POPULATION STATUS OF THE DUSKY CANADA GOOSE

by

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Abstract

The Dusky Canada Goose Management Plan was revised by the dusky/Taverners
Canada goose subcommittee of the Pacific Waterfowl Flyway Technical Committee
in 1985. The objective of the plan is to achieve and maintain a wintering
population of 20,000 dusky Canada geese as part of an overall wintering
population of Canada geese in northwest Oregon and southwest Washington of at
least 40,000 but not more than 75,000 as measured by the mid-winter population
index. The plan also establishes minimum population thresholds for
elimination of hunting (10,000 duskys) and restricted hunting (13,000 duskys).

The revised management plan recommends management procedures and research.
Recommendations pertaining to Alaska and lead agencies are: Quantify and
describe current habitats on the Copper River Delta, the USFS; describe
changes in nest site selection, ADF&G; implement cooperative land management
agreements to protect nesting habitat on private lands, USFS and ADF&G;
continue a policy of stringent protection of nesting habitat on public lands
on the Copper River Delta, USFS and ADF&G; continue monitoring nesting efforts
on the Copper River Delta, ADF&G; continue annual production surveys, ADF&G;
continue annual marking of geese and analyze band recovery data, ADF&G;
develop a reliable method to census the spring early-nesting-season goose
population on the Copper River Delta, USFWS and AOF&G; and describe and
evaluate interactions between habitat, predators and nesting geese on the
Copper River Delta, ADF&G.

The three year average (1983-85) of the mid-winter population index for dusky
Canada geese was 11,500 in 1985. Since this average was below the 13,000
threshold, hunting seasons were restricted. The opening of the Canada goose
season was postponed 3 weeks in Game Management Units 5 and 6 in Alaska and
only an experimental season was allowed on the wintering grounds. This season
was designed to test the ability of hunters to identify and harvest the more
abundant subspecies of Canada geese. Hunting was allowed on Sauvie Island in
Oregon and Ridgefield NWR in Washington until a harvest ceiling of 200 duskies
(WA-40, OR-160) was reached or the regular goose season closed. The
experimental season in Oregon was apparently successful. Hunters harvested a
total of 1,675 Canada geese of which only 157 or 9 percent were duskies. In
Washington, duskies were harvested at about the same to slightly greater rates
than they occurred in the wintering population. The harvest ceiling of 40
birds was reached on the seventh day of the season prompting closure of the
experimental hunt.

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The 1986 mid-winter population index for dusky Canada geese was 12,200 out of a total of 72,500 Canada geese and the 3-year average is 9,930. Hunting season and bag limit recommendations for 1986 will be made at the Pacific Flyway Regulation meetings in July.
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