

MIGRATORY WATERFOWL SEASONS AND REGULATIONS

Public Hearing and Decision

**Don Kraege, Waterfowl Section Manager
Game Division, Wildlife Program**

MIGRATORY WATERFOWL SEASONS

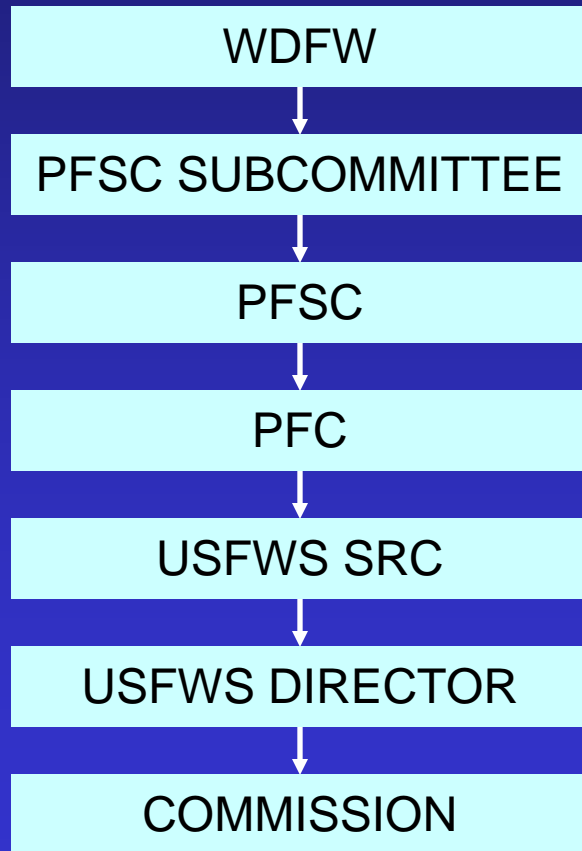
232-28-436

- **USFWS Authority: Federal Framework**
 - Earliest opening, latest closing date
 - Maximum limits, season length
 - Shooting hours
- **State Discretion: WAC**
 - Can be more restrictive but not more liberal
 - Season timing, split seasons, zones

