

# Migratory Gamebird Seasons and Regulations – Briefing and Public Comment

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Washington  
Department of  
**FISH and  
WILDLIFE**

# **STAFF WILL BRIEF THE DIRECTOR ON:**

WAC 220-416-060 2023-2024 Migratory gamebird  
seasons and regulations.



**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

	<p>Pacific Flyway Meetings <b>August</b></p>
	<p>USFWS Service Regs Committee <b>October</b></p>

## Non-framework Changes

	<p>Commission Briefing - <b>March</b></p>
	<p>Commission Adoption - <b>April</b></p>



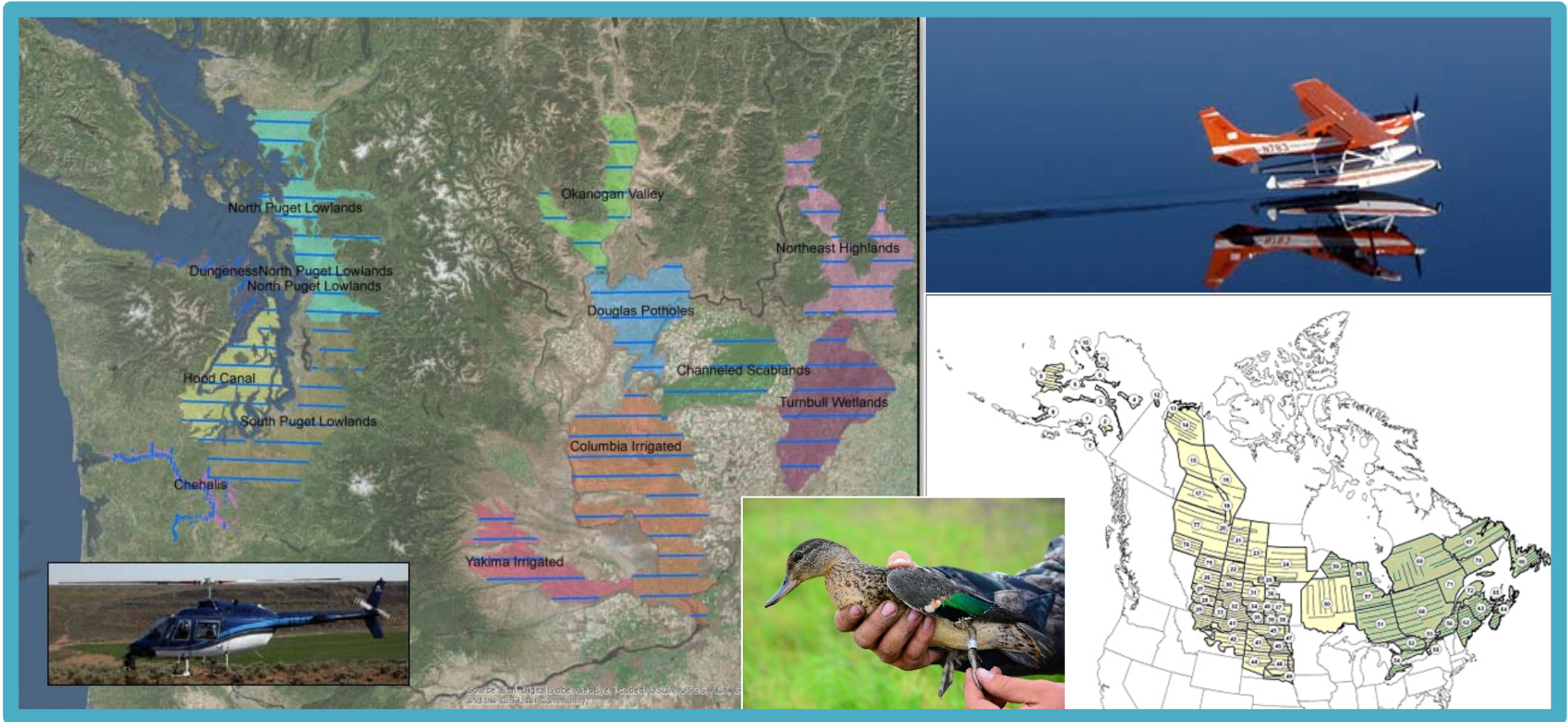
	<p>Season Selections Due to USFWS <b>Late-April</b></p>
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Waterfowl Advisory Group & Public Input

