

Agenda Item Summary

BACKGROUND

Migratory waterfowl management is a joint responsibility of the federal and state governments. Management actions are governed by International Treaty through the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Oregon is an integral part of the Pacific Flyway and serves as either a stopping ground or primary wintering ground for several species of geese that breed in and migrate south from Russia, Alaska and Canada. Additionally, some Canada Geese reside in Oregon year round. Increasing populations of several species of resident and migratory geese have lead to conflicts in both western and south central Oregon. Of primary concern are the White-fronted, Snow and Ross' Geese in the Klamath Basin, Aleutian Canada Geese on the south and north coast and Dusky and Cackling Canada Geese in the Willamette Valley.

Most of these geese have recovered from record lows which has lead to increased conflicts on private agricultural lands. Historically Cackling Canada Geese wintered exclusively in the central valley of California, but in the mid-1990's for unknown reasons shifted north to winter in the Willamette Valley. Dusky Canada Geese have been impacted due to the 1964 earthquake in Alaska which raised the Copper River Delta. Recruitment has declined substantially since that time raising concerns over long-term viability of the Dusky.

Traditionally the department has used hunting seasons to regulate goose populations. Season structure and bag limits have been maximized where possible to provide recreational opportunities and where appropriate to try to stem population growth. However, these traditional methods of controlling populations face challenges due to mandates within the MBTA on season length and timing, concerns over impacts to subsistence harvest by Alaskans and the concern of over harvesting the declining Dusky population.

As a result of landowner concerns the 2009 Legislature passed Senate Bill 622 which established a Goose Control Task Force. The intent of the task force was to study issues raised by the increasing number of various species of geese in Oregon and to make recommendations regarding opportunities to control goose populations and their impacts pursuant to applicable state and federal laws. Two members of the legislature were assigned to the task force and the Director appointed 9 members representing state and federal, aviation, agricultural, conservationist and academic interests.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public meetings were held on January 12, March 18 and May 12. News releases were sent out highlighting the meetings. Public testimony opportunities were provided at each meeting. Additionally all materials provided at the Task Force meetings were put on the department's web site at: <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/OGCTF/index.asp>.

ISSUE 1

DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTROLLING GOOSE POPULATIONS

ANALYSIS

During the three Task Force meetings a variety of information was shared regarding landowner concerns relative to increasing goose populations. Damage in some areas or for some landowners was identified as significant. While aviation concerns were also one of the stated interests of the Task Force nearly all of the group’s efforts were concentrated on agricultural concerns. While not a complete list, follows are some of the specific concerns raised:

- Loss of productivity on crop lands,
- Competition for forage with livestock,
- Complexity of hunting seasons,
- Public and livestock health concerns associated with goose feces,
- Complexity of federal processes for receiving damage permits,
- Complexity of state and federal processes for receiving authorization and permits for use of aversive chemicals,
- Management practices on state and federal lands.
- Population objectives set without any input from impacted landowners,
- Compensation for damage losses.

As a result of these concerns the Task Force has developed a list of recommendations for the Commission and the Legislature to consider. Some of the recommendations involve specific actions for the department either through Commission or Pacific Flyway Council processes. The specific recommendations have not been included in this packet, but will be presented to the Commission and made available to the public at the June 3 Commission meeting and on the department’s web site. Of particular interest to the Commission will be the recommendation to open up negotiations on the Cackling Canada Goose population objective and to the fullest extent possible to liberalize and maximize hunting seasons. Both of these items are timely as the department is in the process of preparing flyway hunting season recommendations for the July Council meeting and ultimately for Commission action at their August 6th meeting.

OPTIONS

1. Provide direction on renegotiation of the Cackling Canada Goose Population objective.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

N/A

DRAFT MOTION	N/A
EFFECTIVE DATE	N/A