

Waterfowl Advisory Group Meeting
July 24, 2010
Moses Lake Fire Hall

MEETING NOTES

1. Welcome and Introductions – Fred Slyfield (chair)
 - a. 13 WAG members present: John Arrabito, Chris Dorow, Dan Howell, Dick Price, Patrick Shearer, Davie Sievers, Fred Slyfield, Rodney Vandersypen, Ben Welton, John Tierney, Roy Christopherson, Doug Hargin, Michael Meseberg
 - b. 2 WDFW representatives (Don Kraege and Mikal Moore) and 1 guest (Brad Forgey)
2. Approval of Minutes – Fred Slyfield (chair)
 - a. Motion of approve minutes, seconded
 - b. Motion passed
3. Waterfowl Status Update / Flyway Update – Don Kraege (WDFW)
 - a. May pond counts up slightly on traditional survey area
 - b. Total ducks similar to last year (40.9 million), above long-term average
 - i. Western Survey areas increased in total ducks (OR, CA, AK)
 - ii. Mallards above NAWMP goal
 - iii. Pintails up slightly, but still below goal
 - c. Recommend continuation of liberal season for 2010-11 with 7 ducks, except 2 pintails, 3 scaup/86 day season, 1 canvasback. Same recommendations as 2009-10.
 - d. Goose numbers are strong for white-fronts, cacklers, snow/Ross' geese, Aleutians
 - i. Brant are steady
 - ii. Goose recommendations: no change for dusky or cackler, possible change for Aleutian (OR, CA), and possibly brant. However, total numbers were up, but production was down this year. Liberalization was not recommended for brant.
 1. Discussion – recommendation from group would be appropriate
 - e. Other issues

- i. Change in possession limit recommended by USFWS 3x daily bag instead of 2x
 - ii. Recommendation that criteria for zones be changed. Allow up to 4 zones with no split seasons. States with 3 zones would be allowed split seasons. May allow some new options for hunting during best weather or waterfowl migration peaks.
 - iii. USFWS working on Environmental Impact Statement for duck hunting, asking for comments.
- 4. Sea Duck Management Review – Don Kraege (WDFW)
 - a. Working on evaluation of sea duck management program
 - b. 1970s: 341,000 scoters; 1990s: 146,000 scoters in Puget Sound; 2000s: 65,000
 - c. North American population of scoters: long-term decline, recent increase
 - d. Numerous possible limiting factors for scoters
 - e. Research includes satellite and VHF transmitters, molt banding, winter surveys
 - f. Adult survival is high, but productivity is low (breed after third year)
 - g. Northern Territories is important nesting area
 - h. Harvest is not responsible for decline, but does contribute to trend
 - i. Restrictive hunting season already in place (4 scoters/LTDs, 1 harlequin/year).
 - ii. Current harvest rate 5.7%
 - iii. Recommending restriction levels based on 3 year population averages
 - 1. Restrictive: 2 (<75,000; recommended for 2010-11)
 - 2. Moderate: 4 (>75,000)
 - 3. Liberal: 7 (>150,000)
 - 4. Closed: (<50,000)
 - iv. Discussion:
 - 1. Wintering bird concentrations related to seafood industry practices (e.g. mussel beds, salmon pens, etc.). Greater concentrations of birds seen at Nainaimo.
 - 2. Days vs. bag limit: most sea duck hunters are trophy hunters, don't necessarily need larger bag limit. Days have more of an

impact on harvest than bag limit in dabblers. Table fare vs. trophy bird. Maximum days with lower limit makes sense.

3. What is the effect of crippling loss? Scoters are difficult to kill.
 4. Limits will be proposed in the season package.
 5. What about cost of monitoring? Intensive research and survey for less recreation.
5. Snow Goose Management in Skagit County
- a. Brandon Roozen is taking over for Doug Huddle
 - b. Snow geese are mostly from Wrangel Island
 - i. 2010 breeding population 150,000 on Wrangel
 - ii. Population increasing dramatically
 - iii. Goal is 120,000
 - c. Issues on wintering grounds: ethical hunting (trespass, over limit, high shooting, etc.), crop damage, wildlife viewing vs. hunting
 - d. January hunting increased harvest
 - e. Proposing additional ethical hunting regulations for 2010-11
6. Regulation proposals for August 6 Commission meeting, NRB
- a. Bayview Game Reserve: Recommendation to repeal reserve
 - i. Request to publish coordinates of Swinomish Spit Game Reserve
 - b. Non-toxic shot restrictions: convert most pheasant release sites to non-toxic shot
 - c. Federal frameworks: October 2 – January 30, 107 day season
 - d. Duck season proposal: reduce scoter, long-tail, goldeneye from 4/8 to 2/4, possession may change to 3x
 - e. No September eastside goose season again this year
 - f. Dusky Canada geese increased over 2009 level, but still below 10,000
 - g. Similar goose season proposals to previous years.
 - h. Skagit County snow goose harvest management
 - i. 100 ft road buffer expanded to entire county

