

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

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Surveys and Inventories

SFY2015 Statewide Report



Waterfowl Fall and Winter Surveys, Production, and Harvest
(October 2014-March 2015),

Waterfowl Spring Surveys and Summer Banding
(April 2015-September 2015)

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2018, Boise, Idaho

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

WATERFOWL FALL AND WINTER SURVEYS, BANDING, AND HARVEST	4
ABSTRACT.....	4
YOUTH WATERFOWL HUNT.....	4
STUDY OBJECTIVES.....	4
PROCEDURES.....	4
RESULTS	5
DUCKS (ALL SPECIES).....	5
CURRENT MANAGEMENT PLAN GOALS	5
MANAGEMENT AREAS.....	5
POPULATION SURVEYS	5
HARVEST CHARACTERISTICS.....	6
MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	6
GEESE (ALL SPECIES).....	7
CURRENT MANAGEMENT PLAN GOALS	7
MANAGEMENT AREAS.....	7
POPULATION SURVEYS	8
HARVEST CHARACTERISTICS.....	8
MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	8
SANDHILL CRANE.....	8
TRUMPETER SWAN.....	9
TUNDRA SWAN.....	9
AMERICAN COOT.....	9
WILSON’S SNIPE.....	9
WATERFOWL PRODUCTION AND SUMMER BANDING.....	10
ABSTRACT.....	10
STUDY OBJECTIVES.....	10
PROCEDURES.....	10
REGIONAL REPORTS.....	11
DUCKS (ALL SPECIES).....	11
Panhandle Region	11
Clearwater Region	12

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

Southwest (Nampa) Region	12
Southwest (McCall) Region.....	13
Magic Valley Region	13
Southeast Region	13
Upper Snake Region	14
Salmon Region.....	16
GEESE (ALL SPECIES)	16
Panhandle Region	16
Clearwater Region	16
Southwest (Nampa) Region	18
Southwest (McCall) Region.....	18
Magic Valley Region	19
Southeast Region	19
Upper Snake Region	20
Salmon Region.....	21
SANDHILL CRANE	21
CURRENT GOALS.....	21
Southwest (McCall) Region.....	22
Magic Valley Region	22
Southeast Region	22
Upper Snake Region	23
Salmon Region.....	23
TRUMPETER SWAN.....	23
Magic Valley Region	23
Southeast Region	24
Upper Snake Region	25
TUNDRA SWAN	25
AMERICAN COOT	25
WILSON’S SNIPE	25

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

LITERATURE CITED25
APPENDIX A.....32

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Estimated waterfowl harvest numbers from USFWS’s waterfowl hunter survey for Idaho, 1988-Present..... 27
Table 2. Ducks banded in Idaho by Department and USDA-Wildlife Services personnel, 2015..... 28
Table 3. Mallards banded in Idaho by Department personnel, 2008-Present..... 28
Table 4. September aerial and ground-based counts of RMP greater sandhill cranes in eastern Idaho, 2009-2015..... 29
Table 5 Sandhill crane tag levels, estimated hunter participation, and harvest based on mail and telephone surveys, 2009-2015..... 30
Table 6. Age composition of sandhill crane harvest based on mail and telephone surveys, 2009-2015. 31

STATEWIDE REPORT SURVEYS AND INVENTORY

JOB TITLE: Waterfowl Fall and Winter Surveys, Banding, and Harvest

STUDY NAME: Waterfowl Population Status, Trends, Use, and Associated Habitat Studies

PERIOD COVERED: October 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015

WATERFOWL FALL AND WINTER SURVEYS, BANDING, AND HARVEST

ABSTRACT

The results of harvest surveys and the mid-winter waterfowl survey are summarized and discussed. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) estimated duck harvest was down 25% and goose harvest was up 4% from 2013-2014 levels. The Department discontinued a separate waterfowl harvest survey for Idaho during 2010. Idaho held a light goose hunts from 26 November to 10 March 2015 in the Southwest and Magic Valley regions, and 14 February to 10 March 2015 in a portion of the Southeast Region. The mid-winter waterfowl survey was conducted in portions of the Clearwater, Southwest, and Magic Valley regions in January 2015. The Department discontinued the aerial portion of the mid-winter waterfowl survey in 2011.

YOUTH WATERFOWL HUNT

The USFWS again offered all states the option of holding a two-day youth waterfowl hunt during the 2014-2015 season. Pacific Flyway states that chose the option were required to reduce their regular seasons by two days so as not to exceed the 107-day maximum length for migratory bird seasons. States were permitted to hold the hunt outside the regular season framework, but regular-season limits applied. The Commission selected the option and chose September 27-28 for the youth hunt. It was open to youth 12-15 years-of-age and full duck (including merganser), coot, and goose limits applied to participants.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

1. Determine production and trends of resident waterfowl.
2. Estimate waterfowl harvest, hunter participation, and hunter opinions.
3. Determine waterfowl movements, distribution, and survival rates.

PROCEDURES

1. Conduct fall and winter aerial counts of waterfowl.
2. Evaluate the usefulness of fall surveys and consider new techniques to assess waterfowl numbers.
3. Conduct a telephone survey of hunting license buyers.
4. Operate check stations or field checks.

5. Band waterfowl and monitor movements and survival rates.

Harvest data were collected and analyzed by the Bureau of Wildlife. Personnel stationed in the state's seven regions and one sub-region collected all other data.

RESULTS

DUCKS (ALL SPECIES)

Current Management Plan Goals

1. Reverse the decline in the number of duck hunters.
2. Reverse the decline in duck harvest.
3. Determine duck nesting success at least twice (every other year) on all Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) where waterfowl production is a priority.
4. Maintain a 30% nest success for upland nesting ducks on WMAs where waterfowl production is a priority.
5. Develop and implement a predator management strategy for priority WMAs where nest success is less than 30%.
6. Establish duck production surveys in at least one region in cooperation with the USFWS.

Management Areas

Background and Management Philosophy: See the 2007 Waterfowl Annual Reports (Study II, Jobs 2 & 3) for a thorough history of the duck management areas in Idaho.

For the 2014-2015 season, the USFWS offered a 107-day season for ducks, snipe, and coot statewide. The regular season was 105 days with no split, and the two-day youth waterfowl season was held September 27-28.

The description, season framework, and bag and possession limits for each Management Area are found in Appendix A.

Population Surveys

During 2010, two helicopter crashes occurred with Department personnel on board. In one instance, the pilot and both passengers sustained serious injuries, and in the other the pilot and both passengers were fatally injured. As a result, the Department conducted a flight safety review during which needs/risk assessment were completed. Aerial mid-winter waterfowl surveys were discontinued 2011. (See Waterfowl Statewide Report 2013). Ground-based mid-winter waterfowl surveys were conducted in the Clearwater, Southwest, and Magic Valley regions in 2015.

In 2014, the estimated mallard abundance was 10.9 million birds, which was similar to 2013 levels, and 42% above the long-term average (USFWS 2014a). Western mallards consist of two substocks and are defined as those birds breeding in Alaska and those birds breeding in

California and Oregon. Estimates of the size of these subpopulations have varied from 0.28 to 0.84 million in Alaska since 1990 and 0.32 to 0.69 million in California-Oregon since 1992. The total population size of western mallards has ranged from 0.72 to 1.40 million. For 2014, the estimated breeding-population size of western mallards was 0.82 million (SE = 0.08 million), including 0.50 million (SE = 0.06 million) from Alaska and 0.32million (SE = 0.06 million) from California-Oregon (USFWS 2014b).

Harvest Characteristics

Telephone Survey: In an effort to reduce costs and increase efficiency, the Department discontinued annual telephone harvest surveys for waterfowl in 2010. The USFWS annually estimates statewide harvest through the Federal Migratory Game Bird Harvest Information Program Harvest (Table 1).

Federal Migratory Game Bird Harvest Information Program: The goal of the program is to obtain improved harvest estimates for all species. By federal mandate, states provide the USFWS with names and addresses of all migratory game bird hunters, from which the USFWS draws a sample of hunters to survey. The Department has complied fully with the USFWS's request for information every year since the 1997-1998 season. The USFWS estimated 241,828 ducks were harvested in Idaho during the 2014-2015 hunting season, which was down 25% from 2013-2014 estimates. According to USFWS HIP estimates, the number of active adult duck hunters in Idaho was 18,959 (Table 1).

Waterfowl check stations were operated at the Boundary Creek, McArthur Lake, and Coeur d'Alene River WMAs on the opening Saturday and Sunday of the 2014 duck season. A total of 63 hunters expended 214 hours of effort to harvest 134 ducks (2.1 ducks/hunter; 0.6 hours/duck). Mallards comprised 31% of the harvest and green winged teal comprised 27% of the harvest.

Management Implications

The Department continued to meet its 1991-1995 Waterfowl Management Plan (WMP) goals to reverse the decline in the number of duck hunters and ducks harvested. However, the WMP is outdated and needs to be updated to reflect current waterfowl management issues in Idaho.

See the 2007 Waterfowl Annual Reports (Study II, Jobs 2 & 3) for a thorough history of the Idaho migratory waterfowl stamp and how the revenue it generated was spent. Currently, there is an annual budget of \$151,920 in the Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) for waterfowl habitat improvement or enhancement.

Future management will be directed toward improving and restoring wetland habitat to attract more ducks and other wetland birds as they migrate through Idaho. Habitat improvement will seek to increase local production and improve wetland functions across the landscape.

GEESE (ALL SPECIES)

Current Management Plan Goals

1. Increase Idaho's breeding Canada goose populations and wintering populations.
2. Increase the annual goose harvest to 50,000 birds.
3. Maintain the average number of geese harvested per hunter per season above 3.0.
4. Increase hunter days to 130,000 annually.

Management Areas

Background and Management Philosophy: Historically, the Pacific Flyway Council has recognized two populations of western Canada geese for management purposes (Subcommittee on Rocky Mountain Population Canada Geese 2000). They include the Rocky Mountain Population (RMP) and the Pacific Population (PP). Both populations occur in Idaho. However, during 2013 the Pacific Flyway Study Committee began the review process to update a management plan for western Canada geese that will combine both populations into one management plan. See the 2007 Waterfowl Annual Reports (Study II, Jobs 2 & 3) for a thorough history of the goose management areas in Idaho.

