

**GAME BIRD PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR 2021-22  
UPLAND and MIGRATORY GAME BIRD SEASONS**



**FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE OREGON FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION  
April 23, 2021**



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Winner of 2021 Oregon Waterfowl Stamp Art Contest by Guy Crittenden featuring Cinnamon Teal pair

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*The recommendations in this packet are based on public correspondence (including telephone and e-mail communications), Pacific Flyway Study Committee and Council discussions, discussions with field personnel, federal regulatory requirements, and past Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) direction concerning hunting seasons.*

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## UPLAND GAME BIRDS

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### SEASON FRAMEWORKS

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In April 2020, the Commission adopted the 2020-2025 Upland Game Bird Hunting Season Framework; a policy document that guides the development of standardized upland game bird seasons for a period of 5 years (September 1, 2020 through August 31, 2025). Standardized regulation frameworks are biologically sound management tools that help the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) provide consistent, stable regulations that reduce confusion, assist hunters with planning trips, and lower administrative costs. The framework includes seasons for ring-necked pheasant, chukar and Hungarian (gray) partridge, California quail, mountain quail, “blue” and ruffed grouse, sage-grouse, and spring and fall wild turkey seasons. The next framework will be considered in April 2025. Upland game bird seasons proposed in the draft 2021-22 Game Bird Regulations reflect framework criteria.

### POPULATION STATUS AND HARVEST

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The following information about the status and harvest of Oregon’s upland game birds is presented to provide additional background and context for the 2021-22 regulation proposals.

**General Trends:** Annual fluctuations in upland bird numbers are normal and these short-term changes can often be attributed to weather conditions, and the resulting effect on habitat. These changes should not be the basis for setting annual hunting seasons because many upland game bird populations exhibit high annual mortality rates whether hunted or not. Generally, it is unnecessary to modify seasons and bag limits for the recovery of upland game bird populations from low levels. Given adequate habitat and favorable weather conditions during nesting and brood rearing, most game bird populations will recover rapidly with no change in hunting regulations. In addition, hunting pressure on upland game bird populations is generally density dependent, i.e. when populations go down, hunting pressure decreases. Long-term population trends are most often related to changes in the quality and quantity of habitat.

After peaking in 2005, upland game bird populations declined sharply in 2007 due to a severe drought (Fig. 1). From 2007-2015 (2011 was an exception) precipitation was below average and consequently suppressed upland game bird populations, especially chukar in eastern Oregon. Weather in the winter of 2016-17 included deep persistent snow cover that caused mortality in some areas, reducing breeding populations. Harvest and hunter effort has been fairly stable over the past 8 years with minor fluctuations primarily related to weather. The 2020-21 season also saw an increase of about 1,200 new customers purchasing an upland validation.

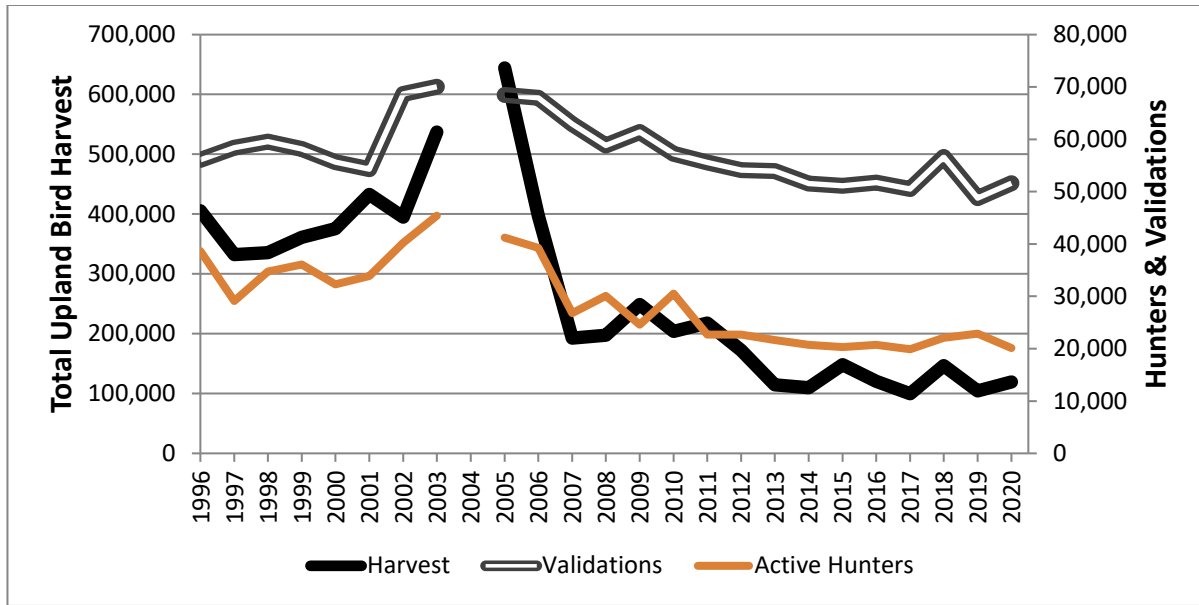


Figure 1. Long-term trend of upland game bird harvest, hunters, and upland validation (stamp) sales. Harvest and active hunter estimates from phone surveys (no survey in 2004).

**Production:** Upland game bird season recommendations are not based on annual production surveys, but it is still important to collect this information to determine the status, trends, and to provide accurate hunting season forecasts. Most birds in the fall harvest are hatched in the same year, so reproductive success is an important predictor of hunter success.

Large swaths of forest grouse habitat were lost to landscape-scale wildfires during September 2020. We expect recovery of those populations to take some time, particularly in areas that were severely burned. Brush-loving species like mountain quail will benefit from the early seral vegetation that initially returns following wildfire in Oregon’s western forests. Much of these areas will be inaccessible to biologists and hunters due to various post-fire hazards, so our understanding of the impacts of 2020’s fire season may take years to be revealed.

Peak hatch for most upland game birds in Oregon is mid-May through mid-June. Biologists will be watching out for cold, wet weather during the hatch, which is detrimental to precocial gallinaceous chicks until they are able to thermoregulate independently. According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, a series of storms across Oregon in February relieved most concerns about snowpack and filled many basins to normal levels. Basins throughout the Blue Mountains are above average, however southeast and southwest Oregon remain below normal. Summer forage availability should be average to above average, based on current conditions.

**Harvest Surveys:** This report marks the beginning of a shift in how the Upland Game Bird Program collects hunter-harvest data. With the availability of customer email addresses, the Program can survey more upland validation holders at less cost than the existing phone survey. Both phone interviews and email surveys were conducted in 2020-21 to provide a means for comparison, but phone interviews will cease in 2021-22 and harvest surveys will be conducted either via email surveys or through the Electronic Licensing System (ELS).

Early conclusions comparing the two techniques show fairly strong concurrence among commonly hunted upland game birds, but the email survey was better at locating hunters who pursue less common species such as mountain quail and Hungarian partridge. Phone survey results are reported herein for ease of comparison to previous years.

A random phone survey of 3,669 upland game bird validation holders was used to estimate 2020-21 upland game bird harvest (Table 1). Upland game bird harvest and hunting effort was down for those species that live in forested habitats. Due to the September fires, associated poor air quality, and the effect of COVID-19 lockdowns, these declines were anticipated. While hunter participation was largely down across the board, harvest actually increased over the previous year and the 5-year average for California quail, chukar, Hungarian (gray) partridge, and ring-necked pheasant. Few people specifically hunt Hungarian partridge and mountain quail so the estimated harvest is highly variable from year to year due to the sample size of hunters called. We expect the email survey to improve estimates for these two species.

Table 1. Results of 2020-21 upland game bird harvest surveys in Oregon in comparison to last season and the previous 5-year average.

		<b>Total Harvest for 2020-21 (phone survey)</b>	<b>% Change from 2019-20<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>5-Year Average</b>	<b>% Change from 5-Year Average<sup>1</sup></b>
Blue Grouse	Hunters	8,433	-35%	10,668	-21%
	Days	51,944	-38%	82,873	-37%
	Harvest	8,314	-30%	11,903	-30%
Ruffed Grouse	Hunters	12,059	-15%	12,457	-3%
	Days	95,080	-17%	126,500	-25%
	Harvest	22,864	-23%	33,559	-32%
Mountain Quail	Hunters	1,181	-53%	3,337	-65%
	Days	17,204	-24%	18,989	-9%
	Harvest	2,310	-59%	5,461	-58%
California Quail	Hunters	4,385	-19%	5,031	-13%
	Days	31,703	1%	33,447	-5%
	Harvest	27,612	38%	25,243	9%
Chukar	Hunters	3,795	0%	4,151	-9%
	Days	30,051	44%	23,140	30%
	Harvest	33,241	48%	28,469	17%
Hungarian (Gray) Partridge	Hunters	1,096	70%	844	30%
	Days	8,653	136%	4,438	95%
	Harvest	3,305	233%	2,327	42%
Ring-necked Pheasant	Hunters	5,144	-10%	5,688	-10%
	Days	28,530	26%	26,892	6%
	Harvest	21,626	85%	16,390	32%

<sup>1</sup> Comparisons based on phone survey results

Separate harvest surveys are conducted for sage-grouse (Table 2) and wild turkeys (Table 3). Wild turkey surveys are included under the mandatory reporting system; sage-grouse harvest estimates are based on a combination of email and direct mailing of survey questionnaires to successful controlled hunt applicants.

