

Agenda Item 6

Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations And Closures

Briefing and Public Hearing



Washington Department of
FISH and WILDLIFE

Don Kraege

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

Migratory Bird Hunting Seasons Authorities

- **USFWS Authority: Federal Framework**
 - Earliest opening date
 - Latest closing date
 - Limits
 - Season length
- **State Discretion: WAC within Federal Framework**
 - Can be more restrictive but not more liberal
 - Season timing within outside dates



New Schedule for Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations

Framework Changes

Pacific Flyway Meetings
August - September



USFWS
Service Regulations
Committee
October



State Season Selections
Due in Late April

Non-framework Changes

Commission - March



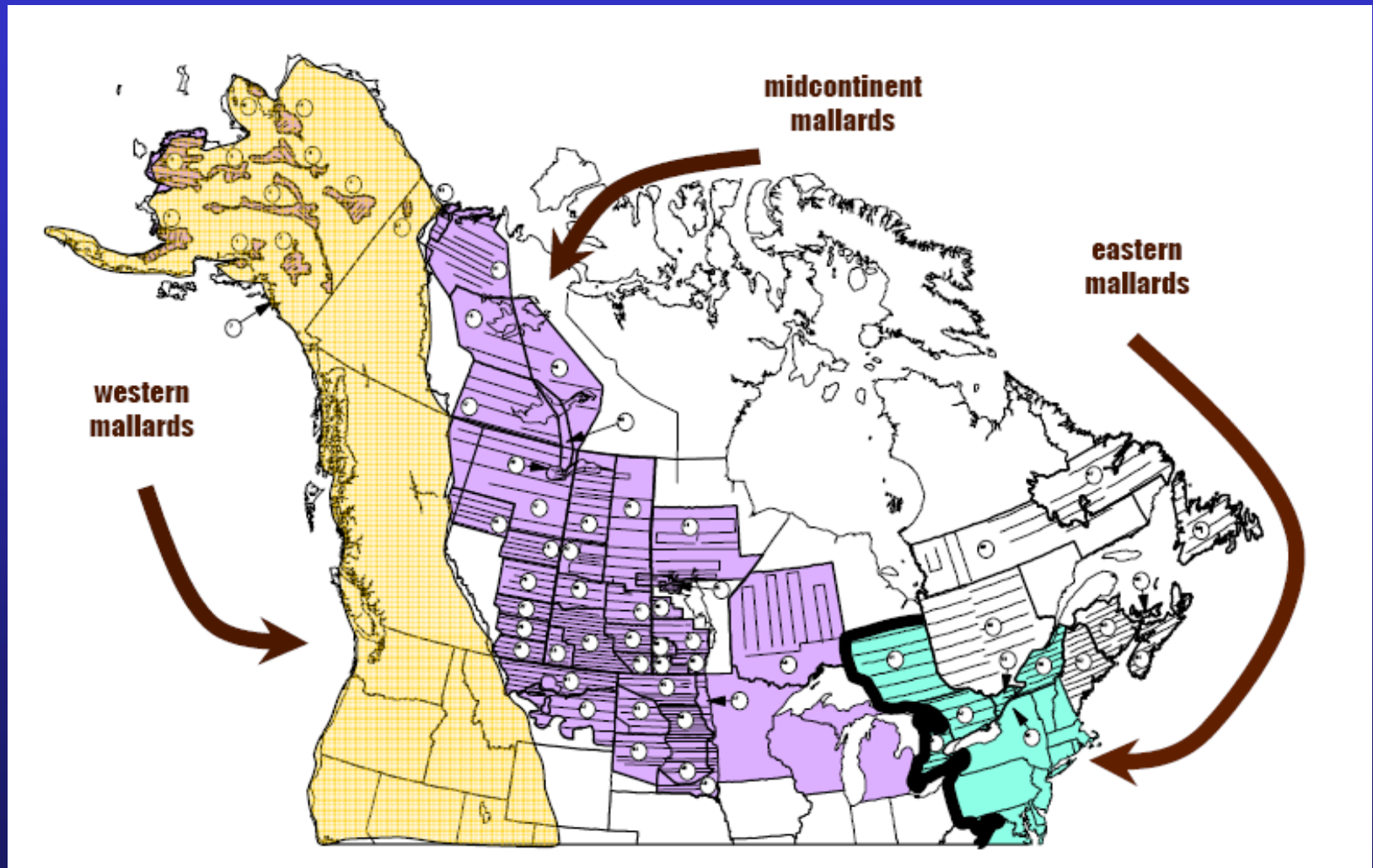
Commission - April



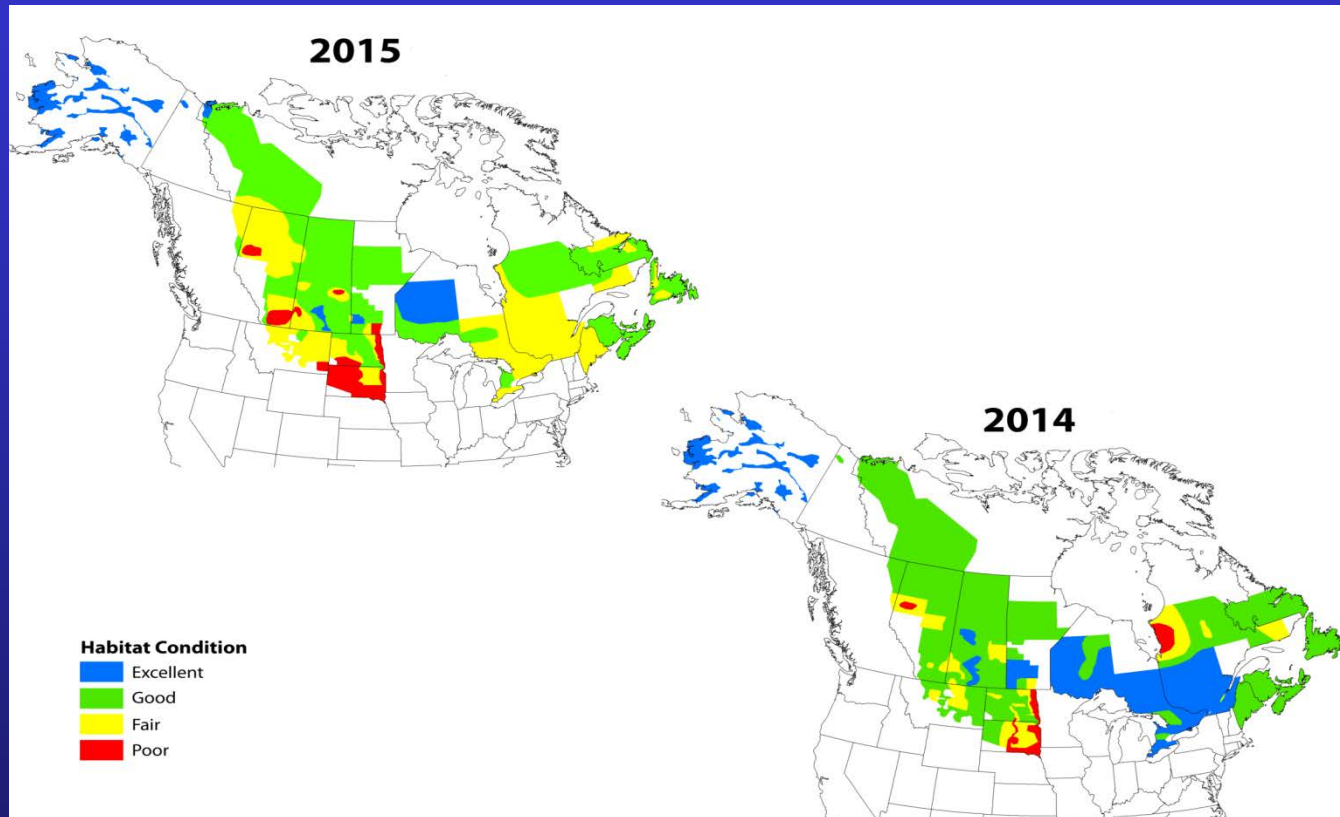
Duck Population Status and Season Proposals