For the 2014-2015 season, the USFWS offered a 107-day season for geese statewide. The regular season for dark geese was 105 days with no split, and the two-day youth waterfowl season was held 27-28 September. The duck and dark goose seasons have opened concurrently since the 2003-2004 waterfowl season.

During the 2008-2009 regulations cycle, the Pacific Flyway Council extended the white goose framework for Interior states to 10 March. During 2014-2015, Idaho implemented a split light goose season in Area 2, which includes portions of the Magic Valley, Southeast, and Upper Snake regions in the American Falls Reservoir area. The season dates were from October 29, 2014 to January 16, 2015 and February 14 to March 10, 2014 to allow for hunting in late February and early March. In Area 3, in the southwest part of Idaho, there was a 105-day light goose season from November 26, 2014 to March 10, 2015. When all other waterfowl and migratory game bird hunting seasons, except falconry, are closed, recorded or electrically amplified bird calls or imitations of bird calls, and unplugged shotguns capable of holding more than three shells may be used to hunt light geese. The remainder of the state had light goose seasons concurrent with duck and Canada goose seasons.

During the 2013-2014 season, seasons for white-fronted and Canada geese were separated to allow a 107-day white-fronted goose season that extends beyond the last Sunday in January. In Area 3, in the southwest part of the state, seasons for white-fronted geese and light geese – snow and Ross's geese – were open at different times for part of the season, with the white-fronted goose season open from November 10 through February 22. The remainder of the state had white-fronted goose seasons concurrent with duck and Canada goose seasons.

The description, season framework, and bag and possession limits for each Management Area are found in Appendix A.

Population Surveys

During 2010, two helicopter crashes occurred with Department personnel on board. In one instance, the pilot and both passengers sustained serious injuries, and in the other the pilot and both passengers were fatally injured. As a result, the Department conducted a flight safety review during which needs/risk assessment were completed. Aerial mid-winter waterfowl surveys were discontinued.

Harvest Characteristics

Telephone Survey: In an effort to reduce costs and increase efficiency, the Department discontinued annual telephone harvest surveys for waterfowl in 2010. The USFWS annually estimates statewide harvest through the Federal Migratory Game Bird Harvest Information Program Harvest.

The Department used a mail-in/telephone survey to estimate the light and white-fronted goose harvest from the spring season. The survey estimated 1,105 hunters harvested 9,100 light geese, which was up 3% from the 2014 season. Additionally, 571 hunters harvested 4,000 white-fronted geese during late winter hunting seasons, which was up 38% from the 2014 season.

Federal Migratory Game Bird Harvest Information Program: The goal of the program is to obtain improved harvest estimates for all species. By federal mandate, states provide the USFWS with names and addresses of all migratory game bird hunters, from which the USFWS draws samples of hunters to survey. The Department has complied fully with the USFWS's request for information every year since the 1997-1998 season. The USFWS estimated 73,400 geese were harvested in Idaho during the 2014-2015 hunting season, which was up 4% from 2013-2014 estimates (Table 1).

Management Implications

The Department met its 1991-1995 WMP goal for total harvest and harvest per hunter per season, but did not meet the goal for total days hunted statewide. However, the WMP is outdated and needs to be updated to reflect current waterfowl management issues in Idaho.

The Department will continue to implement the HIP program (discussed previously in the duck section) to improve wetland habitat for Canada geese and other wetland birds. Goose depredation problems are becoming significant in some urban areas and will require new strategies to manage these nuisance birds.

SANDHILL CRANE

The Department's goals and objectives for the sandhill crane are the same as those for the Pacific Flyway (Subcommittee on Rocky Mountain Population Greater Sandhill Cranes 2007), which is available at the Pacific Flyway website at: www.pacificflyway.org.

The RMP sandhill crane population continued to receive increased management emphasis during the reporting period in the Magic Valley, Southeast, and Upper Snake regions because of continued landowner concerns over crop damage. Surveys of RMP greater sandhill cranes in these three regions were initiated in 1995 to document total sandhill crane numbers, arrival dates, distribution, and age ratios.

TRUMPETER SWAN

The Department's goals and objectives for the trumpeter swans are the same as those for the Pacific Flyway (Subcommittee on Rocky Mountain Population Trumpeter Swans 2012), which is available at the Pacific Flyway website at: www.pacificflyway.org.

TUNDRA SWAN

The Department's 1991-1995 WMP goals for tundra swan are to: (1) maintain current migrations through Idaho, and (2) meet the demand for non-consumptive use. However, during the reporting period, this species received little management emphasis in Idaho. This is because the tundra swan is not currently hunted in the state, and the species benefits indirectly from other wildlife management programs.

AMERICAN COOT

The Department's 1991-1995 WMP goals for American coot are to: (1) maintain Idaho's population, (2) increase the harvest, and (3) provide maximum recreational opportunity. However, this species received little management emphasis during the reporting period. This is because the American coot is not a popular game bird in Idaho and because it benefits indirectly from other wildlife management programs.

WILSON'S SNIPE

The Department's 1991-1995 WMP goals for Wilson's snipe are to: (1) maintain Idaho's Wilson's snipe population and (2) maintain the harvest. However, during the reporting period, this species received little management attention. This is because the Wilson's snipe is not a popular game bird in Idaho and because it benefits indirectly from other wildlife management programs.

STATEWIDE REPORT SURVEYS AND INVENTORY

JOB TITLE: Waterfowl Spring Surveys and Summer Banding

STUDY NAME: Waterfowl Population Status, Trends, Use, and Associated Habitat Studies

PERIOD COVERED: April 1, 2015 to September 30, 2015

WATERFOWL PRODUCTION AND SUMMER BANDING

ABSTRACT

In 2015, Idaho banded 1,094 mallards. Since 2009, 10,400 mallards have been banded by Department personnel in Idaho. In 2015, active nests of Pacific Population (PP) Canada geese were counted from the ground on two survey areas in Idaho, and totaled 325 nests in the Panhandle Region. The Department conducted a flight safety review during which needs/risk assessment were completed. As a result, Canada goose breeding pair surveys have been discontinued. Furthermore, the Pacific Flyway Study Committee is currently revising the management plan for the Rocky Mountain and Pacific populations of Canada geese, and new survey methodologies are being considered. The Department has decided to postpone spring Canada goose surveys until the new methodologies have been designed and the management plan has been completed and approved by the Pacific Flyway Council.

The combination fixed-wing and ground count of sandhill cranes was completed during September 2015. A total of 6,454 cranes were counted in Idaho. In 2015, 290 sandhill crane tags were available on a first-come first-served basis. The hunts were held during September in five areas; an estimated 166 cranes were harvested.

Tundra swans, American coots, and Wilson's snipe received little management emphasis; these species benefit from statewide programs aimed at other species. Department management area descriptions, duck, goose, and sandhill crane hunting season structures, and bag and possession limits for the previous season are provided in Appendix A.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

1. Determine production and trends of resident waterfowl.
2. Determine movements, distribution, and survival rates of resident waterfowl.

PROCEDURES

1. Conduct Canada goose breeding pair aerial surveys and nest searches for specific survey areas and implement a triggering mechanism for determining when to reduce the goose harvest.
2. Band locally-produced waterfowl and monitor movements and survival rates.

3. Trap Canada goose goslings and transplant them into areas where new flocks may be started or to supplement existing low populations.

REGIONAL REPORTS

DUCKS (All Species)

Panhandle Region

Population Surveys: Approximately 258 wood duck nest boxes located in the Panhandle were available for nesting in 2015. A total of 195 boxes were evaluated. Cavity-nesting ducks (wood ducks, common goldeneye, bufflehead, and hooded mergansers) utilized 133 (68%) of the boxes evaluated and all species had a 73% nest success. Wood ducks comprised 50% of the nest box use and saw a 70% nest success. Hooded Mergansers used 20% of the boxes and had 64% nest success.

Breeding pair/brood duck production surveys were conducted on Boundary Creek and McArthur Lake WMAs in 2015. Two breeding pair surveys were conducted in May, followed by brood counts conducted in June (once), July (once), and August (once). Across the northern Panhandle Habitat District, a total of 341 breeding duck pairs produced 83 observed broods (24% success) and 498 ducklings (6.0 ducklings per brood). While a wide variety of duck species were recorded during the pair counts, many of these species leave prior to breeding and consequently artificially lower the referenced success rates. The dominant breeding duck species in the Panhandle are mallards, wood ducks, and to a lesser extent, redhead and ring-neck ducks.

Trapping and Transplanting: A total of 1,515 ducks were trapped and banded by Department personnel in the Panhandle Region during August and September 2015 (Tables 2 and 3). Mallards comprised 58% of the sample. Increased effort to band cinnamon teal resulted in 495 teal banded at CDAWMA and MLWMA. Banding occurred at the Coeur d'Alene River, McArthur Lake, Boundary Creek WMAs, and Kootenai National Wildlife Refuge. No transplanting projects were conducted. Since 1991, a total of 23,423 ducks have been banded during breeding season at the Boundary Creek, McArthur Lake, Pend Oreille, and Coeur d'Alene River WMAs.

Management Studies: Waterfowl check stations were operated at the Boundary Creek, McArthur Lake, and Coeur d'Alene River WMAs on the opening Saturday and Sunday of the 2014 duck season. A total of 63 hunters expended 214 hours of effort to harvest 134 ducks (2.1 ducks/hunter; 0.6 hours/duck). Mallards comprised 31% of the harvest and green winged teal comprised 27% of the harvest.

Management Implications: The installation of nest boxes in appropriate wetland habitat throughout the Panhandle Region has significantly increased production of cavity-nesting ducks, as seen in the significant percentage of wood ducks in the opening weekend waterfowl check station survey. Although wood ducks are the target species for this effort; common goldeneye and hooded mergansers also frequently use these boxes. Through the Habitat Improvement

Program (HIP), many of these nest boxes are now placed on private lands and contribute to the overall improvement in duck production throughout the region.

Clearwater Region

Population Surveys: Clearwater regional staff in coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted the 2015 Mid-Winter Waterfowl Survey along the Snake (WA and ID) and Clearwater Rivers and Mann Lake on January 9, 2015. The Mid-Winter Waterfowl Survey is a nationwide effort to survey waterfowl in areas of major concentration on their wintering grounds and provide winter distribution and habitat affiliations. The count during this reporting period along the Snake River portion of the survey was 2,134 total ducks (1,043 dabblers and 1,077 divers) and 295 Canada geese. The count during this reporting period along the Clearwater River was 4,789 total ducks (4,396 dabblers, 391 divers, 2 mergansers) and 251 Canada geese. The count during this reporting period at Mann Lake was 50 ducks (all dabblers) and no Canada geese.

