

# MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON WILDLIFE, FISHERIES, & PARKS

## Commission Teleconference

Thursday, April 25th, 2024

10:00 AM Business Session

1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211

### MINUTES

**PRESENT VIA TELEPHONE:** Commission Chairman Bill Cossar, Vice-Chairman Scott Coopwood, Commissioner William Mounger and Commissioner Leonard Bentz. Commissioner Gary Rhoads attended in person.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Lynn Posey, Executive Director; Curtis Thornhill, Deputy Executive Director; Larry Pugh, Deputy Director; Brian Ferguson, MS State Parks Chief of Staff; Colonel Jerry Carter, Chief of Law Enforcement; Russ Walsh, Wildlife Chief of Staff; Jason Thompson, Director of Administrative Services; Houston Havens, Waterfowl Program Coordinator; Doug Mann, Staff Attorney; and Drew Malone, MDWFP General Counsel.

**Noted for the Record:** Attached to these minutes are copies of the Special Teleconference Meeting Notice, posted 24 hours prior to the meeting on the doors of the MDWFP office building located at 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS; on the MDWFP website, and on the Mississippi Open Meetings website, per the provisions of the Mississippi Open Meetings Act.

### WELCOME

Chairman Cossar welcomed guests in attendance and those watching the live stream video. Having determined that a quorum was present, the Chairman opened the meeting.

### WILDLIFE

#### 2024-2025 Migratory Game Bird Framework Selection Recommendations

Houston Havens, Waterfowl Program Coordinator, presented the 2024-2025 Migratory Game Bird Hunting Season Recommendations to the Commission, as listed in the table on Page 2.

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	DAILY	POSSESSION
Teal (Early Season)	Sept. 14 – Sept. 29	6	18
Canada Geese (Early Season)	Sept. 1 – Sept. 30	5	15
Woodcock	Dec. 18 – Jan. 31	3	9
Snipe	Nov. 14 – Feb. 28	8	24
Common & Purple Gallinules	Sept. 1 – Sept. 30 AND Nov. 22 – Dec. 31	15 Singly or in aggregate	45
Rails: Clapper and King	Sept. 1 – Sept. 30 AND Nov. 22 – Dec. 31	15 Singly or in aggregate	45
Rails: Sora and Virginia	Sept. 1 – Sept. 30 AND Nov. 22 – Dec. 31	25 Singly or in aggregate	75
Mourning and White-winged Doves (North Zone)**	Sept. 1 – Sept. 29 AND Oct. 12 – Nov. 10 AND Dec. 27 – Jan. 26	15 Singly or in aggregate	45
Mourning and White-winged Doves (South Zone)**	Sept. 1 – Sept. 29 AND Oct. 12 – Nov. 10 AND Dec. 27 - Jan. 26	15 Singly or in aggregate	45
Ducks, Mergansers, and Coots	Nov. 28 – Dec. 1 AND Dec. 7 – Jan. 31	Details Below*	Details Below*
Geese: Canada, White-fronted, Snow, Blue, Ross's, and Brant	Nov. 11 – Nov. 24 AND Nov. 28 – Dec. 1 AND Dec. 7 – Jan. 31	Canada Geese: 5 Snow, Blue, and Ross's: 20 White-fronted: 3 Brant: 1	Canada Geese: 15 Snow, Blue, & Ross's: No Limit White-fronted: 9 Brant: 3
Youth, Veteran, & Active Military Waterfowl Days	Feb. 8 – 9	Same as Regular Season	Same as Regular Season
Crows	Nov. 2 – Feb. 28	No Limit	No Limit
Light Goose Conservation Order** (Special Permit Needed)	Oct. 1 – Nov. 10 Nov. 25 – Nov. 27 Dec. 2 – Dec. 6 Feb. 1 – Feb. 7 Feb. 10 – Mar. 31	No Limit**	No Limit**

**\*DUCKS, MERGANSERS, and COOTS daily bag limit and possession:** The duck daily bag limit will include a total of 6 ducks, including no more than 4 mallards (no more than 2 of which may be females), 3 wood ducks, 2 redheads, 1 pintail, 2 canvasbacks, 1 mottled duck, and 2 black ducks. The daily bag limit for scaup is 1 scaup per day Nov. 28 – Dec. 1 and Dec. 7 – 17; and is 2 scaup per day Dec. 18 – Jan. 31. The merganser daily bag limit will be a total of 5

mergansers, only 2 of which may be hooded mergansers. The coot daily bag limit is 15. The possession limit for ducks, mergansers, and coots is three times the daily bag limit.