North American Mallard Stocks



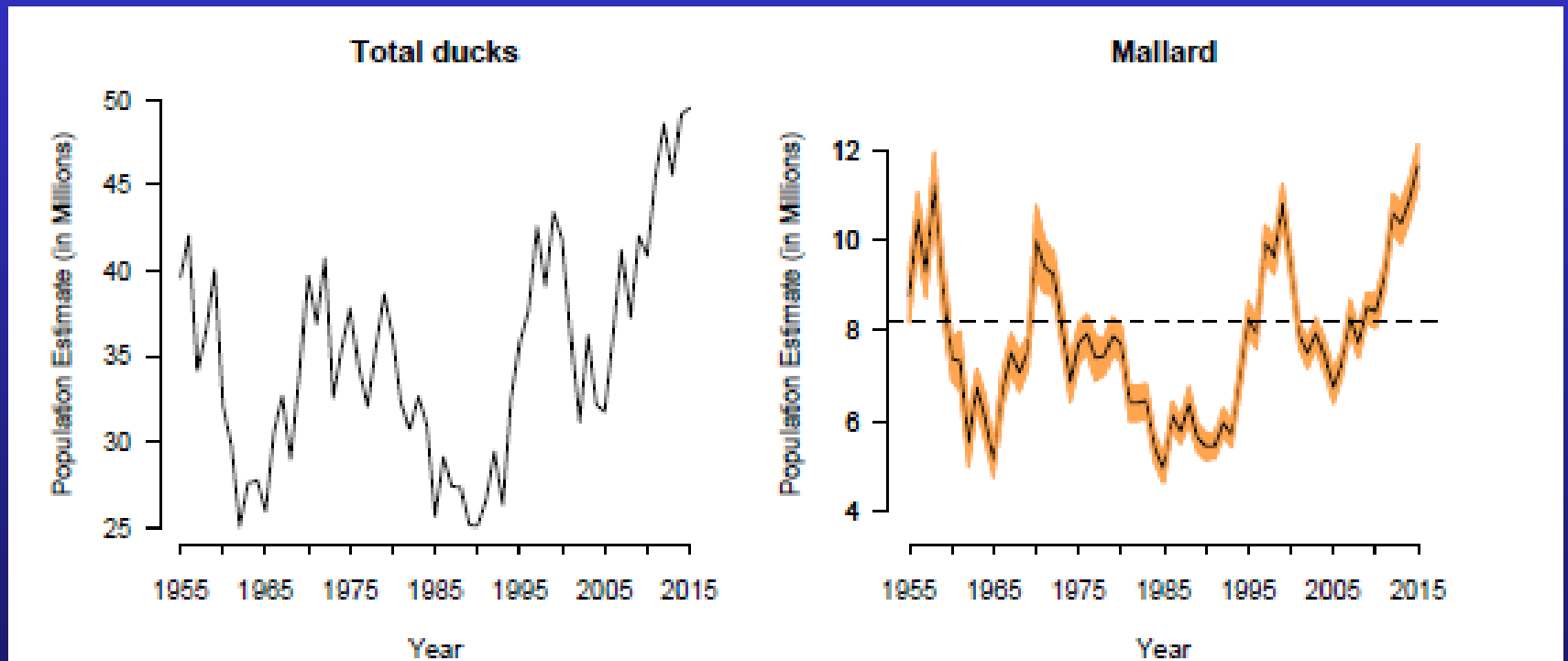
N. American Habitat Conditions



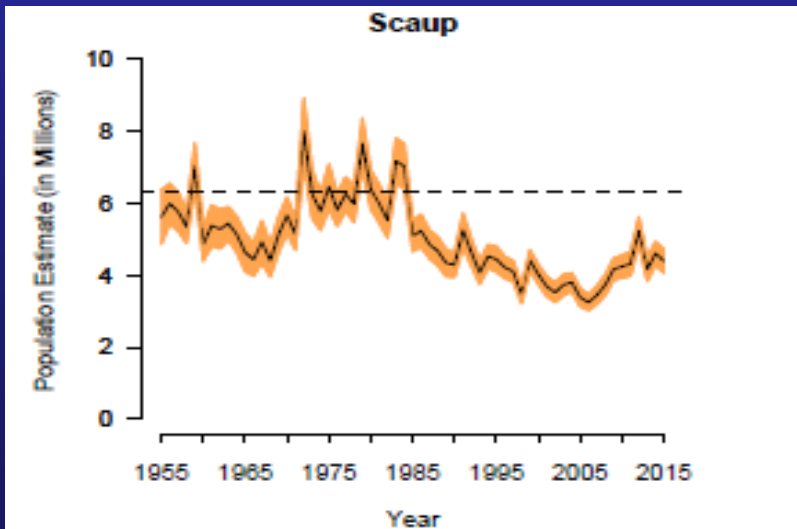
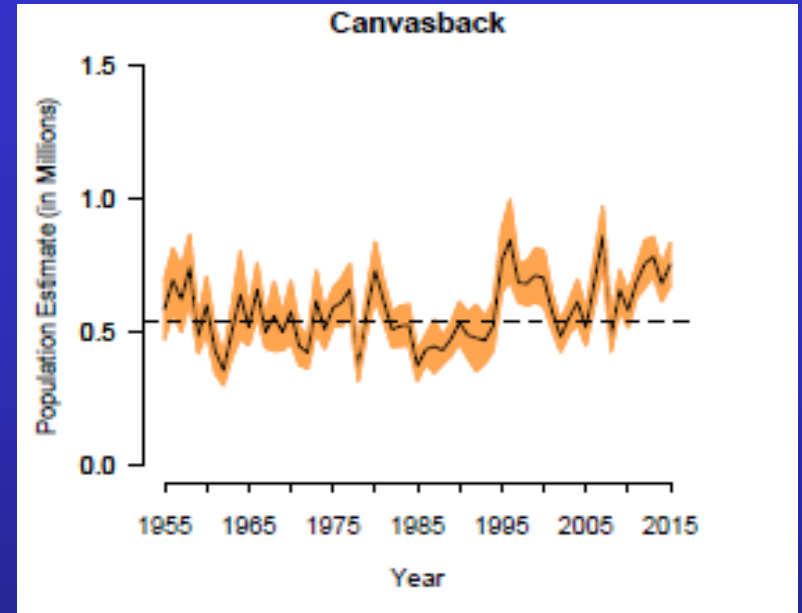
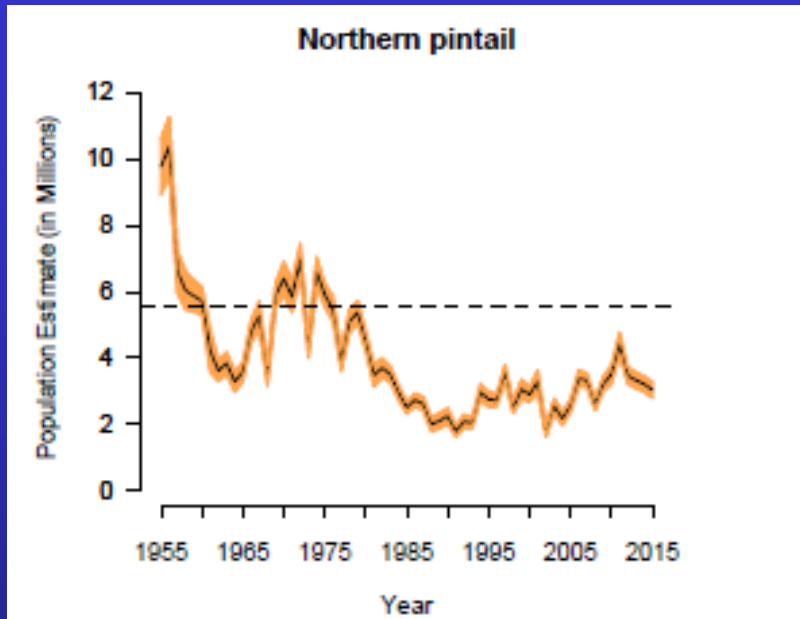
Habitat conditions in 2015 were fair-good, compared to good-excellent in 2014 in most breeding areas

