



State of Utah

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MEMORANDUM

Date: October 28, 2024

To: Wildlife Board and Regional Advisory Council Members

From: Jason Jones, Migratory Game Bird and Falconry Programs Coordinator

Subject: **2025-2027 WATERFOWL & MIGRATORY UPLAND SPECIES HUNT RECOMMENDATIONS**

This year the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources is recommending combing migratory upland species with migratory waterfowl as “migratory game birds”. The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources is also recommending a 3-year cycle for “migratory game birds” hunting regulations. The following proposed season dates, bag limits and other changes would apply for the Waterfowl and migratory upland species (i.e., migratory game birds) Guidebook for a 3-year cycle:

Youth Day

Northern and Southern Area: Two weeks before the waterfowl season opening day

Duck/Coot/Merganser/Snipe (Max. Season, Bag and Possession allowed; 2 wood duck bag)

Northern Area: First Saturday in October

Southern Area: Ends the last Saturday in January

Dark Goose (Max. Season, Bag and Possession allowed)

Eastern Box Elder Area: Same dates as duck hunt

Northern Area: First eight days of waterfowl season – Split – Oct 26 to Jan 31

Wasatch Front Area: First eight days of waterfowl season – Split – Nov 10 to Feb 15

Southern Area: Same dates as duck hunt

- If opening day is a Sunday, the hunt will open one day later

White-fronted Goose Season

Same season dates and hunt areas as dark goose areas

(Max. Season, Bag and Possession allowed)



Light Goose (Max. Season, Bag and Possession allowed)

Eastern Box Elder, Northern and Wasatch Front Area: October 15 – December 22.

February 1 – March 10

- If Oct 15 or Feb 1 is a Sunday or leap year, the hunt will open one day later

Southern Area: October 25 – December 15; January 15 – March 10

- Closed in Millard County from February 15 – February 28
- If Oct 25 or Jan 15 is a Sunday or leap year, the hunt will open one day later

Tundra Swan season (permits allocated through flyway process; 2,750)

- First Saturday in October – Second Sunday in December
- Great Salt Lake Hunt Area

Proposed Rule Change 657-9

- Proposal: combining Waterfowl, Snipe, Coot, Cranes, Doves, Band-tailed Pigeon, American Crow under 657-9a as “Migratory Game birds”
- Rationale: Streamline all HIP (Harvest Information Program) birds into one regulation guide to reduce confusion for the public (increase customer service & simplify regulation)
- These species are already managed under the Migratory Game Bird Coordinator’s program, with Federal government having ultimate oversight.

American Crow

Area: Statewide: Season dates: Sept. 1–30, and Dec. 1st–Feb. 28

- Bag limit is: 10 birds daily - Possession limit: 3 times the bag limit
- If the opener is on a Sunday, the hunt will open one day later

Band-tailed Pigeon

Area: Statewide - Season dates: Sept. 1–14

- Free permit required
- Bag limit: 2 daily-Possession limit: 3 times the bag limit
- If the opener is on a Sunday, the hunt will open one day later

Mourning and white-winged dove Area: Statewide – Season dates: Sept. 1-Oct30

- Bag limit: 15 daily (in any combination): Possession is 3 times the bag limit
- If the opener is on a Sunday, the hunt will open one day later

Sandhill Crane

Crane allocations are set annually through the Flyway process and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Hunt areas are defined by federal hunting frameworks. The daily bag limit is one bird, and permits are distributed through a draw. There are five different hunts, each with its own season dates (Uintah Co. hunts run consecutively):

- Rich co., Cache Co. 1st Sat. in Sept. -2nd Sun. in Sept. – 10 day
- Box Eder Co. 1st Sat. in Sept. – 60-day season



- Uintah Co. (early) Sat. closet to Oct. 1 – 20-day season
- Uintah Co (Mid) 20-day season (late Oct. -Mid Nov.)
- Uintah Co (Late) 20-day season (Mid Nov. – early Dec.)

Falconry:

Area: Statewide

Falconry seasons align with traditional waterfowl hunting. Here are the bag and possession limits:

Falconry Waterfowl (Snipe, Ducks, Mergansers, Geese, Coots, Scaup):

- Daily bag: 3 birds (singly or in combination)
- Possession limit: 9 birds

Falconry Upland Migratory Game Birds:

- If Sept. 1 falls on a Sunday, the season opens the following day.

Falconry Band-tailed Pigeon, Doves:

- Season: Sept. 1 – Dec. 16
- Daily bag: 3 birds (in combination)

Falconry American Crow:

- Seasons: Sept. 1–30 & Dec. 1–Feb. 28
- Daily bag: 3

Falconry Sandhill Crane:

- Same season as the traditional hunt.
- Permit required, daily bag: 1 bird.

Proposed Rule Change 657-9-2 Definitions

- "Migratory game bird" means, for the purposes of this rule, waterfowl, snipe, coot, American crow, band-tailed pigeon, mourning dove, white-winged dove, and Sandhill crane.
- "Retrieval Zone" means areas adjacent to rest areas where game retrieval is allowed but hunting is restricted "BlackHawk is identified as a waterfowl management area
- "Provo River Delta Wildlife Management Area" is identified as a waterfowl management area

R657-9-3. Migratory Game Bird Harvest Information Program

- Updated to include "migratory game birds", and remove instructions to call a phone number for HIP registration (HIP registration is exclusively online)

R657-9-5. Permit Applications for Tundra Swan

- Updated to include band-tailed pigeon, and Sandhill Crane
- R657-9a-6. Tagging Tundra Swans Updated to include tagging requirements for Sandhill Cranes

R657-9-7. Return of Tundra Swan Harvest and Hunt Information.



- Updated to reflect that Tundra swan permit holders must present any harvested swan (except trumpeter swans) or its head for measurement, along with harvest details, to DWR within three days, but if a trumpeter swan is taken, the entire bird must be presented to DWR.

R657-9-9. Nontoxic Shot.

- Updated to include Sandhill Crane
- Updated to include the BlackHawk; Provo River Delta Wildlife Management Area

R657-9-10. Use of Weapons on State Waterfowl Management Areas.

- Updated to include the following waterfowl or wildlife management areas: BlackHawk and Provo River Delta

R657-9-13. Airboats

- Updated to include BlackHawk and the Provo River Delta

R657-9-142. Motorized Vehicle Access.

- Streamlines the rule by Removing line (6) concerning electric assisted bicycles to instead reference R657-28-4 which outlines prohibited activities on waterfowl and wildlife management areas.

R657-9-30. Use of Dogs.

- Updated to add “BlackHawk”
- Updated to add that the Skipper Bay Trail of the Provo River Delta Wildlife Management Area is managed by Utah County Trail Department, and the Utah County trail system leash ordinance applies.

R657-9-302. Rest Areas and No Shooting Areas.

- Updated to extend the Rest area at Ogden Bay Waterfowl Management Area north to the Unit 1 dike for safety purposes.
- Updated to add a retrieval zone and extend the rest lake at Salt Creek Waterfowl management area. Hunters have been setting up so close to the rest lake that birds are avoiding the area, and it therefore does not serve it’s purposes as a rest lake. This change should help mitigate this issue.
- Updated to add the areas at the Provo River Delta that hunters must be 600’ from to discharge a firearm.

R657-9-33. Falconry

- Updated to add that falconers must obtain a band-tailed pigeon permit before taking band-tailed pigeon and a sandhill crane permit before taking sandhill crane.

R657-9-34. Waterfowl Blinds on Waterfowl Management Areas

- Updated to Waterfowl management and “Wildlife Management Areas”

