daily bag limit of doves is mourning and white-winged doves in the aggregate.

<sup>3</sup> Saturdays and Sundays only.

Table 2. Anticipated (2009/10) and previous (2008/09) falconry season dates and bag and possession limits for migratory birds other than ducks and coots. Season dates and bag limits reflect anticipated federal frameworks. **Please note – these regulations are not final and are subject to change.**

Species	2008/09	2009/10	Bag/Possession
Mourning Dove and White-winged Dove	Oct. 4 – Jan. 18	Oct. 3 – Jan. 17	3/6
Rails	Sept. 1 – Dec. 16	Sept. 1 – Dec. 16	3/6
Gallinule	Sept. 1 – Dec. 14	Sept. 1 – Dec. 14	3/6
Snipe	Nov. 1 - Feb. 15	Nov. 1 - Feb. 15	3/6
Woodcock	Nov. 24 - Mar. 10	Nov. 24 - Mar. 10	3/6

Table 3. Anticipated (2009) and previous special September duck season dates and bag limits. Season dates and bag limits reflect anticipated federal frameworks. **Please note – these regulations are not final and are subject to change.**

2007	2008	2009	Bag/ Possession
Sept. 22-26	Sept. 20-24	Sept. 26-30	4/8 teal and wood ducks in the aggregate, no more than 2/4 of which may be wood ducks

Table 4. Anticipated dates for the first phase (September) of the 2009 Canada goose season. The second and third phases of this season typically occur November – January. Season dates and bag limits reflect anticipated federal frameworks. **Please note – these regulations are not final and are subject to change.**

2007	2008 <sup>1</sup>	2009	Bag/ Possession
Sept. 1-26	Sept. 6-24	Sept. 5-30	5/10

<sup>1</sup>Season open statewide, previously restricted to Lake Seminole in Jackson County.