Pamphlet Published **July 1**



# Duck Population Status and Season Proposals

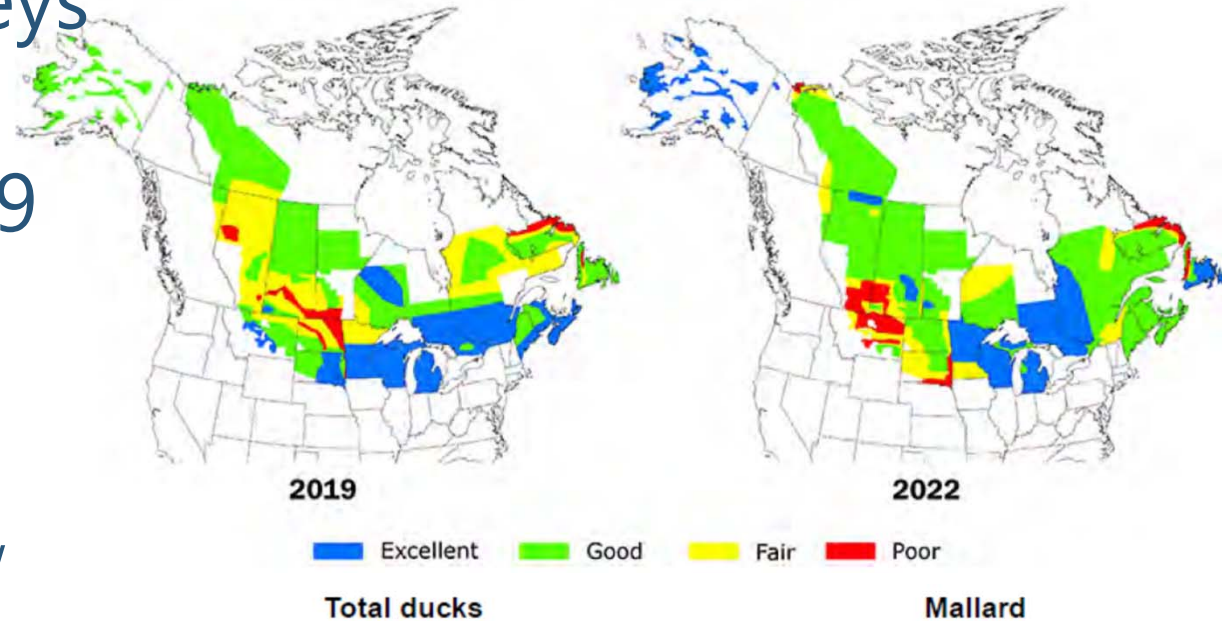


# Duck Populations Status - Continental

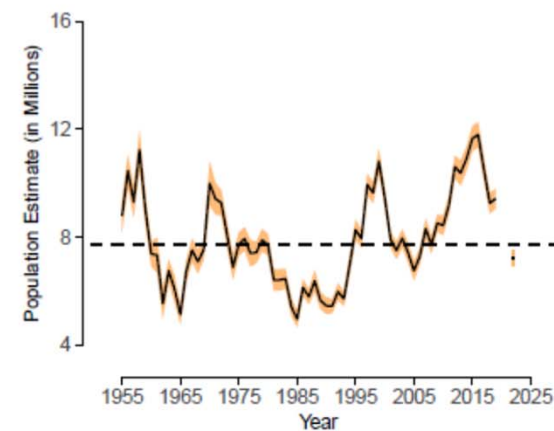
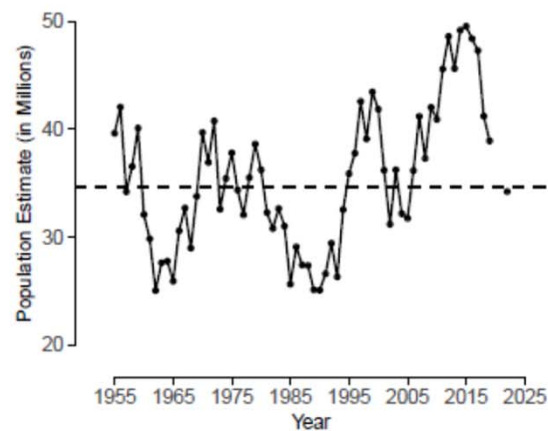
## 2022 Complete Surveys

## 2022 down from 2019

- # ponds (~LTA habitat conditions)
- Total ducks: 34.2 million (12% below 2019; 14% below LTA)