A small breeding population of wood ducks nests in the Clearwater Region. From 1988-1998, in an attempt to enhance this species' presence, nest boxes were erected in conjunction with the Department's HIP program. A landowner survey of wood duck use of nest boxes was discontinued in 2005 due to poor return rates on data cards. Many of these structures are no longer usable. Since 2001, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has installed over 30 wood duck nest boxes along the lower Snake and Clearwater River levee ponds and sloughs. A resident population resides in the valley and disperses out from this source.

Trapping and Transplanting: No ducks were banded in the Clearwater Region during this reporting period.

Management Implications: The development of ponds and shallow water areas through the HIP program has improved local duck nesting in the region, though no production surveys are conducted to monitor this.

Southwest (Nampa) Region

Population Surveys: No surveys for estimating duck nesting success and production were conducted on WMAs during the reporting period.

Trapping and Transplanting: No ducks were trapped during this reporting period.

Disease Testing: No sampling took place during this reporting period.

Habitat Conditions: No regional wetland surveys are conducted; therefore, the exact extent of wetlands is unknown. The waterfowl production from these wetlands is also unknown.

Management Implications: No new wetlands have been created during this reporting period.

Prescribed fire and herbicide are being used on WMAs to open up dense stands of vegetation. Opening these stands will make them more attractive and productive to waterfowl broods.

Southwest (McCall) Region

Population Surveys: No population surveys are conducted for ducks in the McCall sub-region. Ducks are numerous and mostly associated with the Lake Cascade ecosystem.

Various local groups, such as the Boy Scouts and Reservoir Association, erect wood duck nest boxes. No effort was made to monitor the number of boxes installed by these private organizations. Maintenance of these boxes is encouraged annually.

Trapping and Transplanting: No ducks were banded by the Southwest (McCall) Region during this reporting period.

Management Implications: The HIP program and other programs will be utilized to enhance duck nest production. Priority will be placed on projects that stabilize water levels and enhance nest production on Cascade Reservoir.

Magic Valley Region

Population Surveys: Magic Valley regional staff conducts an annual ground waterfowl survey in conjunction with the mid-winter waterfowl survey at Hagerman Wildlife Management Area. In January of 2015 21,510 ducks were counted. Seven species of dabbling ducks and 5 species of diver ducks were observed. Mallards were the most abundant species, accounting for 66% of the total. Ring-necked ducks were the second most abundant accounting for 22% of the total.

Habitat Conditions: Precipitation during the 2014-2015 winter was below or near average in all major watersheds in the Magic Valley Region. Snake River flows, as usual, were low during nesting season..

Trapping and Transplanting: No ducks were banded in the Magic Valley Region during this reporting period.

Management Implications: Although ducks are produced annually on the Hagerman, Niagara, Billingsley Creek, Centennial Marsh, and Carey Lake WMAs, much of the region's duck production occurs in cultivated areas along canals and near small reservoirs and stock ponds. In general, wetland habitats are limited in the region. At WMAs, where duck production is a priority, breeding pair and brood surveys are currently not conducted.

Southeast Region

Population Surveys: Duck nest success and brood surveys have been conducted periodically on the Sterling WMA since the mid-1990s. In 2015, 44 breeding pairs and approximately 4 broods were detected on the WMA with an estimated nest success rate of 9.0%. After incorporating species, observability correction factors the number of broods increased to 6.5 with an estimated

nesting success of 14.7%. Water levels at American Falls Reservoir and all ponds on Sterling WMA were satisfactory during the nesting and brood-rearing season.

Predator Management: Graduate student research from 1993-1995 indicated high magpie populations on the Sterling WMA in association with dense Russian olive stands. Russian olive stands were removed in the late 1990s in an attempt to reduce predation and increase waterfowl nest success. Subsequent field observations suggested that mammalian predators began to replace magpies following tree removal. Mammalian predator removal efforts were initiated in 1997 and continued through 2009, but have not been carried out since. In 2015, nest searches and nest cameras were used to identify primary nest predators at Sterling WMA. All but 1 unsuccessful nest was characterized by all eggs disappearing and no egg shell fragments present and cameras indicated that these are likely magpie depredations. One nest that had egg shell fragments present was depredated by a skunk.

Trapping and Transplanting: 121 ducks were banded in the Southeast Region during this reporting period.

Waterfowl die-offs: One large die-off occurred on American Falls Reservoir during the 2009 reporting period where over 20,000 waterfowl and water birds died due to an avian botulism outbreak. Another, much smaller (~ 250 waterfowl), botulism outbreak occurred in the Shelly City Sewer lagoon during the 2009 reporting period. In August 2010, one small botulism outbreak where approximately 20 ducks died occurred at an industrial settling pond. Climatic conditions during this reporting period, however, were more favorable and no botulism or other waterfowl die-offs were detected.

Upper Snake Region

Population Surveys: No waterfowl brood counts were conducted during this reporting period.

Habitat Conditions: Most ducks in the region are produced on Market Lake and Mud Lake WMAs and Camas National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). Duck production on all of these areas is influenced by water levels. Abnormally wet or dry years can reduce production. Numerous other areas of duck habitat, ranging from small beaver ponds and potholes to riparian communities along the Snake River occur throughout the region. Some areas are severely impacted by livestock grazing while other areas are impacted by irrigation withdrawal, invasive noxious weeds, or housing development. The region is working with private landowners, local weed control areas, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and other non-government groups to improve the quality of nesting and brood-rearing habitat through HIP.

The best wood duck habitat in the region is on the North Fork Snake River below St. Anthony, the South Fork Snake River below Burns Creek, and the Snake River above Roberts. These areas have excellent cottonwood riparian communities and numerous slow-flowing and backwater sloughs. Except for Cartier Slough WMA, Deer Parks WMA, and the Warm Slough Access Area, the land ownership is a mix of private and BLM lands. Market Lake, Mud Lake, and Sand Creek WMAs have limited wood duck nesting habitat around the edges of marshes and ponds.

Habitat Improvements: On Market Lake WMA, 75 acres were farmed during 2015. A variety of crops were planted and left standing for waterfowl and upland game use.

On Mud Lake WMA, 300 acres were planted to food plots to benefit waterfowl and upland game in 2015. On Deer Parks WMU, 110 acres were planted and left standing for waterfowl in 2015.

Trapping and Transplanting: A total of 29 ducks were trapped and banded by Department personnel in the Upper Snake Region during August and September 2015 (Tables 2 and 3). Mallards comprised 58% of the sample. No ducks were trapped for transplanting in the Upper Snake Region during this reporting period.

Waterfowl Die-offs: No waterfowl die-offs occurred during this reporting period.

Depredation: No depredation complaints were received during this reporting period.

Predator Control: Hunters and trappers remove some predators during normal furbearer seasons.

Management Implications: Management direction in the 1991-1995 WMP is to maintain at least 30% duck nesting success on important duck-producing WMAs and increase duck production by improving nesting habitat on WMAs and through HIP. Production surveys are to be used on WMAs where duck production is a priority to monitor production and measures taken to increase production where it is low.

Nest success has not been monitored since the early 1990s. Mayfield nest success estimates at Market Lake WMA were around 20% each year that surveys were done. This is below the objective of 30% for the WMA. Nest predation appeared to be caused by both avian and mammalian predators. Mammalian predation appeared higher on nests in large *Juncus* habitat blocks while avian predation appeared higher in fragmented cattail and hardstem bulrush habitat patches.

Results from nest searches and nest success estimates on Market Lake suggest that ducks are not using some plant communities for nesting. Very few nests were found in the old *Juncus* meadows. Reseeding at least some of these communities to cover providing more structure (e.g., a rank bunchgrass) should be considered and the areas then monitored for nest attempts and success.

Duck nest surveys conducted on Mud Lake WMA generally indicated above 30% nesting success.

The region has some excellent wood duck habitat along the Snake River but has lacked nesting boxes. Adopt-A-Wetland groups and habitat biologists have placed some nesting boxes along the Snake River. Incidental observations suggest a wood duck nesting population has established along the Snake River. Eight new wood duck boxes were installed on Gem State WHA.

Salmon Region

Population Surveys: No population surveys are conducted for ducks in the Salmon Region.

Trapping and Transplanting: No ducks were banded in the Salmon Region during this reporting period.

Wood duck nest boxes in the region were not visited and cleaned.

GEESE (All Species)

Panhandle Region

Population Surveys: Canada goose nest surveys were conducted on the Pend Oreille, Boundary Creek, McArthur Lake and Coeur d'Alene River WMAs in 2015. A total of 325 nests were located. One hundred and thirty two nest platforms were checked with a total of 46 active platforms had active nests for a use rate of 35%.

The Pend Oreille WMA consists of scattered parcels along Pend Oreille Lake and the Pend Oreille River. The number of nesting geese located on the Pend Oreille has remained high in recent years as a result of the acquisitions, including the addition of Pearl Island to the WMA. Pearl Island on the POWMA is now the leading site for Canada goose production with 220 nests in 2015. No platforms were checked in 2015 on POWMA.

Trapping and Transplanting: No Canada geese were banded or transplanted in the Panhandle Region during the reporting period.

Management Implications: Canada goose nesting initially increased in the Panhandle Region in response to the placement of man-made nest structures and a gosling transplant program. Production declined in the early 2000's, presumably in response to a lack of platform maintenance. An increased emphasis was placed on maintaining existing nest structures beginning in 2005, and the number of nesting geese initially increased. The number of nesting geese appears to be stable to increasing. Maintenance of nest platforms is no longer a management priority.

HIP has significantly increased the number of nest structures erected on private property since 1988. There are more structures on private land than there are on Department property; however these are not surveyed at this time.