Shooting hours for all migratory game birds are from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset, except for the Light Goose Conservation Order (see below).

\*\* The Light Goose Conservation Order is a special opportunity designed to reduce the populations of snow, blue, and Ross's geese when no other waterfowl seasons are open. This order allows for expanded methods of take that are not allowed during regular waterfowl seasons. To participate, hunters need a free Light Goose Conservation Order permit number. Hunters need a valid Mississippi hunting license, state waterfowl stamp, and a free Light Goose Conservation Order permit number. Hunters can obtain a permit number by visiting [mdwfp.com/waterfowl](http://mdwfp.com/waterfowl).

Light Goose Conservation Order Methods: Shooting hours are from ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset. Only snow, blue, and Ross's geese are eligible for harvest. The use of electronic calls is allowed. The use of unplugged shotguns is allowed. There is no daily or possession limit for snow, blue, or Ross's geese. Hunters must use non-toxic shot. Hunters must possess a valid Mississippi hunting license and a Mississippi state waterfowl stamp. Light goose conservation order hunters do not need a federal duck stamp.

Commissioner Mounger inquired about federal frameworks and how changes in Arkansas guidelines compare to that of Mississippi's.

Mr. Havens answered that the season recommendations are within the allowable federal frameworks received from the United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), and that duck seasons are based on survey data completed in May each year. He said that these numbers drive what the allowable frameworks are. Mr. Havens added that there have been declines in duck populations (particularly mallards) in recent years, and there are hopes that these trends do not continue. He stated that there are benchmarks within federal framework guidelines that would call for shortened season dates and reduced bag limits if the downward trends continue.

Mr. Havens addressed the Arkansas framework change, stating that the Arkansas Commission voted to change the state's hen/mallard bag limit, as state frameworks allow for more restrictions than federal frameworks.

Commissioner Bentz asked about Arkansas' decision to end their duck season earlier than allowed by the federal frameworks.

Mr. Havens stated that Arkansas in fact voted to do so, but from past surveys, Mississippi has received public feedback that setting January 31<sup>st</sup> as the duck season end date was a priority for MS waterfowl hunters. He said this was the reason for the state's recommendation to end duck season on January 31<sup>st</sup>—the latest closing date allowed by federal frameworks.

Mr. Havens answered that bag limits were set by the Commission, and that the maximum allowable bag limits were always proposed.

**ACTION: Upon motion by Commissioner Rhoads, which was seconded by Commissioner Mounger, the Commission unanimously approved the 2024-2025 Migratory Framework Selections as recommended by the staff.**

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

Date: Thursday, May 16th, 2024  
Location: 1505 Eastover Drive, Jackson, MS 39211  
Time: 10:00 AM FALLEN OFFICER MEMORIAL  
1:00 PM COMMISSION MEETING – BUSINESS SESSION

**ADJOURNMENT**

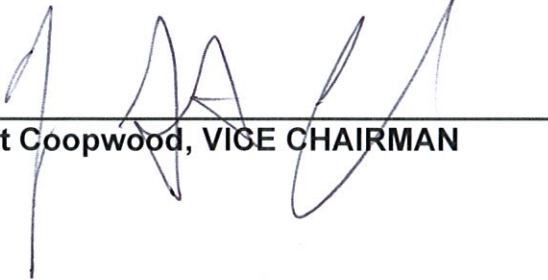
There being no further business before the Commission, Commissioner Rhoads moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Coopwood, and the motion carried. Chairman Cossar adjourned the meeting.



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Bill Cossar, CHAIRMAN

5/16/24

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Date



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Scott Coopwood, VICE CHAIRMAN

5/16/24

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Date