

Background Report
Summary of Potential Changes to Early Migratory Bird Seasons, 2013-2014
Consent Agenda Item 1.
June 11, 2013

(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 that we anticipate one change in the federal frameworks for the 2013-2014 early migratory bird seasons. These seasons include dove, rail, common moorhen, woodcock, snipe, September Canada goose, and special September duck seasons. The anticipated change is an increase in the possession limit for all migratory game birds to three times the daily bag. Staff recommends changing FWC’s rules to allow this change. If the Commission agrees with this recommendation, we would make these changes by executive order in late September, followed by a corresponding rule change at the December Commission meeting.

We plan to provide an update 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 2013-2014 migratory bird seasons.

Table 1. Previous (2012-2013) dates and anticipated (2013-2014) dates, bag and possession limits for seasons 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	2012-2013	2013-2014	
		Dates	Bag/Possession
Mourning Dove and White-winged Dove	Oct. 6 – Oct. 29 ¹ Nov. 10 – Nov. 25 Dec. 8 – Jan. 6	Oct. 5 – Oct. 28 ¹ Nov. 16 – Dec. 1 Dec. 14 – Jan. 12	15/45 ²
Rails and Common Moorhen	Sept. 1 - Nov. 9	Sept. 1 - Nov. 9	15/45 - Clapper Rail, King Rail, & Common Moorhen; 25/75 - Virginia and Sora Rails
Snipe	Nov. 1 - Feb. 15	Nov. 1 - Feb. 15	8/24
Woodcock	Dec. 18 – Jan. 31	Dec. 18 – Jan. 31	3/9
Crow	Aug. 11 – Oct. 28 ³ Nov. 11 – Feb. 18	Aug. 10 – Oct. 27 ³ Nov. 11 – Feb. 18	None

¹ Shooting hours: noon until sunset.

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

³ Saturdays and Sundays only.

Table 2. Previous (2012-2013) dates and anticipated (2013-2014) dates, bag and possession limits for falconry season 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	2012-2013	2013-2014	
		Dates	Bag/Possession
Mourning Dove and White-winged Dove	Oct. 6 – Jan. 20	Oct. 5 – Jan. 19	3/9
Rails	Sept. 1 – Dec. 16	Sept. 1 – Dec. 16	3/9
Common Moorhen	Sept. 1 – Dec. 14	Sept. 1 – Dec. 14	3/9
Snipe	Nov. 1 - Feb. 15	Nov. 1 - Feb. 15	3/9
Woodcock	Nov. 24 - Mar. 10	Nov. 24 - Mar. 10	3/9

Table 3. Previous dates and anticipated (2013) dates, bag and possession limits for the special September duck season. Season dates and bag limits reflect anticipated federal frameworks. **Please note – these regulations are not final and are subject to change.**

2011	2012	2013	
		Dates	Bag/ Possession
Sept. 24-28	Sept. 22-26	Sept. 21-25	4/12 teal and wood ducks in the aggregate, no more than 2/6 of which may be wood ducks

Table 4. Previous dates and anticipated (2013) dates, bag and possession limits for the first phase (September) of the 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.**

2011	2012	2013	
		Dates	Bag/ Possession
Sept. 3-28	Sept. 1-26	Sept. 7-25	5/15