All "10 principal" duck species at or below LTA

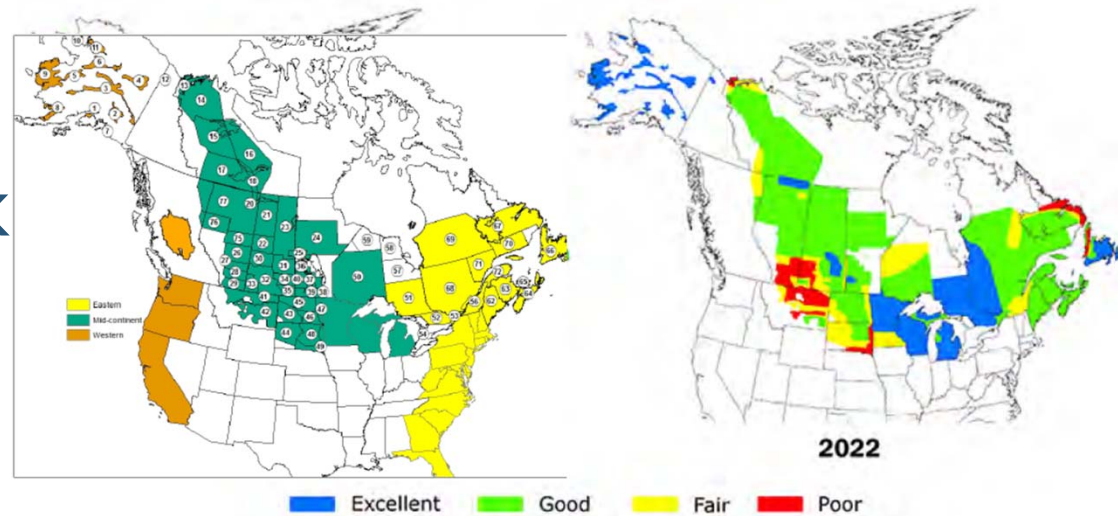


# Duck Populations Status – Pacific Flyway

2022 Complete Surveys

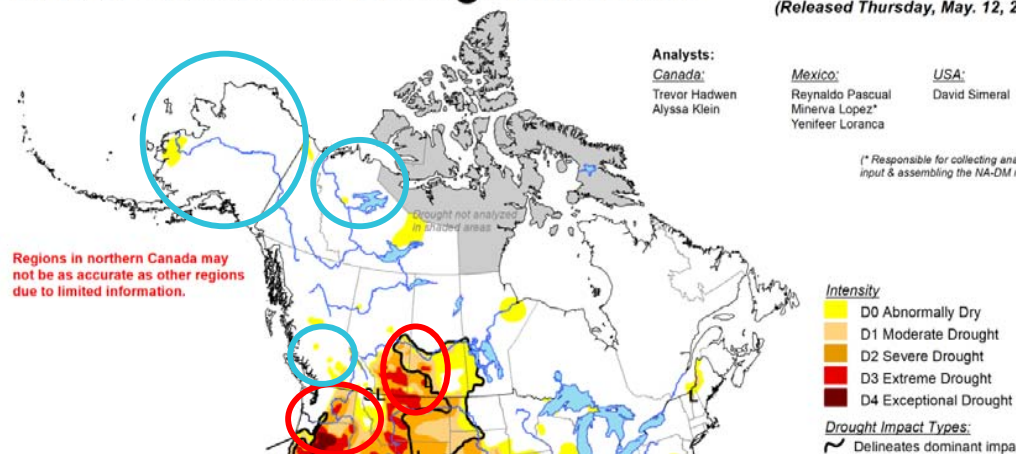
Habitat-Population Link

Long-term – 27<sup>th</sup> season of Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM)



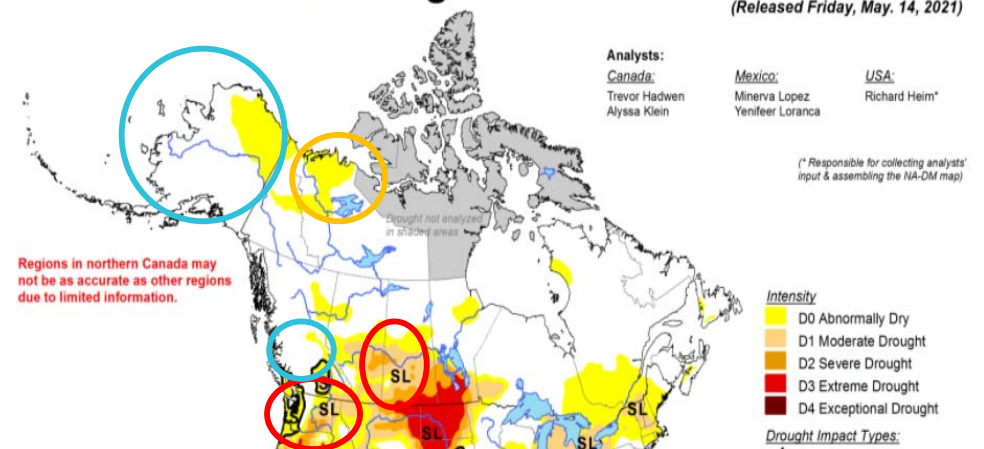
## North American Drought Monitor

April 30, 2022  
(Released Thursday, May. 12, 2)



## North American Drought Monitor

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



# Duck Populations Status – Pacific Flyway

## Washington Status (2022)

- Mallard 87,400 (-31%)

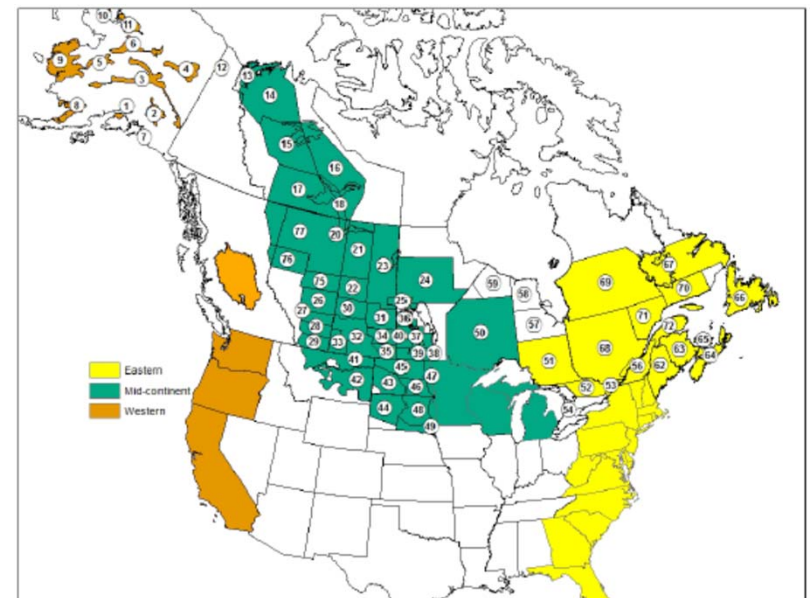
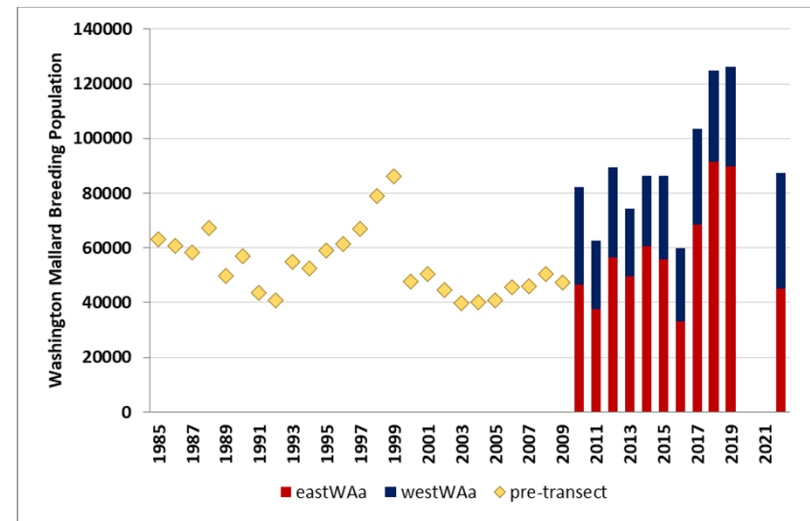
## Western Mallard Strategy