*Sage-grouse* – A long history of sage-grouse conservation efforts in Oregon and throughout the West has resulted in plans, executive orders, and agreements that provide direction for sage-grouse management in the state, prioritize research, and coordinate the many state, federal, and NGO partners involved. A brief history of the most relevant actions is summarized below.

On March 5, 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced its determination that listing the greater sage-grouse range-wide under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) was warranted, but precluded by higher-priority listing actions. This finding prompted the development of the Oregon Sage-Grouse Conservation Partnership (SageCon), a collaborative effort to leverage funding across Oregon's sage country and building agreements to balance natural resource protection with local livelihoods. Concurrently, the department's Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon (2011) laid the groundwork for sage-grouse management in the state and identified the core areas critical to development of SageCon's Oregon Sage-Grouse Action Plan (2015), a collaborative framework for sage-grouse conservation in Oregon. Governor Brown then issued Executive Oregon 15-18 (2015), directing state agencies to implement the Oregon Sage-Grouse Action Plan.

The sage-grouse controlled hunt is addressed in the Action Plan and has been managed according to the agreed-upon objectives and action items (pp 191-192). Specifically, the team members completing the Action Plan did not propose additional restrictions on the hunt due to the already restrictive and conservative nature of the season. The Action Plan directs the continuation of two related conservation actions for sage-grouse hunting seasons: no more than 5% of the fall population is to be harvested annually; and no harvest is allowed in WMUs where the estimated spring population is <100 males in consecutive years.

On September 22, 2015, the USFWS determined greater sage-grouse did not warrant protection under the ESA because unprecedented landscape-scale conservation efforts across the western United States had significantly reduced the threats to greater sage-grouse. This collaborative, science-based greater sage-grouse strategy is likely the largest conservation effort in U.S. history. The determination found that the main threats to sage-grouse rangewide were, and continue to be, 1) habitat loss, fragmentation, and modification, and 2) inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms, particularly in relation to energy and other development actions. In Oregon, two of the largest threats are invasive species (non-native annual grasses and conifer encroachment) and wildfire. The USFWS also evaluated the "utilization" (e.g., hunting) of sage-grouse and concluded, "the greater sage-grouse is not threatened by over-utilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes now or in the foreseeable future."

Sage-grouse are intensively monitored in Oregon. The primary method is spring lek counts which provide year-by-year comparisons in lek attendance by male sage-grouse. Production surveys seek to locate female sage-grouse and their broods, estimating the average brood size for comparison among years and locations. Other demographic information such as nest success, sex ratios, and age ratios are obtained through hunter-collected wings, and through specific academic research

projects. Hunter effort and success rates are obtained through the annual sage-grouse harvest survey. Results from the 2020 lek survey and permit season are detailed below.

In addition to annual monitoring, the department supports numerous academic research projects, primarily in partnership with Oregon State University and the University of Nevada-Reno, to answer specific questions about sage-grouse biology, demographics, and habitat. These projects examine the impacts of feral horses on brood survival and summer habitat, post wildfire recovery, juniper removal, invasive annual grass treatment, nest-site selection, the impact of raven predation, and the effects of legal harvest on sage-grouse. Each research project is designed to inform managers of best practices to improve sage-grouse conservation outcomes by recommending actions based on the study results. For example, Dr. Andrew Olsen (Oregon State University) found that large-scale juniper removal starting in 2012 (Warner Unit) increased sage-grouse population growth rates by 12% as compared to the control areas, but the effect took 5-6 years. These results justify the continued effort and expense of stopping the invasion of western juniper in sagebrush habitats.

*Sage-grouse survey results*--During the 2020 greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) breeding season, 1,761 aerial and ground lek surveys were conducted at 773 individual lek sites comprising 504 lek complexes. Surveys were conducted at 65.5% of known lek sites in the state. Survey effort during 2020 increased 1.2%, 2.2%, and 3.1% from 2019 levels, in terms of number of surveys conducted, number of leks surveyed, and number of complexes surveyed, respectively. This constitutes the third highest lek survey effort accomplished in Oregon to date. Results from these surveys indicate the sage-grouse spring breeding population in Oregon increased by 1.7% between 2019 and 2020, to 14,068 estimated individuals (95% CI: 12,897 – 15,238 individuals). This represents the first year of statewide population increase following three consecutive years of decline, 2017–19. However, the 2020 estimate is still the second lowest estimated sage-grouse population in Oregon during the analysis period of 1980 – 2020. Population increases occurred in the Burns, Lakeview, and Prineville BLM Districts, ranging from 12.5% – 12.7%. Decreases occurred in the Baker BLM Resource Area and the Vale BLM District, at -8.7% and -10.8%, respectively. However, due to issues with population analysis methodology in the Baker Resource area, our confidence in trend estimates in that analysis area are lower than in other areas of the state. A full review of sage-grouse monitoring efforts can be found in the [annual population report](#).

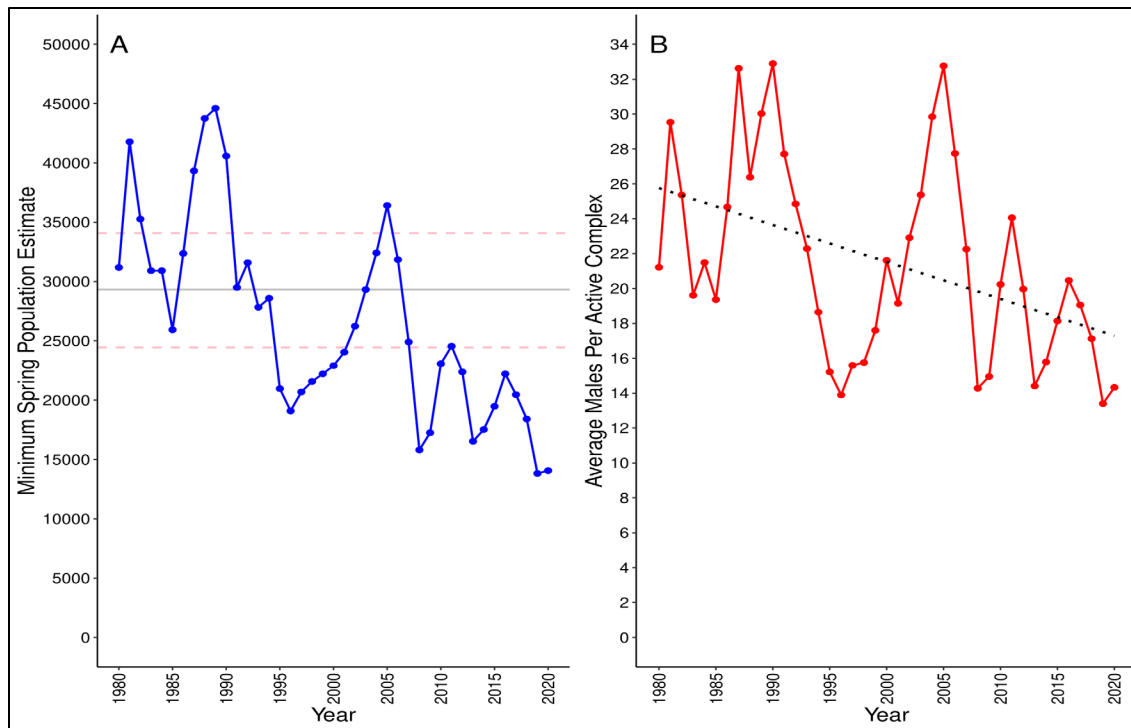


Figure 2. Greater sage-grouse population trends in Oregon, 1980 – 2020. A - Estimated spring breeding population of greater sage-grouse, gray line indicates 2003 baseline population level of 29,327 individuals, pink dotted lines indicate the 95% confidence interval around the 2003 baseline estimate. B - Change in average lek complex size (males per active lek complex).