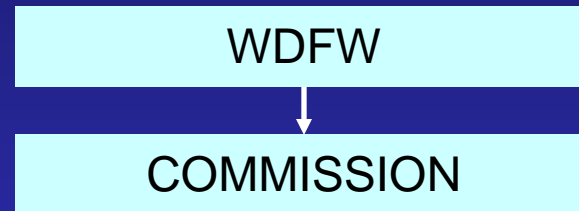


Steps in Approval of Migratory Bird Seasons

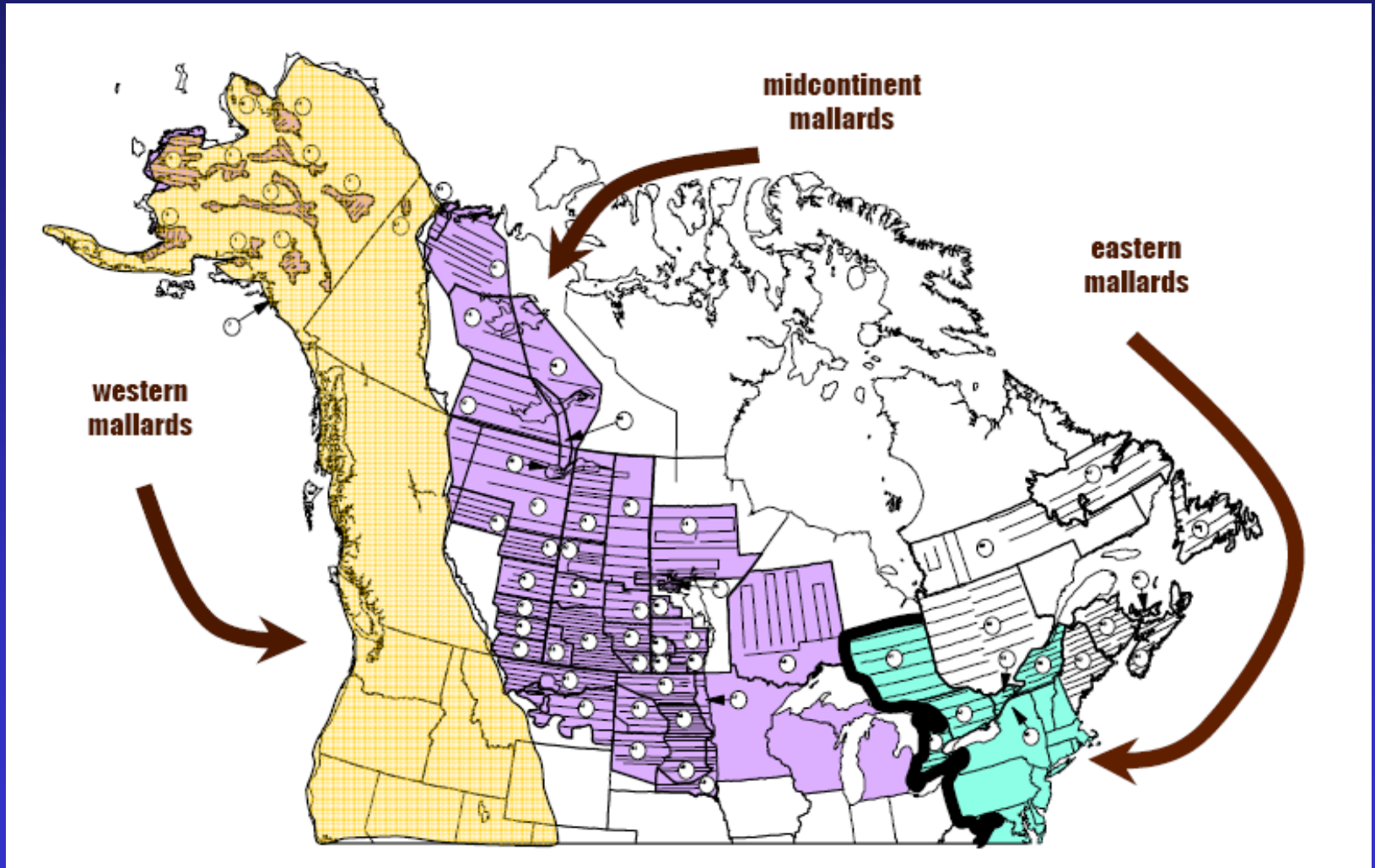
Framework Changes



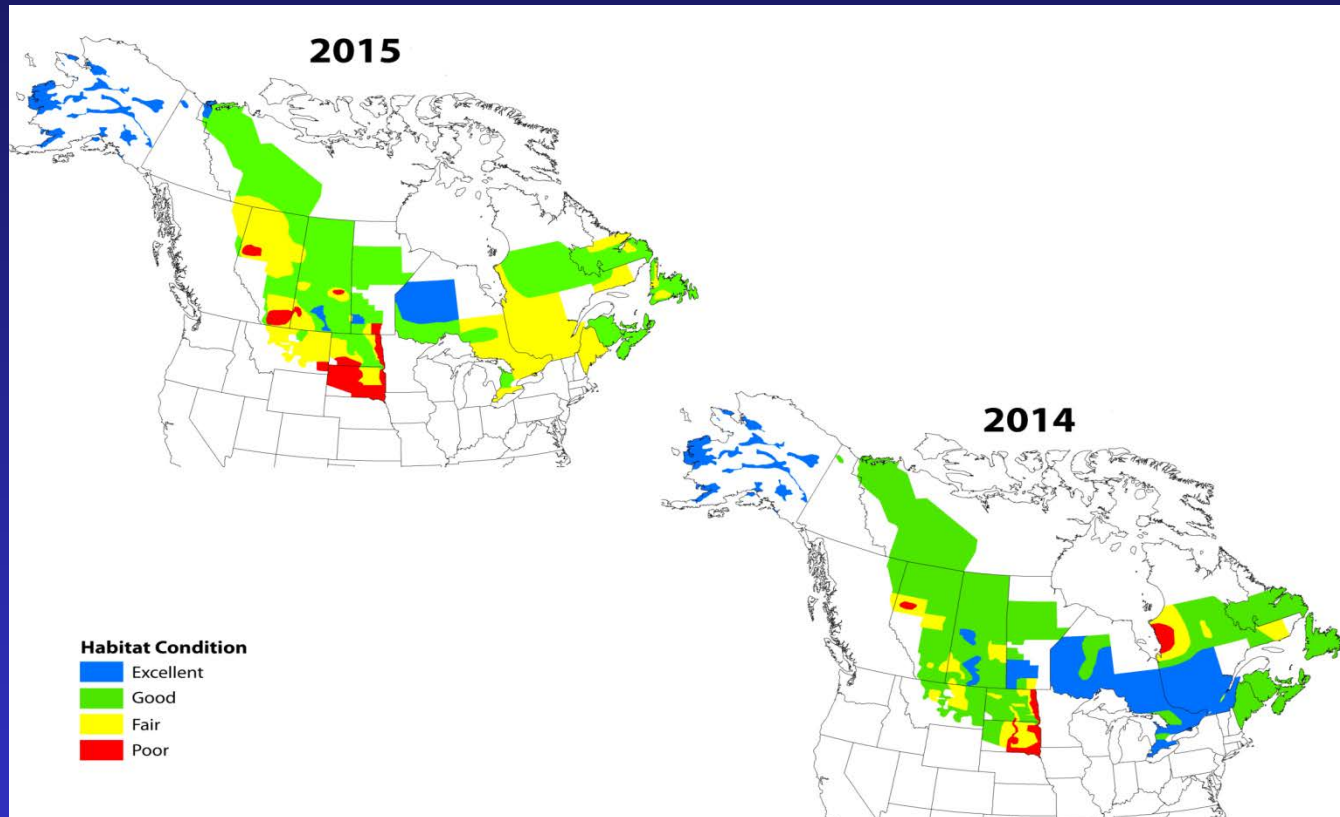
Non-framework Changes



N. American Mallard Stocks

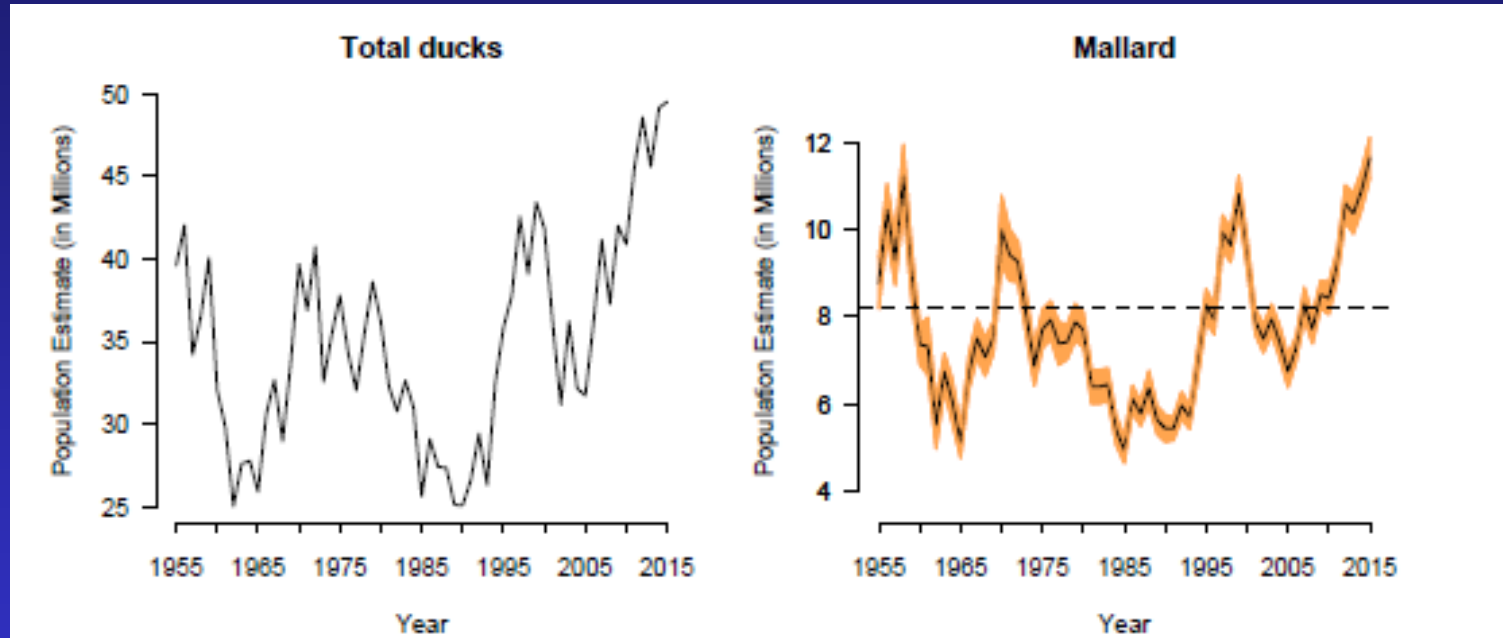


N. American Habitat Conditions

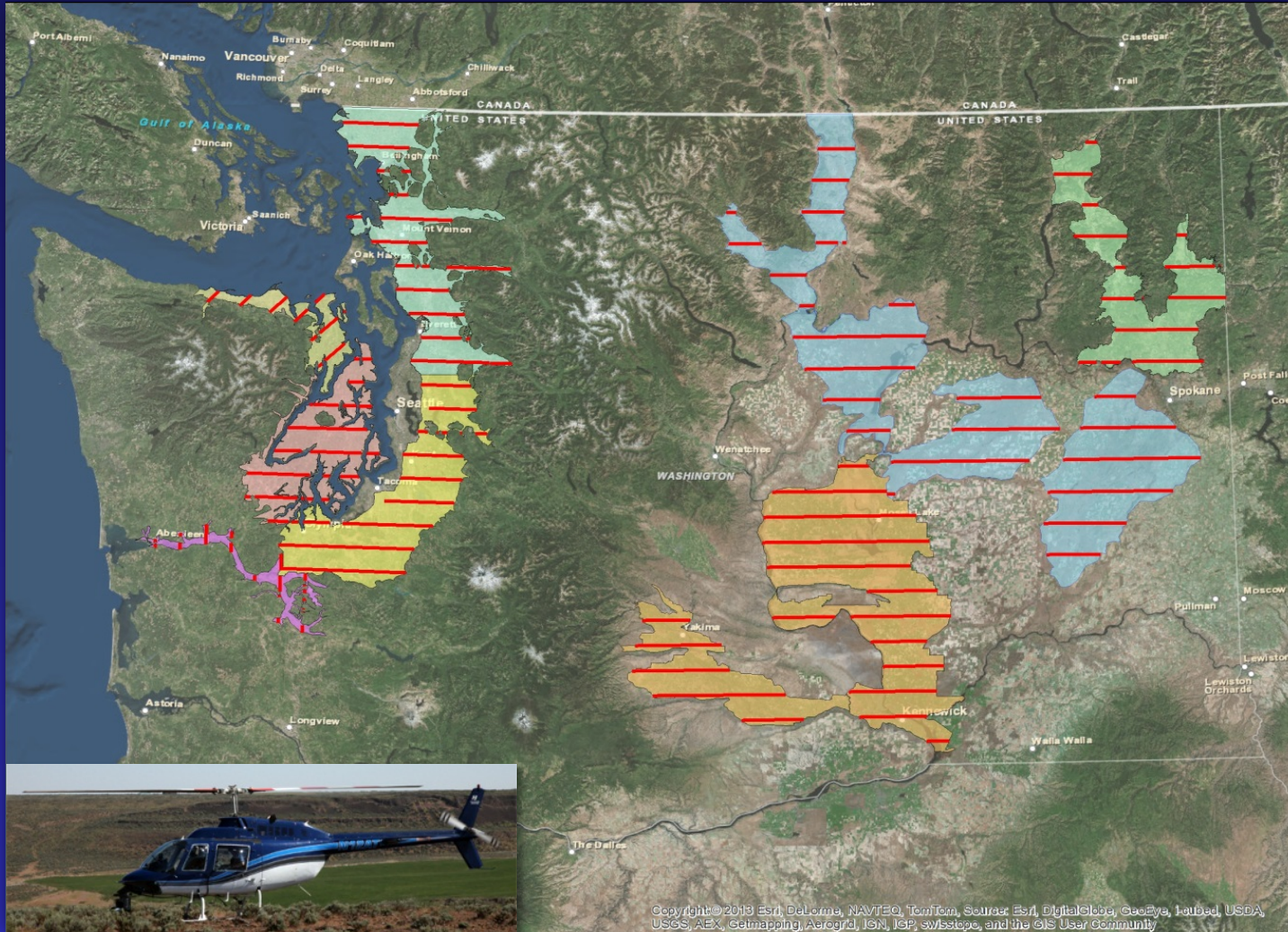


Habitat conditions are fair-good this year, compared to good-excellent last year in most breeding areas