Clearwater Region

Population Surveys: An established flock of PP Canada geese nest in the Clearwater Region. These birds nest along roughly the lower 22 miles of the Clearwater River, primarily from Lewiston upstream to Peck. The 2014 breeding pair survey of this area resulted in a count of 51 indicated pairs and a total of 97 Canada geese. The Canada good breeding pair survey was not conducted in 2015. Numbers of active nests in this area were counted consistently from 1981

through 2006. Nesting success had been enhanced in this area with man-made nest structures placed on islands in the 1980s and early 1990s. Consistent data collection of goose nest structure use in the Clearwater Region began in 1988. The number of structures peaked at 80 in the early 1990s. Issues related to a burgeoning population in the late 1990s resulted in a change in management direction. The total number of structures slowly declined as those found unserviceable were removed. The last structures were removed after the 2006 nesting season. Management direction will encourage natural ground nesting on the islands. Annual summer goose counts conducted in the Lewiston/Clarkston valley indicate a stable local goose population.

Additional areas were surveyed for nests beginning in 1992. These included farm ponds in the region where nesting structures were issued to landowners, and Mann Lake, Middle Fork Clearwater River, Palouse River, Potlatch River, and Red River. These surveys have been discontinued, as they applied to nest structure use only. Poor return rates on data cards were another factor in discontinuing this survey. Few of these structures remain intact for use by geese.

Depredation: The number of goose complaints remained low over the reporting period. The increased hunting pressure and harvest in and around past depredation complaint areas has effectively reduced calls concerning crop damage. Three complaints of crop damage were taken involving Canada geese. The lack of complaints reported around the Mann Lake area are likely a result of the Department's reduction in the size of the waterfowl hunting closure in 2001.

Trapping and Transplanting: No Canada geese were trapped or transplanted in the Clearwater Region during the reporting period.

Management Studies: Problems associated with large numbers of geese at local parks, golf courses, and the Lewiston airport have subsided somewhat due to favorable habitat conditions and dispersal of birds. No trapping operations were conducted this year.

To address concerns about Canada geese in the urban environment of the Lewiston-Clarkston valley, interested parties continue to work together to apply management options available to control local goose numbers. Deterrent measures such as hazing and vegetation manipulation have been conducted by private businesses, state, and federal agencies in the area.

In 2004, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) applied for a limited permit from the USFWS to take waterfowl using egg addling in specified areas on the Washington levee system and associated parks, and on one island shared by both Washington and Idaho. These sites were determined to have heavy nesting concentrations within city limits. Much of the local goose problem is tied to these areas. The USACE now annually treats between 30 to 60 nests in the specified areas. The program is reportedly significantly reducing the level of complaints and human health issues related to the local goose population.

Management Implications: Beginning in 2007, the region changed the method of monitoring Canada geese on the lower Clearwater River (Survey Area 5) from structure and ground nest

search to a pair and total goose count. Survey Area 6 was dropped as it tracked only the use of nest structures issued to landowners throughout the region. These structures are no longer being maintained for goose nesting and most have been removed.

Southwest (Nampa) Region

Population Surveys: The breeding pair flight survey for geese was discontinued in 2011 due to safety concerns.

Climatic Conditions: Precipitation in the Southwest Region was near or below average during winter in the Weiser, Bruneau, Boise, Payette, and Owyhee Basins. Precipitation during spring and early summer was below average in the Weiser, Bruneau, Boise, Payette, and Owyhee Basins. Because no regional wetland surveys are conducted, the exact extent of wetlands is unknown. The waterfowl production from these wetlands is also unknown.

Trapping and Transplanting: No local geese (goslings or adults) were moved out of the urban area of Boise during this reporting period.

Disease Testing: No disease sampling was conducted in the region.

Management Implications: Breeding pair counts along the Snake and Payette Rivers have been below management objectives for six consecutive years (prior to 2011). This survey was curtailed in 2011 due to safety concerns, but the downward trend will likely continue. Canada goose surveys on the Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge also detected a marked decline in production coinciding with spring pair counts (decrease of 45% from 10 year average).

The Southwest Region will continue to closely monitor populations, seasons, harvest, and limits to determine if the situation warrants action.

Observations of geese in Boise parks, indicate only 2% of all birds observed in winter are marked. Whereas, 50% of all birds observed during spring/summer are marked. Because nuisance goose complaints occur during winter, managing “non-resident” nuisance geese during this period is challenging and likely unproductive. The Southwest Region continues to work with Boise Parks and Recreation and other agencies on this issue. Geese were marked with color-coded bands. Boise Parks and Rec employees are recording daily observations of banded geese in local parks throughout the year. This effort will aid managers in determining what management actions may be appropriate and the specific time of year that those actions could benefit the management of urban Canada geese. Juvenile geese banded in Meridian and Boise were reported as harvested in at least 7 states and 2 Canadian provinces.

Southwest (McCall) Region

Population Surveys: No Canada goose pair surveys were conducted during the reporting period. Nesting survey and nest structure use data were not collected during the reporting period. Maintenance of existing goose nest structures is coordinated region-wide through HIP.

Trapping and Transplanting: No Canada geese were trapped or transplanted in the Southwest (McCall) Region during the reporting period.

Management Implications: The 1991-1995 WMP directs the Department to reduce the harvest when the three-year average falls below minimum objectives. The minimum objective for Lake Cascade is 225 geese observed and 100 indicated pairs. The 3-year average for indicated pairs is approximately at this objective. These monitoring criteria were developed for the plan without baseline data. Management objectives for these areas should be refined, using available data. These refined objectives should be incorporated into any updates to the 1991-1995 WMP. Population survey data collection will be continued according to guidelines in the 1991-1995 WMP.

Magic Valley Region

Population Surveys: Canada goose breeding pair surveys and mid-winter waterfowl counts were discontinued in 2011 per statewide direction. Magic Valley regional staff conducts an annual ground waterfowl survey in conjunction with the mid-winter waterfowl survey at Hagerman Wildlife Management Area. During January 2015, 1,465 Canada geese were counted.

Habitat Conditions: Precipitation during the winters of 2014-2015 was below or near average in all major watersheds in the Magic Valley Region. Snake River flows, as usual, were low during nesting season.

Depredation: Seven goose depredation complaints were received in 2015. The majority of these complaints were from landowners in the Hagerman area.

Trapping and Transplanting: No Canada geese were trapped or transplanted in the Magic Valley Region during the reporting period.

Management Implications: Prior to 2011 when breeding pair surveys were discontinued, none of the survey areas in the region have met both minimum breeding pair and total geese criteria. Increased bag limits (from 2/day to 4/day), poor nesting conditions, and reduced availability of artificial nesting structures are all factors that may have contributed to decline in observed spring goose numbers. Many of the nesting structures in the Magic Valley were constructed in the late 1970s and are no longer functional or are located in areas that are no longer suitable. Current budget constraints and personnel shortages will negatively affect maintenance and monitoring of goose nest structures in the region except on WMAs.

Southeast Region

Population Surveys: Canada goose breeding pair surveys and mid-winter waterfowl counts were discontinued in 2011 per statewide direction.

Trapping and Transplanting: No Canada geese were trapped or transplanted in the Southeast Region during this reporting period.

Management Implications: Prior to 2011 when breeding pair surveys were discontinued, goose populations were generally below the 1991-1995 WMP objectives (Connelly and Wackenhut 1990). No formal depredation complaints were filed with the Department during this reporting period; however, Wildlife Services personnel normally deal with waterfowl depredations.

Waterfowl die-offs: No die-offs were detected during this reporting period.

Upper Snake Region

Population Surveys: Two surveys (counts of indicated pairs and total geese) were conducted annually on RMP Canada geese to estimate breeding population trends through 2010. These flights were discontinued in 2011 for employee safety reasons.

Habitat Conditions: Most goose nesting on Department WMAs occurs on nesting structures. Nesting on the South Fork Snake River occurs on islands, while nesting at Camas NWR, in the Teton Basin, the North Fork Snake River, and Island Park Reservoir occurs primarily on the ground.

Habitat on the South Fork Snake River and lower Henrys Fork Snake River is being impacted by the invasion of noxious weeds. The Department is a cooperating partner with local weed control districts to address this problem.

Habitat in the Teton Basin is being lost to summer home development. The Department's HIP program has the potential to reduce this loss if landowner cooperation can be obtained.

Goose production along the South Fork is dependent upon water releases from Palisades Reservoir. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Department jointly researched river flows for optimal goose production during the early to mid-1970s. This study indicated that flows between 8,000 and 16,000 cfs during nesting season were optimal for goose production. However, releases are scheduled to meet irrigation water rights and fisheries needs, which reduces goose production due to nest flooding most years.

Depredation: Canada goose nests located on islands in Gem Lake were oiled with corn oil under a permit from USFWS using license dollars. This effort has helped reduce goose depredations on grain fields near Gem Lake south of Idaho Falls. Landowners around the Mud Lake WMA, and north of Idaho Falls on the Snake River have seen elevated levels of geese during this reporting period and have requested help from the Department and the USFWS. Several landowners throughout the Upper Snake region were provided snow fencing and zong guns to prevent goose depredations.

Predator Control Hunters and trappers remove some predators during normal furbearer seasons.

Trapping and Transplanting: A total of 211 Canada geese were trapped and banded by Department personnel in the Upper Snake Region during June 2015. No transplanting projects were conducted.

Waterfowl Die-offs: No major die-offs occurred within this reporting period.

Habitat Improvements: No goose platform structures were maintained and no new structures were added on the three respective WMA's. On Deer Parks WMU, 24 goose platform structures were maintained in 2015.

On Market Lake WMA, 75 acres were farmed during 2015. A variety of crops were planted and left standing for waterfowl and upland game use. On Mud Lake WMA, 300 acres were planted to food plots to benefit waterfowl and upland game in 2015. On Chester Wetlands and Sand Creek WMAs, 25 acres of food plots were planted to improve habitat for waterfowl in 2015. On Deer Parks WMU, 110 acres were planted and left standing for waterfowl in 2015.

Management Implications: Canada goose production was increased in the region by erecting additional nest structures on the South Fork Snake River, Island Park Reservoir, and Teton River. Annual maintenance of structures on the South Fork was discontinued years ago and most have fallen into disrepair. There is no plan to rebuild these nest boxes due to increased resident populations and the potential for high depredations. Habitat biologists are also no longer servicing platforms on Island Park Reservoir because of conflicts with reservoir recreationalists. Annual maintenance of structures on other non-WMA areas of the region is not being done as needed for goose nesting.

Geese produced around Gem Lake cause annual depredations on malt barley. Goose platforms were erected around Gem Lake as mitigation for the Idaho Falls hydropower project; however, no brood habitat was included in the mitigation plan. These geese are basically urban geese and difficult to harvest and control numbers. In 2014, the Department once again obtained permission from the USFWS to oil nests in Bonneville County. This appeared to decrease the level of depredation to an acceptable level. This work was accomplished utilizing license dollars under the Department's depredation prevention program.