*Sage-grouse controlled hunt results*--A total of 630 permits were authorized for the 2020 season, down slightly from 645 in 2019. The Lookout Mountain, Sumpter, South Wagontire, and Juniper Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) remained closed due to concerning population declines. Some of these declines followed large-scale range fires, while others are long-term declines related to changing land use and habitat quality. The Trout Creek Mountains portion of the Whitehorse WMU offered a modest increase from 25 to 30 permits in 2020. Permits were reduced by 5 in the Owyhee WMU and 15 in the Steens WMU due to declining populations. All other units remained at the same levels as 2019.

Of the 630 permits authorized for 10 WMUs, 301 hunters actually participated in the season, compared to 340 in 2019. Many hunters noted that between fires, air quality, and COVID-19 lockdowns, they were not able to participate in the hunt this year. For example, on the Steens Unit, of the 30 permits authorized, only 8 hunters participated. Hunters harvested an estimated 258 sage-grouse (+1% from 2019) across 10 WMUs, averaging 0.86 birds/hunter (Table 2). Hunter-returned wings ( $n = 174$ ) were examined at the annual sage-grouse wing bee to estimate age ratios, sex ratios, proportion of successful hens and timing of hatch. In 2020, wings showed 1.1 juveniles/hen in the harvest, down from 1.4 the previous year and Oregon's long-term average of 1.5 juveniles/hen. Age ratios varied widely across the units. Of particular note, the Warner Unit wing returns showed a ratio of 3.83 chicks/hen, far exceeding the long-term average.

Table 2. 2020 sage-grouse hunting effort and harvest by wildlife management unit.

Hunt	Tags Authorized	Tags Drawn	Tags Issued	Did Hunt	Hunter Days	Birds Harvested	Birds/Hunter	% Response
J51	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-
J64	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-
J65	150	99	66	48	99	36	0.75	83%
J66	100	90	59	44	130	10	0.23	88%
J67	70	46	26	25	65	10	0.39	93%
J68A	30	30	27	24	49	30	1.25	83%
J68B	70	70	45	40	82	38	0.97	73%
J69	30	30	15	8	10	10	1.29	87%
J70	80	80	63	46	89	59	1.28	86%
J71	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-
J72	20	20	12	7	13	4	0.57	95%
J73A	20	20	16	13	19	12	0.92	100%
J73B	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-
J74	60	60	49	46	88	51	1.10	85%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>85%</b>

Wild Turkey – Turkey population trends are primarily monitored through the mandatory harvest reporting system. The main hunting season is focused on male turkeys and takes place during the spring. Fall seasons are designed to alleviate damage and are an either-sex hunt.

Spring Turkey – Tags issued for general spring turkey were up 9.6% from the previous year, the highest on record. The number of hunters in 2020 who pursued spring turkeys increased by 19.6% from 2019. Those hunters were very successful, with harvest increasing 17.7% from 2019. The youth spring turkey hunt continues to be very popular and well received. Youth accounted for about 13% of total spring harvest of turkeys.

Fall Turkey – This season marked the first year of tag cap removals for eastern Oregon fall turkey season. With the extension of fall turkey season through January 31<sup>st</sup>, mandatory reporting data will not be available until after the new reporting deadline of April 15<sup>th</sup>. Staff will be analyzing the mandatory harvest reports for the 2020-21 fall turkey season once it becomes available.

Table 3. Wild turkey mandatory harvest reporting results for 2019-20 spring and fall seasons.

HUNT	Tags Authorized	Tags Issued	Hunters	Hunter Days	Birds Harvested	Birds/Hunter	% Response
Gen. Spring	Unlimited	46,044	14,869	66,177	5,728	0.39	75
Gen. Spring Youth	Unlimited	10,187	1,982	7,582	861	0.43	
Western Oregon Fall	Unlimited	<i>Data not yet available</i>					
Eastern Oregon Fall	Unlimited						
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>56,231</b>	<b>16,851</b>	<b>73,759</b>	<b>6,589</b>	<b>0.39</b>	

**UPLAND GAME BIRD SEASON PROPOSALS**

**Regulation Proposals:** For most upland game birds, all aspects of the seasons (e.g. season dates, daily bag limits, possession limits) are covered by the Upland Game Bird Hunting Season Framework and presented in Table 4. However, for some species like sage-grouse, there is a controlled hunt where the permit numbers are determined annually based on fall population projections. Fall turkey is another season where the hunts may be adjusted annually based on population trends or damage/nuisance issues.

Table 4. The 2021-22 season proposals for forest grouse, partridge, pheasant, quail, and general turkey.

<b>2021-22 Upland Game Bird Season Proposals</b>			
<b>UPLAND GAME BIRDS</b>	<b>OPEN AREA</b>	<b>OPEN SEASON</b>	<b>Daily Bag limit</b>
"Blue" and Ruffed Grouse	Statewide	Sept. 1 – Jan. 31	3 each species
Chukar and Hungarian (Gray) Partridge	Eastern Oregon counties	Oct. 9 – Jan. 31	8 (except Lower Klamath Hills = 2)
Rooster Pheasant	Statewide	Oct. 9 – Dec. 31	2
California Quail	Western Oregon	Sept. 1 – Jan. 31	10 in aggregate
	Eastern Oregon counties	Oct. 9 – Jan. 31	10 in aggregate
Mountain Quail	Western Oregon	Sept. 1 – Jan. 31	10 in aggregate
	Eastern Oregon	Oct. 9 – Jan. 31	2 in aggregate
Spring Turkey – General	Statewide	Apr. 15 – May 31	1 (season limit 3)
Youth Spring Turkey – General	Statewide	Apr. 9 – Apr. 10	
Fall Turkey – General Western Oregon	17 Western Oregon WMUs	Oct. 9 – Jan. 31	1 (season limit 2 Fall Turkey tags)
Fall Turkey – General Eastern Oregon	25 Eastern Oregon WMUs <sup>1</sup>	Oct. 9 – Jan. 31	1 (Season limit 1)
	WMUs 46, 47, 48 (area south and east of the N Fork John Day Rvr), and 50	Sept. 1 – Jan. 31	

<sup>1</sup>WMUs 36-38, 40, 43 - 45, 48 (area north and west of the N Fork John Day Rvr), 49, 51, 52 (excluding Starkey Experimental Forest and Range enclosure), 53 - 65, and 67<sup>3</sup>

2021 Controlled Sage-grouse Hunt. The season framework for sage-grouse establishes a controlled hunt with a 9-day season between September 1-20. The 2021 proposed season dates are September 11 – 19 with a two bird daily and season bag limit. The Department's policy is for sage-grouse harvest not to exceed 5% of the fall population and in practice, harvest is estimated at 3% or less of the fall population in the hunted areas. Sage-grouse are not hunted range-wide in Oregon; a limited number of sage-grouse permits are considered in 10 of the 21 WMUs where sage-grouse occur.

Volunteers and state and federal personnel are currently conducting the 2021 lek surveys. Over the next couple of months, lek data will be analyzed. Permit numbers are determined annually based on a mathematical formula combining spring lek count information, production, hunter participation rates, and results from the analysis of wings taken during the previous hunting season. Permit numbers for controlled sage-grouse hunting will be proposed in late July 2021 and implemented by temporary rule. Staff expects to maintain a very conservative permit allocation with existing closures maintained, including Juniper, South Wagontire, Lookout Mountain, and Sumpter WMUs.

As stated above, permit numbers are calculated from a formula including various sage-grouse demographic information. Spring lek surveys are used to estimate the adult male breeding population. Based on a sage-grouse sex ratio of females per male (from harvested wing analysis), the adult breeding population is then estimated. A very conservative chick/hen ratio of 0.5 chicks/hen is applied to the adult breeding population to estimate the total sage-grouse fall population. Sage-grouse production is typically much higher than this estimate, but summer brood counts have not shown strong congruence with age ratios from hunter-harvested wings. In 2019 the decision was made to err on the side of caution and not use the brood count data to calculate fall populations. The number of permits offered by WMU during the past two years is shown in Table 5. The formula is designed to authorize the take of 5% or less of the estimated fall population. The 5% is the maximum allowed harvest and not a harvest goal. Research has concluded that harvest rates of 10% or less are unlikely to have any meaningful effect on the population dynamics of sage-grouse. The Department is currently undertaking research to determine the veracity of this guideline specific to Oregon's sage-grouse.

An important benefit of hunting sage-grouse is collection of essential biological information. Each hunter is provided wing envelopes and asked to send in one wing from each bird harvested. Analysis of these wings provides an estimate of overall production, hatching chronology, and pre-winter sex and age composition of the population. The sex and age composition allows the prediction of breeding population trends for the following year. Age-at-harvest models are also being refined for upland game birds that allow for population reconstruction based simply on age at harvest data and known hunting effort. Without this information, it would be very difficult to determine how sage-grouse populations are performing through time. It will become even more critical to have this information as land managers implement habitat improvements designed to benefit sage-grouse.

