

Migratory Gamebird Seasons and Regulations – Briefing and Public Comment

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Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**

STAFF WILL BRIEF THE COMMISSION ON:

- WAC 220-416-060 2022-2023 Migratory gamebird seasons and regulations.
- WAC 220-414-040 Nontoxic shot requirements.
- WAC 220-414-050 Shotgun shell restriction areas.
- WAC 220-414-090 Use of decoys and calls.



WAC 220-416-060 Migratory gamebird seasons and regulations.

Migratory Gamebirds:

ducks

geese

coot & snipe

mourning dove

band-tailed pigeon

Migratory Gamebird Hunting Authorities & Process

- USFWS Authority:
 - Federal Framework
 - Season length
 - Earliest opening date
 - Latest closing date
 - Upper bag limits
- State Discretion:
 - WAC within Federal Framework
 - Season timing within outside framework dates
 - Bag limits can be more restrictive but not more liberal



Framework Changes

	Pacific Flyway Meetings August
	USFWS Service Regs Committee October

Non-framework Changes

	Commission Briefing - March
	Commission Adoption - April
	Season Selections Due to USFWS Late-April

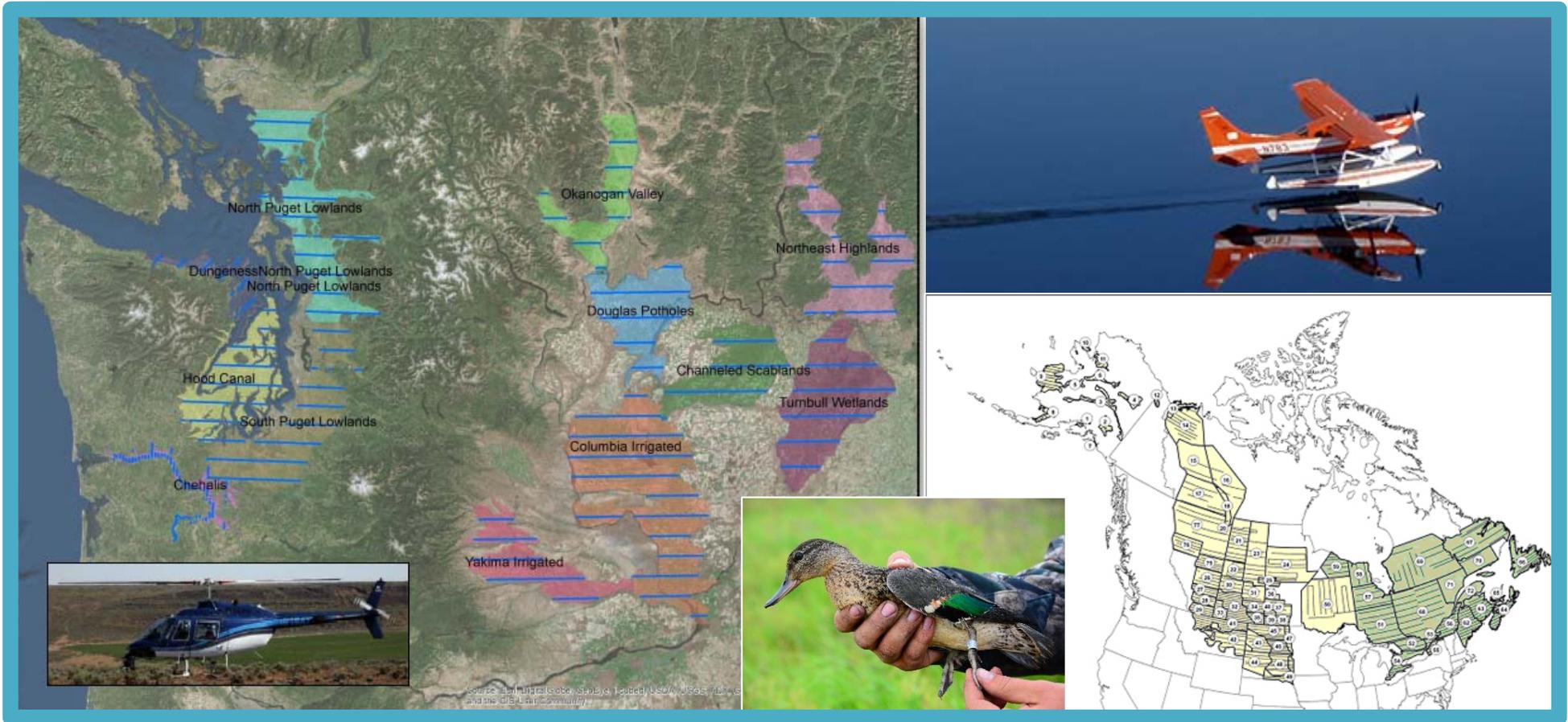
Waterfowl Advisory Group & Public Input



Pamphlet Published **July 1**



Duck Population Status and Season Proposals



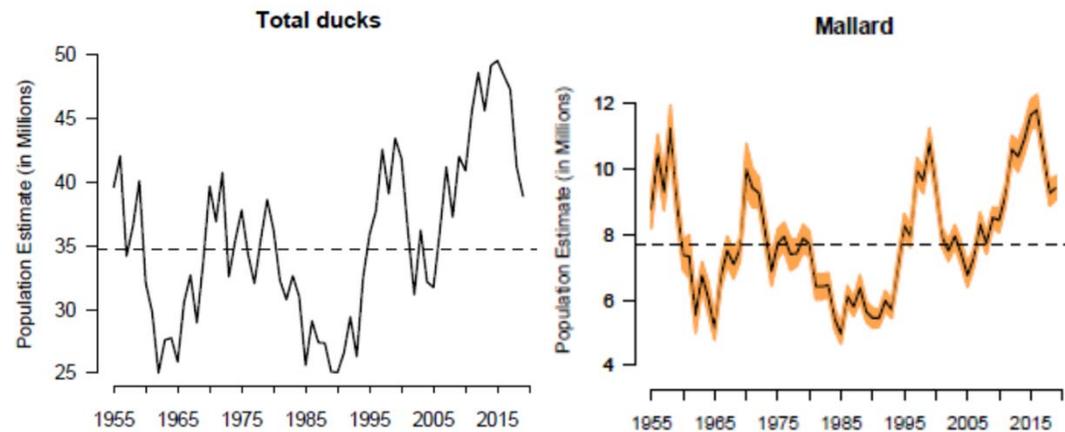
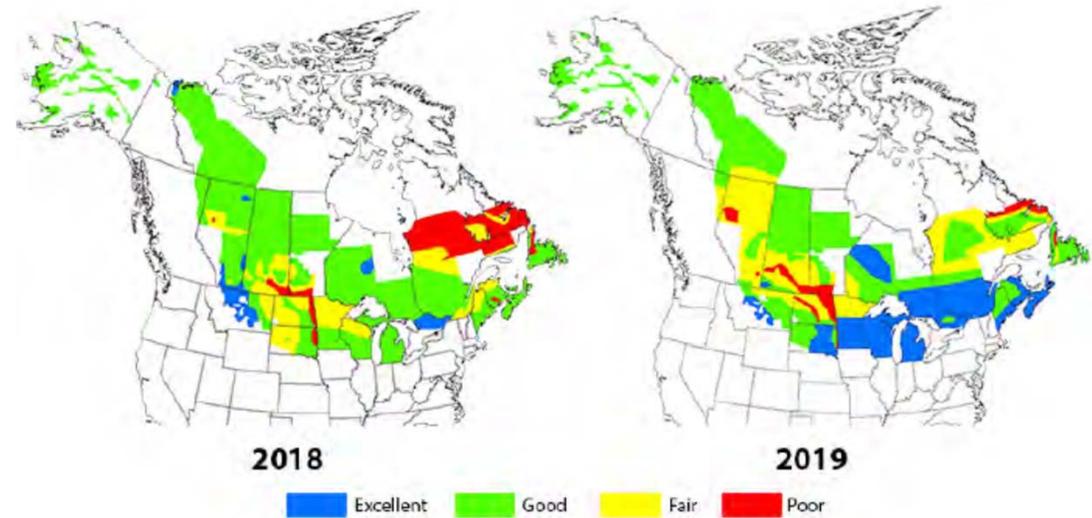
Duck Populations Status - Continental

