

## Dusky Canada Goose Production Survey - 2006

Michael J. Petrula  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

The 2006 dusky Canada goose production survey was flown over the west Copper River Delta (CRD) on July 11. The survey aircraft was a Robinson 44 helicopter with pilot and two observers. A total of ca. 6 hours of observation was conducted from the Copper River islands to Point Whitshed, including Egg Island (Fig. 1). Weather conditions for the survey were favorable with scattered clouds, light winds and good visibility.

A total of 6,261 geese were counted on the survey, including an estimated 1,446 young. Goslings were observed in 53 of 104 flock observations (Fig. 1). Flocks considered family groups (at least 1 gosling present) averaged 13.6 goslings and 18.5 adults. Most goslings were observed west of the Alaganik Slough (36.4% of total goslings in 20 flocks; Table 1), and between the Copper River islands and P. Dahl slough (35.5% in 15 flocks; Table 1). Geese were not observed on Egg Island, but 12 adults and 20 goslings were observed on a sand island to the east.

Flocks with no goslings averaged 75 adult geese. Most adult geese were flightless. Large flocks of molting adults were observed on the tide flats near the mouths of major sloughs, but several large flocks were observed in flooded buckbean/shrub habitat between the mouth of Big Glacier slough and the Copper River Highway (Fig. 1). One flock of 725 adults was observed at the mouth of Mountain slough (Fig. 1).

The total number of geese observed was higher than the previous 3 years, and substantially higher than the 10-year average (Table 2). The number of young observed was higher than usually observed from 1992 (Fig. 2). The production of young dusky Canada geese on the Copper River Delta in 2006 was 23.1%; higher than the 10-year and 35-year averages (Table 2).

The department thanks the USFS Cordova Ranger District, Dave Crowley (ADF&G) and Troy Cambier, our diligent pilot.

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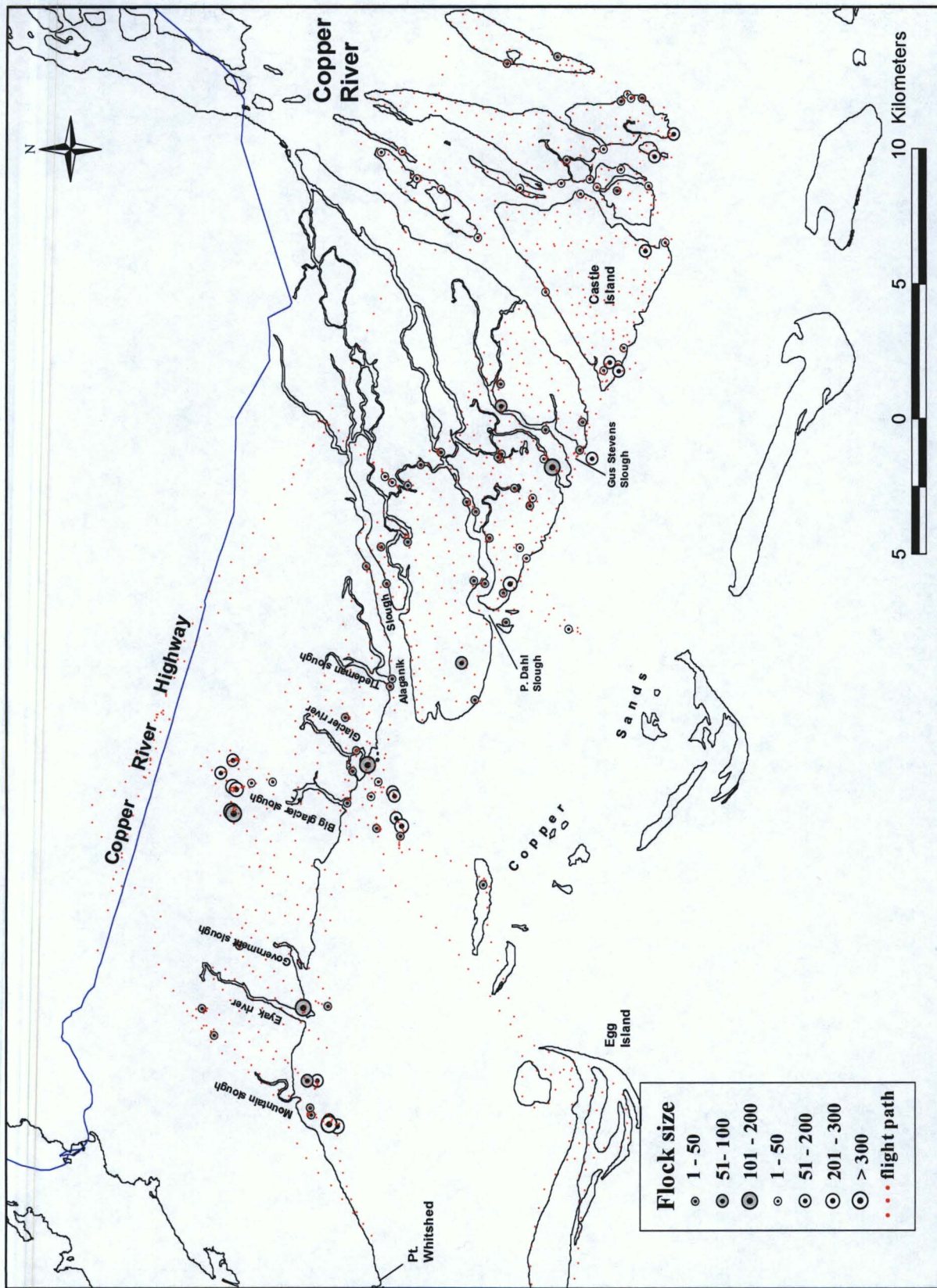


Fig. 1. Flock observations of dusky Canada geese during the annual production survey (11 July 2006) on the west Copper River Delta, AK. Shaded circles indicate flocks with at least 1 gosling. Survey aircraft was a Robinson 44 helicopter.