Of the western states where sage-grouse are hunted, Oregon is among the most conservative. The controlled hunt process allows the Department to closely manage harvest and hunters and collect important information. Collecting this information by other means would be difficult and costly.

The Department will continue to evaluate the limited harvest of sage-grouse in the state on an annual basis; making any necessary adjustments and/or closures as warranted.

Table 5. Oregon sage-grouse hunting permit numbers in 2019 and 2020. Permit numbers for 2021 will be adopted by temporary rule in early August after population and production surveys are completed.

<b>Sage-grouse Permit Recommendations</b>			
<b>MANAGEMENT UNIT</b>	<b>2019 PERMITS</b>	<b>2020 PERMITS</b>	<b>2021 RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
Beulah	150	150	Permit numbers will be adopted in early August after completion of population model.
Malheur River	100	100	
Owyhee	75	70	
Trout Creek Mountains <sup>1</sup>	25	30	
E. Whitehorse <sup>2</sup>	70	70	
Steens Mountain	45	30	
Beatys Butte	80	80	
Juniper	0	0	0
Silvies	20	20	
North Wagonfire	20	20	
South Wagonfire	0	0	0
Warner	60	60	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>630</b>	

<sup>1</sup> The part of unit 68 south of Whitehorse Ranch Rd; west of Hwy 95; and east of Fields-Denio Rd.

<sup>2</sup> Unit 68 excluding that area described for Trout Creek Mountains hunt.

2021-22 Fall Turkey Season. Fall turkey seasons are utilized to address nuisance and damage situations by allowing the harvest of any turkey, including hens. Eastern Oregon fall seasons were historically conservative as turkey populations gained a foothold, beginning as controlled hunts, then a limited general season as populations increased. Statewide, low fall harvest rates and hunter participation coupled with increasing nuisance complaints on wild turkey wintering range allowed for the removal of the tag cap in 2020 and the extension of fall season through January 31<sup>st</sup>.

Despite these changes, wild turkey nuisance and damage complaints continued to increase in the vicinity of Grant County during the winter of 2020-21. Staff proposes to allow additional fall hunting opportunity in those units that overlap Grant County, allowing the season to begin on September 1. These units include: Murderers Creek (44), Northside (47), Desolation (50), and the Ritter portion of the Heppner Unit (48), defined as “that area of Unit 48 south and east of the North Fork John Day River”. This change would allow archery and grouse hunters the opportunity to harvest a fall turkey on during early season hunts.

With the removal of tag caps, staff is also proposing to allow SportsPac holders to select either a General Spring, General Eastern Oregon Fall, or General Western Oregon Fall turkey tag. This change would also apply to the Youth SportsPac. This change would not take place until the 2022 license season. SportsPac sales for 2022 begin on December 1, 2021.

Hunters can purchase two western Oregon general fall turkey tags, or obtain one fall turkey tag for eastern Oregon and one western Oregon general season fall turkey tag per season. The 2021-22

Game Bird Regulations will describe the legal hunting methods for fall turkey and shooting hours (dogs may be used during the fall turkey season).

*2021 Western Oregon Fee Pheasant Hunts.* The Department has offered special western Oregon fee pheasant hunts on specific public hunting areas for over 25 years. Since the hunts occur entirely or partially outside of the general statewide pheasant season, a special season must be adopted for these site-specific hunts. Initially the Oregon Legislature directed the Department to offer these hunts, which have been very popular with a segment of hunters living in western Oregon metropolitan areas. The hunts are currently offered on the following four wildlife areas in western Oregon: E. E. Wilson, Sauvie Island, Fern Ridge, and Denman. The Department typically allocates ~3,300 rooster pheasants among the four areas. In 2020, the number of fee pheasant permits sold increased by 14.6 % over the 10-year average and 17.6% over the previous year. These hunters included approximately 180 people who had never purchased the permit before. In response to this increased interest, the Upland Game Bird Program is planning to purchase an additional 500 pheasants to distribute among the hunt areas in 2021.

In these hunts, rooster pheasants are purchased from private breeders and released (typically daily) on hunt areas throughout the season. Each participant in the hunt must possess a pheasant permit, good for two birds, in addition to a hunting license and upland game bird validation. Revenues from tag sales are applied toward the cost of the program. Additional tags can be purchased throughout the season. While the intent of the program is to cover costs with tag revenue, the balance between annual program costs and hunter participation is difficult to predict with precision. Therefore, pheasant tags pay the bulk of the program costs, and any shortfall is paid with upland game bird stamp revenue.

Based on performance of past seasons, staff is proposing a 2021 season similar to that held in 2020 (Table 6). A pheasant tag allowing hunters two birds would again be required.

Table 6. Proposed locations and dates for the 2021 western Oregon fee pheasant hunts.

<b>2021 Proposed Western Oregon Fee Pheasant Hunts</b>	
<b>HUNT AREA</b>	<b>DATES</b>
Fern Ridge Wildlife Area	September 13 – October 10, 2021
Sauvie Island Wildlife Area	September 20 – October 3, 2021
Denman Wildlife Area	September 20 – October 8, 2021
E. E. Wilson Wildlife Area	September 27 – October 31, 2021

*2021 Youth Upland Game Bird Hunts.* Special youth hunts for pheasants began at E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area in the early 1950s, and are currently held at 12 other areas throughout the state (Table 7). All of the youth hunts provide a controlled opportunity for young hunters to experience bird hunting without competition from adult hunters. Youths ages 17 and younger are eligible to participate. The program has been popular and well received but has been experiencing a long-term declining trend in participation for most locations. In 2020, 605 youth hunter-visits were recorded for the program, down from 665 visits in 2019. This decline was expected with the cancellation of one popular youth hunt due to COVID-19 concerns.

Instructors provide youth shotgun skill clinics in association with the youth hunts at many locations. Sporting clay trailers provide a convenient method to for participants to learn how to hit flying targets and use a shotgun more effectively. All participants, including adults are required to wear a blaze orange hat and vest, in addition to shooting glasses (eye protection). Youth hunts draw considerable community interest and generally good publicity from the news media. Volunteers from sportsmen's clubs, the Hunter Education Program, and interested individuals assist with the hunts; some providing and handling dogs for the participants.

Table 7. Proposed 2021 youth upland hunt dates, locations, and maximum number of hunters allowed on area at any one time (hunter limitation).

<b>2021 Proposed Youth Upland Game Bird Hunts</b>		
<b>HUNT AREA</b>	<b>DATES</b>	<b>HUNTER LIMITATION</b>
Central Oregon (Near Madras)	September 18 & 19	80
City of Ontario property	October 16 & 17	20
Coquille Valley Wildlife Area	September 25 & 26	40
Denman Wildlife Area	September 18 & 19	85
E. E. Wilson Wildlife Area	September 25 & 26	70
Fern Ridge Wildlife Area	September 11 & 12	75
Irrigon Wildlife Area	September 25 & 26	15
John Day (private land)	September 18 & 19	30
Klamath Wildlife Area	September 18 & 19	80
Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area	September 18 & 19	35
Sauvie Island Wildlife Area	September 18 & 19	50
White River Wildlife Area (Mid-Columbia)	September 25 & 26	20

*2021 Pheasant Hunting Workshops.* The Department's Information and Education program proposes to offer two pheasant hunting workshops on Sauvie Island and E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area. These hunts take place prior to the regular season and require special approval from the Commission.

Table 8. Oregon outdoor skills education program pheasant hunting workshops.

<b>2021 Proposed Pheasant Hunting Workshops</b>	
<b>HUNT AREA</b>	<b>DATES</b>
Sauvie Island Wildlife Area	September 11 & 12
E. E. Wilson Wildlife Area	September 18 & 19

*2021 Lower Klamath Hills Youth Chukar Hunt.* The Klamath Chapter of the Oregon Hunters Association, in cooperation with the Department, will again offer a youth hunting opportunity for chukar in the Lower Klamath Hills regulated hunt area. The hunt is planned for October 23 and 24. The primary intent of this hunt is to provide youth 17 years of age and younger an upland hunting opportunity immediately following the release of chukar into the hunt area. Each youth shall be accompanied by one adult chaperone. The adult chaperone will be asked to refrain from hunting. Mentored Youth Hunter Program rules will apply to this hunt since it is within the general season dates for chukar. Youth hunters will be required to wear hunter orange and safety glasses. Adult

chaperones will be required to wear hunter orange. Hunting is available by reservation. Daily bag limit is two chukar.

*2021-22 Upland Game Bird Falconry Seasons.* A small group of hunters in Oregon use raptors to take upland game birds. All falconers are licensed, and staff coordinates with the USFWS on the monitoring of falconry activities in the state.

