

POPULATION STATUS OF THE DUSKY CANADA GOOSE

by

Bruce H. Campbell
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Anchorage, Alaska

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 dusks) and restricted hunting (13,000 dusks).

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 ADF&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 dusks (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 dusks. In Washington, dusks 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.

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.

Forest Service

Chugach
National
Forest
R10-MB-7



Proceedings of the Eleventh Copper River Delta Conference

April 10 & 11, 1986
Cordova, Alaska