1. Discussion: does this set a dangerous precedent for other counties?
Recommendation (Vandersypen): 100 foot setback from Skagit County roads should be just for snow geese. Will address in overall recommendations. Seconded. Discussion: will be better targeted to snow geese. Just Skagit County. **Motion passed.**

ii. Fir Island (inside the dike):

1. 24 decoys per person set up in a realistic pattern
2. Decoy = anything as big as a mallard decoy
3. Decoys must be attended and in immediate control

i. Snow Goose Quality Hunt

- i. Same provision as last year except special QHA authorization not required
- ii. 5 vs 7 days per week
- iii. Private lands access funding and duck stamp funding use for program
- iv. Saturday drawing will remain

j. Motion: Accept 2010-11 waterfowl season proposals as amended. Seconded.

- i. Discussion: Will cacklers remain at 2 in SW zone? Goal will be revisited next year. Scaup: same recommendation as last year (3 bird daily bag / 86 day season). Need better clarification in regulations. Scoter management plan may be too restrictive. What about a fee for sea duck validation? What about separate merganser bag limit?
- ii. **Motion passed.**

k. Baiting Regulations

- i. Step 1: Make federal and state baiting regulations consistent
 1. Some state regulations are more liberal and others are more restrictive.
 - a. Federal rules allow hunting doves over mowed wheat, state does not
 - b. Exposing ears of corn in course of hunting is not allowed in federal rules;
 2. Would apply to all game birds
 3. Exception for dove and band-tail

ii. Motion: recommend accepting baiting regulations as suggested. Seconded. Motion passed.

iii. Step 2: Request from commission to address baiting concerns in next 3 year package.

7. Waterfowl Guide Permits

a. Region 2 currently requires “commercial use permit” to guide on WDFW property.

b. There is not a statewide guide permit

c. Discussion: Interest in standardizing the existing use permit statewide. WDFW has little incentive to license guides (more work, no \$).

d. Motion: WAG recommends to WDFW the department makes standardized statewide waterfowl guide permit for WDFW owned and managed land, similar to the Region 2 permit. Seconded.

i. Discussion: No fee permit. Only for use on state managed land.

ii. Amendment: Include all hunting and fishing guides on WDFW owned and managed lands.

1. Discussion: hunting license and stamp, insurance, indemnity clause, state of WA business license, first aid certified. Stick with waterfowl only due to purpose of advisory group.

2. Amendment seconded.

3. Amendment withdrawn.

iii. In favor: Unanimous (with abstentions)

iv. Next steps: Fred Slyfield will meet with Dennis Beich.

8. Update on select duck stamp projects – Mikal Moore (WDFW)

a. Capital budget projects

b. Operating budget projects

c. Small Canada goose PTT project

9. Future of migratory bird collector stamp program – Don Kraege (WDFW)

a. Licensing division handles actual state duck stamps for hunters and collectors

b. Licensing division recommends getting rid of physical stamp due to cost vs. income. Spending \$50,000 / year, with \$25,000 income.

- c. Discussion: Could outsource product or increase cost of stamp
- d. Motion: Recommend not losing physical stamp, but outsource in manner that works for WDFW.**
 - i. Seconded.
 - ii. Discussion: Art committee has not weighed in yet. What about print program? Losing stamps and prints would have negative effect on tradition. Two separate possibilities: Make physical stamp \$25, and/or raise validation to \$15. Recommendation would go to both Art Committee and Department.
 - iii. Motion passed unanimously**

10. Other topics

- a. Swan management plan is being developed as Mike Smith's Ph.D. project. Is a hunting season being considered?
- b. Selling carbon credits on state land? Could be a potential funding source?
- c. Recent news on Eld Inlet / Thurston County firearms restrictions – public meetings have taken place; commissioners are discussing alternatives

11. Election of vice-chair for 2011

- a. Nominations: Pat Shearer (previous chair), Ben Welton (declined), John Arrabito (declined), Michael Crowder (previous chair), Rodney Vandersypen (seconded)
- b. Vote for Rodney Vandersypen: approved**

12. Next meeting: March – North Bend

- a. Request for *not* last weekend of March due to conflicts