**Open Season<sup>1</sup>:** September 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022

**Daily Bag Limit:** One pheasant (either sex), two California quail, two Hungarian (Gray) partridge, two chukar partridge, two ruffed grouse, and two blue grouse.

**Possession Limit:** Three times the daily bag limit.

**Open Areas:** Statewide

**Sage-grouse Season<sup>1</sup>:** September 1, 2021 – January 31, 2022

**Daily Bag Limit:** One sage-grouse

**Season Limit:** Two sage-grouse

**Open Areas:** Those areas with permits allocated for controlled sage-grouse hunting in 2021.

<sup>1</sup>Although the seasons are long, falconry harvest is believed to be low with only about 140 licensed falconers in Oregon. A conservative sage-grouse season and bag limit is proposed. The falconry season for sage-grouse closes at the end of January, prior to the time birds begin gathering on leks where they are more vulnerable.

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## PUBLIC COMMENTS RELATED TO UPLAND GAME BIRD REGULATIONS

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See Attachment 5



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## MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS

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### POPULATION STATUS

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**Population Status:** Because of the Federal rulemaking schedule, migratory game bird population status information used to inform hunting season proposals is information collected during the calendar year prior to, or earlier, than the proposed seasons. For example, the proposals identified in this document for 2021-22 seasons are based in part on population status information collected in 2020 or earlier. Additionally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many aerial migratory game bird surveys planned by ODFW and the USFWS were not conducted in 2020.

**Mourning Doves:** Mourning dove abundance is assessed by a model using a combination of banding data (harvest probability) and hunter harvest information to estimate population size. Because doves must be harvested to generate this information, the derived population estimates produced are for preceding years. Oregon has been banding mourning doves to generate information for this population model since 2008. Last summer (2020) staff banded 986 doves across the state, up 11% from the previous year.

For August 2019, the USFWS estimated 23,993,314 mourning doves resided in the Western Management Unit (WMU), which includes Oregon, California, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, and Utah. This estimate is down 58% from 2018 (57,125,365). Information on the 2020 WMU population size is dependent on an estimate of the 2020-21 season harvest, which the USFWS has not yet finalized at this time. Mourning dove population trends can also be assessed by the US Geological Survey's Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). For Oregon, during the past 10-years, the trend is inconclusive.

**Band-tailed Pigeons:** Band-tailed pigeon population status is assessed by a model calculating the trend in pigeons counted at approximately 50 mineral sites in mid-July in California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. In Oregon, ODFW staff has been conducting these surveys at 20 to 22 mineral sites since 2004. Unlike mourning doves, methods to assess total abundance of pigeons have not been developed.

For 2020, the USFWS estimated no change in the trend of pigeon abundance over the long-term (previous 17 years) and short term (previous 5-years), though there is a positive trend when considering the previous 10 years. BBS data can also be used to assess population trends for pigeons. Over the long (1968-2019), mid (2010-2019), and short-term (2015-2019) trends are inconclusive for pigeons in Oregon. Range-wide, the trend is negative over the long-term but inconclusive over the mid and short-terms. When considering all factors, the Pacific Coast Population of band-tailed pigeons is currently considered stable.

**Ducks and Mergansers:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were no aerial breeding waterfowl surveys conducted in Oregon, or other Pacific Flyway waterfowl breeding areas in 2020. As a substitute, the USFWS used historical population trends to generate predictions of populations sizes to inform harvest management decisions for ducks.

**Geese:** Similar to ducks, there was no breeding population status information collected for geese in 2020, except Russian biologists did monitor breeding snow geese on Wrangel Island, Russia. In most cases, harvest management recommendations were based on the most recent 3-year average population size for the goose management populations in the Pacific Flyway. In general, most goose populations in the Pacific Flyway remain healthy (table 9). However, dusky Canada geese remain of concern, though their 2019 population estimate was 17,729, up 53% from 2018. Habitat conditions on Wrangel Island, Russia, were once again excellent and production was well above average in 2020.

Table 9. Current population status and objectives for Pacific Flyway goose populations.

	Most Recent Population Indices	Most Recent 3-Year Average	Population Objective	Status Relative to Objective
<b>Cackling Canada Geese</b>	205,287 (2019)	232,946 (2017 - 2019)	250,000	Below
<b>Dusky Canada Geese</b>	17,729 (2019)	14,410 (2017 - 2019)	20,000	Below
<b>Aleutian Canada Geese (winter)</b>	118,388 (2020)	163,087 (2018 - 2020)	60,000	Above
<b>Taverner's Canada Geese</b>	58,924 (2019)	48,471 (2017 - 2019)	None	NA
<b>Lesser Canada Geese</b>	13,066 (2019)	5,962 (2017 - 2019)	None	NA
<b>Pacific Western Canada Geese</b>	347,000 (2019)	331,800 (2017 - 2019)	None	NA
<b>Brant (winter)</b>	150,587 (2021)	149,600 (2017 - 2019)	162,000	Below
<b>Pacific Greater White-fronted Geese</b>	479,289 (2019)	601,650 (2017 - 2019)	300,000	Above
<b>Tule White-fronted Geese</b>	6,993 (2018)	12,859 (2016 - 2018)	10,000	Above
<b>Wrangel Island Snow Geese</b>	685,120 (2020)	477,707 (2018 - 2020)	120,000	Above
<b>Western Canadian Arctic Snow Geese</b>	451,000 (2013)	NA	200,000	Above
<b>Pacific Flyway Winter White Geese</b>	1,599,641 (2019)	1,456,202 (2017 - 2019)	NA	NA

**Coots:** The estimated continental breeding population was 1.64 million in 2019, which is 3% higher than the 2018 estimate and 15% below the LTA (1955-2018).

**Wilson's Snipe:** According to the North American Breeding Bird Survey the estimated annual change in the snipe population in the Western Region was -0.64% over the long-term (1966-2019) and -1.21% over the short-term (2010-2019).

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## 2019-20 HARVEST ESTIMATES

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The Harvest Information Program (HIP), a cooperative harvest survey between the USFWS and states, was implemented in Oregon during 1995. The USFWS estimates hunter effort and harvest by sampling hunters from records provided by the Oregon Electronic Licensing System (ELS). This cooperative survey continues to be refined yearly. Hunter and Harvest estimates for 2019-20 can be found in Table 10. Harvest estimates from the 2020-21 seasons will not be available until summer 2021.

**Total Waterfowl Hunters:** HIP estimates that during the 2019-20 season, 19,800 people hunted ducks and/or geese at least one day in Oregon. This estimate is down 14% from the previous 5-year average.

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## 2020-21 MIGRATORY WATERFOWL VALIDATION SALES

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**Waterfowl Validation/Stamp Sales:** State of Oregon waterfowl validation (stamp) sales to resident hunters for the 2020-21 season totaled 64,524, an increase of 9% from 2019-20. However, 66% of adults and youths who purchased a Sports Pac (Sports Pacs accounted for 76% of validation sales) did not redeem their Sports Pac waterfowl validation voucher for the actual waterfowl validation after July 1<sup>st</sup>, leaving the total number of resident waterfowl validations actually held by hunters during the 2020-21 season at 32,476, up 6% from 2019-20. Total 2020-21 nonresident game bird validation (valid for both waterfowl and upland game bird hunting) sales were 4,138, down 3% from 2019-20.

Table 10. Harvest Information Program estimates of Oregon migratory game bird hunters and harvest during the 2019-20, season compared to the previous five seasons.