Salmon Region

Population Surveys: No population surveys for RMP Canada geese were conducted in the Salmon Region during 2015.

Trapping and Transplanting: No Canada geese were trapped or transplanted in the Salmon Region during this reporting period.

SANDHILL CRANE

The Department's goals and objectives for the sandhill crane are the same as those for the Pacific Flyway (Subcommittee on Rocky Mountain Greater Sandhill Cranes 1997).

Current Goals

1. Maintain current sandhill crane breeding populations and their distribution.
2. Maintain current sandhill crane migrations through Idaho.

3. Meet the demand for non-consumptive uses.

The RMP sandhill crane population continued to receive increased management emphasis during the reporting period in the Magic Valley, Southeast, and Upper Snake regions because of continuing landowner concerns over crop damage. Surveys of RMP greater sandhill cranes in these three regions were initiated in 1995 to document total sandhill crane numbers, arrival dates, distribution, and age ratios.

Background and Management Philosophy: Rocky Mountain Population greater sandhill cranes have caused crop damage in eastern Idaho for decades. In 1996, the Commission adopted rules that changed the classification of sandhill cranes from migratory nongame birds to migratory game birds and directed the Department to obtain Pacific Flyway Council and USFWS approval for an experimental controlled hunt in three areas. See the 2007 Waterfowl Annual Reports (Study II, Jobs 2 & 3) for a thorough history of the sandhill crane management areas in Idaho.

In 2009, the Commission authorized sandhill crane seasons that were no longer administered through controlled hunts. Tags have since been available on a first-come, first-served basis. This decision was made because the harvest allocation for Idaho had increased in recent years, but the number of birds harvested had remained relatively steady. In 2015, 290 sandhill crane tags were available in five hunt areas. The description, season framework, and bag and possession limits can be found in Appendix A.

Southwest (McCall) Region

Breeding pairs of sandhill cranes occur in the Lake Cascade, North Fork Payette River, and Little Salmon River drainages. No management data are collected on these birds.

Magic Valley Region

During September 2015, 585 cranes were observed in the Silver Creek Valley. No cranes were observed on the Camas Prairie or Carey Lake either year.

Southeast Region

Population Surveys: Personnel for the USFWS and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources collect aerial survey information to determine total sandhill crane abundance during September in selected areas of the Southeast Region (Table 4).

Harvest Characteristics: A mail-in survey with a follow-up telephone survey of non-respondents was used to estimate hunter participation and harvest of sandhill crane for each hunt (Tables 5 and 6). During 2015, sportsmen harvested 104 sandhill cranes in the Bear Lake hunt area and 10 sandhill cranes in the Swan Lake hunt area.

Management Implications: Concerns expressed by grain producers during the mid-1990s prompted the Department to collect baseline information that could be used to identify strategies to reduce depredation. Chesterfield Reservoir, Blackfoot Reservoir, Bear River Valley, and

Grays Lake were identified as primary sites due to a history of depredation concerns. However, sandhill cranes stage and use grain fields throughout the region including Marsh Valley, Malad Valley, Swan Lake/Oxford Slough area, Bear Lake Valley, American Falls Reservoir, and Thomas Fork Valley.

Depredations in the Southeast Region are managed using a lure crop program, most of which have been focused in Caribou County. IDFG responded to an additional two complaints of sandhill cranes outside of the Lure Crop focus area.

Upper Snake Region

Population Surveys: Personnel for the USFWS collect aerial survey information to determine total sandhill crane abundance during September in selected areas of the Upper Snake Region (Table 4).

Harvest Characteristics: A mail-in survey with a follow-up telephone survey of non-respondents was used to estimate hunter participation and harvest of sandhill crane for each hunt (Tables 5 and 6). During 2015, sportsmen harvested 29, 14, and 9 sandhill cranes from Fremont, Teton, and Jefferson counties respectively.

Depredation: The region received no sandhill crane depredation complaints during this reporting period.

Management Implications: Fall pre-migration staging area sandhill crane composition surveys were conducted in the Upper Snake Region for the first time in 1995. These baseline data were used to help identify strategies to reduce depredation concerns on pre-migration staging areas in the Fremont County area and the Teton County area.

Salmon Region

Sandhill cranes occur as scattered breeding pairs in the Lemhi, Pahsimeroi, and Salmon River valleys from Salmon to Stanley. No management data are collected on these birds.

TRUMPETER SWAN

The trumpeter swan is included in the 1991-1995 Nongame Species Plan; the Department's goals and objectives are the same as those of the Pacific Flyway. The 1991-1995 WMP contains no goals for this species. Data for trumpeter swans are included in this report for the historical record.

Magic Valley Region

In 1994, 1995, and 1996, a pair of trumpeter swans successfully nested at White Arrow Ponds north of Bliss in Gooding County. Since then, the trumpeter swans have made no attempt to nest at that site or attempts were brief and unsuccessful.

Successful nesting by trumpeter swans was also documented in 1995 and 1996 at the Department's Highway 46 Pond in Camas County. In 2002, a pair of trumpeter swans successfully nested and reared 3 juveniles on a private pond approximately 6 miles southeast of the Department's Highway 46 Pond.

During August 2006, Department staff found a pair of adult trumpeter swans with three cygnets on Spring Creek Reservoir in Camas County. No nesting trumpeters were documented in the region during 2007; however, a pair of adults was observed at Thorn Creek Reservoir by Department personnel on 23 August, 2007. Trumpeters with cygnets were observed on the Snake River and at White Arrow Ponds during a February, 2009 survey. No evidence of nesting trumpeters has been documented in the region since 2009.

Southeast Region

The trumpeter swan is included in the 1991-1995 Nongame Species Plan; the Department's goals and objectives are the same as those of the Pacific Flyway. The 1991-1995 WMP contains no goals for this species. Data for trumpeter swans are included in this report for the historical record.

Distribution and abundance of trumpeter swans have been monitored since the establishment of a spring light goose hunt in 2010. Despite annual increases in numbers of swans in the area, the IDFG, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and The Trumpeter Swan Society (TTSS) remain concerned about potential impacts of a spring light goose hunt on continued trumpeter swan conservation.

The objective of the 2015 monitoring project was to determine if spring light goose hunt activities resulted in the disturbance and displacement of trumpeter swans from the American Falls Reservoir area. We monitored distribution and abundance of trumpeter swans to assess any possible impacts from the spring light goose hunt.

A comparison of swan distribution during surveys conducted in 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2015 show generally similar distribution patterns both in the hunt area and on the Fort Hall Reservation (2011 and 2012 only) between years. In 2015, we observed new swan use in fields along the northern shore of American Falls Reservoir, which could reflect a change in conditions or agricultural practices at those fields.

The importance of the Fort Hall Reservation for field-feeding swans was unknown prior to the surveys conducted in 2011 and 2012. It was expected the majority of the field-feeding occurred on the northwest side of the American Falls Reservoir. However, surveys indicate the Fort Hall Reservation is an important and viable site for field-feeding swans in late winter. There is no definitive evidence swans are disturbed and displaced by hunting pressure; however, if negative interactions between hunting activities and swan behavior occur, the Fort Hall Reservation provides apparent ample field-feeding opportunities where hunting is prohibited.

Upper Snake Region

The trumpeter swan is included in the 1991-1995 Nongame Species Plan; the Department's goals and objectives are the same as those of the Pacific Flyway. The 1991-1995 WMP contains no goals for this species. Data for trumpeter swans are included in this report for the historical record.

Based on recommendations from the Wyoming Wetlands Society and others at GYTSWG, it was determined that the Teton Basin project would release yearlings instead of cygnets in future releases to try to enhance survival/success. Therefore, no birds were released in 2015. Five cygnets produced by Wyoming Wetlands Society were allocated to the Teton Basin project to be released as yearlings in spring 2016.

TUNDRA SWAN

The Department's 1991-1995 WMP goals for the tundra swan are the same as those of the Pacific Flyway (Connelly and Wackenhut 1990). However, during the reporting period, this species received little management emphasis in Idaho. This is because the tundra swan is not classified by the state as a game bird and the species benefits indirectly from other wildlife management programs.

Tundra swans migrate through the region in spring and fall, and some winter on the Snake River, the North Fork Snake River and the Teton River, but none are known to nest in the state. Counts are made incidental to other waterfowl during the mid-winter waterfowl count and the mid-winter tri-state trumpeter swan survey.

AMERICAN COOT

The Department's 1991-1995 WMP goals for the American coot are to 1) maintain the Idaho population, 2) increase the harvest, and 3) provide maximum recreational opportunity (Connelly and Wackenhut 1990). However, during the reporting period, this species received little management emphasis. This is because the American coot is not a popular game bird in Idaho and because it benefits indirectly from other wildlife management programs.

WILSON'S SNIPE

The Department's 1991-1995 WMP goals for the Wilson's snipe are to 1) maintain Idaho's Wilson's snipe population and 2) maintain the harvest (Connelly and Wackenhut 1990). However, during the reporting period, this species received little management attention. This is because the Wilson's snipe is not a popular game bird in Idaho and because it benefits indirectly from other wildlife management programs.

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Table 1. Estimated waterfowl harvest numbers from USFWS’s waterfowl hunter survey for Idaho, 1988-Present.

Year	Duck stamps sold	Estimated adult hunters	Total ducks harvested ^a	Total geese harvested ^a
1988	16,597	14,271	112,900	26,600
1989	16,894	14,073	119,600	30,500
1990	17,036	13,443	96,700	36,800
1991	17,151	14,144	117,880	39,500
1992	17,717	14,132	126,700	31,700
1993	21,761	17,972	153,200	45,600
1994	21,229	17,418	141,300	61,100
1995	21,097	18,395	203,400	46,900
1996	22,382	19,751	245,800	61,100
1997	23,697	22,241	248,600	40,700
1998	23,515	21,006	254,700	56,700
1999	26,709	20,795	228,300	28,500
2000	28,206	23,306	173,200	86,200
2001	26,173	12,000/14,900 ^b	138,600	64,400
2002	24,937	14,500 / 9,900 ^b	160,600	36,700
2003	24,878	18,200/15,400 ^b	262,900	84,200
2004	24,320	17,100/13,300 ^b	188,500	62,700
2005	23,724	18,500/16,000 ^b	258,300	74,300
2006	25,726	18,400/14,500 ^b	278,000	77,800
2007	27,137	17,500/11,178 ^b	229,100	40,900
2008	^c	20,000/13,700 ^b	257,600	64,500
2009	^c	15,400/11,100 ^b	286,600	58,300
2010	^c	16,900/11,100 ^b	156,600	31,400
2011	^c	14,200/12,800 ^b	209,500	51,000
2012	^c	16,200/12,700 ^b	277,700	73,900
2013	^c	19,400/15,600	320,400	70,300
2014	^c	18,959/15,165	241,800	73,400

^a Adjusted for exaggeration memory bias and juvenile hunter density.