(2 stocks; long-term sustainable harvest)  
 –Alaska portion (614K; +70%)

### –Southern Pacific Flyway

- BC (81K; +9%)
- Oregon (79K; -5%)
- California (179K; -25%)

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





# Washington – Mallard Harvest

STATE	FRAMEWORK	Mallard Rank Nationally	Mallard Composition in Duck Harvest	Recent Harv. Rate Adult Males Adult Females
Western Mallard AHM Expectation	107/7/7/2			AM = 0.134 (AF = 0.071)*
<b>COMPARISONS</b>				
WA	107/7/7/2	2 <sup>nd</sup> (6 of last 7 years)	45-51%	AM = 0.190 AF = 0.114
California	107/7/7/2	3rd	~15%	AM = 0.120 AF = 0.052
Arkansas	60/6/4/2 Mississippi Flyway	1st	~46%	NA* (not a breeding source) AM = 0.107



# Duck Populations Status

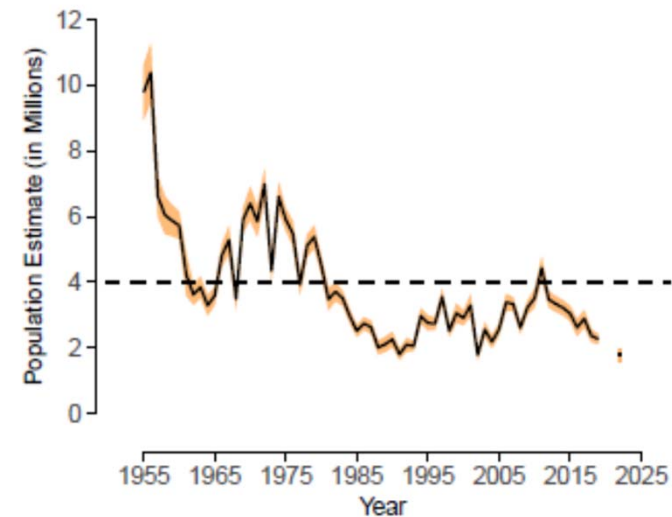
## Problematic Status

- **Northern Pintail**: 1.783 million
  - 54% below LTA; **THE lowest**
- **Scaup**: 3.599 million combined
  - 28% below LTA; 6<sup>th</sup> lowest

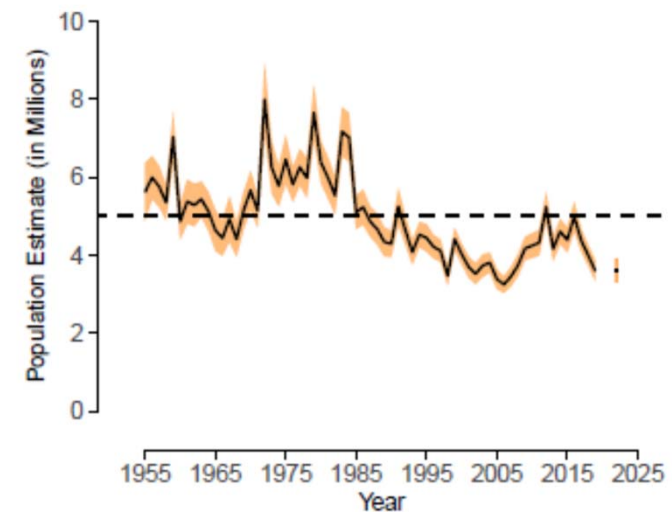
## National Strategies that inform harvest options