	Hunters			Harvest		
	2019-20	Previous 5- Season Avg	% Change from 5- Season Avg	2019-20	Previous 5- Season Avg	% Change from 5- Season Avg
<b>Total Ducks</b>	<b>18,274</b>	<b>19,950</b>	<b>-8%</b>	<b>287,200</b>	<b>335,746</b>	<b>-14%</b>
Mallard				97,820	129,683	-25%
Gadwall				11,782	10,172	16%
American Wigeon				62,079	58,255	7%
Eurasian Wigeon				283	293	-3%
Green-winged Teal				42,311	48,947	-14%
Cinnamon & Blue-winged Teal				736	568	30%
Northern Shoveler				14,557	13,984	4%
Northern Pintail				22,997	37,576	-39%
Wood Duck				5,154	8,422	-39%
Redhead				793	354	124%
Canvasback				1,643	1,421	16%
Greater Scaup				5,721	4,987	15%
Lesser Scaup				7,363	5,249	40%
Ring-necked Duck				5,608	7,327	-23%
Barrows Goldeneye				793	450	76%
Common Goldeneye				1,699	537	216%
Bufflehead				3,455	5,141	-33%
Ruddy Duck				283	500	-43%
Black Scoter				0	0	0%
White-winged Scoter				0	5	-100%
Surf Scoter				181	91	99%
Harlequin Duck				0	0	0%
Long-tailed Duck				0	0	0%
Hooded Merganser				1,303	1,046	25%
Red-breasted Merganser				0	0	0%
Common Merganser				510	1,046	-51%
<b>Total Geese (excluding Brant)</b>	<b>8,872</b>	<b>10,456</b>	<b>-15%</b>	<b>55,701</b>	<b>54,485</b>	<b>2%</b>
Canada Geese				41,229	45,418	-9%
Greater White-fronted Geese				7,819	5,031	55%
Snow Geese				5,746	3,637	58%
Ross' Geese				711	360	98%
<b>Brant</b>	<b>&lt;50</b>	<b>&lt;50</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Mourning Doves</b>	<b>3,300</b>	<b>3,280</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>24,186</b>	<b>20,440</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Band-tailed Pigeons</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>1,073</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>American Coots</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>-5%</b>	<b>819</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>-59%</b>
<b>Wilson's Snipe</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>-75%</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>-59%</b>

## 2020-21 MIGRATORY GAME BIRD SEASON PROPOSALS

*Please note: All seasons for migratory game birds are established under USFWS frameworks. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife works through the Pacific Flyway Council and the USFWS regulatory process to make recommendations on these federal frameworks. Additionally, all recommendations must fall within established frameworks (can be more conservative but not more liberal) and all season selections by the Fish and Wildlife Commission are subject to approval by the USFWS.*

### • MOURNING DOVE

**Framework:** Under the national harvest strategy, when mourning dove abundance dictates a standard mourning dove season, Oregon is allowed a 60-day season between September 1 and January 15, with daily bag and possession limits of 15 and 45, respectively. Seasons may be selected in two zones and the seasons may be split into two segments. Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

**Recommendation:** Adoption of a 60-day season and bag and possession limits of 15 and 45, respectively. This is the standard regulatory alternative as prescribed by the National Mourning Dove Harvest Strategy. Adopt different seasons within two geographic zones (Figure 3). In Zone 1 adopt a split season with half of the days utilized starting September 1 and the remainder utilized beginning on November 15. In Zone 2 adopt a 60-consecutive day season beginning on September 1. This recommendation represents no change from last season, except to establish two dove hunting zones and split the season into two periods in Zone 1.

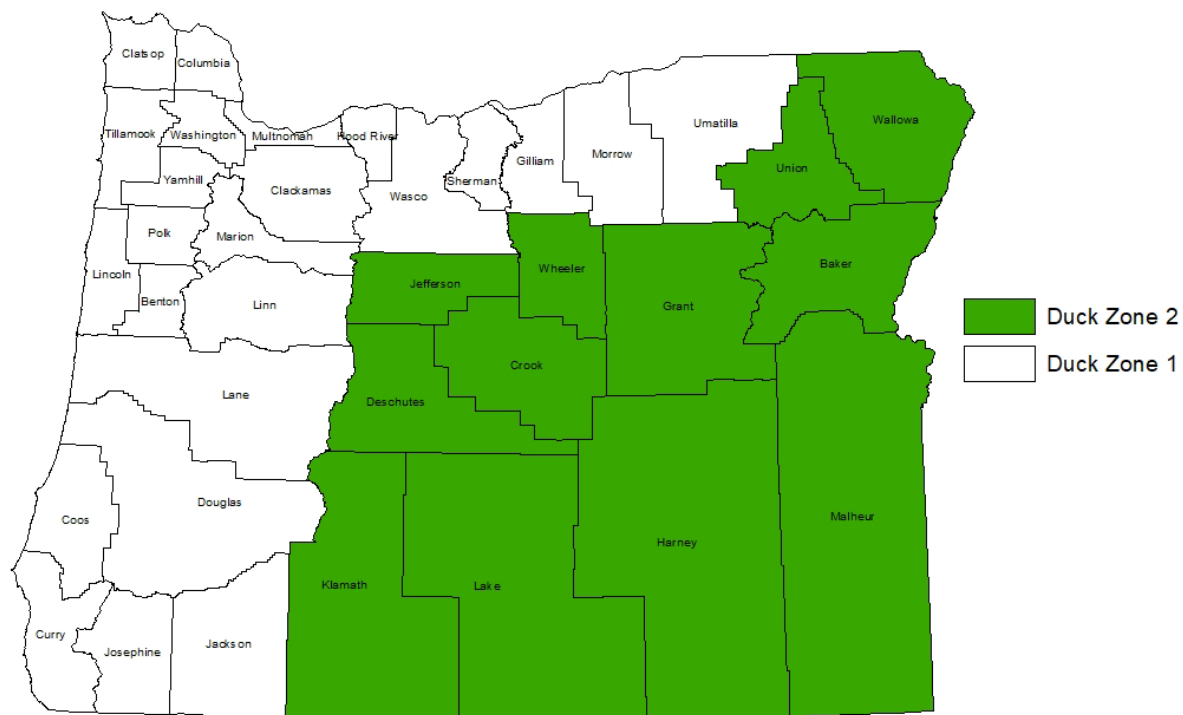


Figure 3. Oregon mourning dove, duck, and Wilson's snipe hunting zones.

Proposed Season:

<b>Zone 1:</b> (Zone 1 is western Oregon and Columbia Basin counties)	September 1 – September 30 November 15 – December 14
<b>Zone 2:</b> (Zone 2 is remaining eastern Oregon counties)	September 1 – October 30
<b>Daily Bag Limit:</b>	15 mourning doves
<b>Possession Limit:</b>	45 mourning doves
<b>Shooting Hours:</b>	One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

Discussion: In most years, especially in eastern Oregon, the effective length the mourning dove season is governed by the first cool temperatures or early storms that initiate southern migration, which usually occurs in early September. However, concentrations of wintering mourning doves can be found in some areas of western Oregon. Previously, the Department's Game Birds Committee had considered proposing a statewide split season to allow a harvest opportunity for these wintering doves, however, it was not supported as seasons could not be set by zone in Oregon under federal zone and split guidelines. However, federal zone and split guidelines established for the 2021-22 through 2025-26 seasons now allow the Department to propose different mourning dove seasons in up to two zones, beginning this hunting season. The Department will monitor hunter effort during this new season timeframe via harvest at western Oregon wildlife areas, as well as through the HIP program.

Public Comment: As of March 18, 2021, three persons have submitted comments about dove hunting. One person supports proposed change in the season structure, yet recommends adding more days to the later hunt period and one person does not support the proposal to change the season structure in Zone 1. Additionally, one person suggests that Eurasian collared doves should be classified as a game species (currently unprotected wildlife) and that the Department should establish a hunting season with a regulated bag limit for them.

- **BAND-TAILED PIGEON**

Framework: Under the Flyway adopted harvest strategy, when band-tailed pigeon abundance dictates a restrictive season, Oregon is allowed a 9-consecutive day season between September 15 and January 1, with daily bag and possession limits of 2 and 6, respectively. Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

Recommendation: Adoption of a 9-consecutive day season statewide beginning as early as allowed under federal frameworks with a bag and possession limits of 2 and 6, respectively. This is the restrictive regulatory alternative as prescribed by the Flyway's Pacific Coast Band-tailed Pigeon Harvest Strategy. This recommendation represents no change from last season.

Proposed Season:

**Open Season:** September 15 – September 23  
**Open Area:** Entire State  
**Daily Bag Limit:** 2 band-tailed pigeons  
**Possession Limit:** 6 band-tailed pigeons  
**Shooting Hours:** One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

Discussion: In July of 2010 the Pacific Flyway Council adopted an updated management plan for Pacific Coast band-tailed pigeons with a harvest strategy based on the population status derived from the coordinated July mineral site survey. Although there has been concern over the status of the pigeon population in past years, hunting restrictions have reduced hunter numbers and harvest to minimal levels, which are believed to have no significant impact on the population.

Public Comment: None

• **SPECIAL YOUTH WATERFOWL HUNTING DAYS**

Framework: States may select two days per duck-hunting zone, designated as “Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days,” in addition to their regular duck seasons. The days may be held concurrently. The days must be held outside any regular duck season on weekends, holidays, or other non-school days when youth hunters would have the maximum opportunity to participate. The days may be held up to 14 days before or after any regular duck season frameworks or within any split of a regular duck season, or within any other open season on migratory birds. The daily bag limit may include ducks, geese (including brant), mergansers, and coots and would be the same as those allowed in the regular season. Flyway species restrictions would remain in effect. Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

States may use their established definition of age for youth hunters. However, youth hunters must be under the age of 18. In addition, an adult at least 18 years of age must accompany the youth hunter into the field. This adult may not duck hunt but may participate in other seasons that are open on the special youth day. Youth hunters 16 years of age and older must possess a Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (also known as Federal Duck Stamp).

