



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Game Bird Hunting Regulations

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) annually adopts the Oregon Game Bird Hunting Regulations which establish season dates, bag limits, areas and other regulations for hunting upland and migratory game birds.

Regulation of upland and migratory game birds are set through two different structures. For upland birds, the Commission has authority and responsibility for upland game bird management within the state. Upland game bird seasons are based on a framework that is renewed every five years based on internal recommendations and public comments. The Upland Game Bird Hunting Season Framework for September 1, 2025 – August 31, 2030 was adopted by the Commission in April 2025 and is in effect.

For migratory game bird management, preeminent authority and responsibility in the United States lies with the Secretary of the Interior and is derived from international treaties to which the U.S. Constitution specifies that only the Federal government can be signatory. Federal authority is legislated by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and its amendments. Countries involved in bilateral migratory bird treaties with the U.S. include Canada, Mexico, Japan, and the Russian Federation. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is the lead federal agency for migratory game bird management.

The USFWS actively cooperates with other countries and states in the management of migratory game birds. Management in the U.S. and Canada is coordinated through Flyways which are administrative units that describe migration routes and distribution of migratory birds. Oregon is one of twelve states in the Pacific Flyway.

Through various Flyway committees and Councils, states provide season recommendations to the USFWS annually. Federal frameworks (allowed days, bag limits, shooting time, etc.) are proposed by a USFWS Regulations Committee and then approved by the Secretary of the Interior. These frameworks provide guidance to states in selection of seasons; states cannot legally adopt seasons that are more liberal than established federal frameworks.

For both upland and migratory game birds, each year staff consults with field biologists, stakeholders, and experts when considering game bird hunting regulations proposals. They consider the status of game bird populations, habitat conditions, new research, and environmental events (such as weather, climate patterns, and fire) that may require adaptation of hunting regulations. Staff also consider opportunities to simplify and clarify rules to improve the hunter experience.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The department used several approaches to gather input on annual proposals for changes to the game bird hunting regulations:

- Responded to members of the public and news media on questions and comments on game bird programs throughout last year's seasons.
- Migratory game bird season concepts were sent in March 2026 via email to a list of persons who have requested to receive regulation updates from the Migratory Game Bird Program Coordinator.
- Plans for the 2026-27 Upland Game Bird Regulations were provided in March 2026 to interested sporting groups. Members of the public who expressed interest in the upland game bird proposals were also provided copies via email in March 2026.

In anticipation of the Commission consideration of the proposed rules, the department published notice of the proposed rulemaking (Attachment 2). Additionally, the public has an opportunity to provide comment prior to (in writing) or (orally) during the hearing that occurs at the April Commission meeting.

ISSUE 1

Adopt 2026-27 hunting regulations and seasons for game birds and crows.

ANALYSIS

A summary of population status, past hunter effort and harvest, proposed season dates, bag and possession limits, and other regulations related to the 2026-27 game bird hunting seasons is included in Attachment 4. Public comments received as of March 13, 2026 are provided in the summary and Attachment 6.

An overview of the proposed recommendations include:

Upland Game Bird Seasons

Proposals for forest grouse, partridge, pheasant, and quail seasons will follow the adopted 2025-2030 Upland Game Bird Hunting Season Framework, including a minor calendar shift from the previous year. The Beardless Wild Turkey Permit Hunt is proposed to continue with the same boundaries, dates, and bag limits as the previous season. Similarly, no changes to the spring and fall general season wild turkey hunts are proposed with the exception of annual calendar shifts.

Sage-grouse Seasons

Season length, open areas, bag limit, and permit numbers for each sage-grouse hunt unit are proposed at the same conservative levels set in 2025. Permit numbers in these proposed rules

may be modified by subsequent rulemaking if sage-grouse population estimates change after currently on-going spring surveys are completed and analyzed by mid-July.

Special and Youth Upland Game Hunting Opportunities

Staff proposals include specific dates and locations for one pheasant hunting workshop and 10 youth hunting opportunities.

Mourning Dove Seasons

Proposals for mourning dove seasons are unchanged from last year.

Band-tailed Pigeon Season

Proposals for band-tailed pigeon seasons are unchanged from last year.

Youth Waterfowl Season

Proposals for this season are unchanged from last year.

Veteran & Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Season

Proposals for this season are unchanged from last year.

Duck Seasons

Proposals for duck seasons are unchanged from last year, except staff is proposing that opening dates in Oregon’s two duck hunting zones open on different weekends.

Goose Seasons (including Brant Season)

Proposals for goose seasons are unchanged from last year, except, in accordance with the federal frameworks, to reduce the statewide white-fronted goose daily bag limit from 10 to 6. Additionally, staff is proposing a shorter September Canada goose season in the Northwest Permit Zone, as only nine days are available between the department’s traditional opening date of the Saturday after Labor Day and the federal framework ending date of September 20.

Snipe and Coot Seasons

Proposals for snipe and coot seasons are unchanged from last year.

Crow Seasons

Proposals for the crow season are unchanged from last year.

Game Bird Seasons for Falconers

Proposals for seasons to hunt game birds by falconry are unchanged from last year.

ISSUE 2

Modify rules for department owned lands.

ANALYSIS

Staff propose a minor rule change to align OARs specific to Summer Lake Wildlife Area. This change will duplicate the language used in the Big Game Hunting Regulations specific to overlapping game mammal and game bird seasons east of Highway 31 on the wildlife area. This change has the effect of allowing big game hunters to hunt during the mourning dove season prior to the upland game bird opening date.

OPTIONS

1. Adopt staff recommendations
2. Modify staff recommendations

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. Adopt staff recommendations

DRAFT MOTION:

1. I move to adopt regulations for 2026-27 game bird hunting seasons, amend rules for department owned lands, and OAR Chapter 635, Divisions 008, 045, 051, 052, 053, 054, and 060 as proposed by staff and shown in Attachments 3 and 4.

Effective Date: *Upon Filing*