

2020-2025 Oregon Upland Game Bird Hunting Season Framework Change Proposals

Open mountain quail season statewide with a 10 bird bag in western Oregon and a 2 bird bag in eastern Oregon. Hunters have the potential to encounter mountain quail in every county of the state due to successful translocation efforts in eastern Oregon. This change would protect hunters who may not be able to distinguish mountain quail on the wing, while still maintaining a conservative management approach. This proposal aligns mountain quail seasons with California quail seasons in Hood River and Wasco counties, but does reduce the bag limit for mountain quail from 10 to 2 and delays the mountain quail opening until the second Saturday in October. Previously, hunters could pursue mountain quail in Hood River and Wasco counties on September 1, but not California quail. Similar to western Oregon, eastside quail bag limits would be combined, e.g. 10 birds singly or in aggregate with mountain quail: within the daily bag limit, you may not have more than two mountain quail.

Eastern Oregon upland bird seasons opening changed from “Saturday closest to October 8th” to “second Saturday in October”. This change is necessary to adhere to a season opening 1 week after most eastern Oregon controlled deer seasons begin. Controlled deer seasons are proposed to open the first Saturday in October beginning in 2021. This change would not affect the proposed 2020 eastern Oregon upland bird opener, which is already scheduled for the second Saturday in October.

Extend fall turkeys season to January 31st statewide. Extending the hunting season for fall turkey by 1 month will allow additional opportunity for hunters and provide a tool for managers dealing with nuisance and damage, particularly on private land. Many fall turkey tag holders do not actually utilize their tags and harvest is low, approximately 1,000 birds statewide in 2018. Eastern Oregon fall turkey seasons will remain private lands only from December 1st – January 31st. Standardize season dates statewide, second Saturday in October through January 31.

Remove limits on total tags available for Oregon fall turkey hunts. Turkey populations continue to expand throughout Oregon. Western Oregon fall turkey tags have never sold out, so tag limits are not necessary. Eastern Oregon fall turkey tags always sell out, but based on mandatory reporting, harvest rates and actual hunter participation are low. Removing artificial tag limits will increase opportunity for hunters and provide an additional tool for Wildlife Districts seeking to address turkey damage using licensed hunters.

Eliminate White River Controlled Fall Turkey Hunt. The White River WMU hosts one of the most popular spring turkey hunts in Oregon with the highest hunter density. Maintaining the White River WMU turkey population is a management priority, but hunter success continues to decline. Fall seasons are a management tool to control turkey populations by potentially removing breeding hens from the flock, and therefore incompatible with White River WMU turkey management goals. Removing the White River Controlled Fall Turkey Hunt (K41) also simplifies turkey hunting regulations by removing the last controlled turkey hunt in the state. While technically not a frameworks change, the potential elimination of this hunt does change the description of fall turkey hunting open areas in the frameworks.