2015 Results

All North American Survey Areas



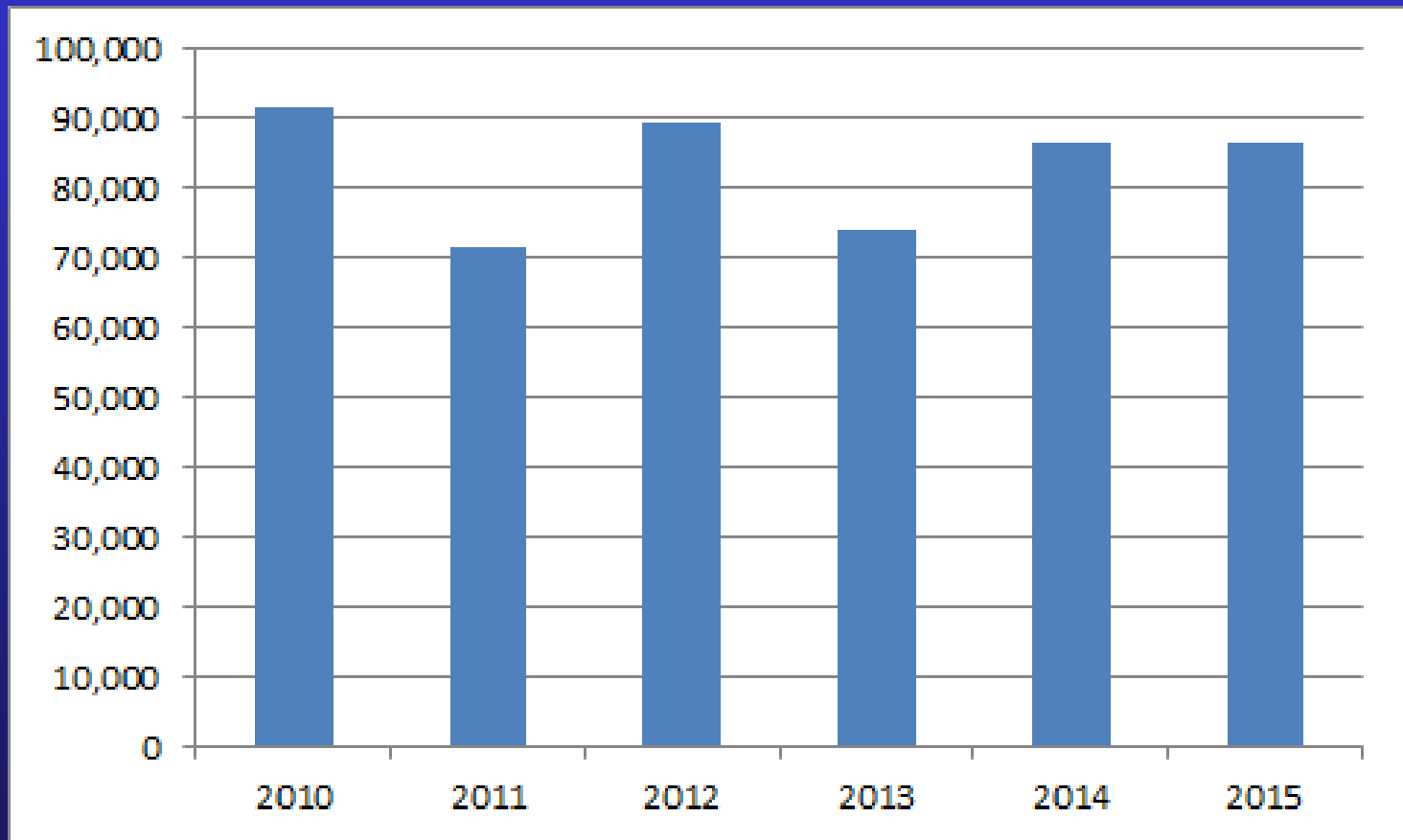
Pintail, Canvasback, Scaup



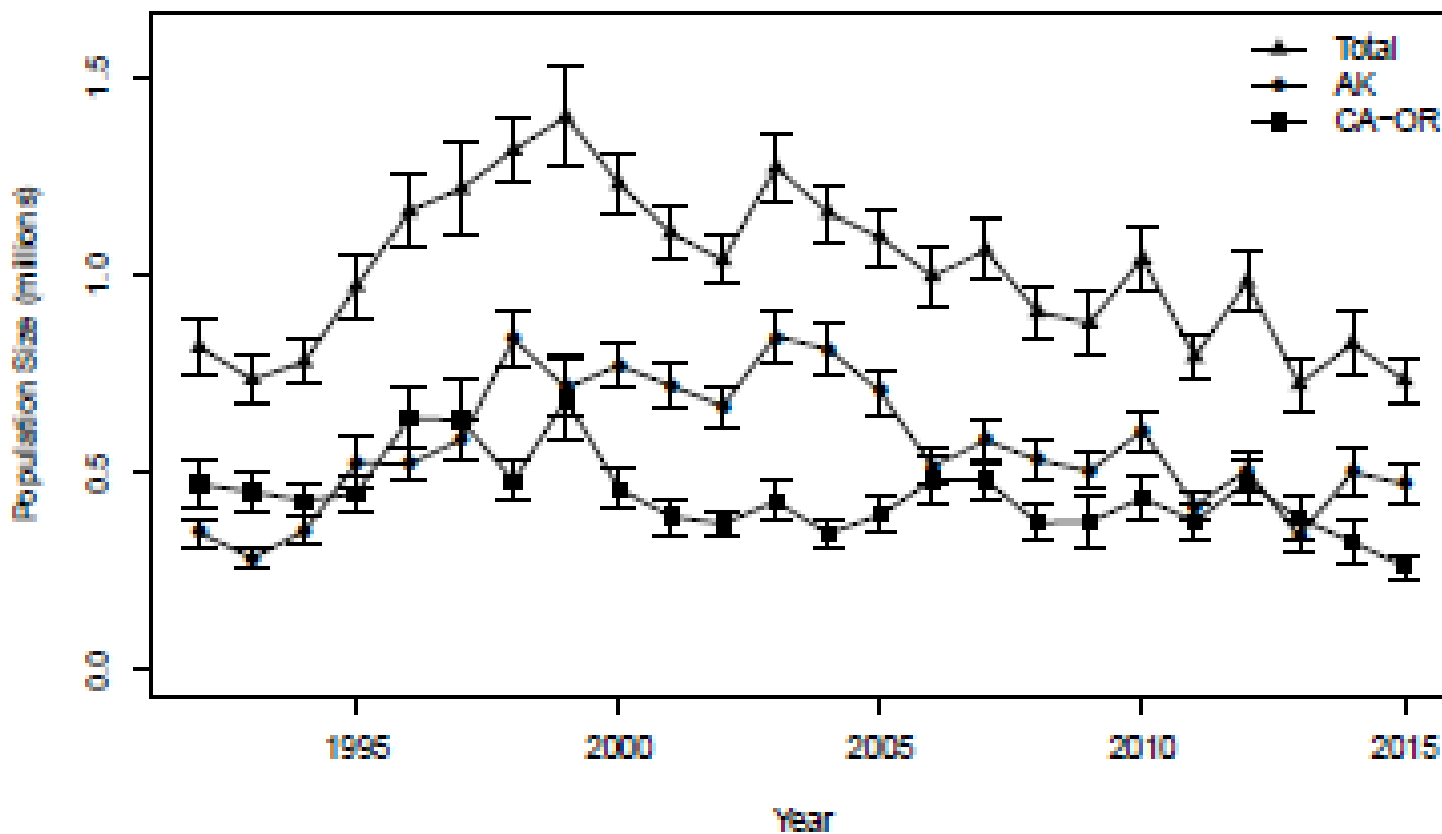
Independent harvest strategies based on models