2015 Results – All N. Survey Areas

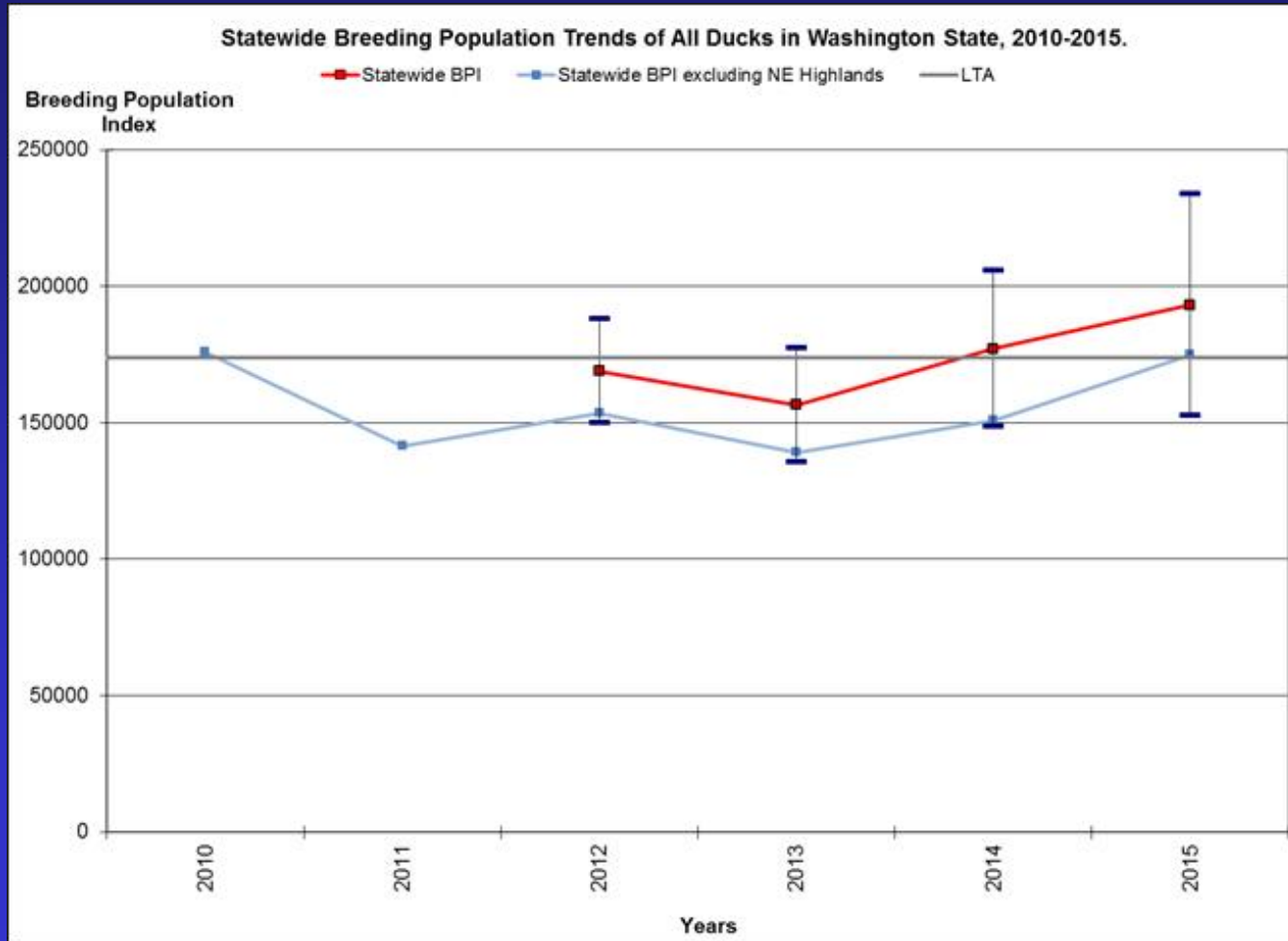


Washington Breeding Surveys



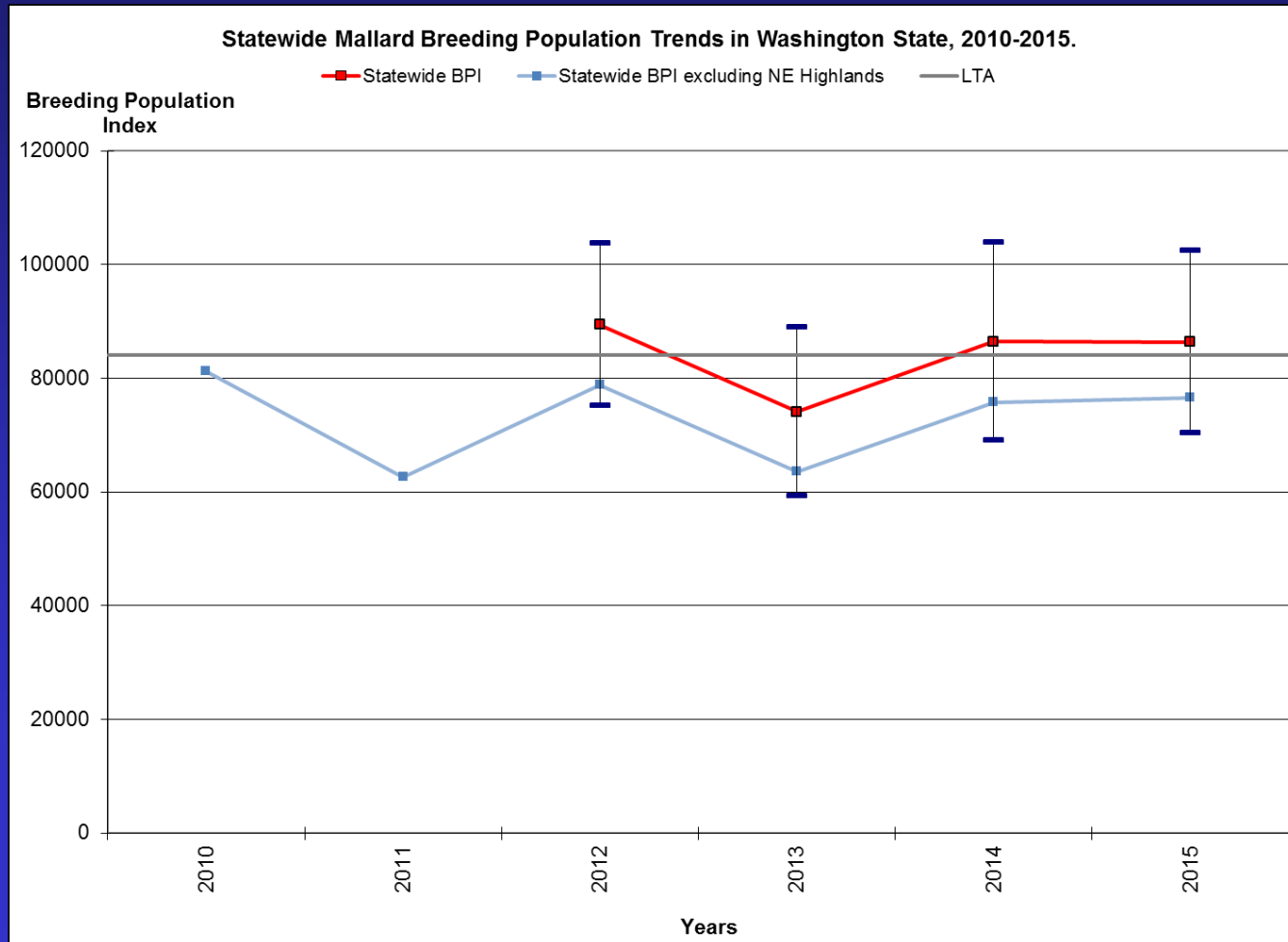
Washington Breeding Surveys

Total Ducks

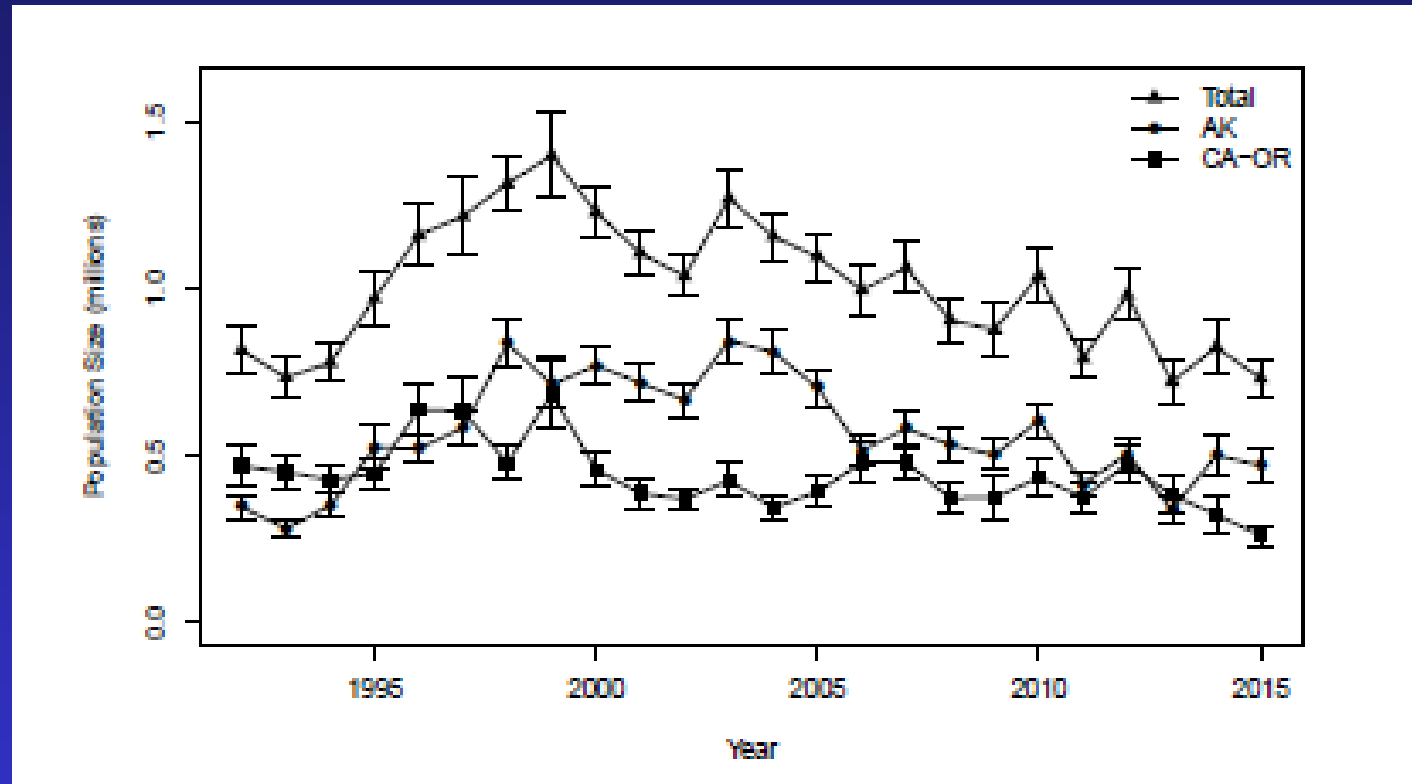


Washington Breeding Surveys

Mallards



2015 Western Mallard Trends



2015-16 Western Mallard Regulatory Prescription

CA-OR BPOP ^b	Alaska BPOP ^b										
	0	0.05	0.1	0.15	0.2	0.25	0.3	0.35	0.4	0.45	≥0.5
0	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	R	L	L	L
0.05	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
0.1	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	R	L
0.15	M	C	C	C	C	C	C	R	L	L	L
0.2	L	C	C	C	C	C	M	L	L	L	L
0.25	L	C	C	C	C	M	L	L	L	L	L
0.3	L	C	C	C	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
0.35	L	C	C	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
0.4	L	C	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
0.45	L	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
0.5	L	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
≥0.55	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L

^a C = closed season, R = restrictive, M = moderate, L = liberal.