2021 Limited Surveys
(COVID restrictions)

2019 similar to 2018

- # ponds (habitat conditions)
- Total ducks: 38.9 million
(6% below 2018; 10% above LTA)

All “10 principal” duck species had come down from 2015 peaks

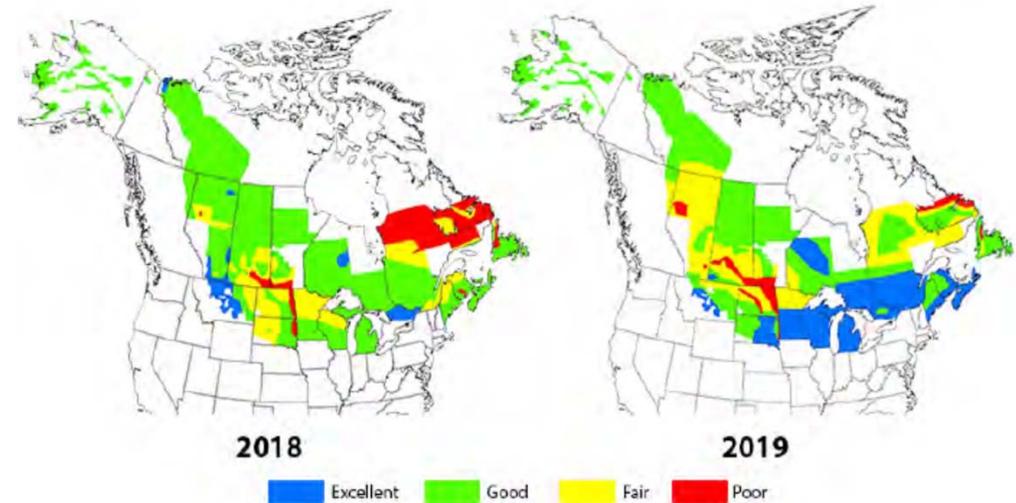


Duck Populations Status – Pacific Flyway

2021 Alaska and Oregon
(COVID restrictions)

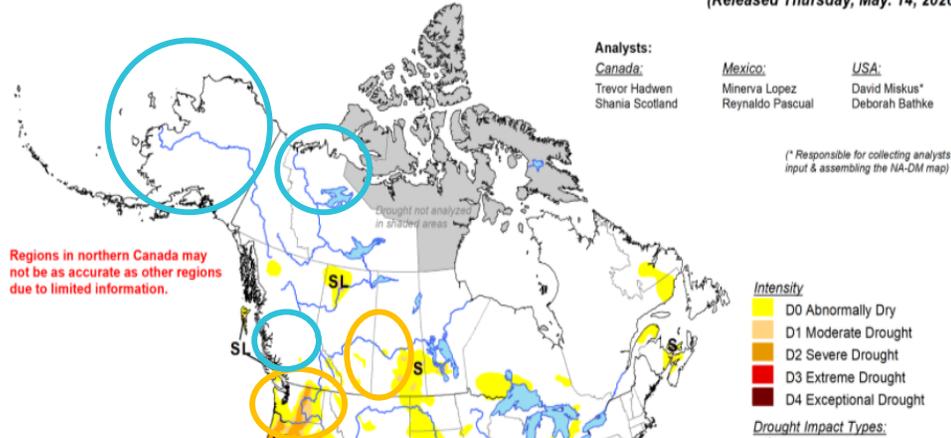
Habitat-Population Link

Long-term - 25 seasons of
Adaptive Harvest Management
(AHM)



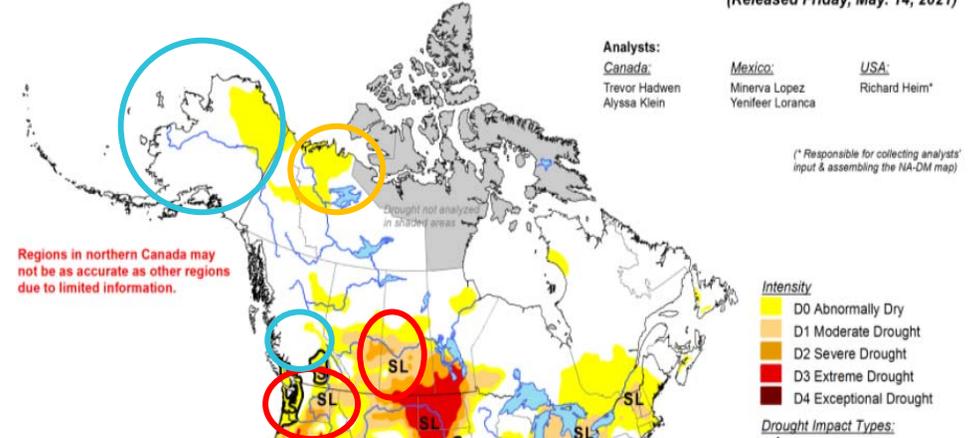
North American Drought Monitor

April 30, 2020
(Released Thursday, May. 14, 2020)



North American Drought Monitor

April 30, 2021
(Released Friday, May. 14, 2021)



Duck Populations Status – Pacific Flyway

Washington Status (2019)

- Mallard 126,243 (+1%)