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

Northern pintail



Scaup



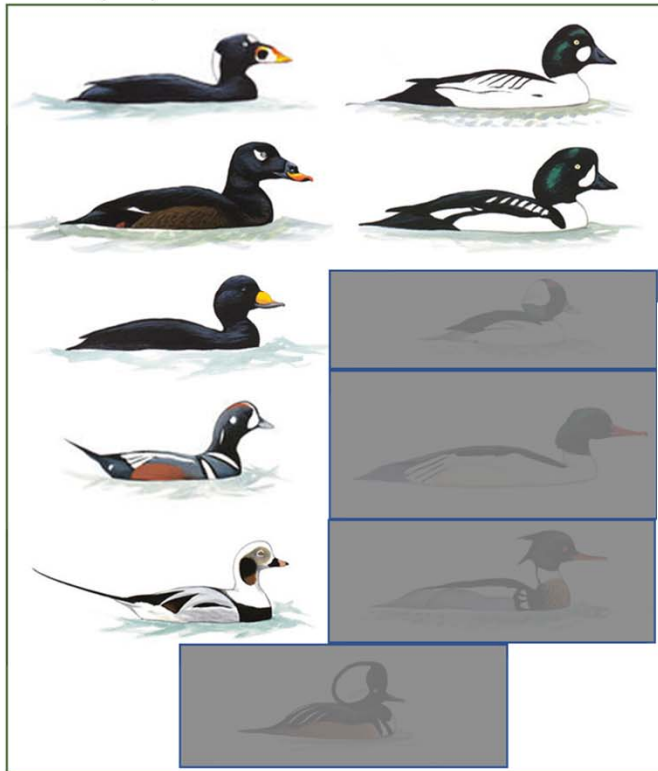
# Sea Duck Status

## Scoter

Most recent 3yr-avg. = 59,982

– Restrictive Regulation Package

Sea (11)



### SEADUCK

Did you hunt for seaducks?  Yes  No

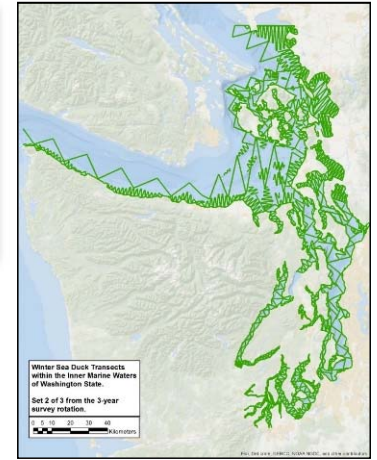
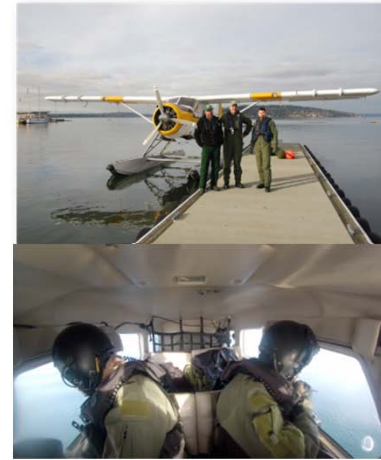
How many total days did you hunt for these species? \_\_\_\_\_

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)



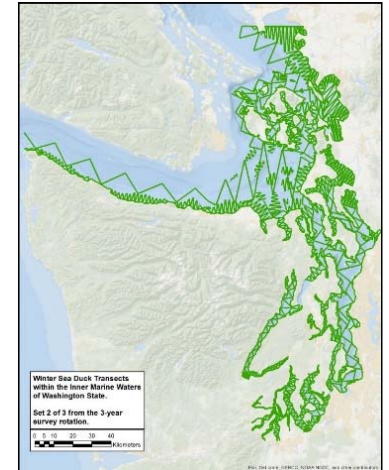
Regulation Package	Winter Index (3-yr)*	Bag Limit
Closure	<45,000	0
Restrictive	45,000-67,500	2
Moderate	67,500-135,000	4
Liberal	>135,000	7



# 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

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

Harvest Rate check		
2020	2021	2022(compliance)
427	510	<b>23.89%</b>
(1%)	(1.2%)	<5%

## Long-tailed Duck

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

136	160	<5%
(2.7%)	(3.3%)	

## Harlequin Duck

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

231	297	<b>Closed</b>
(5.7 - 6.4%)	(7.1%)	