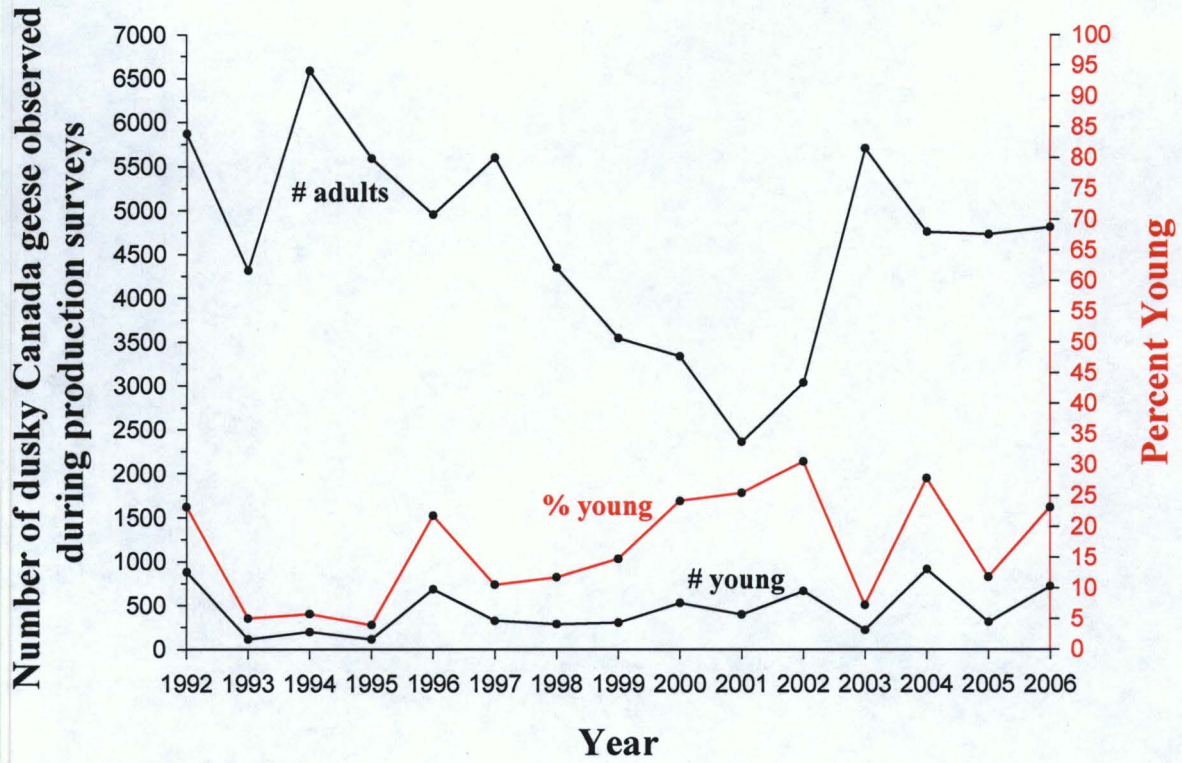


Fig. 2. Composition of dusky Canada geese observed in July during production surveys on the Copper River Delta, AK (1992-2006).

Table 1. Summary data for the west Copper River Delta, AK 2006 dusky Canada goose production survey.

Location	Number of flocks <sup>a</sup>	Number of flocks w/young	Number of young	Number of adults	Average #young in family groups	Average #adults per flock	%young of total young
Alaganik to Pete Dahl slough	14	11	158	204	14.4	14.6	22.2
west of Alaganik slough	36	20	259	3009	12.9	83.6	36.4
Copper River islands	31	6	42	903	7.0	29.1	5.9
Egg Island	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Copper River islands to P. Dahl	22	15	252	685	16.8	31.1	35.5
Total	103	52	711	4801	13.6	46.3	100.0

<sup>a</sup> One flock on sand island east of Egg Island with 12 adults and 20 goslings not included in table.

Table 2. Percent young of the year and sample size for dusky Canada geese recorded during July aerial surveys of the Copper River Delta, Alaska. 1971-2006.

Year	% Young	Geese sampled	Year	% Young	Geese sampled
1971	16.2	5717	1988	22.5	6917
1972	10.6	8193	1989	8.6	6114
1973	36.0	5873	1990	23.5	5530
1974	51.4	8199	1991	21.5	7098
1975	17.9	8990	1992 <sup>2</sup>	23.1	7633
1976	24.2	7092	1993	5.0	4542
1977	44.3	--	1994	5.7	6977
1978	24.8	--	1995	3.9	5818
1979	16.0	12700	1996	21.7	6329
1980	23.7	7500	1997	10.5	6253
1981	17.9	8740	1998	11.7	4919
1982	23.7	8473	1999	14.7	4156
1983	15.0	7740	2000	24.1	4397
1984	18.3	11913	2001	25.4	3165
1985	3.7	13780	2002	30.5	3708
1986 <sup>1</sup>	10.7	13309	2003	7.2	5929
1987	9.8	12448	2004	27.8	5678
			2005	11.8	5364
			2006	23.1	6216
10-year Avg.	18.7	4979	36-year Avg.	19.1	7277

<sup>1</sup> Estimates made with regression of flock size error 1986-1988.

<sup>2</sup> Surveys conducted by fixed-winged aircraft prior to 1992; with Robinson R-22 or R44 helicopter 1992-2006.