Western Mallard Strategy

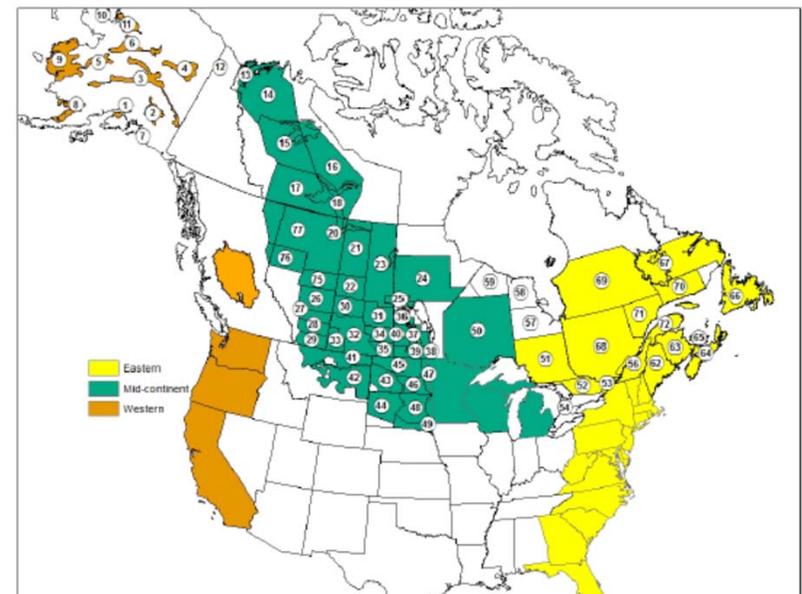
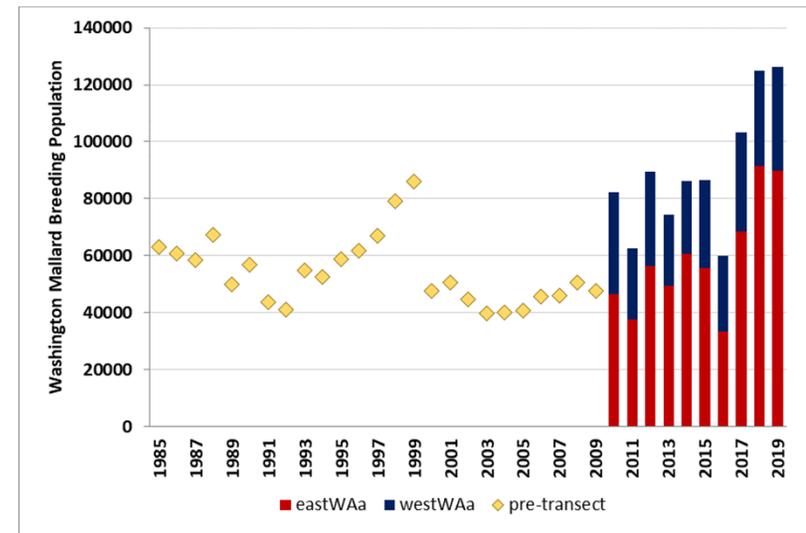
(2 stocks; long-term sustainable harvest)

–Alaska portion (**640K; +33%**)

–Southern Pacific Flyway

- BC (75K; **-5%**)
- Oregon (**76K; -16%**)
- California (240K; **-12%**)

Liberal Regs = 107 days;
7 ducks/7 mallard/2 hens



Washington – Mallard Harvest

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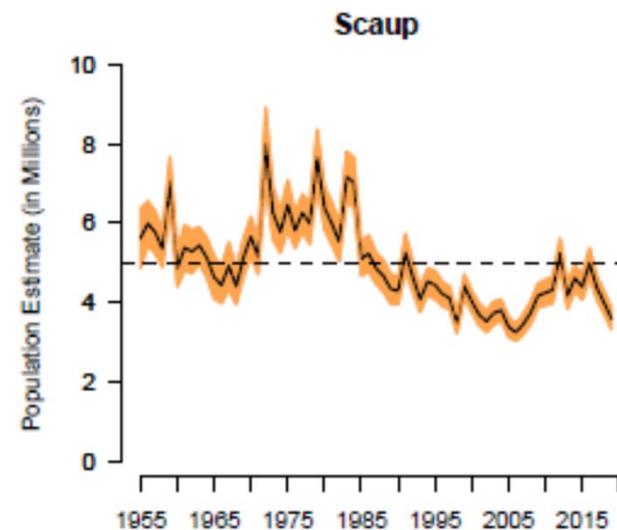
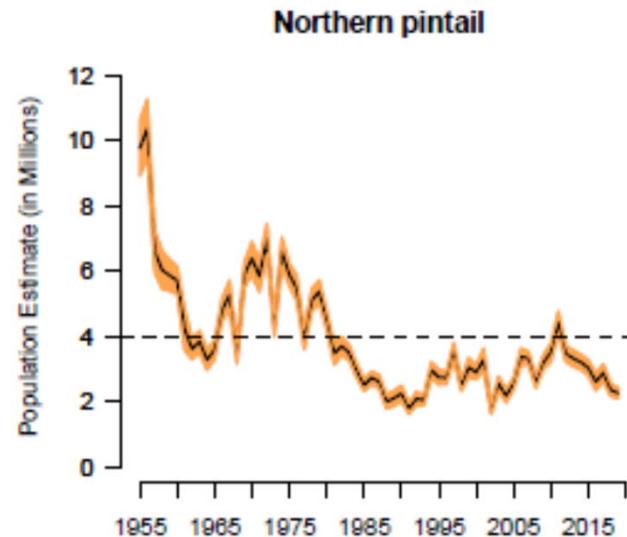
Duck Populations Status

Problematic Status

- **Northern Pintail**: 2.27 million
 - 42% below LTA; 9th lowest
- **Scaup**: 3.59 million combined
 - 28% below LTA; 5th lowest

National Strategies that inform harvest options

- **Northern Pintail** = **Liberal-1**
 - 1 bird daily bag limit
- **Scaup** = **Restrictive** Regs.
 - 2 bird daily bag limit;
 - 86-day season length

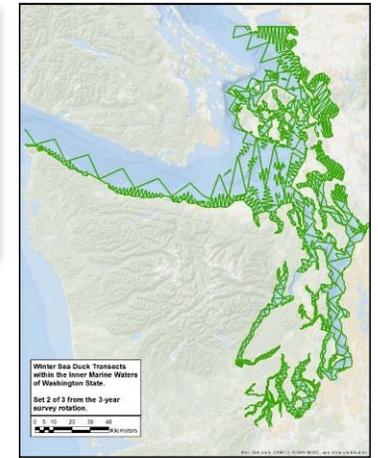
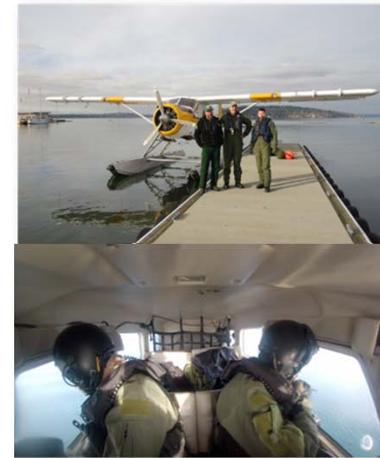


