

Background Report
Summary of Potential Changes to Early Migratory Bird Seasons, 2014-2015
Consent Agenda Item 1.
June 18, 2014

(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 two changes in the federal frameworks for the 2014-2015 early migratory bird seasons. These seasons include dove, rail, common moorhen, woodcock, snipe, September Canada goose, and special September duck seasons.

The first anticipated change is an increase in the number of days to hunt doves from 70 days to 90 days. Results of a dove hunter preference poll, regarding placement of the additional hunt days, were presented at the April Commission meeting and the structure of a 90-day dove season was approved by the Commission. This change in the structure of the dove hunting season also necessitates some changes to the falconry dove hunting season because federal frameworks limits the total number of days for hunting any species or group of species to 107 days. In previous years, the falconry season coincided directly with the regular, 70-day, dove hunting season. The additional 37 hunting days afforded to falconers occurred during the closed periods between phases of the regular season and with extra days at the end of the regular season. After consultation with members of the falconry community, we propose to have the falconry season for doves mirror the proposed 90-day regular dove season, with an additional 17 days added to the end of season.

The last anticipated change is an increase in the daily bag limit for teal during the special September duck season from four birds to six birds. Staff recommends changing FWC’s rules to allow for these changes. If the Commission agrees with these

recommendations, we would make these changes by executive order in late September, followed by a corresponding rule change at the November Commission meeting. Dates and bag/possession limits for the 2014-2015 seasons, based on anticipated federal frameworks, these proposals and Rules 68A-13.008 and 68A-13.003, F.A.C., are as indicated in the attached tables (Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4).

We plan to update you again on both early and late (regular waterfowl) migratory bird 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 2014-2015 migratory bird seasons.

Table 1. Anticipated (2014/15) and previous (2013/14) 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	2013-2014	2014-2015	Bag/Possession
Mourning Dove and White-winged Dove	Oct. 5 – Oct. 28 ¹ Nov. 16 – Dec. 1 Dec. 14 – Jan. 12	Sept. 27 – Oct. 27 ¹ Nov. 8 – Dec. 1 Dec. 12 – Jan. 15	15/45 ²
Rails and Common Moorhen	Sept. 1 - Nov. 9	Sept. 1 - Nov. 9	15/45 - Clapper Rail, King Rail, & Common Moorhen; 25/25 - 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. 10 – Oct. 27 ³ Nov. 11 – Feb. 18	Aug. 9 – Oct. 26 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. Anticipated (2014/15) and previous (2013/14) 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	2013-2014	2014-2015	Bag/Possession
Mourning Dove and White-winged Dove	Oct. 5 – Jan. 19	Sept. 27 – Oct. 27 Nov. 8 – Dec. 1 Dec. 12 – Feb. 2	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. Anticipated (2014) 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.**

2012	2013	2014	Bag/ Possession
Sept. 22-26	Sept. 21-25	Sept. 20-24	6/18 teal and wood ducks in the aggregate, no more than 2/6 of which may be wood ducks

Table 4. Anticipated (2013) and previous dates 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.**

2012	2013	2014	Bag/ Possession
Sept. 1-26	Sept. 7-25	Sept. 6-24	5/15