Recommendation: Adoption of a 2-day, youth waterfowl weekend in September. This recommendation represents no change from last season.

Proposed Season:

**Open Season:** September 25 & 26  
**Open Area:** Entire State  
**Daily Bag Limit:** Same as during regular season by zone  
**Shooting Hours:** One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

Discussion: This hunt allows youth hunters, with adult supervision, to have a chance to hunt waterfowl at a time when waterfowl are generally abundant, the weather is pleasant, and without the pressure to keep up with more experienced adult hunters or other distractions. Selection of this hunt does require that the general duck season be reduced by two days in length. This is due to

the limitation within the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) which restricts the hunting of any species of migratory bird to not more than 107 days. Since states in the Pacific Flyway are afforded a 107-day regular duck season, selection of special hunt days necessitates a reduction in the length of the regular season, so the total number of days open for duck hunting does not exceed the MBTA limit of 107 days.

*Public Comment:* None

- **SPECIAL VETERANS AND ACTIVE MILITARY PERSONNEL WATERFOWL HUNTING DAYS**

*Framework:* States may select two days per duck-hunting zone, designated as “Veterans and Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Days,” in addition to their regular duck seasons. The days may be held concurrently. The days may be held up to 14 days before or after any regular duck season framework or within any split of a regular duck season, or within any other open season on migratory birds. The daily bag limit may include ducks, geese (including brant), mergansers, and coots and would be the same as those allowed in the regular season. Flyway species restrictions would remain in effect. Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

Veterans (as defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code) and members of the Armed Forces on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves on active duty (other than for training), may participate. All hunters must possess a Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (also known as Federal Duck Stamp).

*Recommendation:* Adoption of a 1-day, Veterans and Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Day in February. Persons participating in this hunt would be required to carry valid proof of veterans or active duty status issued by the U.S. Department of Defense or Veteran’s Affairs. This recommendation represents no change from last season.

*Proposed Season:*

<b>Open Season:</b>	February 5, 2022
<b>Open Area:</b>	Entire State
<b>Daily Bag Limit:</b>	Same as during regular season by zone
<b>Shooting Hours:</b>	One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

*Discussion:* This season was established by the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act in 2019 was first adopted by the Commission in 2021-22. Department wildlife areas saw moderate participation during the inaugural hunt last February and the participating hunters enjoyed very good success. Selection of this special season does require that the general duck season be reduced by one day (the youth waterfowl weekend also requires a reduction in the general duck season). This is due to the limitation within the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) which restricts the hunting of any species of migratory bird to not more than 107 days. Since states in the Pacific Flyway are afforded a 107-day general duck season, selection of special hunt days necessitates a reduction in the length of the general season, so the total number of days open for duck hunting do not to exceed MBTA limit of 107 days.

*Public Comment:* None

• **DUCK AND MERGANSER**

*Framework:* A maximum season length of 107 days is allowed between the Saturday closest to September 24 (September 25) and January 31; daily bag limit of seven birds to include no more than two scaup, two hen mallards, two redheads, two canvasback, and one pintail. The season for scaup may only be open for 86 days during the general duck season. For all species the possession limit is three-times the daily bag limit. Shooting hours are from one half hour before sunrise to sunset. Zoning options approved by the USFWS may be retained (Figure 3). One split in season dates may occur in each zone.

*Recommendation:* Adoption of maximum days and bag limits as allowed by framework. Maintain traditional shooting hours. The adoption of a youth waterfowl weekend and a Veterans and Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Day requires a reduction in regular duck season by three days total, which accounts for the three-day split in each zone. This recommendation represents no change from last season.

*Proposed Seasons:*

<b>Zone 1:</b> (Zone 1 is western Oregon and Columbia Basin counties)	October 16 – October 31 & November 4 – January 30, 2022 <i>Scaup open from November 6 – January 30, 2022</i>
<b>Zone 2:</b> (Zone 2 is remaining eastern Oregon counties)	October 9 – November 28 & December 2 – January 23, 2022 <i>Scaup open from October 9 – November 28 &amp; December 2 – January 5, 2022</i>
<b>Daily Bag Limit (all seasons):</b>	7 total; with no more than 2 hen mallards, 2 redheads, 2 scaup, 2 canvasbacks, and 1 pintail. Note: scaup may only be taken during the open season specific to them.
<b>Possession Limit:</b>	Three times the bag limit
<b>Shooting Hours:</b>	One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

*Discussion:* Allowed frameworks were developed cooperatively with the USFWS, states, and all Flyway Councils under the concept of Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM). AHM is a process that increases objectivity and efficiency in the annual process of setting duck hunting regulations. AHM improves upon past approaches by using clearly defined harvest-management objectives, a limited set of regulatory options, and robust data assessment procedures. It is important to note the AHM process is dynamic and as new information is obtained, decision criteria is modified. This year represents the 14<sup>th</sup> year of implementation of the Western Mallard Model under AHM. This model takes information from breeding duck surveys in Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and California to guide the season for the entire Pacific Flyway.

The proposed season framework is identical to last year and flyway biologists believe continued liberal harvest regulations for most species are justified based on population information, even though aerial surveys could not be conducted last spring due to the pandemic. Species specific national harvest strategies are in place for pintail, scaup and canvasback.

Adoption of a 104-day regular duck season will accommodate the special youth waterfowl hunting weekend and the Veterans and Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Day (104-day regular season + 2-day youth weekend + 1-day Veterans and Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Day = 107-day maximum duck season under the MBTA) and should provide ample opportunity to hunt at preferred times.

*Public Comment:* As of March 18, four people commented that the pintail limit should be increased. Additionally, four people commented regarding electronic decoys for game bird hunting; three people would like to see their use allowed, while one person commented in support of the current prohibition.

- **GOOSE SEASONS**

*Please Note:* There are four separate frameworks regarding goose seasons; September Canada goose, general fall/winter, Northwest Permit Goose, and black brant season.

- **SPECIAL EARLY CANADA GOOSE SEASON**

*Framework:* A Canada goose season of up to 15 days during September 1–20 may be selected. The daily bag limit may not exceed 5 Canada geese. Areas open to hunting of Canada geese in each State must be described, delineated, and designated as such in each State’s hunting regulations. Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

*Recommendation:* Adoption of a September Canada goose season in all areas of the state except the South Coast Goose Zone, with a bag limit of 5 Canada geese in all open areas and possession limits triple the daily bag limit. Adoption of a season length of 9 days in the Northwest Permit Zone and 5 days in all other open zones, with all areas opening on the traditional opener of the Saturday after the Labor Day weekend. This recommendation represents no change from last season.

*Proposed Seasons:* (for zone descriptions see general goose and Northwest Permit Goose sections)

<b>Northwest Permit Zone:</b>	September 11 – 19
<b>Southwest Zone:</b>	September 11 – 15
<b>South Coast Zone:</b>	Closed
<b>Eastern Oregon Zone:</b>	September 11 – 15
<b>Klamath, Lake, Harney, &amp; Malheur Zone:</b>	September 11 – 15
<b>Daily Bag Limit (all zones):</b>	5 Canada geese
<b>Possession Limit:</b>	15 Canada Geese
<b>Shooting Hours:</b>	One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

*Discussion:* A September Canada goose season, designed to focus harvest on resident western Canada geese, was initiated in 1990 to alleviate agricultural crop depredation and provide a recreational opportunity on a growing resident goose population occurring in the lower Columbia River area. In later years, the September season was expanded statewide, however, this season has been closed in the South Coast Zone since 2006 due to a desire to hold late-winter Canada goose seasons in that Zone to address damage caused by Aleutian Canada geese.

Seasons are relatively short but cannot be longer because of the desire to hold long regular goose seasons as well as avoid season overlap with the Labor Day holiday. Currently, all frameworks for regular goose seasons are 107 days, the maximum allowed under the MBTA. Season days used for September Canada goose seasons require a subsequent reduction in general Canada goose seasons. In 2017, staff considered a nine-day season in all areas of the state, however, hunter comments indicated a preference to maintain as many days as possible during the regular season.

Public Comment: None

- **GENERAL FALL/WINTER GEESE**

Framework: Different frameworks exist for Canada/cackling, white-fronted, and white geese

- For Canada geese, a maximum season length of 107 days is allowed between the Saturday closest to September 24 (September 25) and January 31, except that the season in the South Coast Zone may extend through March 10. The maximum daily bag limit is 4, except the bag limit in the South Coast Zone may not exceed 6.
- For white-fronted geese a maximum season length of 107 days is allowed between the Saturday closest to September 24 (September 25) and March 10. The maximum daily bag limit is 10, except the bag limit in Lake County is 1.
- For white geese a maximum season length of 107 days is allowed between the Saturday closest to September 24 (September 25) and March 10. The maximum daily bag limit is 20
- For all species the possession limit is three-times the daily bag limit and shooting hours are from one half hour before sunrise to sunset. Seasons may be set within five geographic zones.