Sea Duck Status

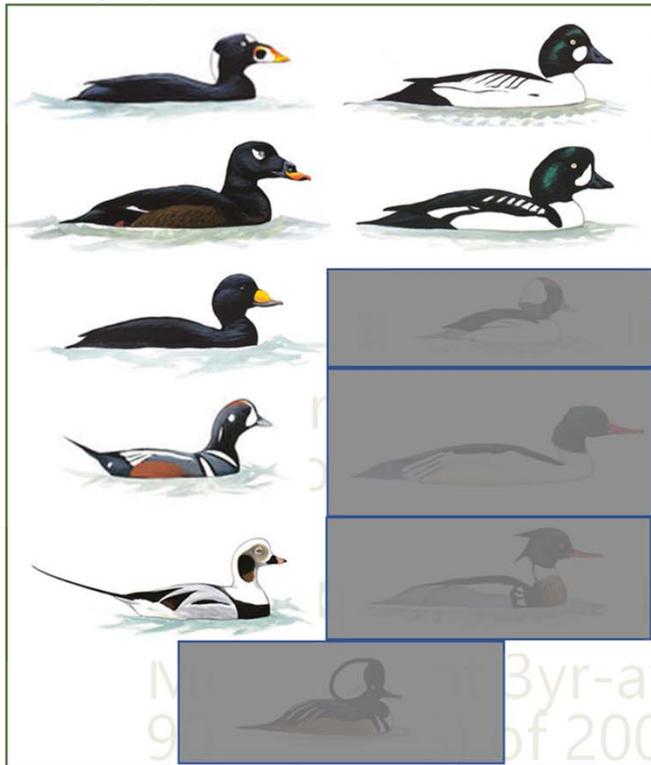
Scoter = 61,322 (2021-22)

Most recent 3yr-avg. = 59,982

– **Restrictive** Regulation Package



Sea (11)



342
avg = 42,644;
avg.

Regulation Package	Winter Index (3-yr)*	Bag Limit
Closure	<45,000	0
Restrictive	45,000-67,500	2
Moderate	67,500-135,000	4
Liberal	>135,000	7

SEADUCK

Did you hunt for seaducks? Yes No

How many total days did you hunt for these species? _____

MARK A SPECIES CODE FOR EACH BIRD HARVESTED (MARK ONE LINE FOR EACH BIRD HARVESTED)

SPECIES CODE*: B=BLACK SCOTER, H=HARLEQUIN, L=LONG-TAILED DUCK, S=SURF SCOTER, W=WHITE-WINGED SCOTER

COUNTY	MO (1-12)	DAY (1-31)	SPECIES CODE*
Ex. CLAL	10	25	B



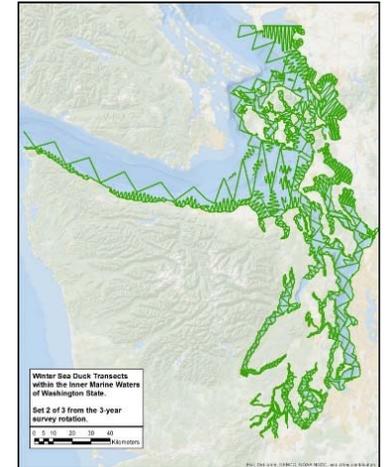
Mandatory Harvest Report requirement (2004)



Sea Duck Harvest Strategy

(2013): “Additional restrictions will be considered for harlequin duck, long-tailed duck, and goldeneye if significant declines occur (<70% of 2007-09 average), also based on evaluation of harvest rates.”

“Goudie et al. (1994) estimated sustainable harvest of harlequin ducks at 3-5% of the adult population...” [90.3% adult pop]



Goldeneye = 44,342

Most recent 3yr-avg = 42,644;
+8.4% of 2007-09 avg.

Long-tailed Duck = 5,186

Most recent 3yr-avg = 4,910;
+9% of 2007-09 avg.

Harlequin Duck = 3,913

Most recent 3yr-avg = 4,178;
90% (-10%) of 2007-09 avg.

Harvest Rate check

2020 2021 (compliant-only)

427
(1%)

due Mar. 20th

136
(2.7%)

due Mar. 20th

231
(5.7 -
6.4%)

due Mar. 20th



WAC 220-416-060

2022-2023 Duck Season Proposals

Proposed general duck season dates and bag limits:

- 107 days (except scaup)
 - 2-day youth hunt
 - **Sept. 24, 2022** and **Feb. 4, 2023** in western WA (West Zone);
 - **Oct. 1, 2022** and **Feb. 4, 2023** in eastern WA (East Zone)
 - 1-day veteran and active military hunt **Feb. 4, 2023** statewide
 - 105-day general season: **Saturday, Oct. 15, 2022**
 - Requiring a 2-day closure Oct. 24-25 (Mon. & Tues.)
- 7 ducks, to include not more than:
 - 2 hen mallard, 1 pintail
 - 2 redhead, 2 canvasback, 2 scaup (86-day season, **Nov. 5** opener)
 - western WA (West Zone) sea duck reduced bag-limits:
 - 2 scoter, 2 goldeneye, 2 long-tailed duck,
 - 1 harlequin duck (season-limit)* [pending harvest rate evaluation using compliant harvest record cards due March 20th]**



Sea Duck Harvest Strategy

(2013): “Additional restrictions will be considered for harlequin duck, long-tailed duck, and goldeneye if significant declines occur (<70% of 2007-09 average), also based on evaluation of harvest rates.”

“Goudie et al. (1994) estimated sustainable harvest of harlequin ducks at 3-5% of the adult population...” [90.3% adult pop]

Harlequin Duck = 3,913

Most recent 3yr-avg = 4,178;
90% (-10%) of 2007-09 avg.

Considerations:

- Status vs. harvest rate
- Estimate is “reported harvest”
 - No crippling loss correction
- % Compliant trends (29-38%)
- Current guidance on waterfowl hunting opportunities