# WAC 220-416-060

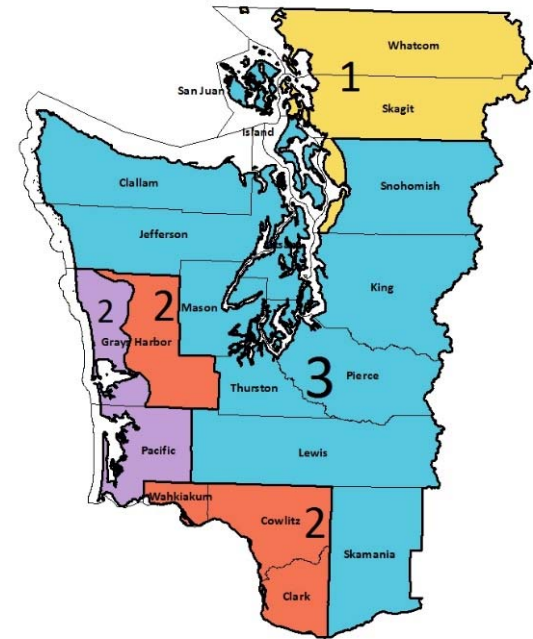
## 2023-2024 Duck Season Proposals

### Proposed general duck season dates and bag limits:

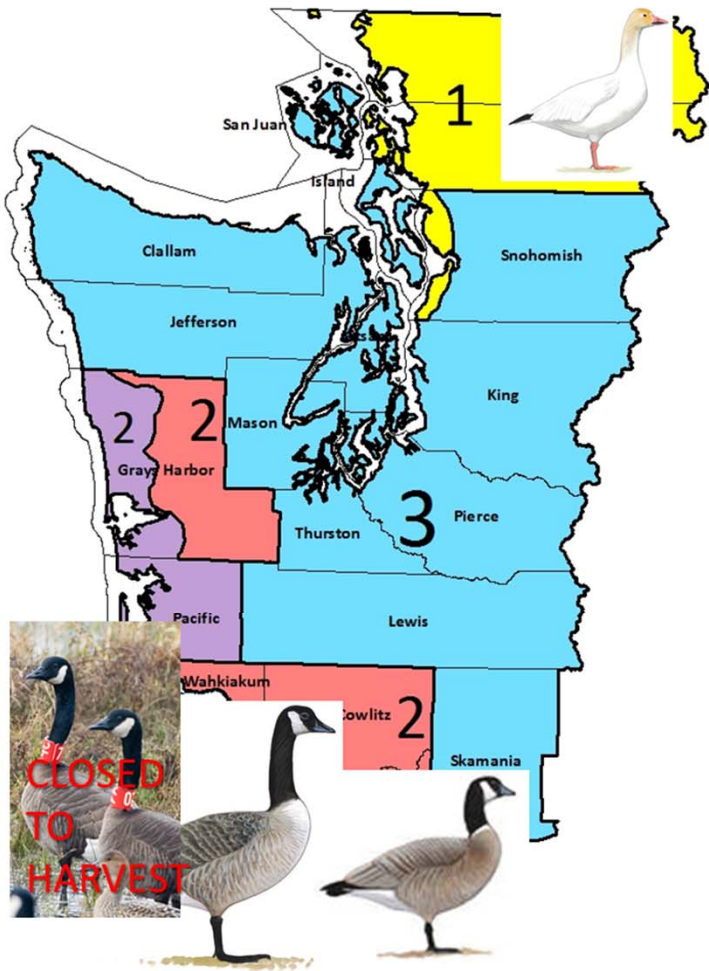
- 107 days (except scaup)
  - 2-day youth hunt
    - **Sept. 23, 2023** and **Feb. 3, 2024** in western WA (West Zone);
    - **Sept. 30, 2023** and **Feb. 3, 2024** in eastern WA (East Zone)
  - 1-day veteran and active military hunt **Feb. 3, 2024** statewide
  - 105-day general season: **Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023**
    - Requiring a 2-day closure Oct. 23-24 (Mon. & Tues.)
- 7 ducks, to include not more than:
  - 2 hen mallard, **1 pintail**
  - 2 redhead, 2 canvasback, **2 scaup** (86-day season, **Nov. 4** opener)
  - western WA (West Zone) sea duck reduced bag-limits:
    - 2 scoter, 2 goldeneye, 2 long-tailed duck,
    - harlequin duck closed to harvest.**



# Goose Populations Status and Season Proposals



# Goose Management Areas



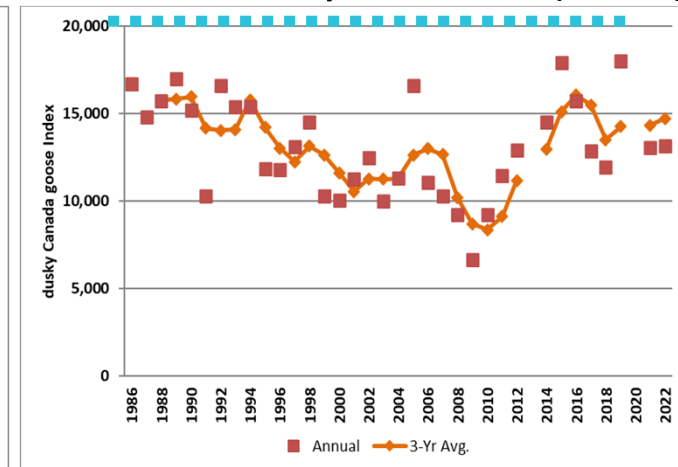
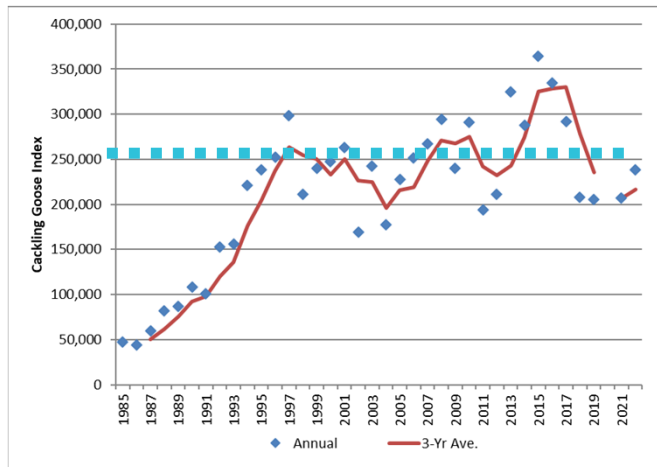
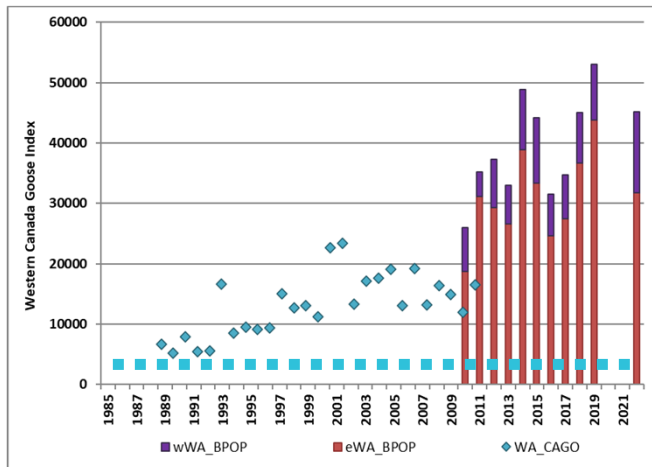
# Goose Populations Status