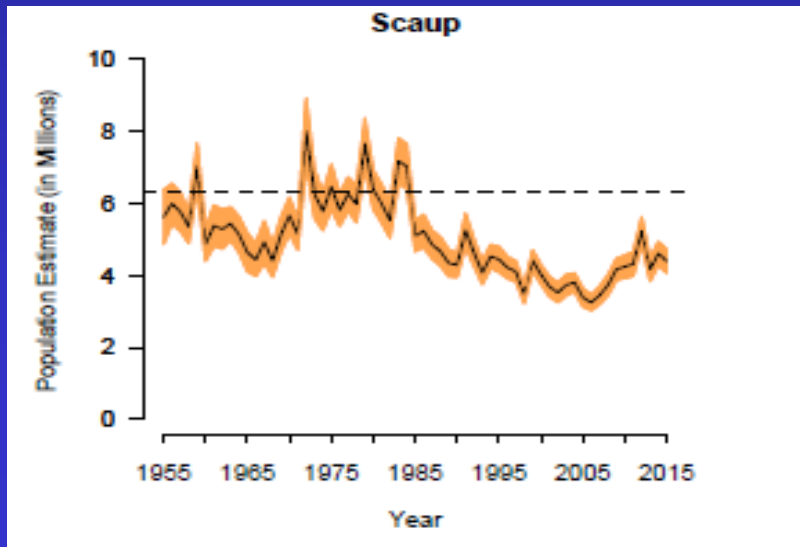
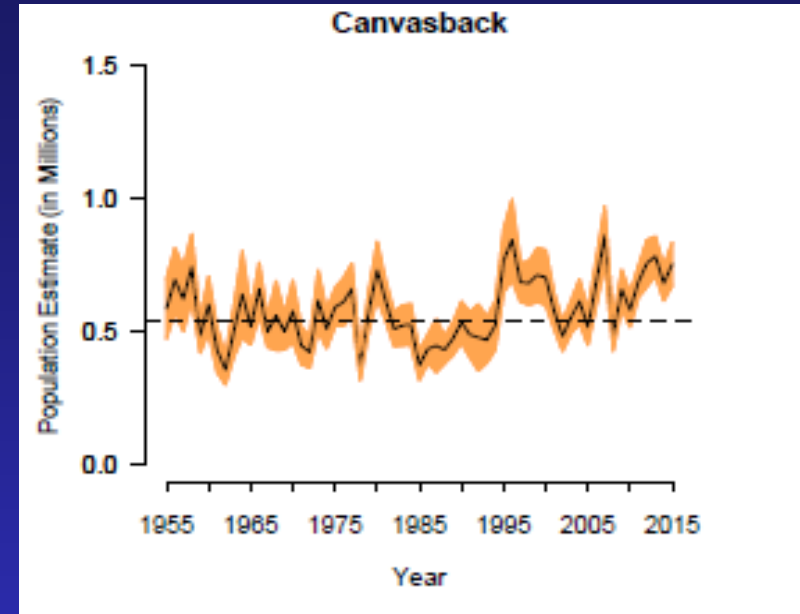
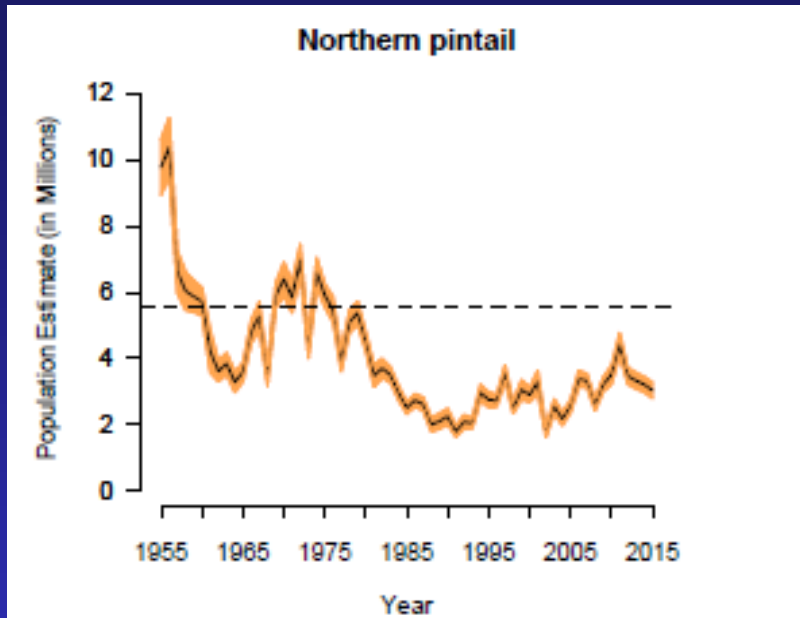
^b Estimated number of mallards (in millions) for Alaska (WBPHS strata 1-12) and in California-Oregon.

2015-16: Liberal Season

AHM / Washington Season Timing (From Game Mgmt Plan)

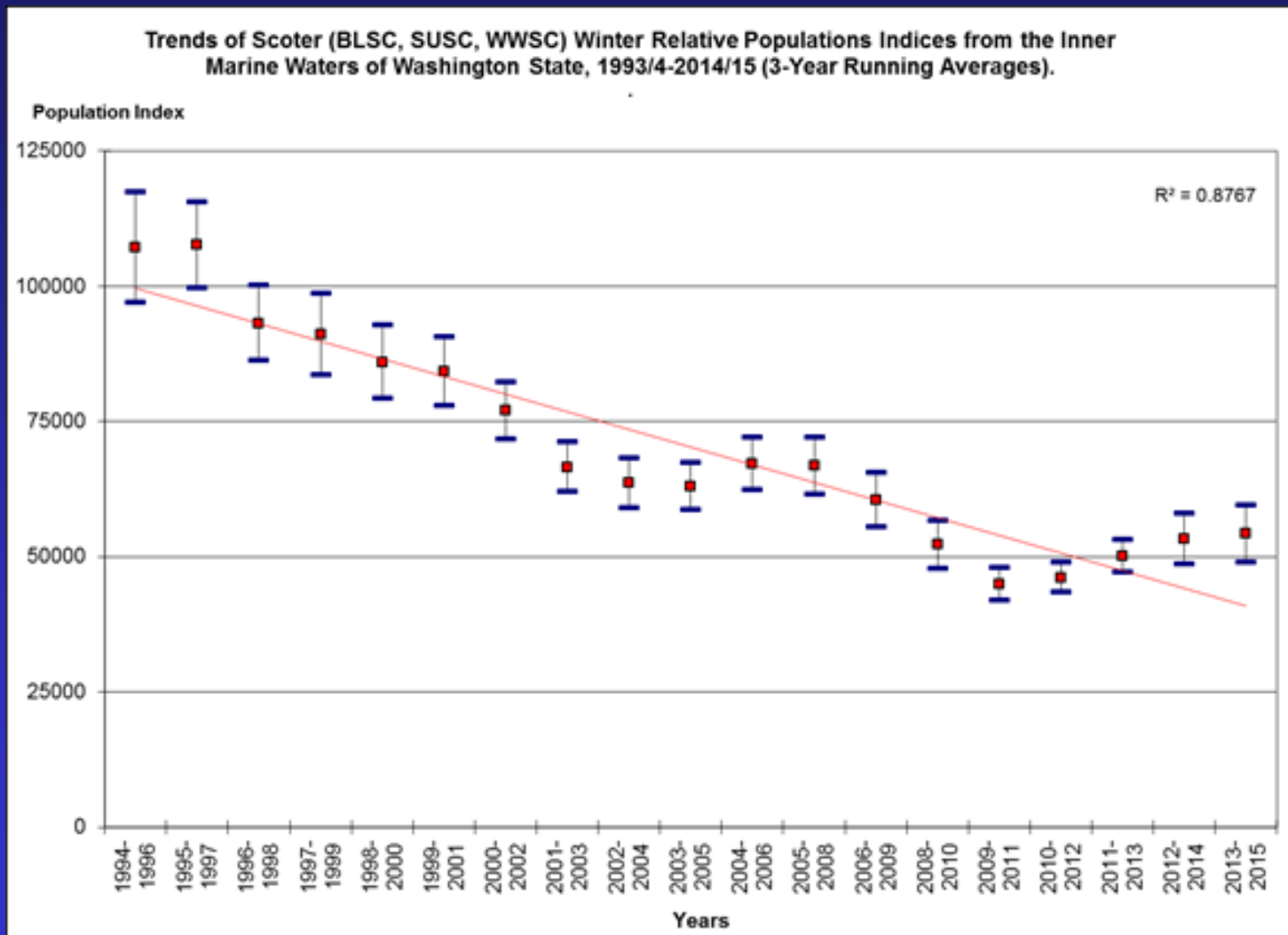
Regulation package	EASTERN WASHINGTON			WESTERN WASHINGTON		
	Days	Limit total/ mall/ F mall	Proposed Season Timing*	Days	Limit total/ mall/ F mall	Proposed Season Timing*
Liberal	107	7/7/2	mid-Oct. thru late Jan.	107	7/7/2	mid-Oct. thru late Jan.
Moderate	93	7/5/2	mid-Oct. – 9 days; remainder early-Nov. thru late Jan.	86	7/5/2	mid-Oct. – 9 days; remainder mid-Nov. thru late Jan.
Restrictive	67	4/3/1	mid-Oct. – 9 days; remainder mid-Nov. thru mid-Jan.	60	4/3/1	mid-Oct. – 9 days; remainder mid-Nov. thru early Jan.

Pintail, Canvasback, Scaup



- Independent harvest strategies based on models

Scoters



2015-16 Duck Season Proposals

WAC 232-28-436

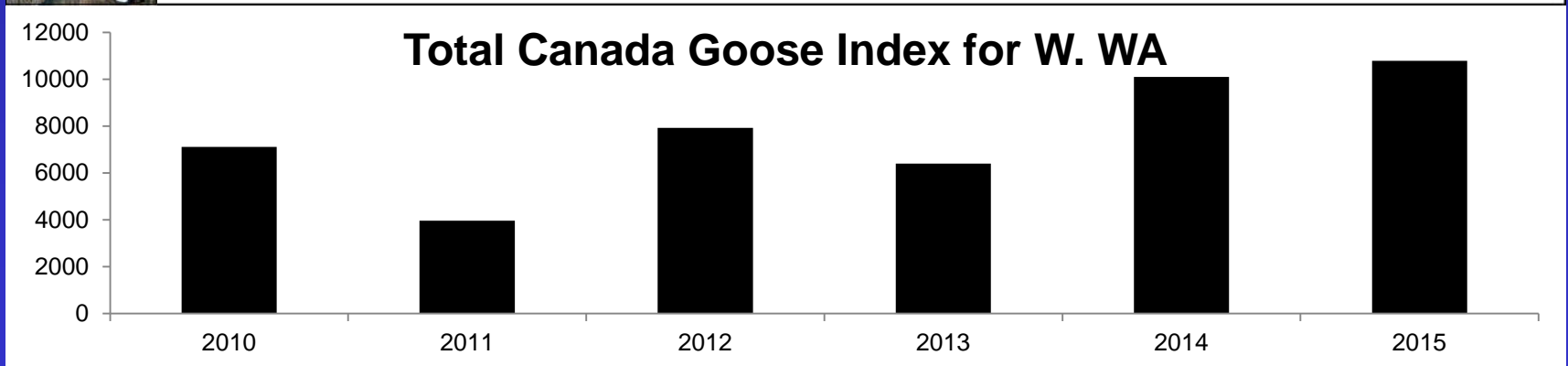
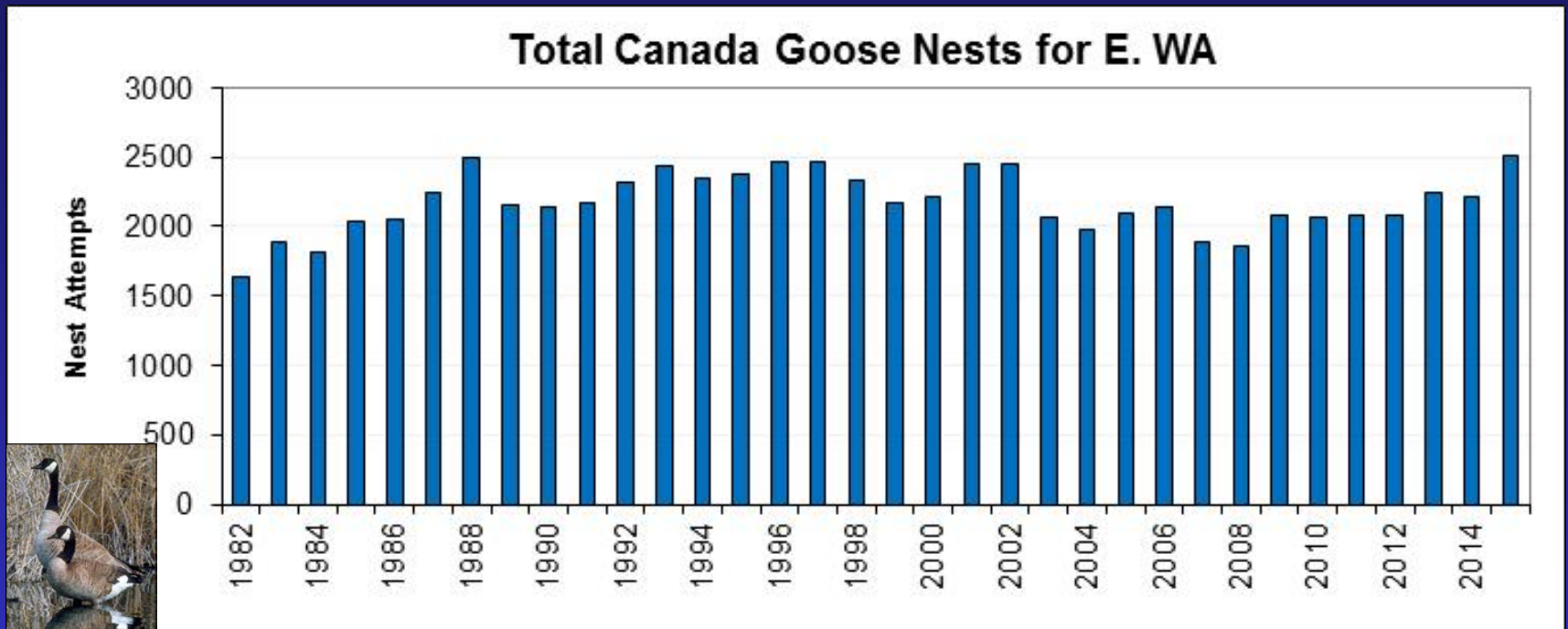
- **Proposed general duck season dates and limits similar to last year**
 - **107 days**
 - 2 day youth hunt
 - 105 day general season
 - **7 ducks, to include not more than:**
 - 2 hen mallard, 2 pintail
 - 2 redhead, 4 2 canvasback (**recommended adjustment p. 3**), 3 scaup
 - W. WA: 2 scoter, 2 long-tail, 2 goldeneye, 1 harlequin