Harvest Rate check

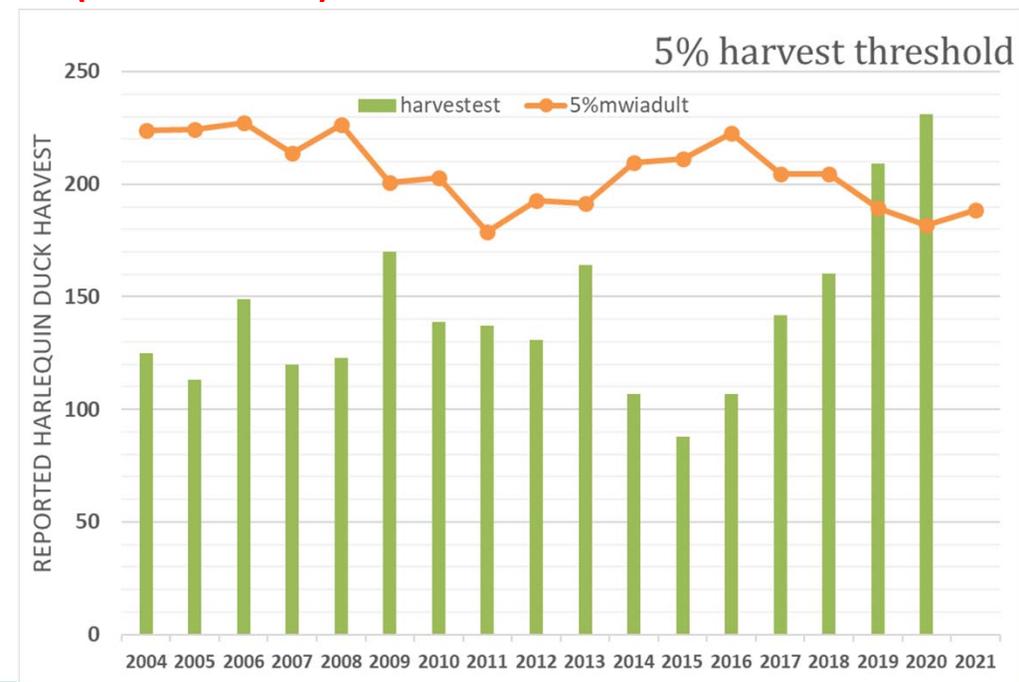
2020

2021 (compliant-only)

231

due Mar. 20th

(5.7-6.4%)