PopObjective: >2,000 pairs  
Current: 37,406 total eWA

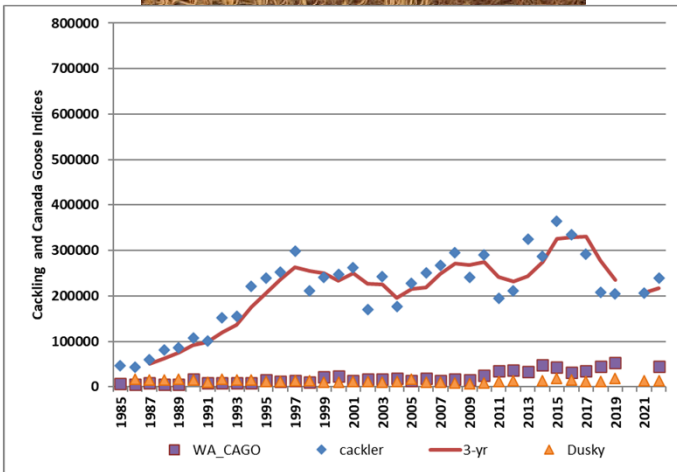
PopObjective: 250,000  
Current 3-yr: 216,892 (-13%)

PopObjective: 20,000  
Current 3yr: 14,737 (-26%)

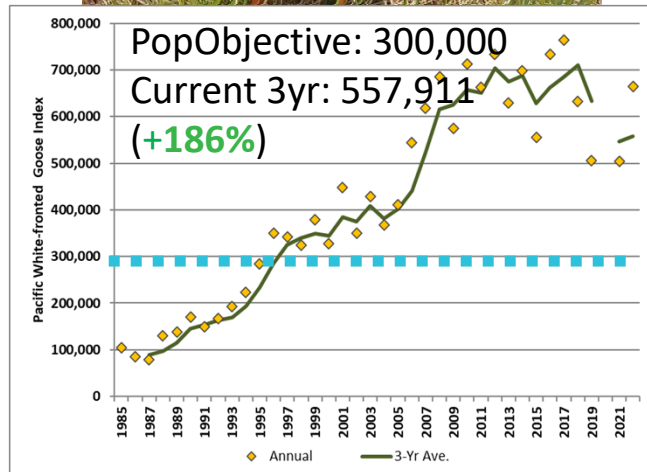




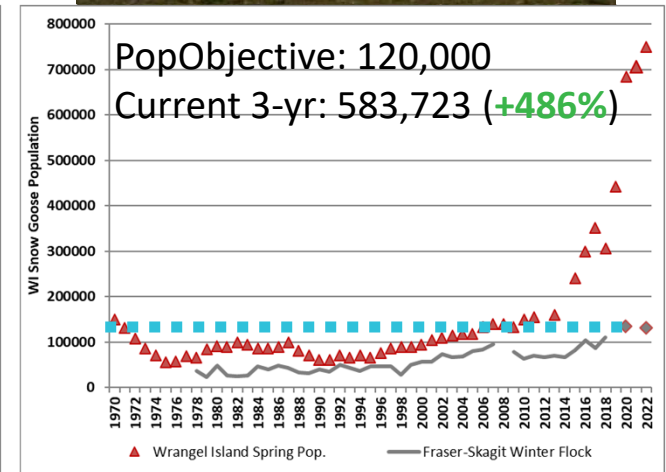
# Goose Populations Status & Bag-limit Proposals



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



White-fronted Geese  
 Bag limit = 10



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



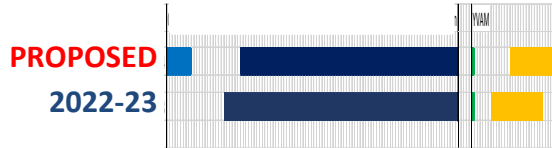
# White Goose Status – Goose Management Area 4



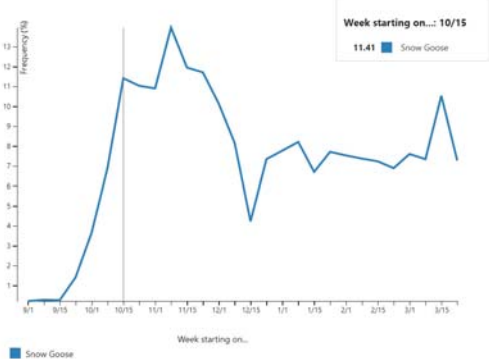
Continued increases in Wrangel Island (Russia) snow geese:  
2022 fall flight estimate > 1.2 million lesser snow geese

Wrangel Island: > 120,000 spring pop. obj. (1 colony)  
GMA 4: 120K-150K (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)



Adjust season dates in GMA4 (no delayed opener):  
select days during Oct. 14-22, Nov. 10, 2023 – Jan. 28, 2024, and  
everyday Feb. 17 - Mar. 3, 2024