Washington Breeding Surveys

Mallards



2015 Western Mallard Trends



2016-17 Western Mallard Regulatory Prescription

Table 6 – Optimal regulatory strategy^a for the Pacific Flyway for the 2016 hunting season predicated on a liberal alternative selected the previous year (2015). This strategy is based on current regulatory alternatives, updated (1990–2015) western mallard population models and parameter estimates, and an objective to maximize long-term cumulative harvest. The shaded cell indicates the regulatory prescription for 2016.

CA-OR BPOP ^b	Alaska BPOP ^b												
	0.05	0.1	0.15	0.2	0.25	0.3	0.35	0.4	0.45	0.5	0.55	0.6	≥0.65
0.05	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	R	R	L
0.1	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	R	R	L	L	L
0.15	C	C	C	C	C	C	R	R	M	L	L	L	L
0.2	C	C	C	C	C	R	M	L	L	L	L	L	L
0.25	C	C	C	C	R	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
0.3	C	C	C	R	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
0.35	C	C	R	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
0.4	R	R	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
0.45	R	M	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L
≥0.5	L	L	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) observed in Alaska (WBPBS strata 1–12) and in California-Oregon.

2016-17: Liberal Season

AHM / Washington Season Timing (From Game Mgmt Plan)

Table 2. AHM Regulation Packages and Washington Season Timing.

Regulation package	EASTERN WASHINGTON			WESTERN WASHINGTON		
	Days	Limit total/mall/♀mall	Season Timing*	Days	Limit total/mall/♀mall	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-late Oct. – 9 days; remainder early-Nov. thru late-Jan.	86	7/5/2	mid-late Oct. – 9 days; remainder mid-Nov. thru late-Jan.
Restrictive	67	4/3/1	mid-late Oct. – 9 days; remainder mid-Nov. thru mid-Jan.	60	4/3/1	mid-late Oct. – 9 days; remainder mid-Nov. thru early-Jan.
Very Restrictive	45	4/3/1	mid-Nov. thru early Dec.; late Dec. thru mid-Jan.	38	4/3/1	mid-Nov. thru early Dec.; late Dec. thru early-Jan.

* USFWS rules on duck season timing:

1. Washington zones (2) – E. Washington and W. Washington
2. Season dates must be the same within each zone
3. Seasons may only be split into 2 segments
4. Youth days in addition to above days, except for liberal package

2016-17 Duck Season Proposals

WAC 232-28-436

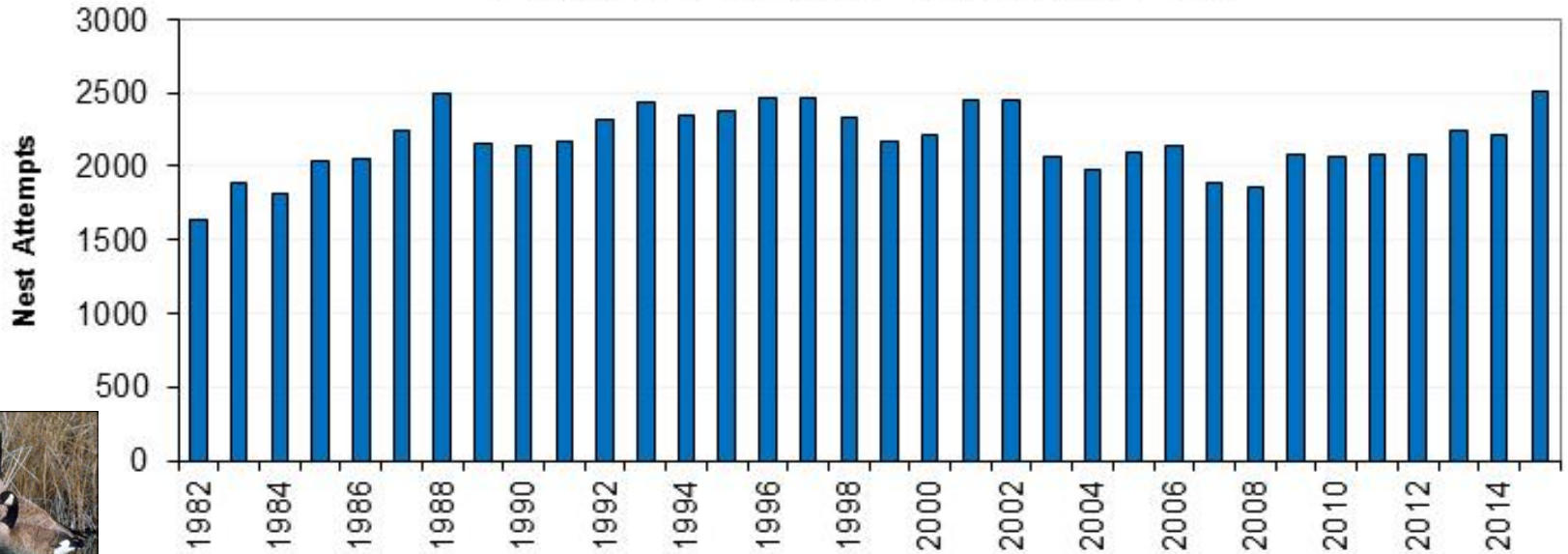
- Proposed general duck season dates and limits similar to 2015-16
 - 107 days
 - 2 day youth hunt
 - 105 day general season
 - 7 ducks, to include not more than:
 - 2 hen mallard, 2 pintail
 - 2 redhead, 2 canvasback, 3 scaup
 - W. WA: 2 scoter, 2 long-tail, 2 goldeneye, 1 harlequin
- **Recommended adjustment: p. 3 (2016-17)**

