



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of Fish and Game

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
Central/Southwest

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October 11, 2016

An Agenda Change Request (ACR) has been submitted to the Alaska Board of Game requesting to change 5 AAC 85.065(4)(G) Hunting seasons and bag limits for small game, and 99.025(12) Customary and traditional uses of small game.

With respect to the board's ACR acceptance criteria (5 AAC 92.005):

- (A) The department has not identified a conservation need for the emperor goose population, but recognizes that hunting opportunity will be lost if the board does not consider a proposal to establish an emperor goose season.
- (B) The department is unaware of any error in regulation.
- (C) Recent survey data and population modeling indicate that the emperor goose population is of sufficient size to allow the department to open an emperor goose season.

The department recommends the board accept this ACR. The general hunt of emperor geese has been closed since 1986 because of low population size. Recent survey data and population models indicate that the emperor goose population has increased to a harvestable level, allowing the board to open the hunt for the 2017-2018 season.

A population model was developed in 2016 that integrated 30 years of survey data and estimated a population of 150,000–170,000 geese, approximately twice the size of previous estimates. As a result, a Federal framework change was adopted in October 2016 to allow an open season for emperor geese based on a 2016 revised Emperor Goose Management Plan adopted by the Pacific Flyway Council.

The department anticipates much public interest and supports the request by the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council (AMBCC) that this regulation change be included in the public process to address allocation and hunt administration. Additionally, the board has the ability to make a Customary and Traditional Use finding to allow a general/subsistence hunt of emperor geese as recommended by the AMBCC in the ACR. The department supports this ACR to prevent the lost hunting opportunity that would occur if this regulation change is not considered until the 2017-2018 statewide regulations meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce Dale".

Bruce Dale, Director
Division of Wildlife Conservation