2015-16 Goose Season Proposals

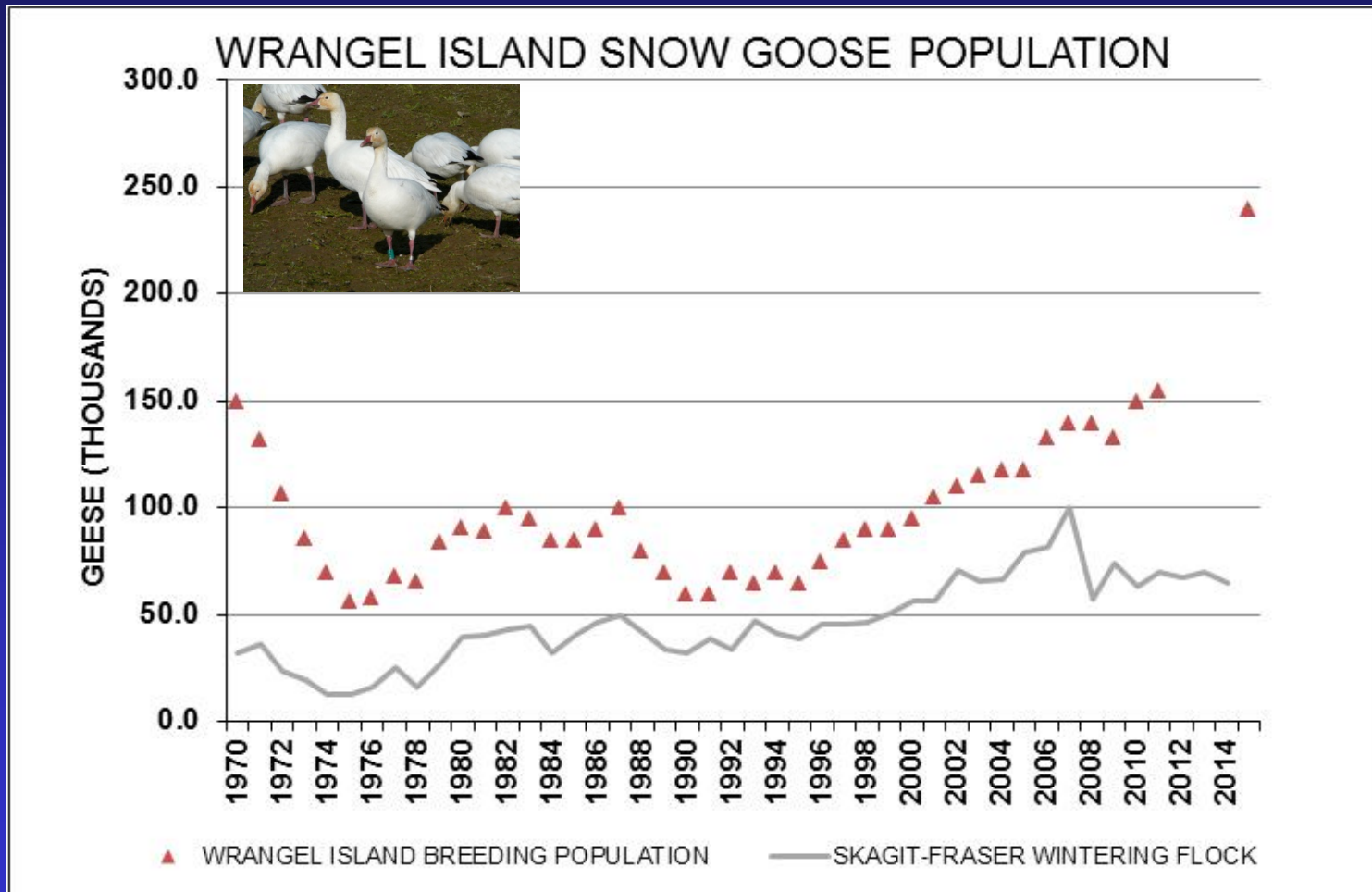
WAC 232-28-436



Canada Goose Breeding Trends



Wrangel Island Snow Goose Trends



- Breeding resumed in 2015
- 2015: record count on Wrangel Is. (240,000), est. 35-40% young
- 64,712 Skagit/Fraser 2014-15

2015-16 Goose Season Proposals

- Seasons similar to last year in Areas 3, 4, and 5
- Change in Area 1 white-front bag limit
- Change in Skagit County brant season structure
- Major changes to SW goose season in Areas 2A / 2B



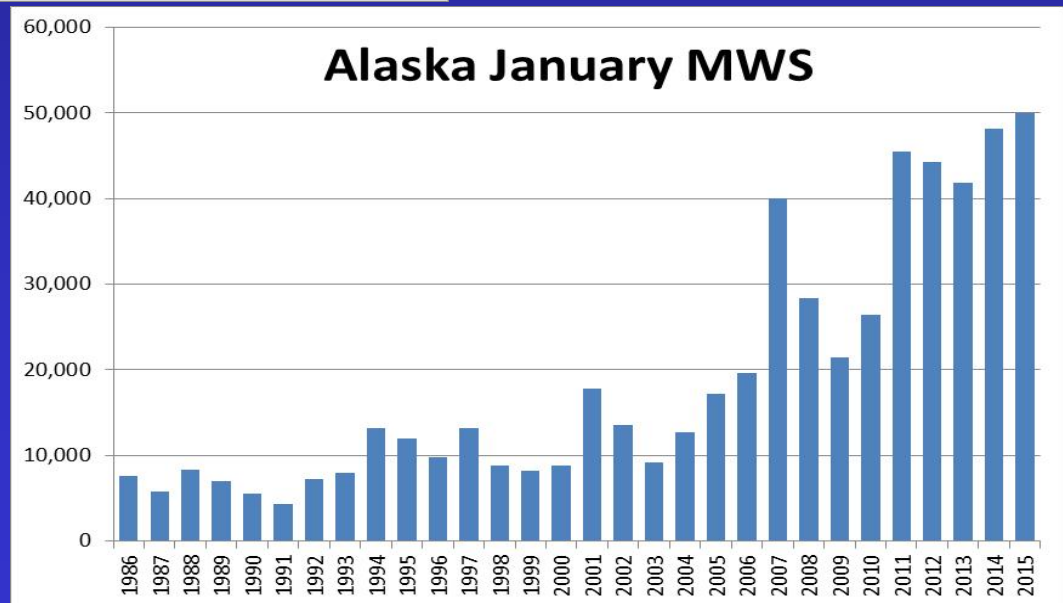
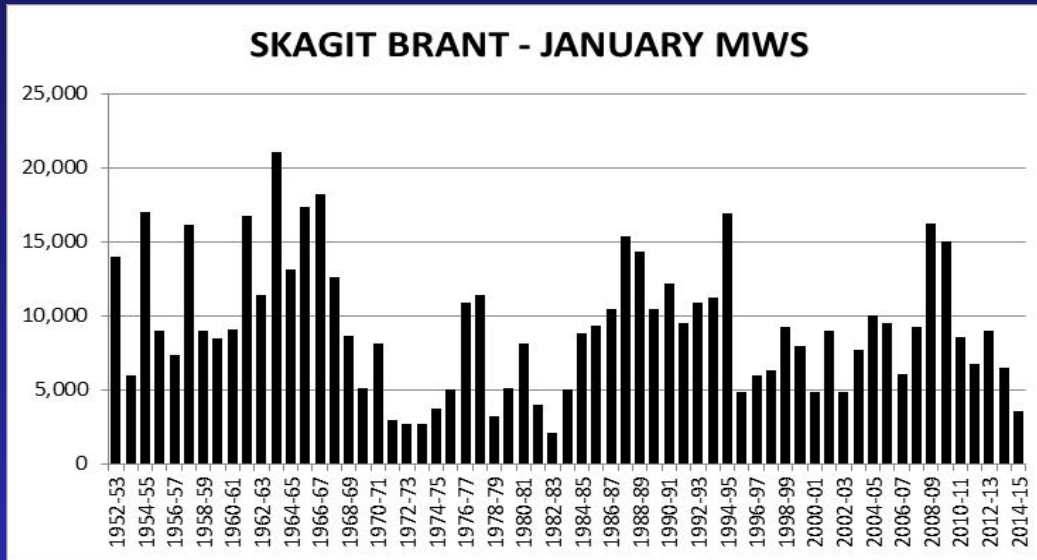
Change in Area 1 White-fronted Goose Limit

Floor change:

- The current 3-year average for Pacific white-fronts is 565,403, above the flyway objective of 300,000
- Page 5, Goose Management Area 1: Oct. (~~11, 2014 - Jan. 25, 2015~~) 17, 2015 - Jan. 31, 2016 for snow, Ross', and blue, and white-fronted geese.