^b The first number is estimated number of duck hunters and the second number is estimated number of goose hunters.

^c Data is no longer available.

Table 2. Ducks banded in Idaho by Department and USDA-Wildlife Services personnel, 2015.

Species	Panhandle	Clearwater	Southwest	Magic Valley	Southeast	Upper Snake	Salmon	Total
American Widgeon	0	1	0	0	5	0	0	6
Com. Goldeneye	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Canvasback	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Gadwall	5	0	0	0	28	0	0	33
Mallard	867	11	150	0	45	21	0	1,094
Northern Pintail	5	0	6	0	0	0	0	11
Northern Shoveler	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Redhead	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
Ring-necked	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Ruddy Duck	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Teal	495	14	62	0	0	7	0	578
Lesser Scaup	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wood Duck	126	0	0	0	0	0	0	126
Total	1,513	26	218	0	56	848	0	1,867

Table 3. Mallards banded in Idaho by Department personnel, 2008-Present.

IDFG Region	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Panhandle	1,315	1,065	1,086	971	455	1,776	1,053	867	8,588
Clearwater	0	12	3	0	0	0	0	11	26
Southwest	0	40	63	0	0	0	0	150	253
Magic Valley	0	0	59	0	0	0	0	0	59
Southeast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	45	45
Upper Snake	309	977	633	788	14	380	565	21	3,687
Total	1,624	2,094	1,844	1,759	469	2,156	1,618	1,094	12,658

Table 4. September aerial and ground-based counts of RMP greater sandhill cranes in eastern Idaho, 2009-2015.

Region/Area	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Magic Valley							
Camas Prairie	103	5	32	ND	21	ND	0
Carey Lake	0	0	0	0	0	ND	0
Silver Lake	381	309	399	281	421	431	575
Southeast							
American Falls Reservoir	91	68	52	103	288	155	71
Bear River Valley	780	1,211	908	559	410	778	1,272
Blackfoot Reservoir	361	429	298	434	333	520	537
Chesterfield Reservoir	109	103	135	40	103	49	196
Grays Lake	1,483	1,115	972	262	907	839	489
Malad River	277	ND	271	96	248	325	320
Marsh Valley	167	117	135	193	122	238	149
Oxford Slough	231	366	241	136	136	205	214
Upper Snake							
Ashton-St Anthony	830	444	400	950	662	654	840
Camas NWR	806	664	430	60	200	375	426
Henry's Lake Flats	28	112	144	72	59	2	1
Island Park Reservoir	34	5	5	65	0	4	0
Kilgore	0	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Market Lake WMA	0	3	2	6	5	6	25
Mud Lake WMA	ND	137	13	103	248	53	54
Teton Basin	1,253	688	592	572	1,065	1,130	1,285
Total	6,934	5,776	5,029	3,932	5,228	5,764	6,454

^a Pre-count reports from the Camas Prairie indicated that there were no cranes; therefore, the survey was not completed

Table 5 Sandhill crane tag levels, estimated hunter participation, and harvest based on mail and telephone surveys, 2009-2015.

Hunt Areas 1-6	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Bear Lake-Caribou County							
Tags available	400	400	400	295	180	160	195
Tags issued	332	335	355	279	180	160	195
Total hunters	170	152	201	131	87	83	109
Days hunted	449	523	595	389	207	197	277
% Success ^a	50	45	44	20	51	46	53
Harvest	150	150	141	139	93	74	104
Teton County							
Tags available	100	100	100	40	25	22	25
Tags issued	100	50	52	49	25	21	25
Total hunters	53	37	36	27	18	13	15
Days hunted	124	114	86	44	38	23	23
% Success ^a	50	66	59	59	7	62	56
Harvest	35	33	30	29	2	13	14
Fremont County							
Tags available	100	100	100	65	40	35	45
Tags issued	100	98	91	98	40	35	45
Total hunters	71	58	65	57	34	23	35
Days hunted	192	167	143	124	53	61	98
% Success ^a	56	48	69	55	58	71	64
Harvest	50	47	61	54	23	25	29
Bonneville County							
Tags available	40	40	40	10	5		
Tags issued	22	22	9	14	5		
Total hunters	15	15	9	3	4		
Days hunted	38	23	11	9	7		
% Success ^a	28	41	37	50	0		
Harvest	6	9	5	7	0		
Jefferson County							
Tags available	40	40	40	20	10	10	10
Tags issued	31	26	36	40	11	10	26
Total hunters	17	15	18	17	7	6	13
Days hunted	49	46	55	59	9	1	34
% Success ^a	49	54	69	73	73	80	58
Harvest	12	14	26	29	8	8	9
Bannock County							
Tags available				30	15	13	15
Tags issued				30	15	15	15
Total hunters				19	11	11	11
Days hunted				46	38	33	15
% Success ^a				60	60	93	70
Harvest				18	9	14	10
State Total							

Tags available	680	680	680	460	275	240	290
Tags issued	585	531	543	510	276	241	306
Total hunters	326	278	285	255	161	135	185
Days hunted	852	875	891	671	352	325	447
% Success ^a	50	48	53	60	49	56	54
Harvest		253	261	275	135	134	166

^a Success rate shown is harvest per permit issued.

Table 6. Age composition of sandhill crane harvest based on mail and telephone surveys, 2009-2015.

Hunt Areas 1-6	2009	2010	2011	2112	2013	2014	2015
Bear Lake-Caribou County							
Juvenile	24	19	26	21	8	4	15
Adult	126	131	115	118	85	70	89
Unknown							
Teton County							
Juvenile	4	6	3	5	0	1	0
Adult	31	27	27	24	2	12	14
Unknown							
Fremont County							
Juvenile	10	9	10	11	1	3	4
Adult	40	38	51	43	22	22	25
Unknown							
Bonneville County							
Juvenile	3	1	0	4	0		
Adult	3	8	5	3	0		
Unknown							
Jefferson County							
Juvenile	3	2	6	4	1	0	2
Adult	9	12	19	25	7	8	7
Unknown							
Bannock County							
Juvenile				2	0	1	0
Adult				16	9	13	10
Unknown	24	19	26	21	8	4	15

^a Birds not classified as adult were assumed to be juvenile.

^b Data shown is for Hunt # 9506, 1-7 September. No hunters from Hunt # 9507, 8-15 September, responded to the survey.

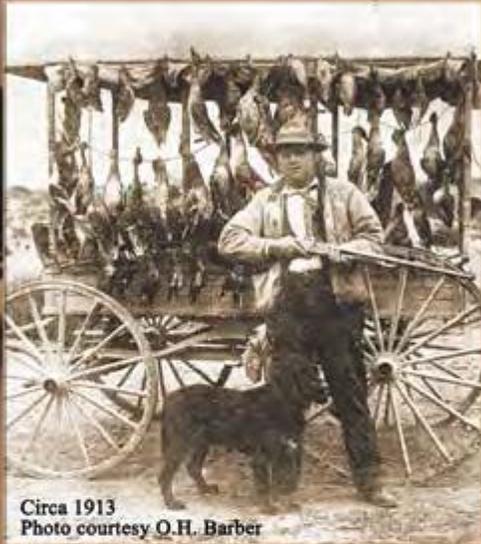
APPENDIX A

IDAHO

2014-2015 SEASON

WATERFOWL RULES

2014 Waterfowl Seasons and Rules



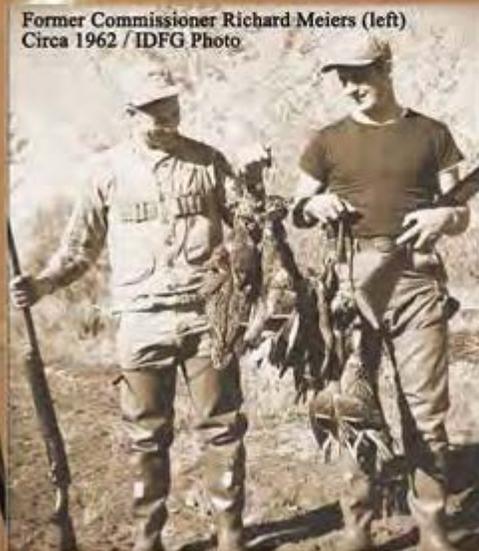
Circa 1913
Photo courtesy O.H. Barber



Circa 1920
Photo courtesy Mick Hoover



Circa 1959
IDFG Photo



Former Commissioner Richard Meiers (left)
Circa 1962 / IDFG Photo

Idaho Fish & Game

WATERFOWL SEASONS AND RULES 2014

September 2014 through March 2015

Including: Wilson's snipe and American coot

KEY DATES:		
Canada Goose Season	Area 1	October 4, 2014 to January 16, 2015.
Canada Goose Season	Area 2	October 11, 2014 to January 23, 2015.
White-fronted Goose Season	Area 1	October 4, 2014 to January 16, 2015.
White-fronted Goose Season	Area 2	October 11, 2014 to January 23, 2015.
White-fronted Goose Season	Area 3	November 10, 2014 to February 22, 2015.
Light Goose Season	Area 1	October 4, 2014 to January 16, 2015.
Light Goose Season	Area 2	October 29, 2014 to January 16, 2015 and February 14, 2014 to March 10, 2015.
Light Goose Season	Area 3	November 26, 2014 to March 10, 2015.
Light Goose Season	Area 4	October 11, 2014 to January 23, 2015.
Duck Season	Area 1	October 4, 2014 to January 16, 2015. Scaup: October 25, 2014 to January 16, 2015.
Duck Season	Area 2	October 11, 2014 to January 23, 2015. Scaup: November 1, 2014 to January 23, 2015.
Special Youth Hunt		September 27 and 28, 2014.