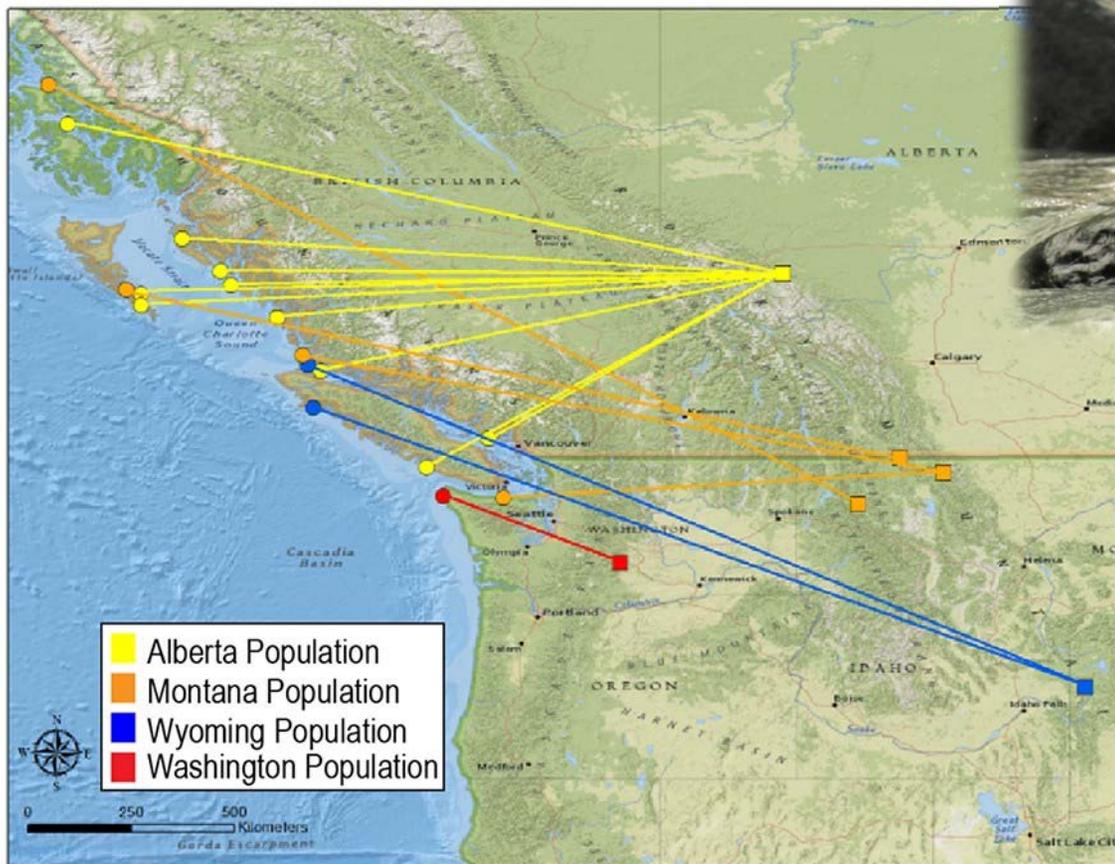


Harlequin Duck Ecology

“Winter West” = River specialist

High site and pair fidelity

Poor annual productivity

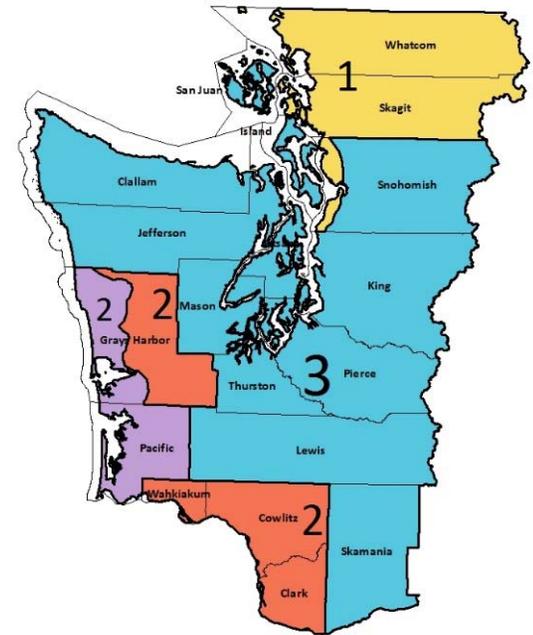


A6
16 APR 2018
Glacier Creek
resighted w/brood
4 JUN 2018

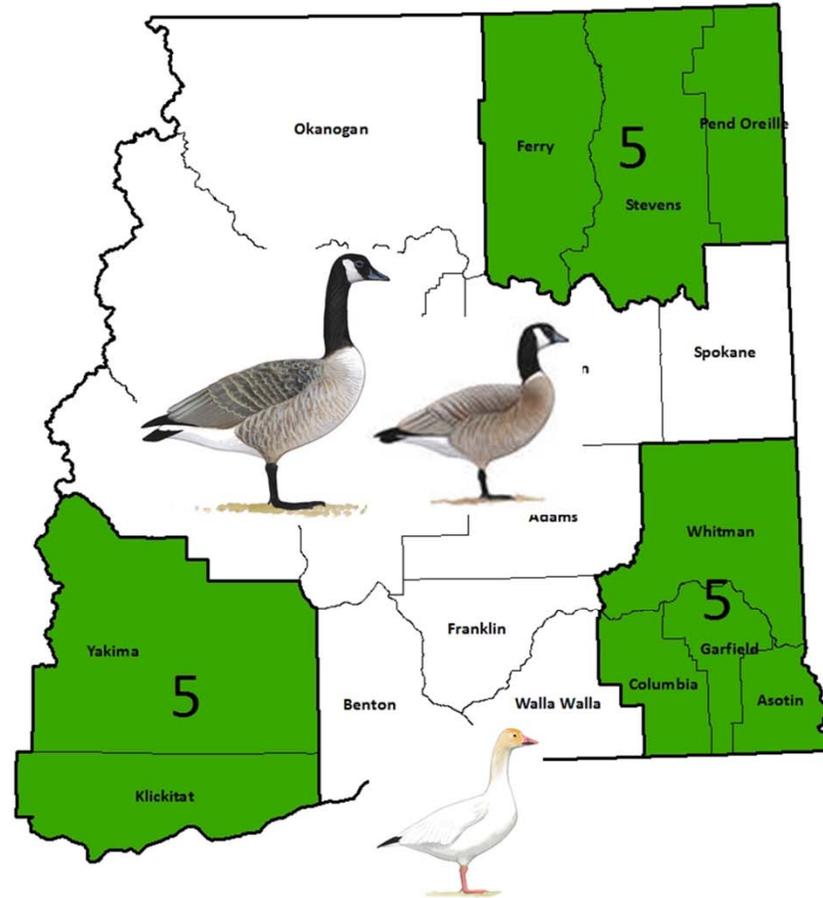
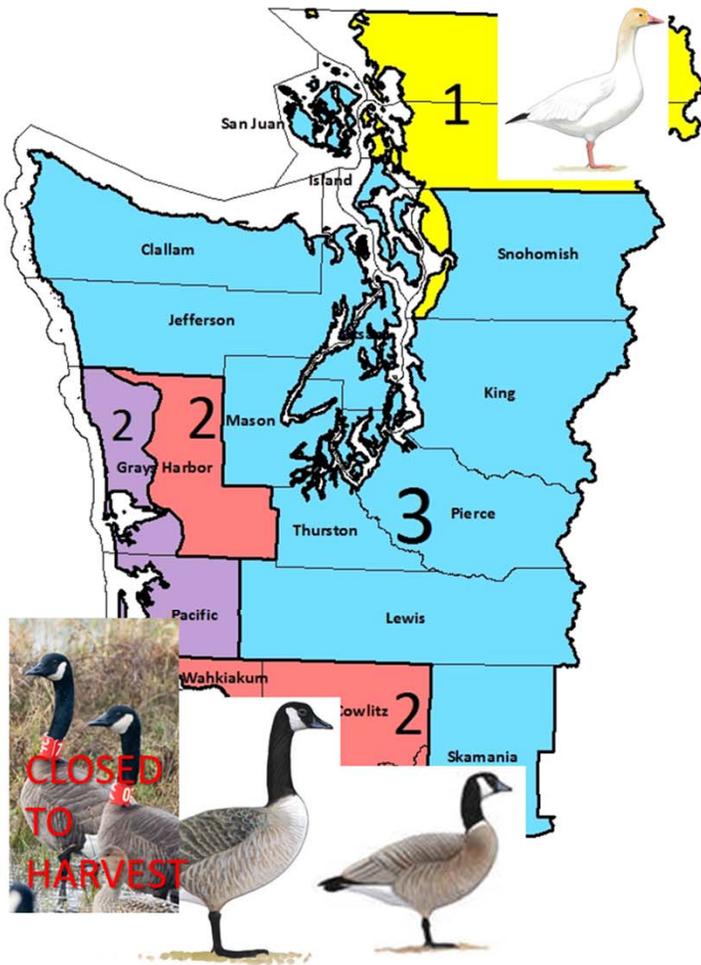
Meanwhile... the male of the pair
molted out near Neah Bay



Goose Populations Status and Season Proposals



Goose Management Areas



Goose Populations Status



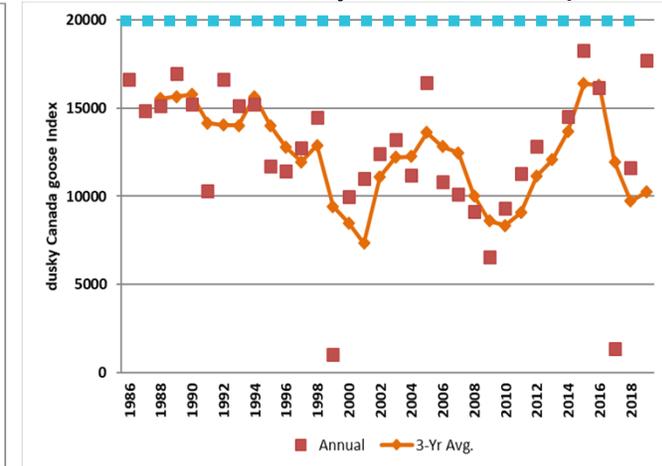
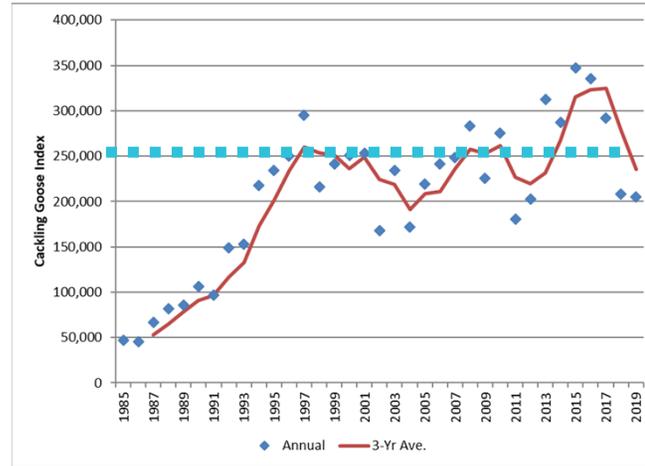
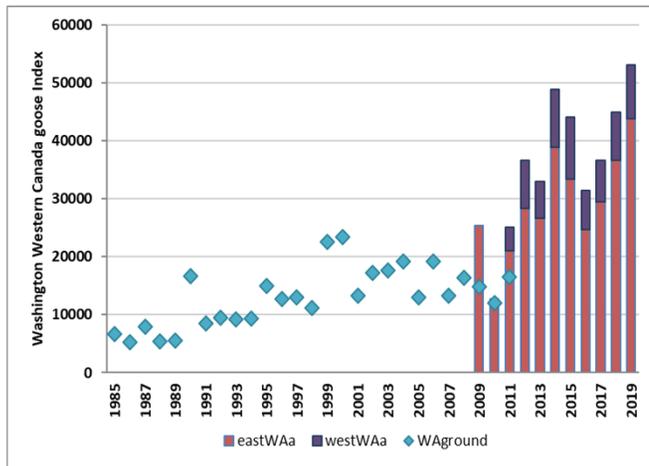
PopObjective: >2,000 pairs
Current: 36,600 total



