

## *Lesser Canada Goose (Lesser)*

### **Description**

- Breast color variable from light gray to dark gray and some birds can be very similar color to that of a dusky.
- Neck collar colors are blue; colored leg bands can be white or green.
- Size similar to Taverner's goose and dusky; much larger than cackling goose
- Culmen length between 32 mm and 40 mm



Figure 43: A group of lesser Canada geese showing wide variations in color.



Figure 44: Lesser Canada goose flock in low light conditions; notice longer neck.



Figure 45: Dark lesser Canada geese; **Note:** Hunters should typically avoid shooting a medium-sized goose with this breast color.



Figure 46: A very dark lesser Canada goose; **Note:** Hunters should typically avoid shooting a medium-sized goose with this breast color.



Figure 47: Probable dusky Canada goose (1), lesser Canada goose (2) and cackling goose (3).

**Note:** Hunters should avoid shooting birds with a breast color of Bird 1.



Figure 48: Lesser Canada geese (1) and cackling geese (2).



Figure 49: Lesser Canada geese; note the long neck in proportion to the body as well as wide variation in color.



Figure 50: Lesser Canada geese with single cackling goose second from right, top left bird is dark for a lesser.



Figure 51: Mixed group of lesser Canada geese and cackling geese; notice the lessers' wide color variation and their large size compared to the cacklers.

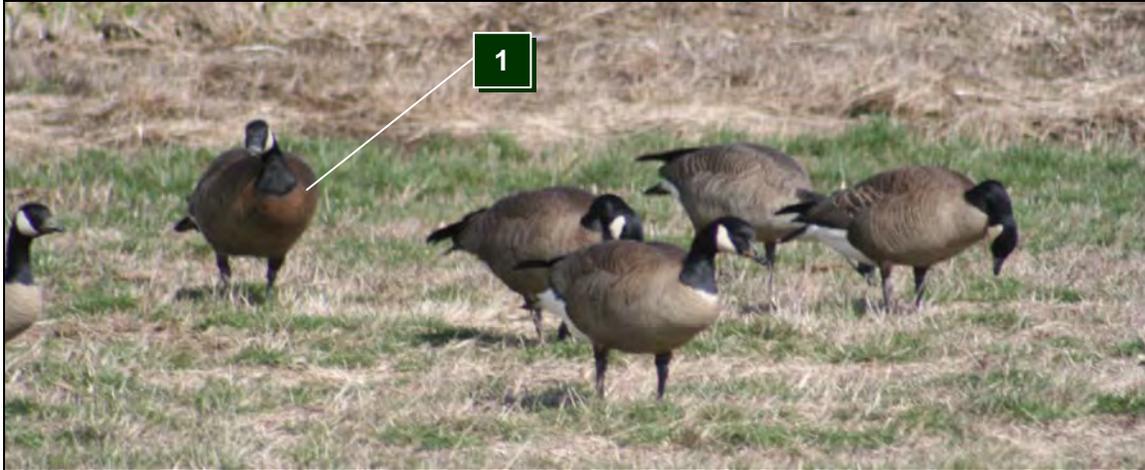


Figure 52: Hunters should avoid shooting a medium-sized goose (Bird 1) with this breast color.



Figure 53: A pair of lesser Canada geese in flight; notice the color difference between the two.



Figure 54: Lesser Canada geese; notice long necks and range of colors.



*Figure 55: Group of lesser Canada geese in flight with one cackling goose (behind the blue-collared lesser).*



*Figure 56: Lesser Canada geese with wide variations in color; avoid mid-size dark birds like most of these; shoot only lighter colored birds of this size.*



*Figure 57: Lesser Canada geese in flight behind three cackling geese.*



*Figure 58: Lesser Canada geese in flight; notice light breasts, which sharply contrast with dark neck.*



*Figure 59: Lesser Canada geese in flight; notice longer necks and light breasts, which sharply contrast with dark neck.*

## Distribution



*Figure 60: Nesting area and migration route for lesser Canada geese; red line is the Anchorage, Alaska population that winters in the Willamette Valley; yellow is the remainder of the breeding population range.*

## **Behavior**

Lesser Canada geese prefer open areas, including water bodies. They are commonly found in mixed flocks with Taverner's, cacklers, and dusks. Lessers tend to fly higher than other subspecies and usually fly in family groups.

Lesser Canada goose populations have been very successful and adapt well to changing environments. Their population is healthy and has been increasing for the past decade. There are many different populations of lessers and these different populations carry certain characteristics that distinguish them from one another.

The lesser nests from interior and northern Alaska eastward into the Yukon Territory over a widely dispersed area. Subsistence harvest is not significant.

## **Management**

The lesser Canada goose population is considered healthy, although wintering counts are not available. This subspecies has been very successful in adapting to changing environments and may be found in urban areas. The population in Anchorage, Alaska, has increased in recent years and has become a nuisance in some areas. Recently implemented urban goose management programs have lowered the Anchorage nesting population. Many marked geese from the Anchorage area winter in select areas of the Willamette Valley. Efforts are underway to better delineate the breeding range of lesser Canada geese in Alaska.

## **Future**

The lesser population is considered to be stable, due to relative stability in breeding areas.