Required:

- Federal Migratory Game Bird Harvest Information Program Validation.
- Federal Migratory Bird Stamp for all hunters 16 or older.
- Nontoxic shot.

It is the responsibility of the hunter to become familiar with the rules that affect the hunt in which he or she is participating. This brochure provides seasons for waterfowl hunting, and it provides a summary of rules that govern waterfowl hunting in Idaho. For details about the rules, please refer to these links: Idaho Administrative Procedures Act, <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/content/idfg-rules>; Idaho Code <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/content/title36>.



License holder must validate stamp by signing across the front in ink.

Remember!

If you are 16 or older, you need to purchase a Federal Migratory Bird (Duck) Stamp.

Available online @

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/content/duckstamp>

See page 18

**Statewide Duck (Including Merganser),
Wilson's Snipe and American Coot Seasons, Limits
& Hunt Area Descriptions**



AREA 1

- **October 4, 2014 - January 16, 2015**
- **Scaup Season:
October 25, 2014 - January 16, 2015**
Area 1 includes all lands and waters within the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, including private in-holdings; Bannock County; Bingham County, except that portion within the Blackfoot Reservoir drainage; Caribou County within the Fort Hall Indian Reservation; and Power County east of State Highway 37 and State Highway 39. (See yellow area on map).

AREA 2

- **October 11, 2014 - January 23, 2015**
- **Scaup Season:
November 1, 2014 - January 23, 2015**
Area 2 includes all parts of the state **not** included in Area 1. (See blue area on map).

Duck Bag Limit
(Including mergansers)

- Daily Bag Limit:** 7 of any kind except:
Shall not include more than the following:
- 2 female mallards
 - 2 redheads
 - 2 pintails
 - 1 canvasback
 - 3 scaup

Bag Limits For Wilson's Snipe and Coots

Wilson's Snipe
Daily Bag Limit: 8

Coots
Daily Bag Limit: 25

Possession Limit: 3 times daily bag limit

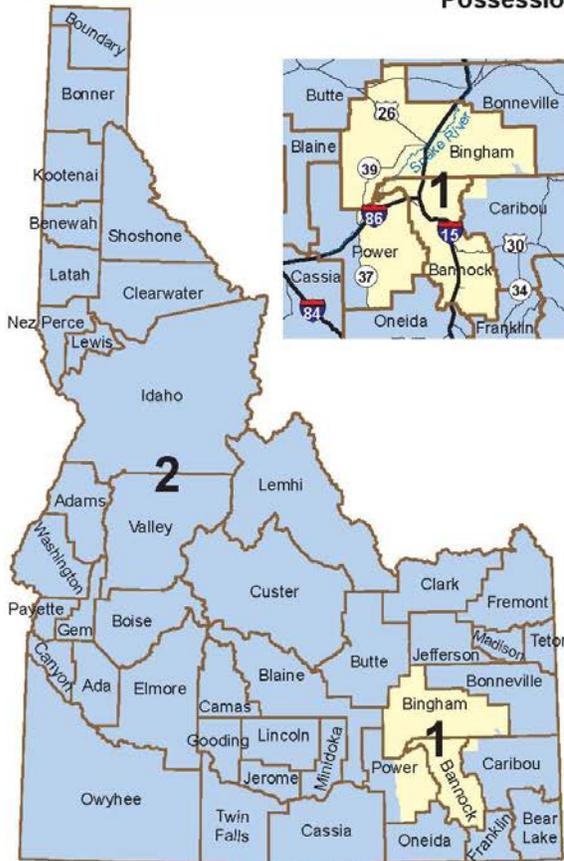


Northern Pintail

Photo courtesy Mark Sands

Canada Goose Seasons, Limits & Hunt Area Descriptions

Daily Bag Limit: 4
Possession Limit: 12



AREA 1

- **October 4, 2014 - January 16, 2015**

Area 1 includes all lands and waters within the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, including private in-holdings; Bannock County; Bingham County, except that portion within the Blackfoot Reservoir drainage; Caribou County within the Fort Hall Indian Reservation; and Power County east of State Highway 37 and State Highway 39. (See yellow area on map).

AREA 2

- **October 11, 2014 - January 23, 2015**

Area 2 includes all parts of the state **not** included in Area 1. (See blue area on map).

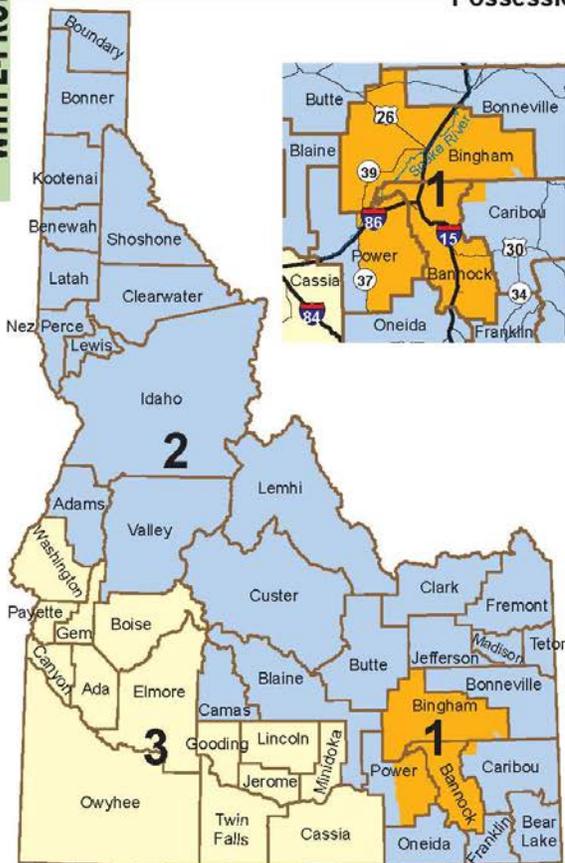


Photo courtesy Paul Spurling

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov>

White-fronted Goose Seasons, Limits & Hunt Area Descriptions

Daily Bag Limit: 10
Possession Limit: 30



AREA 1

- **October 4, 2014 - January 16, 2015**
Area 1 includes all lands and waters within the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, including private in-holdings; Bannock County; Bingham County, except that portion within the Blackfoot Reservoir drainage; Caribou County within the Fort Hall Indian Reservation; and Power County east of State Highway 37 and State Highway 39. (See orange area on map).

AREA 2

- **October 11, 2014 - January 23, 2015**
Area 2 includes all parts of the state **not** included in Areas 1 and 3. (See blue area on map).

AREA 3

- **November 10, 2014 - February 22, 2015**
- **Area 3** includes the following counties: Ada, Boise, Canyon, Cassia, Elmore, Gem, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka, Owyhee, Payette, Twin Falls, and Washington counties. (See yellow area on map).
- **Closures:** In the Southwest Region, Fort Boise and Payette River WMAs and that portion of the Roswell Marsh Wildlife Habitat Area south of State Highway 18, and the Snake River Islands Unit of the Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge will be closed February 1 - March 10, 2015.



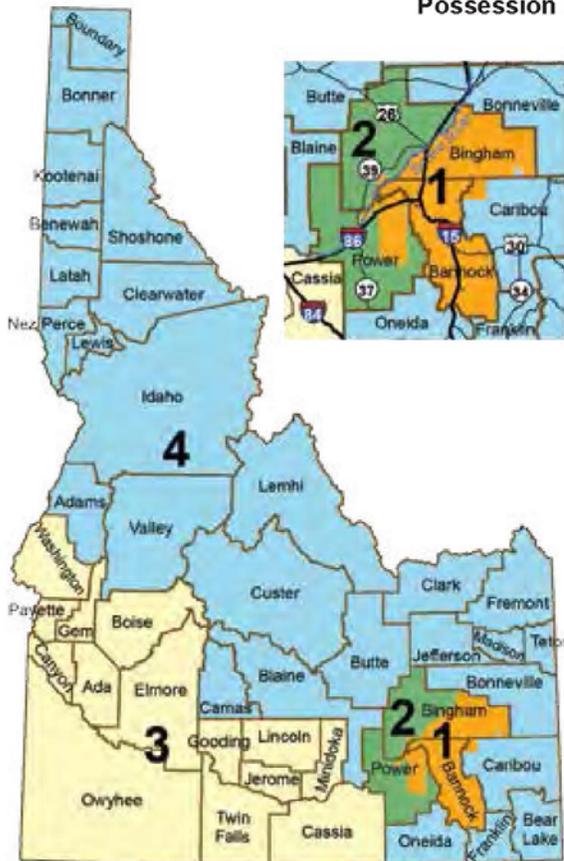
Photo courtesy Philip Lewer

Light Goose Seasons, Limits & Hunt Area Descriptions

(Including: Blue, Ross's and Snow Geese)

Daily Bag Limit: 20

Possession Limit: 60



AREA 1

- **October 4, 2014 - January 16, 2015**

Area 1 includes all lands and waters within the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, including private in-holdings; Bannock County; Bingham County east of the west bank of the Snake River, west of the McTucker boat ramp access road, and east of the American Falls Reservoir bluff, except that portion within the Blackfoot Reservoir drainage; Caribou County within the Fort Hall Indian Reservation; and Power County below the American Falls Reservoir bluff, and within the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. (See orange area on map).

AREA 2

- **October 29, 2014 - January 16, 2015 and February 14, 2015 - March 10, 2015.**

Area 2 includes Bingham County west of the west bank of the Snake River, east of the McTucker boat ramp access road, and west of the American Falls Reservoir bluff; Power County, except below the American Falls Reservoir bluff and those lands and waters within the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. (See green area on map).

AREA 3

- **November 26, 2014 - March 10, 2015.**
- **Area 3** includes the following counties: Ada, Boise, Canyon, Cassia, Elmore, Gem, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka, Owyhee, Payette, Twin Falls, and Washington counties. (See yellow area on map).
- **Closures:** In the Southwest Region, Fort Boise and Payette River WMAs and that portion of the Roswell Marsh Wildlife Habitat Area south of State Highway 18, and the Snake River Islands Unit of the Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge will be closed February 1 - March 10.