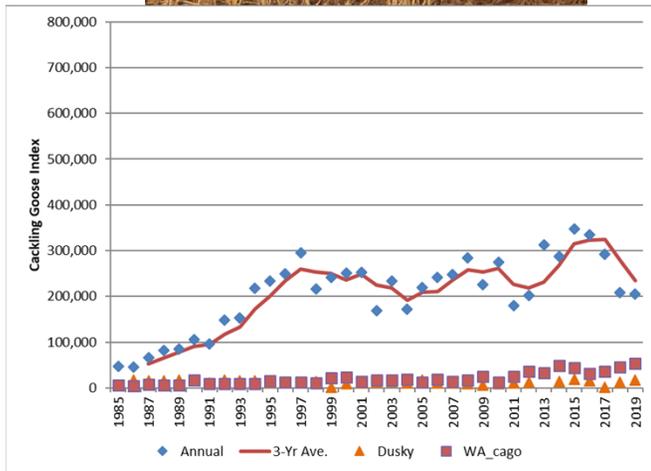
PopObjective: 250,000
Current 3-yr: 206,763 (-17%)



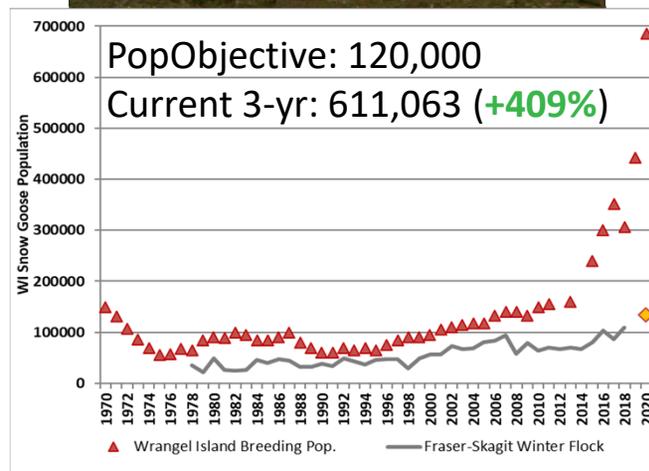
PopObjective: 20,000
Current 3yr: 14,334 (-28%)



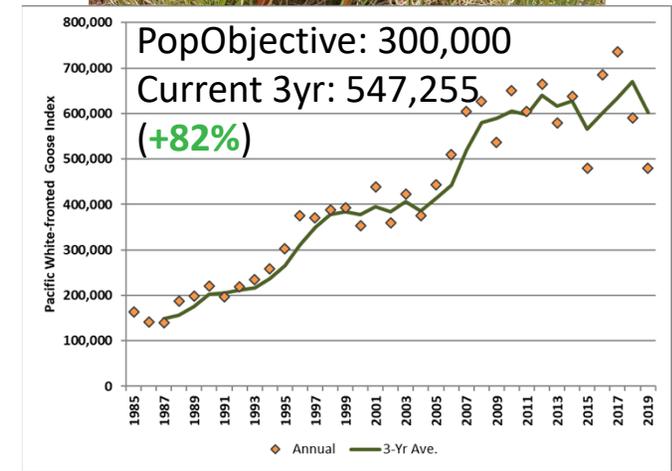
Goose Populations Status & Bag-limit Proposals



Canada/Cackling Geese
 Bag limit = 4
 Except in GMA2
 Bag limit = 3



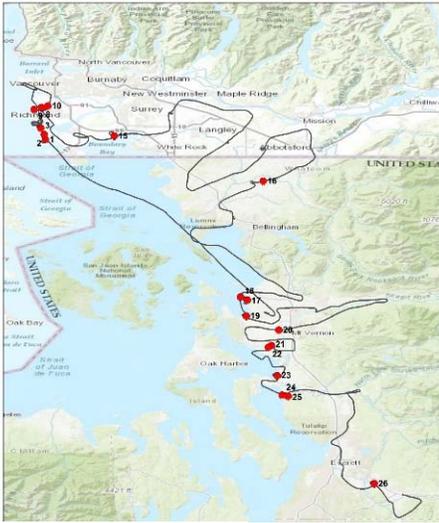
Snow Geese (white geese)
 Bag limit = **10** statewide;
20 during white goose-
only season segments



White-fronted Geese
 Bag limit = 10



White Goose Status – Goose Management Area 1 & 4



Continued increases in Wrangel Island (Russia) snow geese:
2021 fall flight estimate > 1.2 million lesser snow geese

Wrangel Island: > 120,000 spring pop. obj. (1 colony)

GMA 1: 133,306 (3yr-avg. = 89,068 adults)

GMA 4: 153,690 (no management obj.)

The 107-days allowed are maxed out, allowed “3-segments”
Pacific Flyway is not part of “Conservation Order”

Outside of this 107-days requires an agricultural depredation permit (non-consumptive take)

Maintain:

10 white goose bag limit statewide

Maintain: white goose-only season segments

GMA1: Feb. 11 – 21 (11 days)

GMA4: Feb. 11 – Mar. 1 (19 days)

20 white goose bag limit during a white goose-only season segment



Brant Season Proposal

No changes to brant daily bag limit (2), based upon Pacific Flyway Winter Brant Survey, with continuation of Mandatory Harvest Report

Season Dates in January 2023

Specified by county

- Clallam: 3 days (Jan. 14, 18, 21)
- Whatcom: 3 days (same)
- Skagit: 0-8 days, determined by aerial survey results (starts closed)
- Pacific: 14 days, starts Jan. 7, 2023

Youth, Veteran & Active Military date:

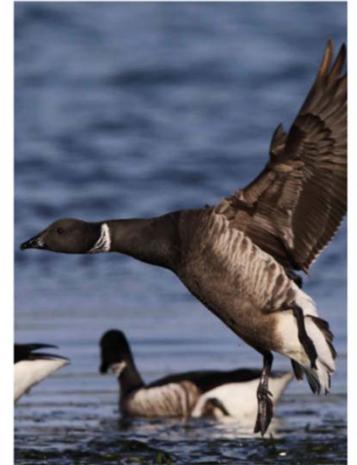
Feb. 4, 2023; Clallam, Whatcom, Pacific,

Skagit will depend upon results of aerial survey

PACIFIC FLYWAY COUNCIL



Management Plan:
Pacific Population
of Brant



Adopted March 2018



Season Dates: Coot

same as duck seasons

Bag-limits: 25 daily

No changes to season dates or bag limits



Season Dates: Snipe

same as duck seasons (except not open during special hunt dates)

Bag-limits: 8 daily

No changes to season dates or bag limits.



Mourning Dove



Season Dates:

Sept. 1 – Oct. 30, 2022

Bag-limits: 15 daily

No changes to season dates or bag limits.