Goose Population Status and Season Proposals

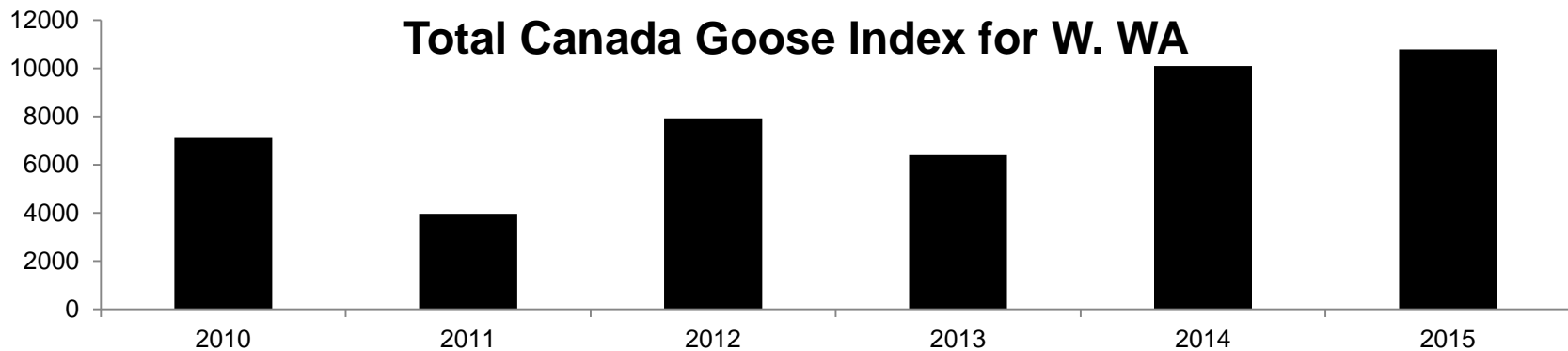


Canada Goose Breeding Trends

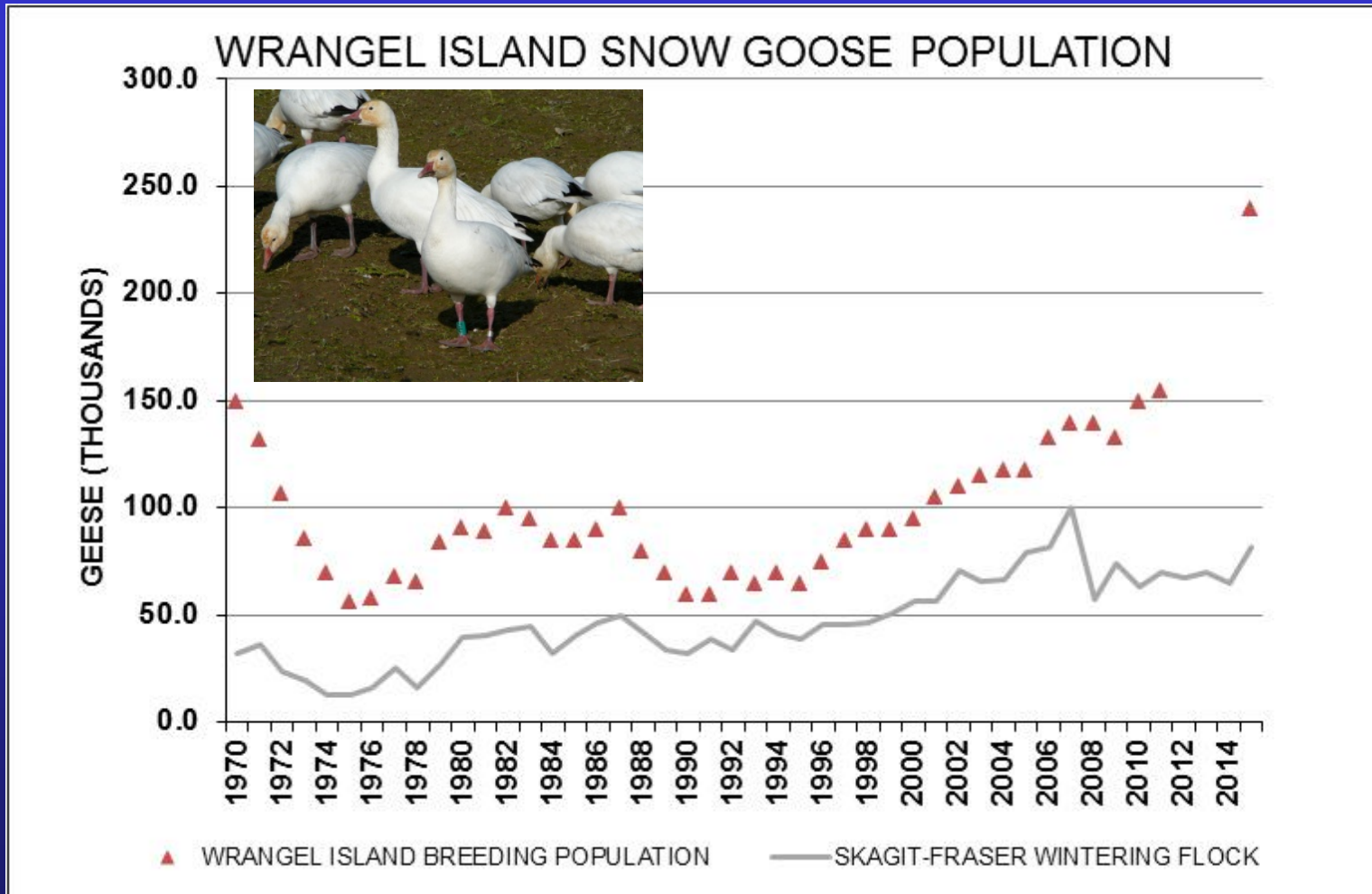
Total Canada Goose Nests for E. WA



Total Canada Goose Index for W. WA

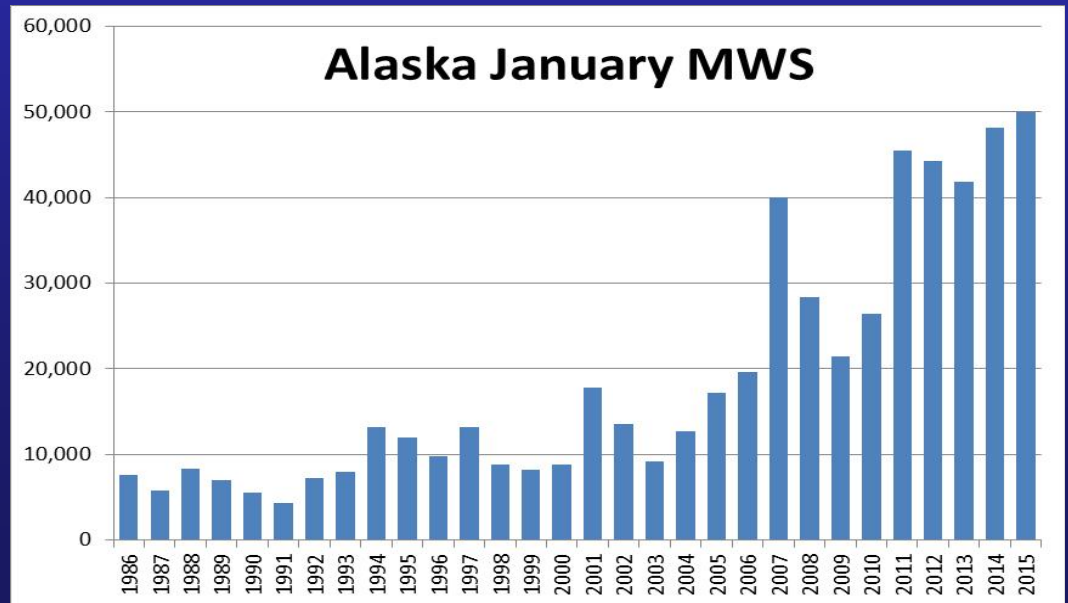
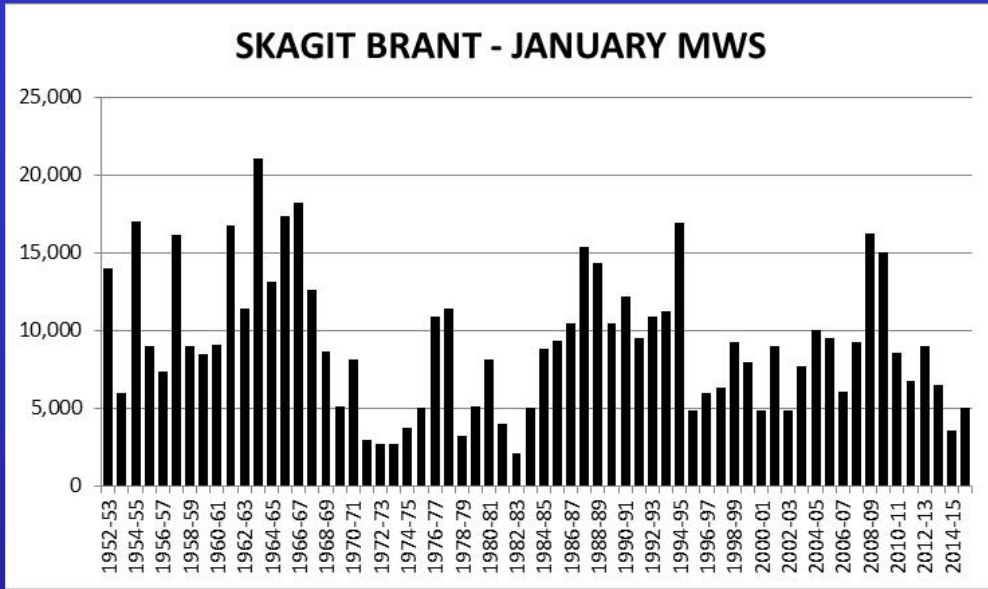