AREA 4

- **October 11, 2014 - January 23, 2015**
- **Area 4** includes all parts of the state not included in Areas 1, 2, and 3. (See blue area on map).
- **Closures:** Fremont and Teton counties

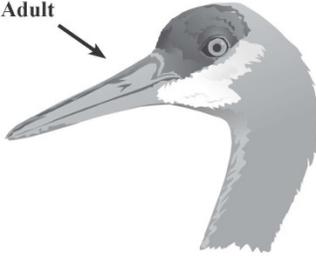
LEGAL HUNTING METHODS FOR LIGHT GEESSE :

When all other waterfowl and migratory game bird hunting seasons, except falconry, are closed, recorded or electrically amplified bird calls or imitations of bird calls, and unplugged shotguns capable of holding more than three shells may be used to hunt light geese. These hunting methods apply to the light goose seasons in Area 2 from February 14 to March 10, 2015 and in Area 3 from February 23 to March 10, 2015.

Know Your Crane!

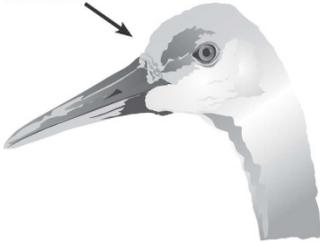
Please note the age of the crane you harvested. This data is important for crane harvest management.

Adult



An adult sandhill crane stands nearly four feet tall. Grayish plumage is accented by a featherless red head patch. Juveniles have tannish brown heads with no red.

Juvenile



Hunting Cranes:

One of the purposes of these hunts is to help reduce crop damage by sandhill cranes. Check with local landowners or Fish and Game offices for information on crane use areas and always remember to:

Ask First For Permission to Hunt on Private Property



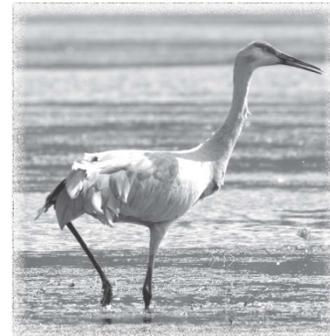
The Idaho Department of Fish and Game adheres to all applicable state and federal laws and regulations related to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability. If you feel you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility of Fish and Game, or if you desire further information, please write to: Idaho Department of Fish and Game, P.O. Box 25, Boise, ID 83707; OR The Office of Human Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240.

Information in this brochure summarizes the rules and is the official proclamation of the Idaho Fish and Game Commission for the hunting of sandhill cranes in calendar year 2015. Further explanation is available in the current upland game seasons brochure. The official rules are available from the Division of Statewide Administrative Rules, Department of Administration, Statehouse Mall, Boise, ID 83720. If you have space, I would include that official Fish and Game Rules are available on-line at: <http://adminrules.idaho.gov/rules/current/13/index.html>.

Costs associated with this publication are available from IDFG in accordance with section 60-202, Idaho Code. sgm 7-2015/250041918



2015 IDAHO SANDHILL CRANE Season Information



Tags will be available for purchase at 10 am MDT August 1, first-come, first-served.

Tags are available at any Fish and Game license vendor, by telephone (1-800-554-8685), or the Fish and Game website: fishandgame.idaho.gov.

License, Tag and Validation Requirements:

To hunt sandhill cranes, hunters must have in possession the appropriate hunting license, sandhill crane tag and Federal Migratory Game Bird Harvest Information Program (HIP) validation. All are available at any license vendor, Fish and Game office, by telephone (1-800-554-8685), or Fish and Game website: fishandgame.idaho.gov.

Tags will be available for purchase at 10 am MDT on August 1, first-come, first-served.

Fees - includes vendor fee:

Sandhill Crane Tag.....\$15.00
Federal HIP Validation\$1.75

HIP validation is required with the first tag only.

Daily/Season Limits

Daily Limit—for all hunts2
Season limit.....2

Shot and Weapon Restrictions:

- Shot Sizes: Sandhill cranes may legally be taken with shot size T (0.2 inches in diameter) or smaller (lead or non-toxic).
- No person may take migratory game birds with any shotgun capable of holding more than three (3) shells unless it is plugged with a one-piece filler that is incapable of removal without disassembling the gun.

Sandhill Crane Seasons, Limits and Tags		
Hunt Area	Season	Tags
1	September 1-15	195
2	September 1-15	25
3	September 1-15	45
4	September 1-15	10
5	September 1-15	15
<p>Note: Daily limit is 2 for all hunts. The season limit is 2.</p>		

Tagging:

Immediately after any sandhill crane is harvested, the tag must be validated and securely attached. The tag must remain attached so long as the sandhill crane is in transit or storage.

Species Identification:

To legally transport any migratory game bird, one feathered wing or head must be left attached at all times while being transported until they reach their final destination.

Shooting Hours:



Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. For exact time, check the current upland game brochure on Page 23. *For general sandhill crane season rules, see pages 20-23 of the current Upland Game Rules Brochure or online at: fishandgame.idaho.gov.*

Sandhill Crane Hunt Areas include the following:

- Area 1** — Includes all of Bear Lake County and all of Caribou County **except that portion lying within the Grays Lake Basin.**
- Area 2** — Includes all of Teton County **except that portion lying west of state Highway 33 and south of Packsaddle Road (West 400 North) and north of the North Cedron Road (West 600 South) and east of the west bank of the Teton River.**
- Area 3** — Includes all of Fremont County **except the Chester Wetlands Wildlife Management Area.**
- Area 4** — Includes all of Jefferson County.
- Area 5** — Includes Bannock County east of Interstate-15 and south of U.S. Highway 30; and all of Franklin County.

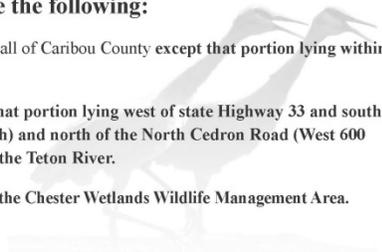


Photo courtesy Steve Janssa

Submitted by:

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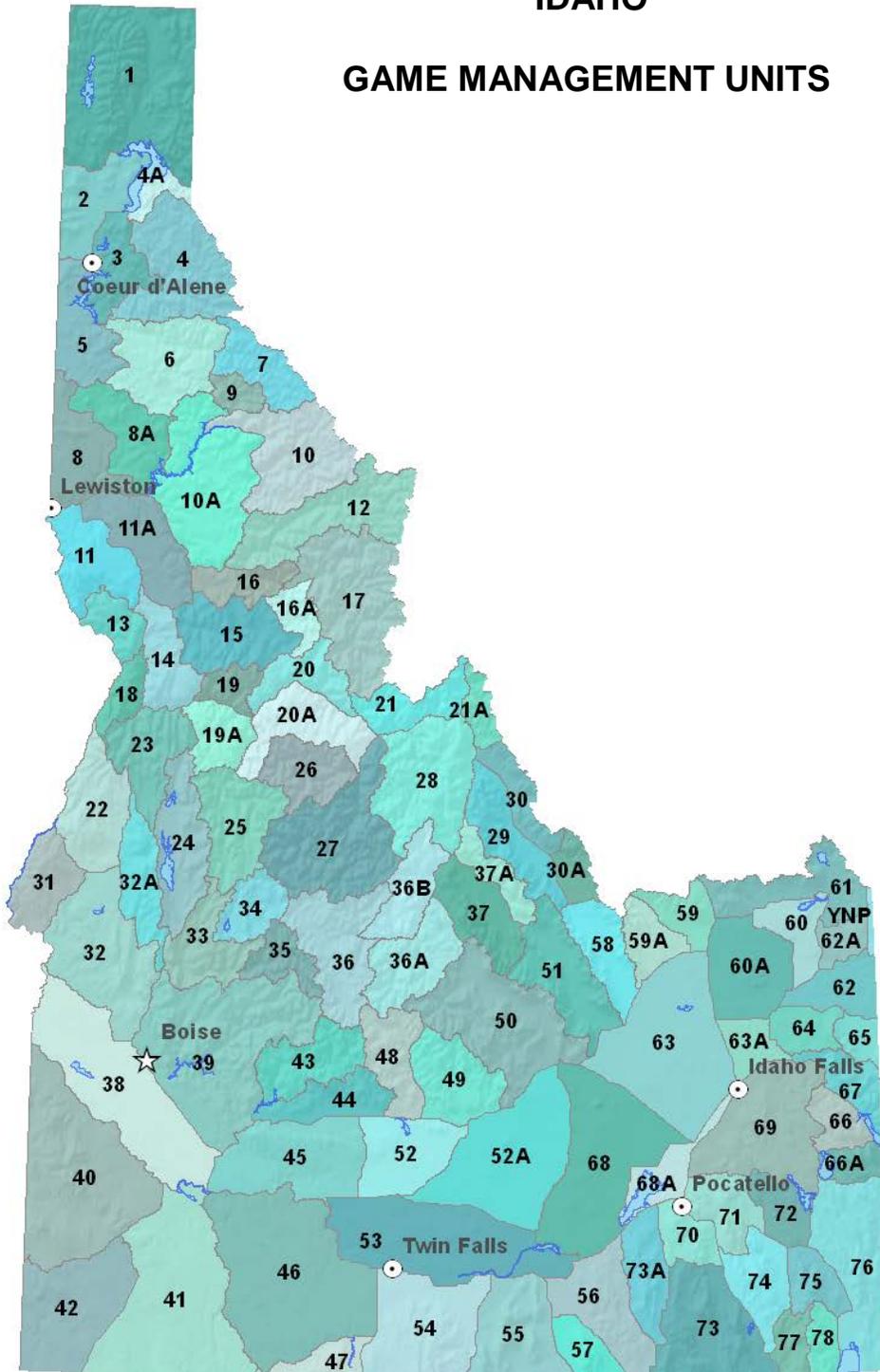
Approved by: IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME


Toby Boudreau, Asst. Chief
Bureau of Wildlife


Scott Reinecker, Chief
Bureau of Wildlife

IDAHO

GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS



FEDERAL AID IN WILDLIFE RESTORATION

The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program consists of funds from a 10% to 11% manufacturer's excise tax collected from the sale of handguns, sporting rifles, shotguns, ammunition, and archery equipment. The Federal Aid program then allots the funds back to states through a formula based on each state's geographic area and the number of paid hunting license holders in the state. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game uses the funds to help restore, conserve, manage, and enhance wild birds and mammals for the public benefit. These funds are also used to educate hunters to develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to be responsible, ethical hunters. Seventy-five percent of the funds for this project are from Federal Aid. The other 25% comes from license-generated funds.