Maintain:  
10 white goose bag limit statewide

Maintain: white goose-only season segments  
20 white goose bag limit during a white goose-only season segment



# Brant Harvest Strategy

Pacific Flyway Winter Brant Survey  
 Four Washington Counties  
 min. threshold > 1,000 brant  
 Presence of Western High Arctic Brant  
 min. threshold > 3,000  
 Anticipated Daily Harvest  
 Mandatory Harvest Report Compliance

Pacific Flyway WBS index = 143,052

## Pacific

Most recent 3yr-avg = 2,771; (7.5%)  
 WHA? = No.  
 Avg. daily harvest = 6-13

## Clallam

Most recent 3yr-avg = 1,210; (-6.4%)  
 WHA? = No.  
 Avg. daily harvest = 15-60

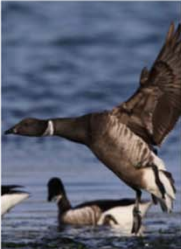
## Whatcom

Most recent 3yr-avg = 2,299; (+0.2%)  
 WHA? = **Very Likely**  
 Avg. daily harvest = 9-41

## Skagit **Starts Closed**

Most recent 3yr-avg = 2,887; (-66.9%)  
 WHA? = **Yes**.  
 Avg. daily harvest = 34-187

Management Plan:  
Pacific Population  
of Brant



Adopted March 2018

Regulation Package	WBS (3-year average)
Closed <sup>1</sup>	<102,000
Restrictive	102,000–122,000
<b>Moderate</b>	<b>122,000–147,000</b>
Liberal	>147,000

PACIFIC FLYWAY COUNCIL



# Brant Season Proposal

No changes to brant daily bag limit (2), based upon Pacific Flyway Winter Brant Survey, with continuation of Mandatory Harvest Report **22.28%**

Season Dates in January 2024

Specified by county

- Clallam: 3 days (Jan. 20, 24, 27)
- Whatcom: 3 days (same)
- Skagit: 0-8 days, determined by aerial survey results (**starts closed**)
- Pacific: 14 days, starts Jan. 6, 2024

Youth, Veteran & Active Military date:

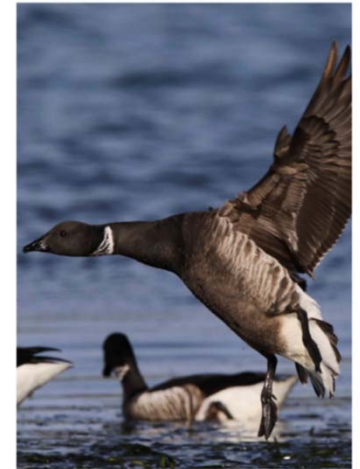
Feb. 3, 2024; Clallam, Whatcom, Pacific,

**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, 2023

Bag-limits: 15 daily

No changes to season dates or bag limits.



# Band-tailed Pigeon

## Season Dates:

Sept. 16-24, 2023; 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

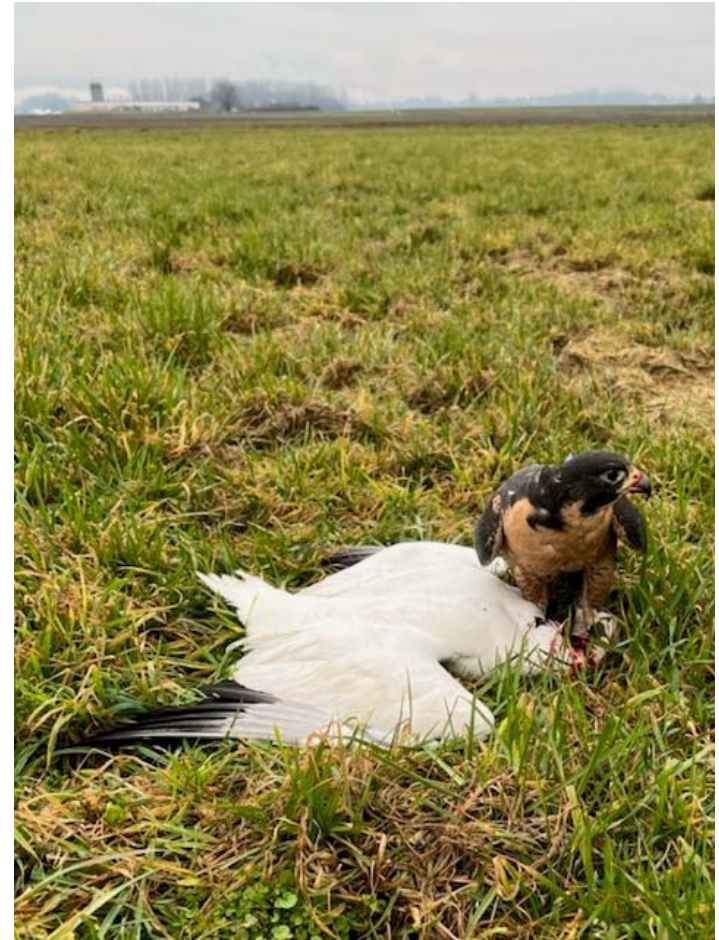
No changes to season dates or bag limits

## EXTENDED FALCONRY Season Dates:

Sept. 23, 2023 and Feb. 3, 2024 in western WA

Sept. 30, 2023 and Feb. 3, 2024 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, 2023 – Dec. 16, 2023





# Questions?