Wrangel Island Snow Goose Trends

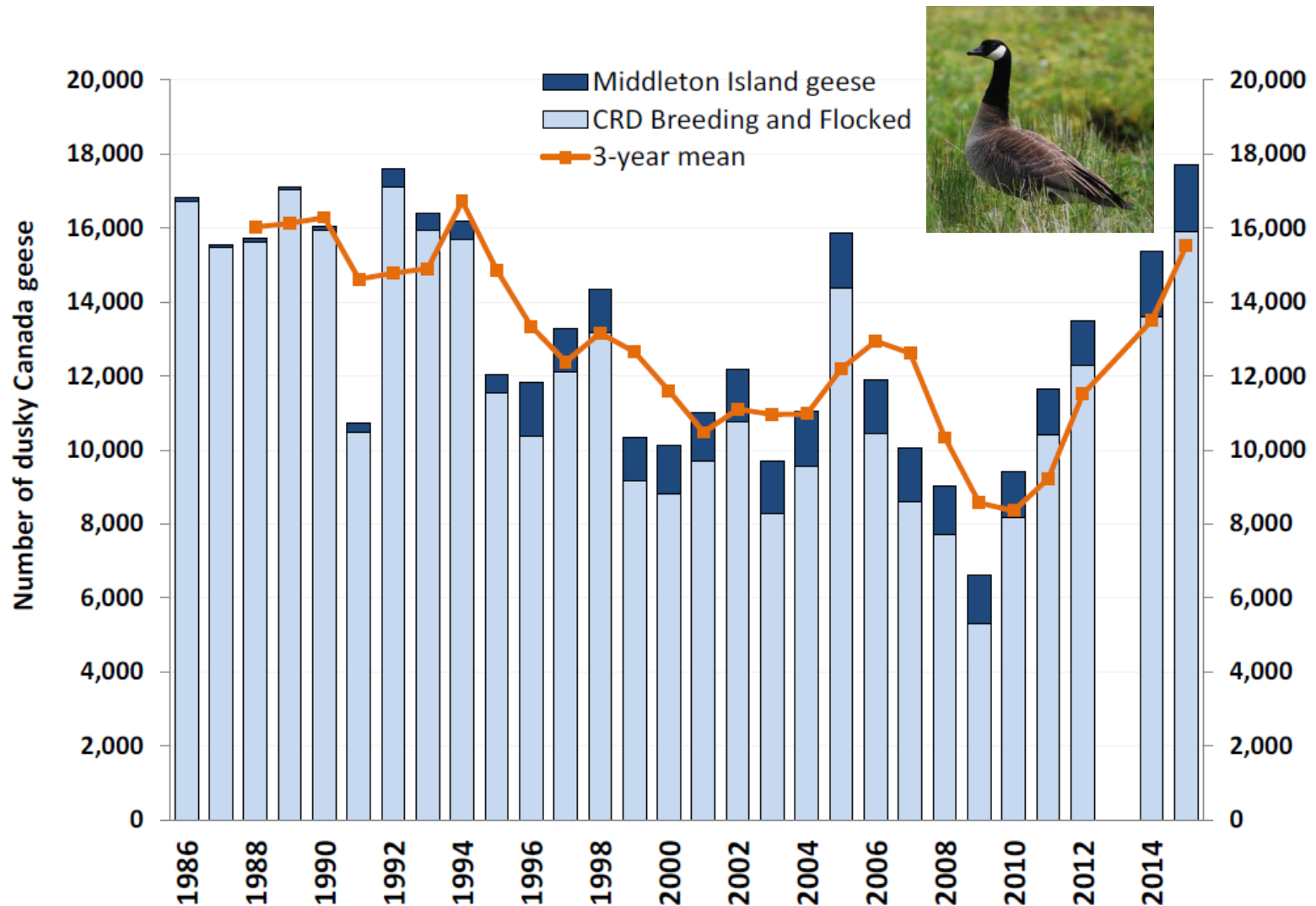


- 2015: record count on Wrangel Is. (240,000)
- 81,195 Skagit/Fraser 2015-16

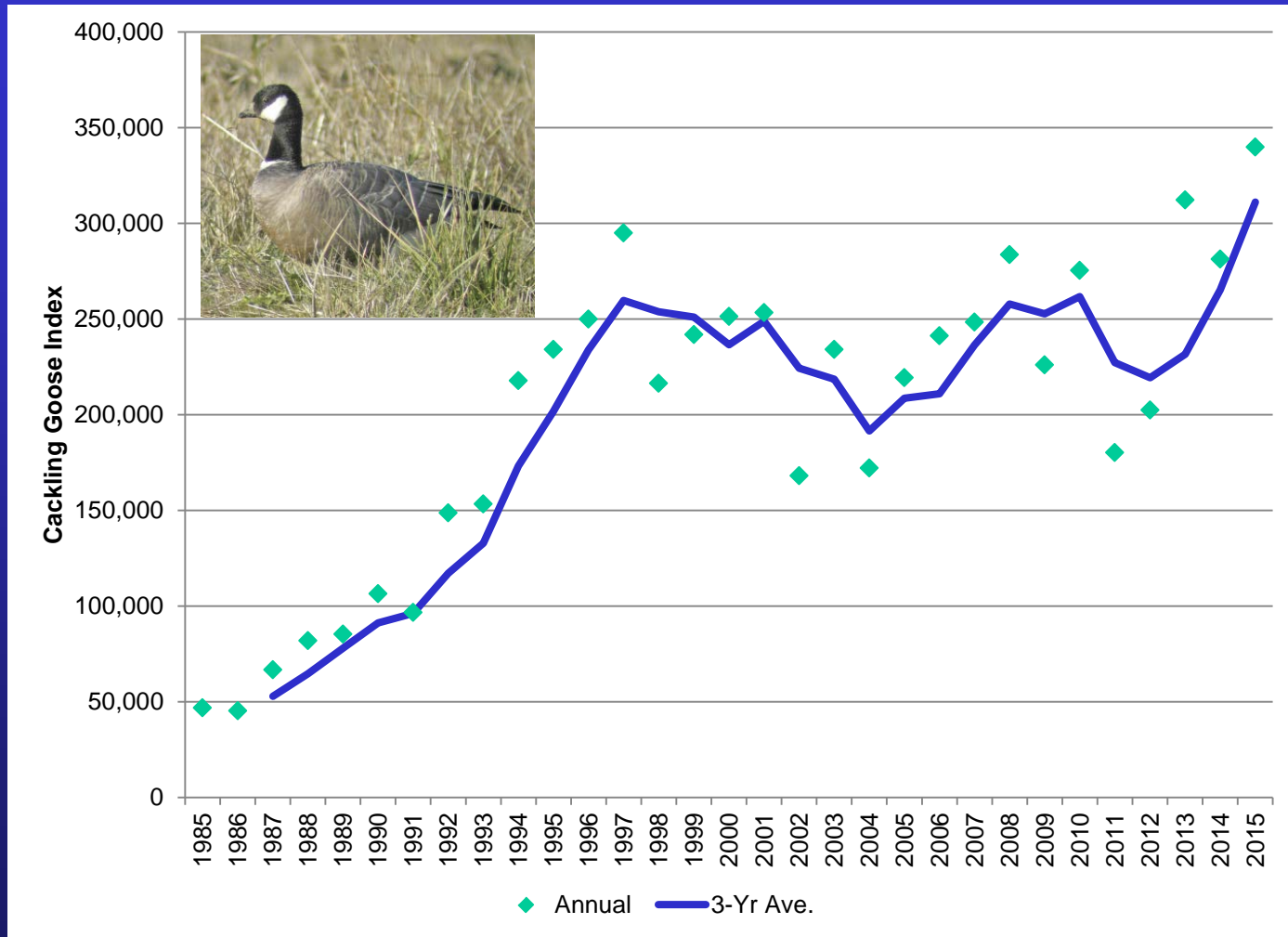
Brant Midwinter Survey Trends



Dusky Canada Goose Trends



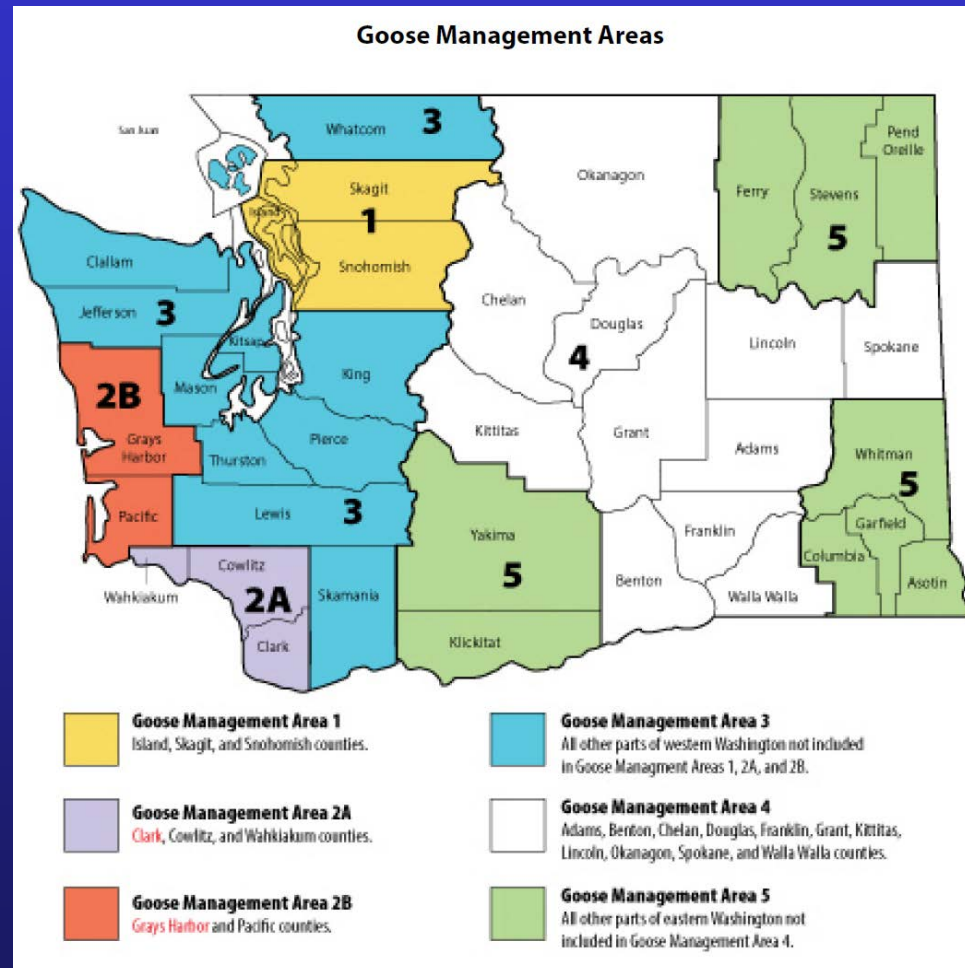
Cackling Canada Goose Trends



