

MEMORANDUM



To: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners

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

Date: June 24, 2015

Subject: Consent Agenda Item: Quail Enhancement Areas (QEA) Hunting Rule Changes

Purpose:

The purpose is for the Commission to take final action on proposed rule amendments on four Quail Enhancement Areas (QEA's): Three Lakes, Jennings Forest, Blackwater and Apalachicola WMA's. These amendments would expand hunting opportunities and increase hunter access, while allowing bobwhite populations to expand.

Summary:

At its April 15 meeting in Tallahassee, staff presented draft rule amendments that were approved to move forward for final consideration in June. The proposed rule amendments would 1) remove quota permit requirements; 2) establish a bag limit on bobwhite of 6 per person; 3) establish up to 16 days (Saturday and Wednesday) of quail hunting in January and February, combined; and 4) establish that the quail season will be set annually by order of the Executive Director, based on annual fall densities (see attached draft rule). Staff worked with partnering agencies on the proposed rule amendments and believes QEAs can support greater access and at the same time contribute to population growth of bobwhite.

Staff has received unsolicited feedback from hunters in support of the proposed rule amendments. Additionally, staff solicited feedback from QEA and public land hunters through online outreach and received strong support for the proposed rule amendments.

Staff Recommendation:

Approve the proposed rule amendments

Staff Contact and/or Presenter:

Greg Hagan, Northern Bobwhite Coordinator, Division of Hunting and Game Management

Attachment:

68A-15.062 Specific Regulations for Wildlife Management Areas- North Central Region.