Band-tailed Pigeon

Season Dates:

Sept. 17-25, 2022; to allow two weekends and overlap with youth waterfowl in western WA

Bag-limits: 2 daily (no change)



Falconry – Migratory Gamebirds

Season Dates:

Ducks, coots, snipe and mourning dove
same as season dates approved for each species

Bag-limits: 3, straight or mixed bag, including
ducks, coots, snipe, geese, and mourning doves
during established seasons

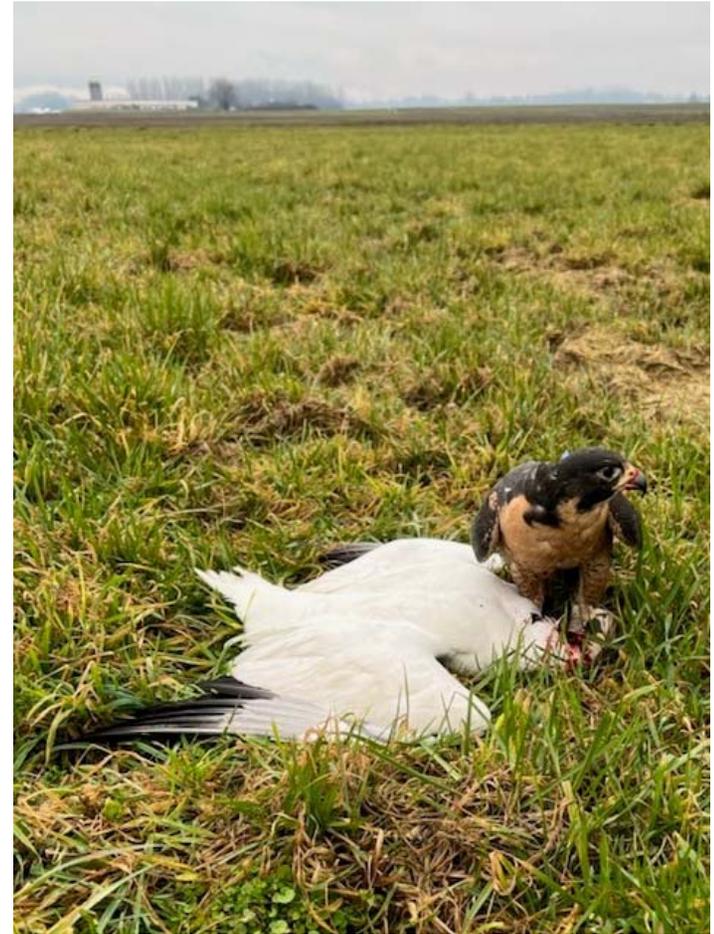
No changes to season dates or bag limits

EXTENDED FALCONRY Season Dates:

Sept. 24, 2022 and Feb. 4, 2023 in western WA

Oct. 1, 2022 and Feb. 4, 2023 in eastern WA

Bag-limits: 3, straight or mixed bag, including
allowable species specified under youth, veterans
and active military personnel dates.



Mourning Dove: Oct. 31, 2022 – Dec. 16, 2022



Questions?





WAC 220-414-040 Nontoxic shot requirements.

WAC 220-414-050 Shotgun shell restriction areas.

WAC 220-414-090 Use of decoys and calls.



WAC 220-414-040
Nontoxic shot requirements.

Nontoxic shot requirements

30 Years Lead-Free =
Waterfowl Hunting

Adjust Wildlife Area and Unit
naming conventions under
Section 2 (specific areas) to
reflect current relationships

Units with significant wetland
complexes w/in boundaries



EXAMPLE: South Puget Sound
(Union River unit)



Purpose of the proposal and effects

The 2021-2022 migratory waterfowl, coot and snipe season marked the 30th year since prohibiting the use of lead for waterfowl hunting nationwide.

If adopted:

- Provide consistency in naming conventions of our Wildlife Area Units;
- Address Wildlife Area Units with significant wetlands presenting a high probability for contact with spent shot pellets; and
- Additionally, it would remove pheasant release sites that are no longer in use in order to reduce confusion.





WAC 220-414-050
Shotgun shell restriction areas.

Shotgun shell restriction areas



Technical adjustments:

Johnson/DeBay's Slough Hunt Unit
and Dungeness Unit
to align intent and legal description

"Addition" of Skagit Wildlife Area's:

- Samish River Unit to differentiate from Samish Unit
- South Padilla Bay Unit

Both current management



Purpose of the proposal and effects

If adopted, the proposal would improve the presence of waterfowl over the course of the 107-day season on the specified units, balancing resource and user objectives consistent with Objective 104e in WDFW's Game Management Plan.

The proposed changes would further WDFW's mandate to provide sustainable recreational hunting opportunities.





WAC 220-414-090
Use of decoys and calls.

Use of decoys and calls



Federal law prohibits the use of electronic calls, EXCEPT

During a white goose-only season segment (snow, Ross', and blue phase geese)

Aligns state regulation with this federal exception that has existed since 2008

Providing a final harvest management tool to increase harvest on snow geese



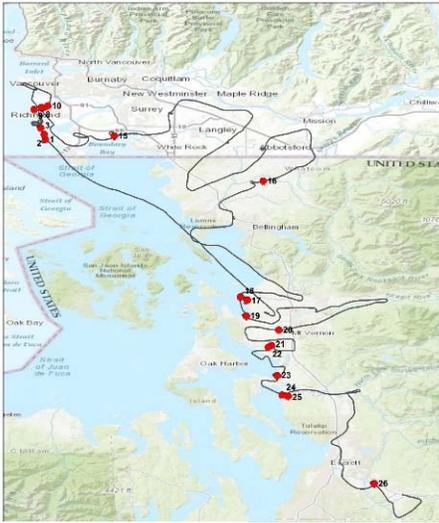


Purpose of the proposal and effects

- The proposed change only impacts the lesser snow goose population that has experienced rapid population growth in the past three years and is now significantly above both established flyway and winter-flock population objectives.
- It is consistent with the Pacific Flyway Management Plan for the Wrangel Island Population for Lesser Snow Geese.
- WAC 220-440-060(3)(e) encourages the use of general season hunting to help minimize private property damage, also this allows consumptive use of harvested geese;
- Agricultural depredation permits do not allow for consumptive uses as this is defined as “take” outside of established seasons under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S. Code § 704).



White Goose Status – Goose Management Area 1 & 4



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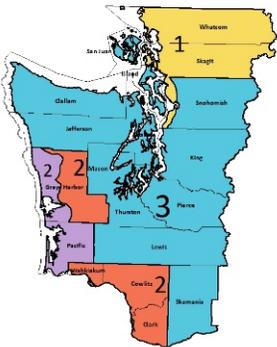
10 white goose bag limit statewide

Maintain: white goose-only season segments

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GMA4: Feb. 11 – Mar. 1 (19 days)

20 white goose bag limit during a white goose-only season
segment



Electronic decoys – no change

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TVIZM\$YW				
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Washington – Mallard Harvest

WXEXI	JVEQ I [SVO Days / Total Bag/ # MALL / #Hens	Q epevh\$Veros\$ Rexsrepp}	Q epevh\$ Gsq tswmsr\$ Hygo\$Levziwx	Levziwx\$Vexi\$Ehyps\$ Q epiw Ehyps\$Tiq epiw
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Questions?