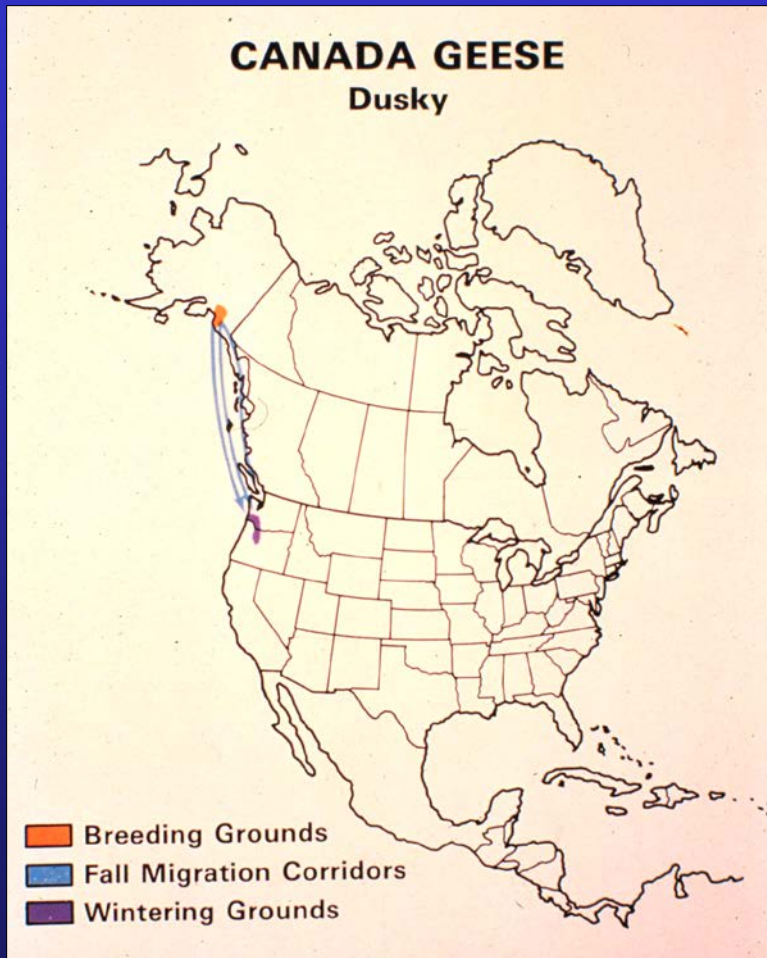
2016-17 Goose Season Proposals

WAC 232-28-436

- Seasons similar to last year in Areas 1, 3, 4, and 5
- Standardize most Sept. Canada goose season limits to 5
- **Recommended adjustment (p. 11):**
 - Change possession limit for E. WA Sept. season from 15 to 10



