

**Report to the Commission: Summary of Potential
Changes to Early Migratory Bird Seasons, 2008/2009**
(Background Report – May 2, 2008)

(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 you that we are anticipating one change in federal frameworks for the 2008/2009 early migratory bird seasons. These seasons include dove, rail, gallinule, woodcock, snipe, September Canada goose, and special September duck seasons. The anticipated change in the frameworks is associated with the bag limit for morning doves. Last year, the regulations for morning doves included a 70-day season and a daily bag limit of 12 birds. This year, in response to recommendations from Eastern Management Unit (EMU) Dove Technical Committee and endorsement from the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyway Councils, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is proposing an increase in the daily bag limit to 15 birds. This recommendation is in response to the revised harvest strategy for morning doves and is consistent with the status of mourning doves in the EMU. Furthermore, the increase in total harvest is predicted to be no higher than 3%, which biologists consider insignificant.

If the Service finalizes the proposed changes to the morning dove bag limit, staff recommends changing FWC’s rules to correspond with the change.

We plan to update you again on both early and late (regular waterfowl) seasons at the September Commission meeting. That update will describe developments occurring between now and then on anticipated or proposed changes in federal frameworks and our proposed rule changes for the 2008/2009 migratory bird seasons.

CM/pas
WLD 3-1
migr bird early seasons 08-09.doc,

Table 1. Anticipated (2008/09) and previous (2007/08) 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	2007/08	2008/09	Bag/Possession
Mourning Dove and White-winged Dove	Oct. 6 – Oct. 29 ¹ Nov. 10 – Nov. 25 Dec. 8 – Jan. 6	Oct. 4 – Oct. 27 ¹ Nov. 15 – Nov. 30 Dec. 13 – Jan. 11	2007/08: 12/24 ² 2008/09: 15/30 ²
Rails and Gallinule	Sept. 1 - Nov. 9	Sept. 1 - Nov. 9	15/30 - Clapper Rail, King Rail, & Florida Gallinule; 25/25 - Virginia and Sora Rails
Snipe	Nov. 1 - Feb. 15	Nov. 1 - Feb. 15	8/16
Woodcock	Dec. 15 – Jan. 13	Dec. 20 – Jan. 18	3/6
Crow	Aug. 11 – Oct. 28 ³ Nov. 11 – Feb. 18	Aug. 9 – Oct. 26 ³ Nov. 11 – Feb. 18	None

¹Shooting hours: noon until sunset.

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

³Saturdays and Sundays only.

Table 2. Anticipated (2008/09) and previous (2007/08) 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	2007/08	2008/09	Bag/Possession
Mourning Dove and White-winged Dove	Oct. 6 – Jan. 20	Oct. 4 – Jan. 18	3/6
Rails	Sept. 1 - Dec. 16	Sept. 1 - Dec. 16	3/6
Gallinule	Sept. 1 - Dec. 14	Sept. 1 - Dec. 14	3/6
Snipe	Nov. 1 - Feb. 15	Nov. 1 - Feb. 15	3/6
Woodcock	Nov. 24 - Mar. 9	Nov. 24 - Mar. 10	3/6

Table 3. Anticipated (2008) 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.**

2006	2007	2008	Bag/Possession
Sept. 23-27	Sept. 22-26	Sept. 20-24	4/8 teal and wood ducks in the aggregate, no more than 2/4 of which may be wood ducks

Table 4. Anticipated dates for the first phase (September) of the 2008 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.**

2006	2007	2008 ¹	Bag/Possession
Sept. 2-27	Sept. 1-26	Sept. 6-24	5/10

¹Season open statewide, previously restricted to Lake Seminole in Jackson County.