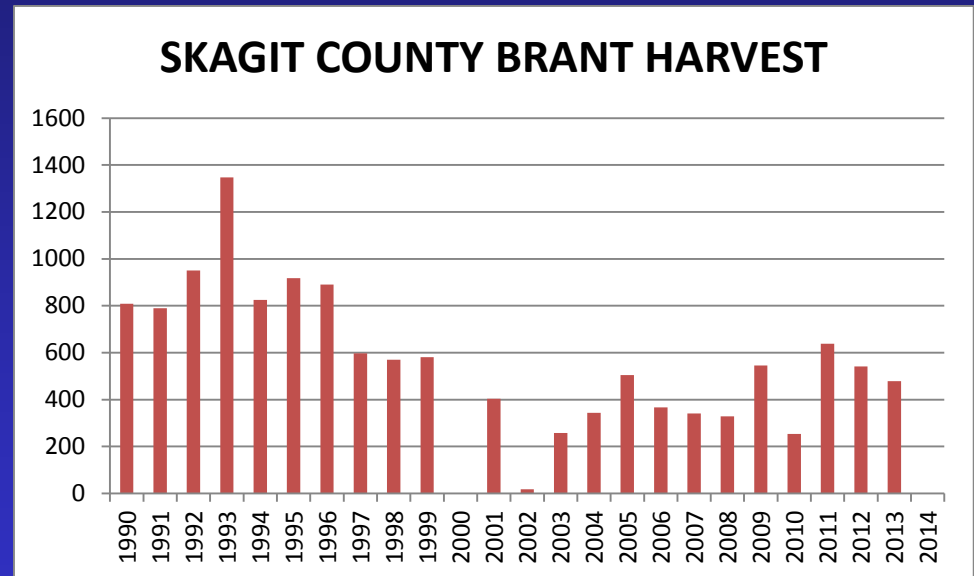


Brant Midwinter Survey Trends



Change in Skagit County Brant Season Structure

- Current closure level = 6,000
- Proposed addition of very restrictive season: 3,000-6,000
- Low predicted harvest rate (<10%)



