

# MEMORANDUM



**To:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners

**From:** Diane Eggeman, Director, Division of Hunting and Game Management

**Date:** September 2, 2015

**Subject:** Consent Item: Migratory Bird Hunting Seasons, 2015-2016

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**Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to update the Commission on anticipated changes in federal frameworks and our proposed rule change for the 2015-2016 migratory bird seasons.

**Summary:**

The federal schedule for setting migratory bird hunting regulations precludes the Commission from taking timely conforming action to modify Rules 68A-13.003, F.A.C., Hunting Regulations for Ducks, Geese, and Coots, and 68A-13.008, F.A.C., Hunting Regulations for Migratory Birds other than Ducks and Coots. The federal frameworks will not be final until late August for early-season migratory bird hunting regulations (dove, rail, gallinule, woodcock, snipe, and special early waterfowl seasons) and mid-September for the late-season migratory bird hunting regulations (regular waterfowl and coot season and limited Canada goose season).

There are no anticipated changes to the early-season migratory bird hunting regulations. While we were hopeful, as reported at the April Commission Meeting, that purple swamphens would be added as a species that could be harvested in Florida, this change did not occur. An Environmental Assessment (EA) will need to be prepared before this change can move forward. Staff will work with USFWS to provide information necessary to complete the EA.

There is only one anticipated change to the late season frameworks, an increase in the bag limit of canvasbacks from 1 to 2 birds per day during the regular duck hunting season. Staff recommends changing FWC rule to allow for this change. If the Commission agrees with this recommendation, we would make this change by Executive Order in late September, followed by a corresponding rule change at the December Commission meeting.

If final federal frameworks differ from our predictions, the Executive Director will confer with the Commission Chairman regarding any necessary decisions, and any resulting rule changes will be made initially by executive order, followed by a corresponding rule change at the December Commission meeting.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Approve change to FWC rule to increase the canvasback bag limit from 1 to 2 following publication of final late-season migratory bird hunting regulations.

**Staff Contact and/or Presenter:**

Jamie Feddersen, Waterfowl and Small Game Management Program Coordinator, Division of Hunting and Game Management