2016-17 SW Goose Season Proposals

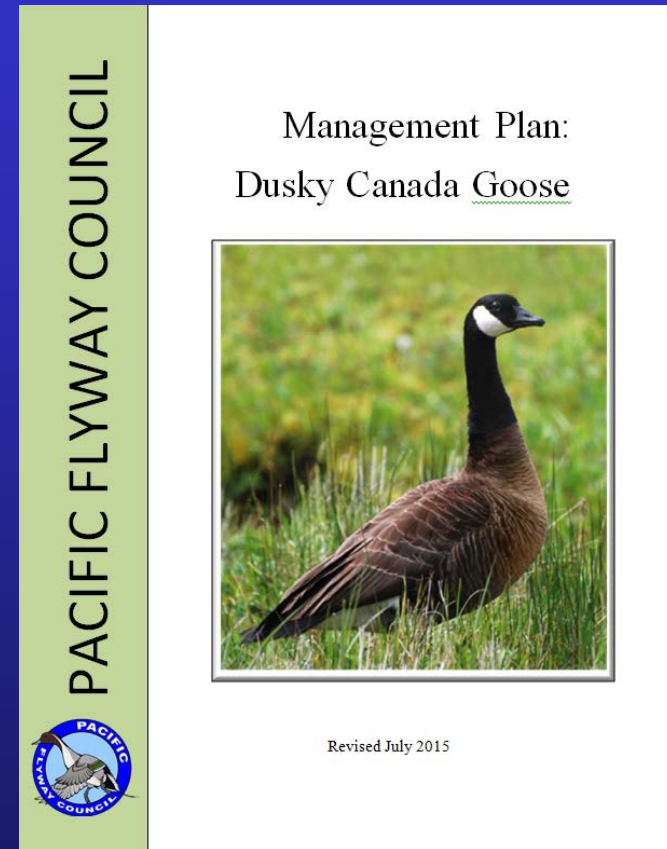


Dusky Canada Goose

2015-16 SW Goose Season Changes

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 Changes

Preliminary Observations

- Most changes well received
- Many fewer hunters and geese checked compared to past years
- Some confusion about late season areas (private vs. public lands)
- 10 permits invalidated (typical ave. ~20)
- Continuation of season dependent on dusky index, survival estimates

2016-17 SW Goose Season Proposals

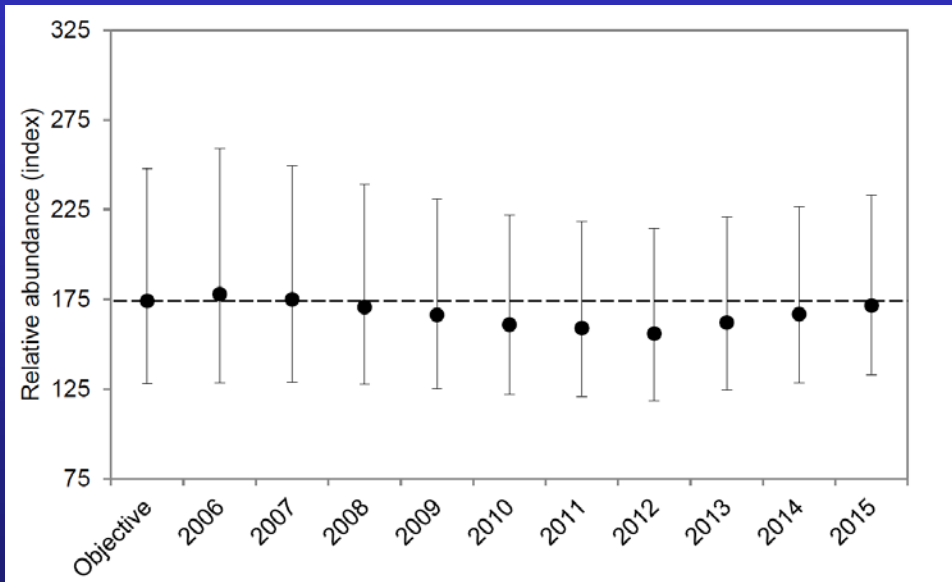
- Combine Areas 2A and 2B into one area: Area 2
- Area 2 proposed season dates:
 - Allow Canada geese in youth hunt bag limit
 - 9 day September season
 - 9 day October season
 - Remainder of days late Nov. – early Mar.
- **Recommended adjustment (p. 8):**
 - Change late season closed area from *public lands* to *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs) and WDFW Wildlife Areas*
- Rationale for changes: Reduce regulation complexity; maximize length and timing of the goose season to address depredation concerns

Status of Other Migratory Bird Populations and Season Proposals

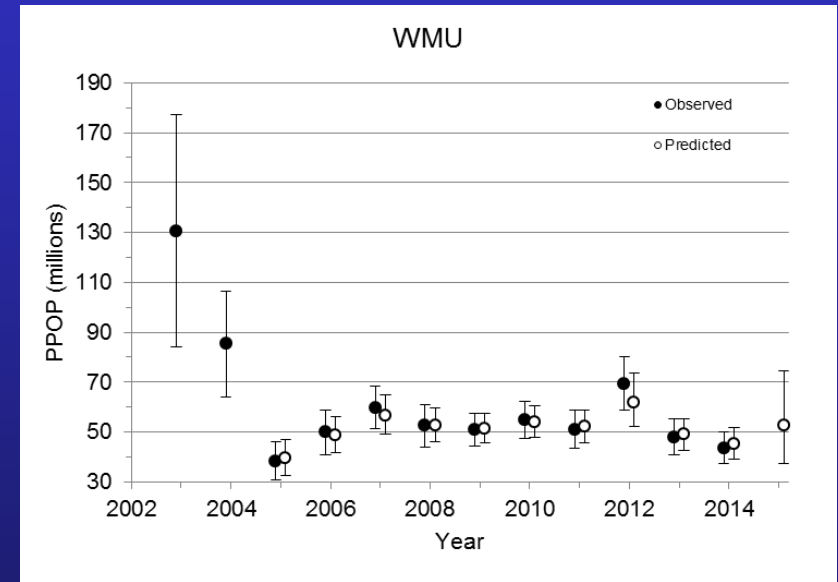


Status of Other Migratory Bird Populations and Season Proposals

WAC 232-28-436



Band-tailed Pigeons

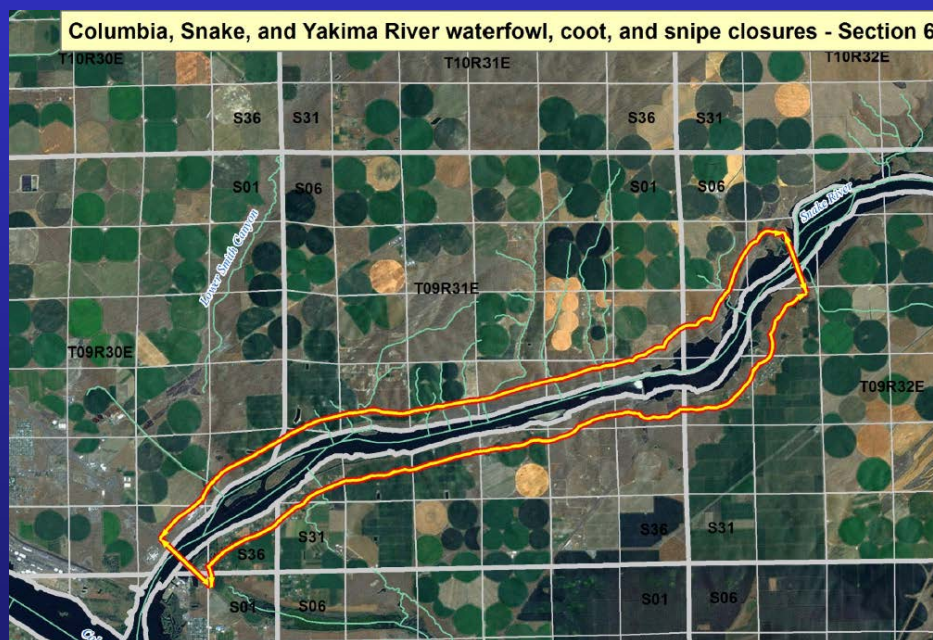


Mourning Doves

Recommend same seasons as last year

Columbia, Snake, and Yakima River Waterfowl, Coot, and Snipe Closures

WAC 232-16-740



Minor change to Section 6 Snake River closure:
change Nav. Marker from 4 to 5

Questions?