~200 active hunters

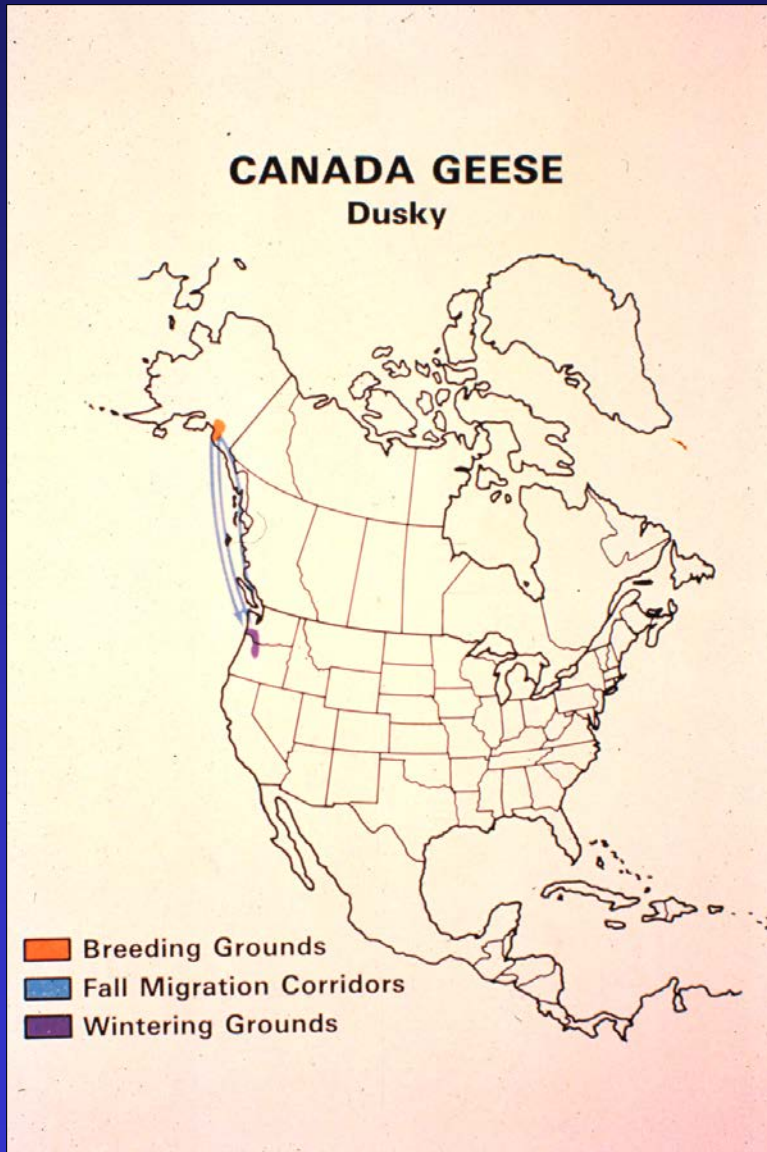
2015-16 SW Goose Season Proposals

- 7 Canada goose subspecies in the Pacific Flyway

- Western
- Vancouver
- Dusky
- Lesser
- Taverner's
- Aleutian
- Cackling

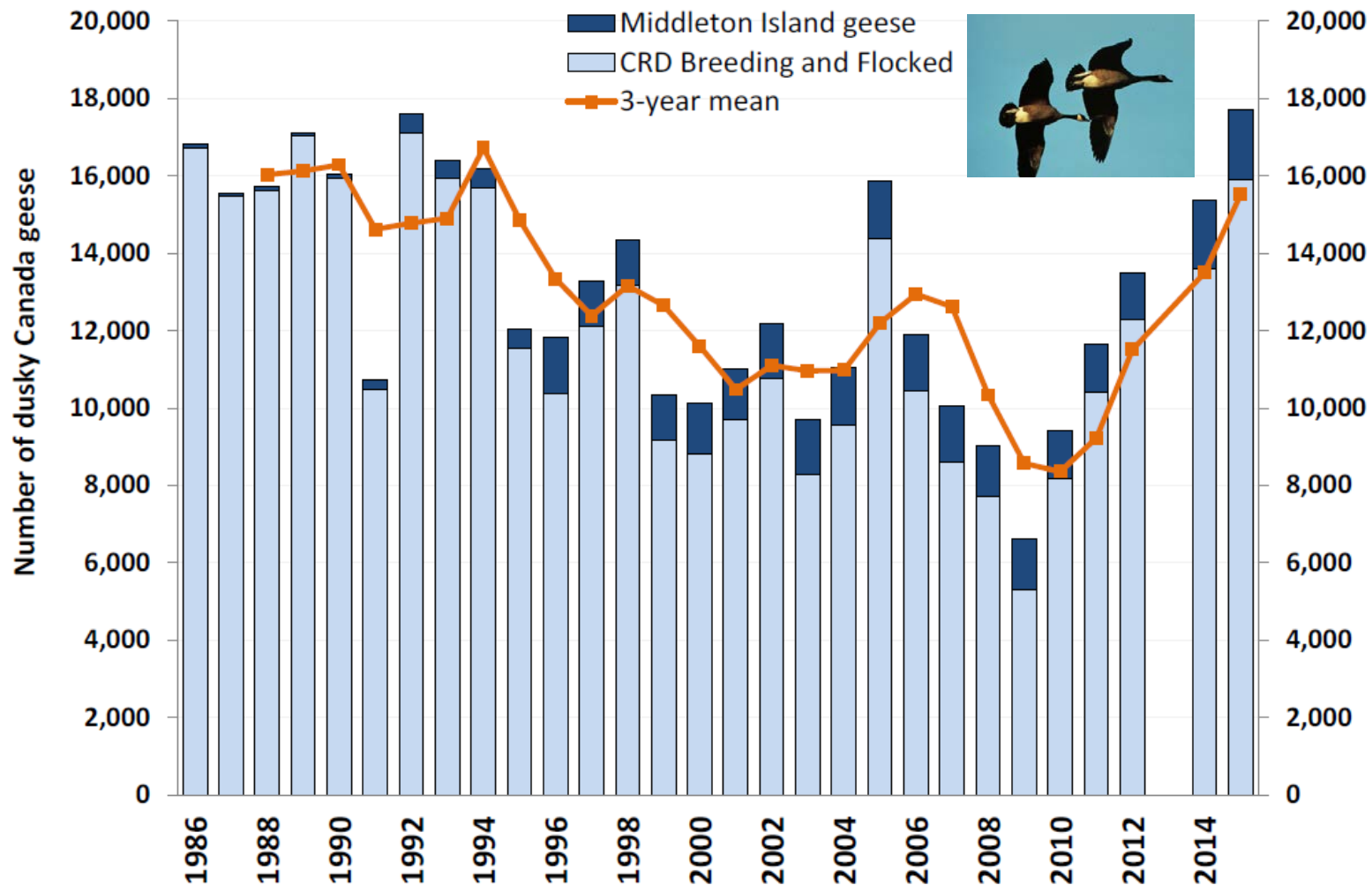


2015-16 SW Goose Season Proposals

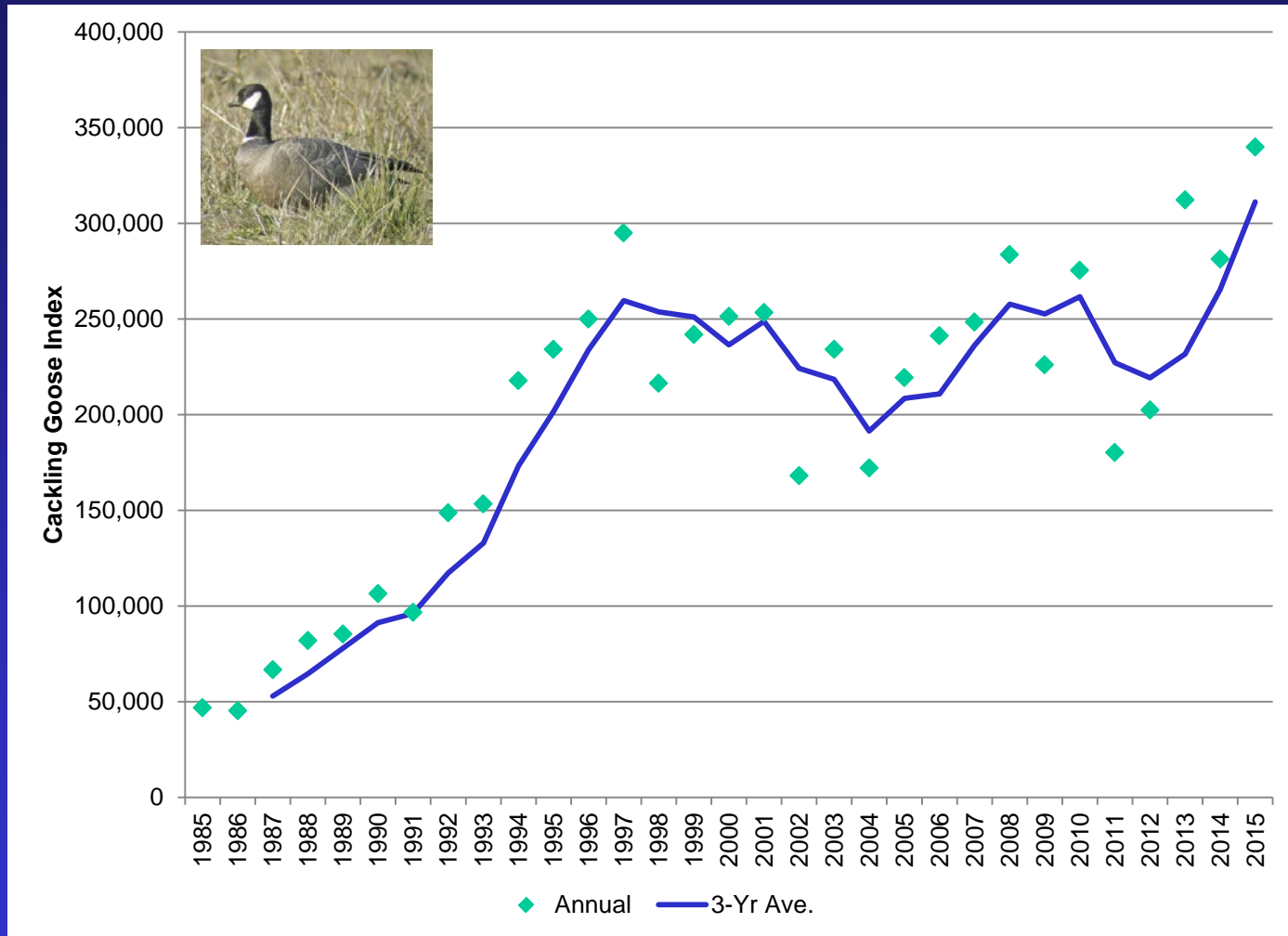


Dusky Canada goose

Dusky Canada Goose Trends



Cackling Goose Trends



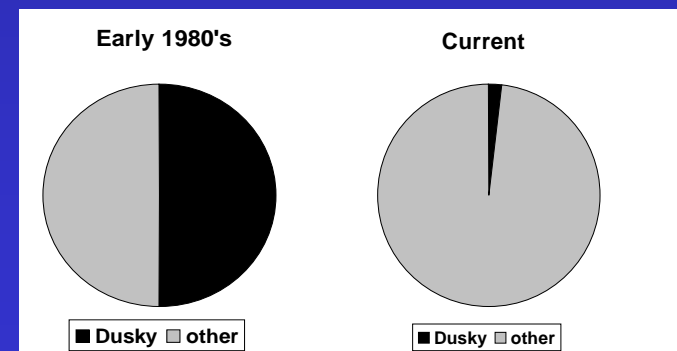
◆ Annual — 3-Yr Ave.

Current SW Goose Harvest Management

- Program initiated in OR / WA in 1986 for:
 - Conservation of dusky Canada geese
 - Agricultural depredation control
 - Recreational harvest
- Subspecies ID test
- Mandatory check stations
- One dusky / season limit
- Area dusky quotas



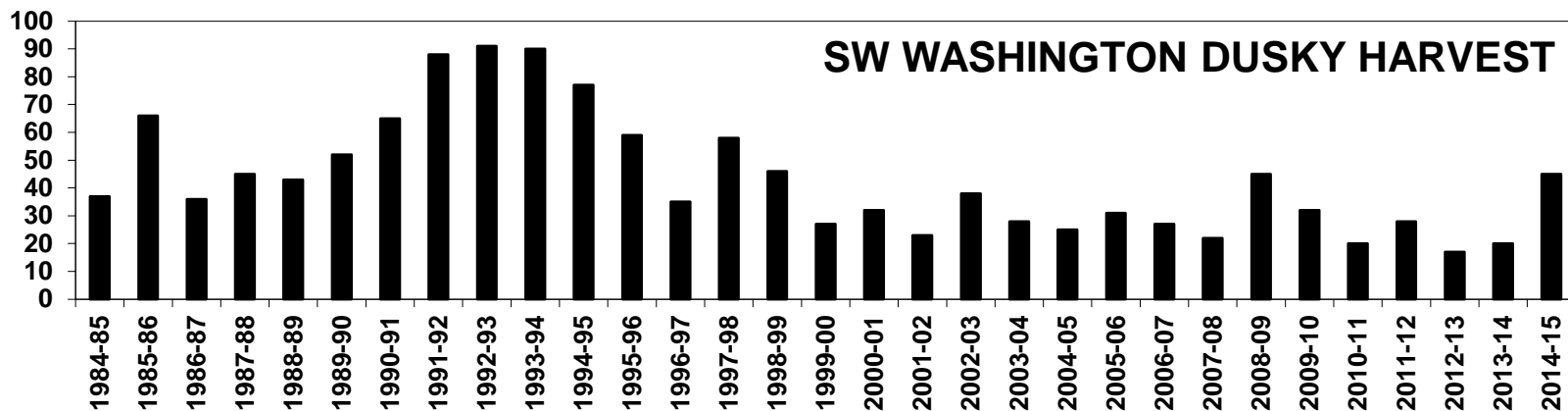
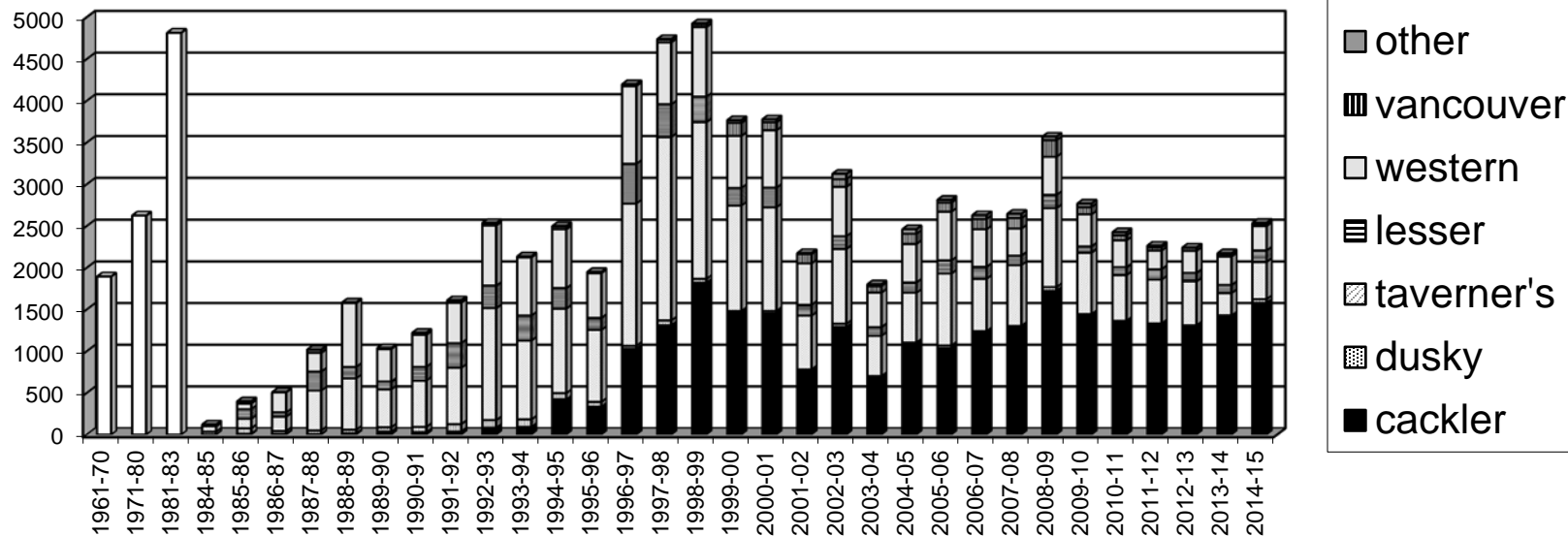
HARVEST COMPOSITION



