



Testimony on 2015-16 Migratory Bird Regulations
NW Goose Permit Season
Paul Donheffner, Mid West Director, Oregon Hunters Association

I am the Mid West Director, which covers Marion, Polk, Linn, Benton, Lane and Lincoln counties - basically the southern half of the NW goose permit area and the NW goose general zone. I've hunted geese in the NW permit area since it started.

The Oregon Hunters Association supports the proposed changes to the NW Goose Permit Season.

OHA supports elimination of goose check stations, with the goal of seeing the cost savings used for wetland conservation and enhancement. We understand these funds have come from bird stamp fees, and want to ensure that the savings are used for waterfowl habitat and conservation.

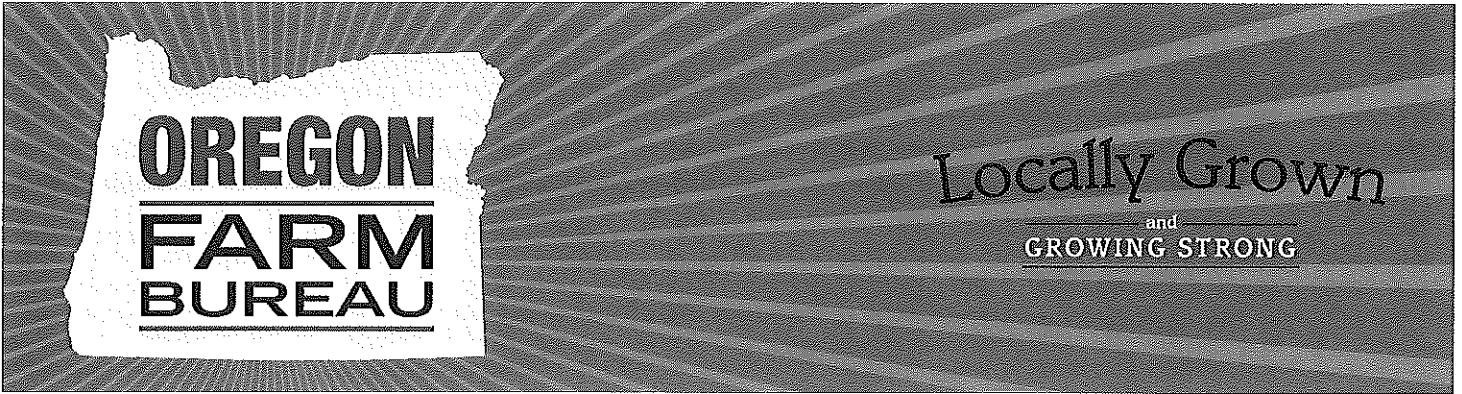
As a trade off for closing the check stations, we support the proposal to make the taking of a Dusky Canada goose a Class C violation.

We support the changes to "shooting hours" which are long overdue. While we would prefer "sunrise", we can accept the "sunrise plus 15 minutes" as it gains time for most of the season and will help improve success on cacklers.

We were concerned about the initial proposal to require all existing NW Goose Permit hunters to be "re-tested". We think existing permit holders can comprehend the changes being made without the burden and hassle of having to be re-tested on basic goose identification.

OHA is very pleased to see that "re-testing" was dropped from the final staff recommendations. We appreciate the efforts your staff has undertaken to make improvements to the complex NW permit goose season.

All in all, the proposed changes are a good step forward and we encourage the commission to give its approval.



Mr. Michael Finley
Chair, Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE
Salem, OR 97302

August 7, 2015

Re: 2015-16 Oregon Game Bird Regulations

Chair Finley,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on the 2015-16 Oregon Game Bird Regulations. As a reference, the Oregon Farm Bureau Federation (OFB) is a voluntary, non-profit, grassroots organization, representing over 7,000 farming families in Oregon. For decades, OFB has been actively engaged in discussions with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to address Canada goose management concerns and associated economic losses on farms.

Our members recognize the sensitivities surrounding the dusky Canada goose and have engaged with stakeholders throughout the region to better understand management issues. Most recently, OFB attended the Pacific Flyway Council meeting in Reno, NV to engage with policymakers on revisions to the Dusky Goose Management Plan and other Canada geese. Interactions with federal, regional, and state policymakers have been key to conveying the increased burden that over 350,000 wintering geese have on Oregon's producers annually. Canada geese are voracious grazers and cause millions of dollars of crop damage each year to Oregon's family farmers and ranchers. Farmers need every available tool to protect their crops from the increasing pressure of depredation, including a hunting program for geese that encourages active participation from stakeholder groups.

OFB supports the changes reflected in the 2015-16 Oregon Game Bird Regulations as a balanced first step in alleviating excessive crop losses caused by Canada geese. Goose check stations and complex regulations have long been a deterrent to depredation management efforts.¹ Check stations have been a drain on ODFW's budget and staff resources and are expensive to maintain. Likewise, hunter retention has been difficult to sustain with distance and cost barriers created by check stations. Consequently, OFB supports the new goose season framework, which would eliminate goose check stations, close the season for dusky Canada

¹ Taylor, Eric J. et al. Cackling Canada Geese Management in the Pacific Flyway: Balancing Harvests, Economic Interest, and Ecological Values.

geese in wintering areas, and open a season on other Canada geese. These management changes will encourage hunter retention and free up resources for management by ODFW.

OFB also supports increasing the number of hunting days for geese and allowing for a seven-day-a-week goose hunting season in certain weeks throughout the season. Expanding the number of hunting days will help producers continue to use hunting as a hazing tool to keep geese off of their fields. This also is crucial to the effectiveness of other avian hazing efforts (i.e. predator effigies, flagging, pyrotechnics and pistol launchers, mylar tape, and propane cannons), which are time consuming and costly. Without adequate hunting opportunities, avian hazing tools are less successful, and farmers will suffer greater damages to their crops. Maintaining the maximum number of hunting days is critical to reducing ag depredation losses.

Oregon's farmers and ranchers rely on partnerships with ODFW and the recreational hunting community to help alleviate depredation pressure on their crops. We look forward to continuing to work together with ODFW to address goose damage concerns and protect Oregon's family farmers and ranchers.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Dresler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Jennifer Dresler
Director of State Public Policy
Oregon Farm Bureau

WITNESS REGISTRATION

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission

August 7, 2015, ODFW 4034 Fairview Industrial Dr SE, Salem, OR

EXHIBIT C

PUBLIC HEARING ON: EXHIBIT C: 2015-16 Oregon Game Bird Regulations

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