Current SW Goose Harvest Management

SW WASHINGTON CANADA GOOSE HARVEST

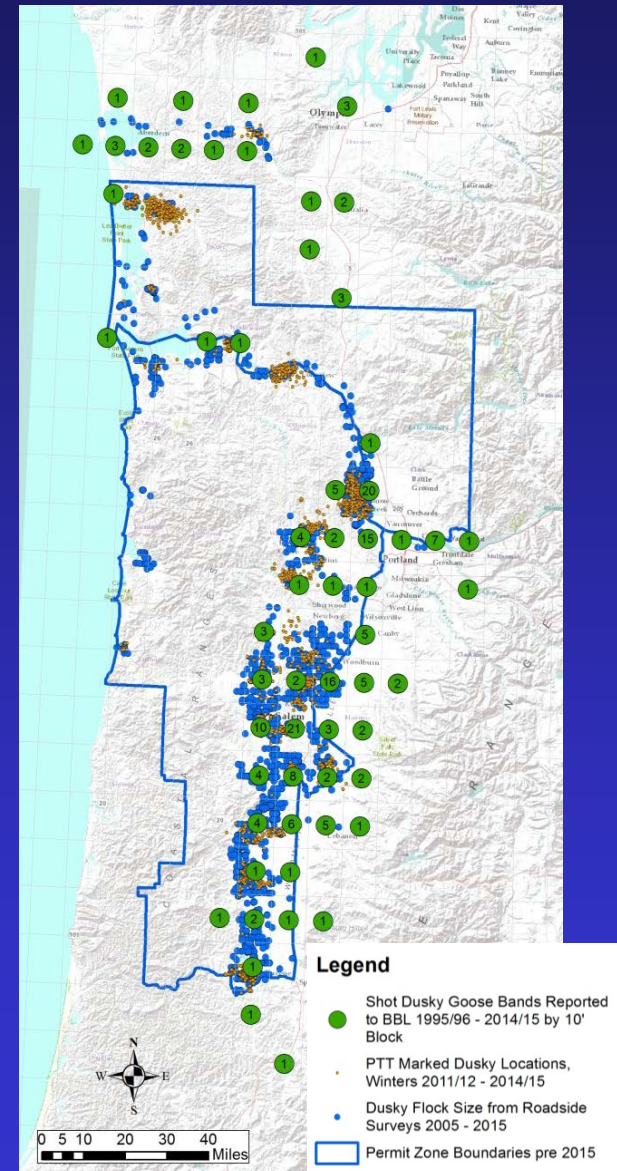
~450 ACTIVE HUNTERS IN 2014-15



Current SW Goose Harvest Management

Problems with Current Season Structure

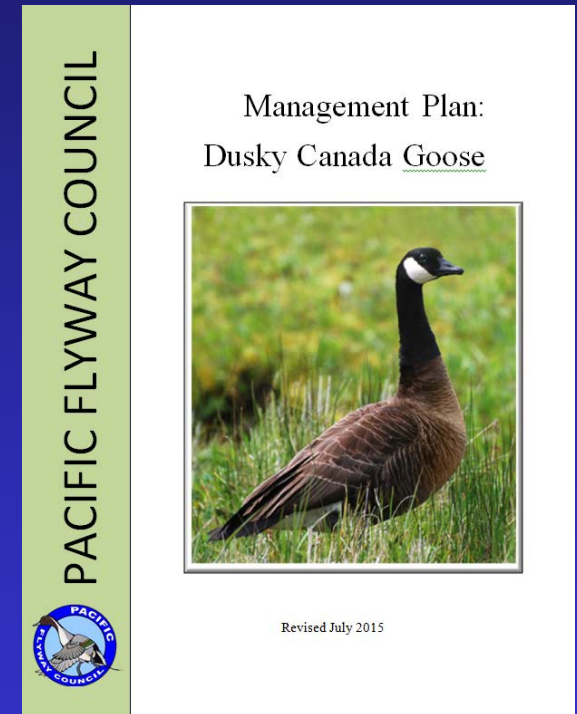
- Complexity
- Check station costs (\$250K in OR, \$85K in WA)
- Constraints on season days, hunting hours, dusky conservation
- Hunter compliance / harvest
- Some hunting areas >30 miles from nearest check station
- Some check stations occasionally check no hunters
- Disincentives to hunter participation



2015-16 SW Goose Season Proposals

Objectives

- Maintain dusky Canada goose abundance, distribution, and winter survival
- Maximize length and timing of the goose season to address depredation concerns
- Reduce agency costs
- Reduce regulation complexity and hunter reporting requirements



2015-16 SW Goose Season Proposals

Season proposal details:



- Additional general season days
- General season ending dates extended to March (Master Hunter late season discontinued)
- Hunting hours extended
- No check stations or recording of daily harvest
- 2A / 2B boundaries changed to include all of Clark and Grays Harbor counties
- Closed season for dusky Canada geese
- 3 of 5 check station positions converted to field staff and assistance for Enforcement

2015-16 SW Goose Season Proposals

Floor change:

- ODFW is unable to implement tests for all hunters and WDFW may have similar limitations; USFWS approved elimination of requirement
- Page 9: (~~New hunters and those who did not maintain a valid 2013-14 authorization~~) New hunters and those who did not maintain a valid 2014-15 authorization must review goose identification training materials and score a minimum of 80% on a goose identification test to receive authorization.



2015-16 SW Goose Season Proposals

Floor change:

- Clarify authority for non-enforcement personnel to collect information, continue penalty for non-compliance
- Page 10: It is unlawful for hunters in Goose Management Areas 2A and 2B to fail to comply with the directions of authorized department personnel related to the collection of goose subspecies information pursuant to RCW 77.12.071. A person who prevents department personnel from collecting samples of tissue or other bodily parts is subject to prosecution under RCW 77.15.360, Unlawful interfering in department operations – Penalty. If a hunter takes a dusky Canada goose or does not comply with requirements listed above regarding WDFW collection of subspecies information, authorization will be invalidated by the department and the hunter will not be able to hunt geese in Goose Management Areas 2A and 2B ...

2015-16 SW Goose Season Proposals

Recommended adjustment:

- Remove reference to the late goose season, specify penalties for taking a dusky Canada goose and other violations.
- Page 10: ...for the remainder of the season ~~and the special late goose season~~. Taking one dusky Canada goose is punishable as an infraction under RCW 77.15.160(5)(b). Other violations of Area 2A or 2B goose hunting rules are punishable as an infraction under RCW 77.15.160(2)(e) or as a misdemeanor or gross misdemeanor under RCW 77.15.400, Unlawful hunting of wild birds, depending on the circumstances of the violation.

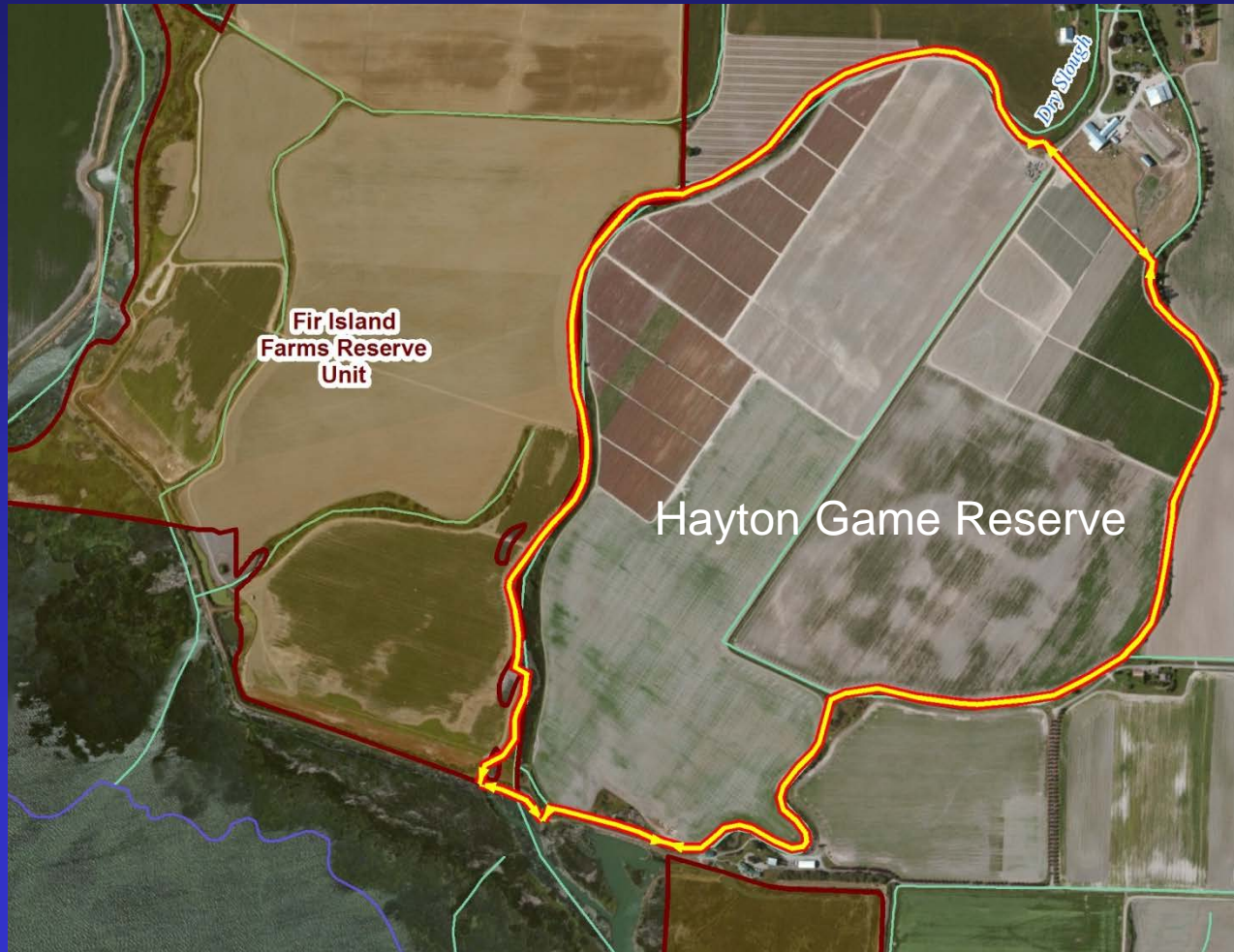
WAC 232-12-289 Official hunting hours for game birds—Migratory game birds, upland birds, and wild turkeys.

- Floor change – date / time corrections
- SW goose season hunting hours extended:
 - From: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. (regular season) and 7 a.m. – 4 p.m. (late season)
 - To: 30 minutes after the start of official hunting hours to 30 minutes before the end of official hunting hours
- Hunting hours tables extended to March 10

QUESTIONS?



Repeal of Hayton Game Reserve WAC 232-16-790



Repeal of Hayton Game Reserve WAC 232-16-790

- Farming lease agreement between Hayton Farms and WDFW 1997-2014
- Agreement provided winter forage for snow geese by planting of cover crops on both areas
- In 2015, WDFW awarded the farming lease for Fir Island Farm to another contractor
- Agreement to keep lands in game reserve status is no longer active
- Repeal of WAC 232-16-790 Hayton Game Reserve

QUESTIONS?