Recommendation: Adoption of maximum days and bag limits as allowed by framework and select differential seasons in five different zones. Maintain traditional shooting hours. The adoption of a September Canada season, a youth waterfowl weekend, and a Veterans and Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Day requires reductions in regular goose seasons from three to twelve days in each goose zone. This recommendation represents no change from last season, except the Department recommends increasing the bag limit for white geese to 20 statewide, regardless of season date, and federal framework zone boundary descriptions have been modified in eastern Oregon so that:

- The East Goose Zone only includes Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Morrow, and Umatilla counties and has been renamed the Mid-Columbia Goose Zone, and
- The Klamath, Lake, Harney, and Malheur Counties Goose Zone now also includes Deschutes, Jefferson, Wheeler, Crook, Grant, Baker, Union, and Wallowa counties and has been renamed the High Desert and Blue Mountains Goose Zone (Figure 4 & 5).

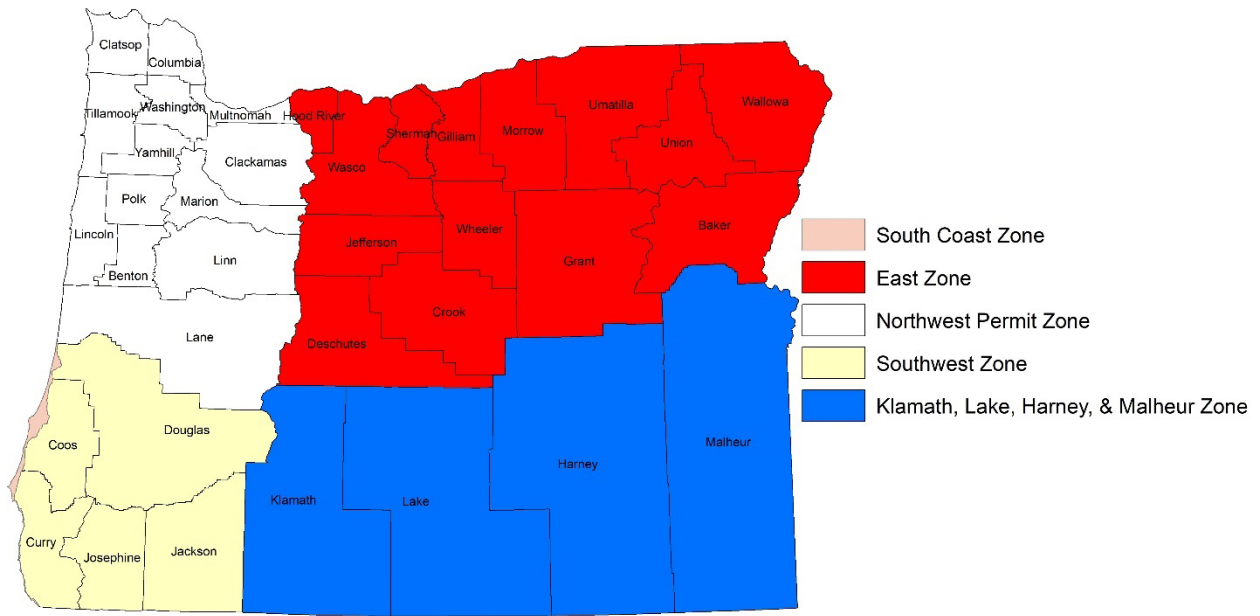


Figure 4. Goose hunting zones in Oregon, through the 2020/21 hunting seasons.

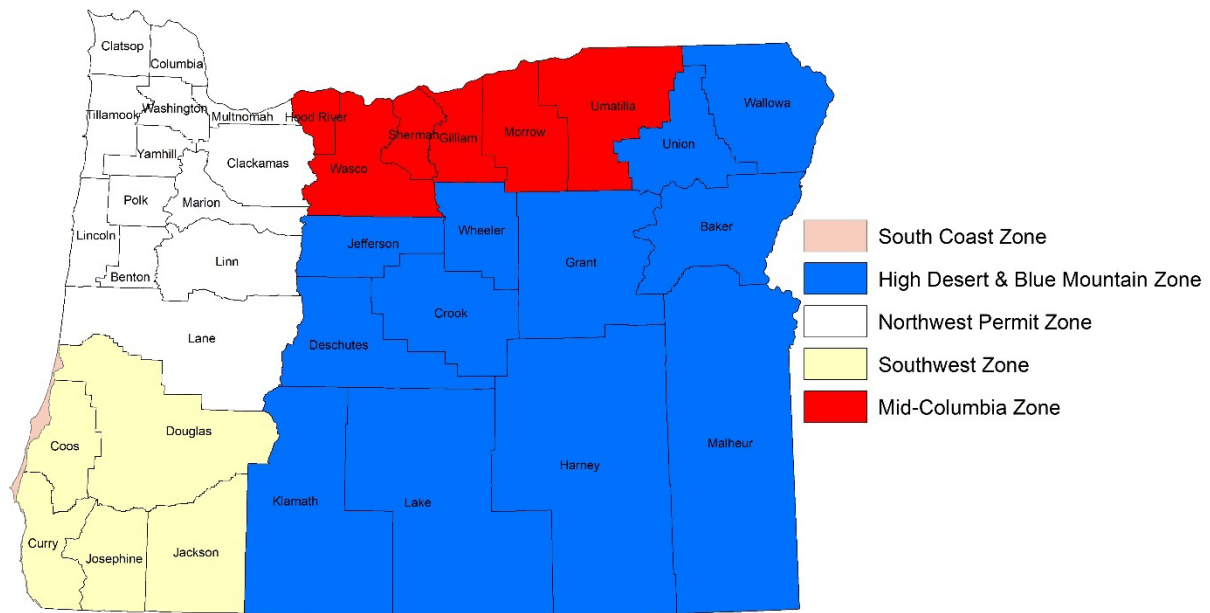


Figure 5. Goose hunting zones in Oregon, for the 2021/22 hunting seasons.

Proposed Seasons:

<b>Southwest Zone:</b> (all of Douglas, Coos, and Curry counties east of Hwy 101, and Jackson and Josephine counties.)	October 16 – October 31 & November 9 – January 30, 2022
<b>South Coast Zone:</b> (all of Douglas, Coos, and Curry counties west of Hwy 101)	October 2 – December 5 & December 18 – January 5, 2022 & February 19 – March 10, 2022
<b>Hight Desert &amp; Blue Mountains Zone:</b> (Canada Goose Seasons only)	October 9 – November 28 & December 14 – January 30, 2022
<b>Hight Desert &amp; Blue Mountains Zone:</b> (White-front and White Goose Seasons only)	October 9 – November 28 & January 16 – March 10, 2022
<b>Mid-Columbia Zone:</b> (Canada Goose Seasons only)	October 16 – October 31 & November 9 – January 30, 2022
<b>Mid-Columbia Zone:</b> (White-front and White Goose Seasons only)	November 9 – January 30 & February 5 – February 26, 2022
<b>Daily Bag Limit (all zones unless noted):</b>	4 Canada geese 10 white-fronted geese 20 white geese
<b>Possession Limit:</b>	Three times the daily bag limits
<b>Shooting Hours:</b>	One-half hour before sunrise to sunset
<i>Daily Bag Limit Exceptions</i>	
<b>South Coast Zone:</b>	6 Canada geese
<b>Lake County:</b>	1 white-fronted goose

Discussion: Most goose populations have remained robust in recent years, increasing recreational opportunity throughout the state. Snow, Ross's, Aleutian Canada, Pacific western Canada, and Pacific white-fronted goose populations in the flyway are at or significantly above management goals. The number of snow geese wintering in the state has greatly expanded in recent years, with significant wintering flocks now found around Sauvie Island and in the Columbia Basin. During the 2019-20 winter, approximately 25,000 snow geese wintered at Sauvie Island (and adjacent areas of Washington) while over 160,000 wintered in the Columbia Basin of Oregon and Washington. This rapid increase in wintering birds has paralleled the rapid increase of the population of snow geese from Wrangel Island, Russia. During 2020, Russian biologists estimated the population was over 650,000 adult snow geese (Figure 6) and the population is now over five times the population objective of 120,000. In response to the population increase, the federal framework bag limit for white geese in Oregon has been liberalized to 20 per day, for the entire season.

These large wintering flocks have led to increased depredation complaints, especially in the irrigated agricultural portions of the Columbia Basin, in Morrow and Umatilla Counties. In an effort

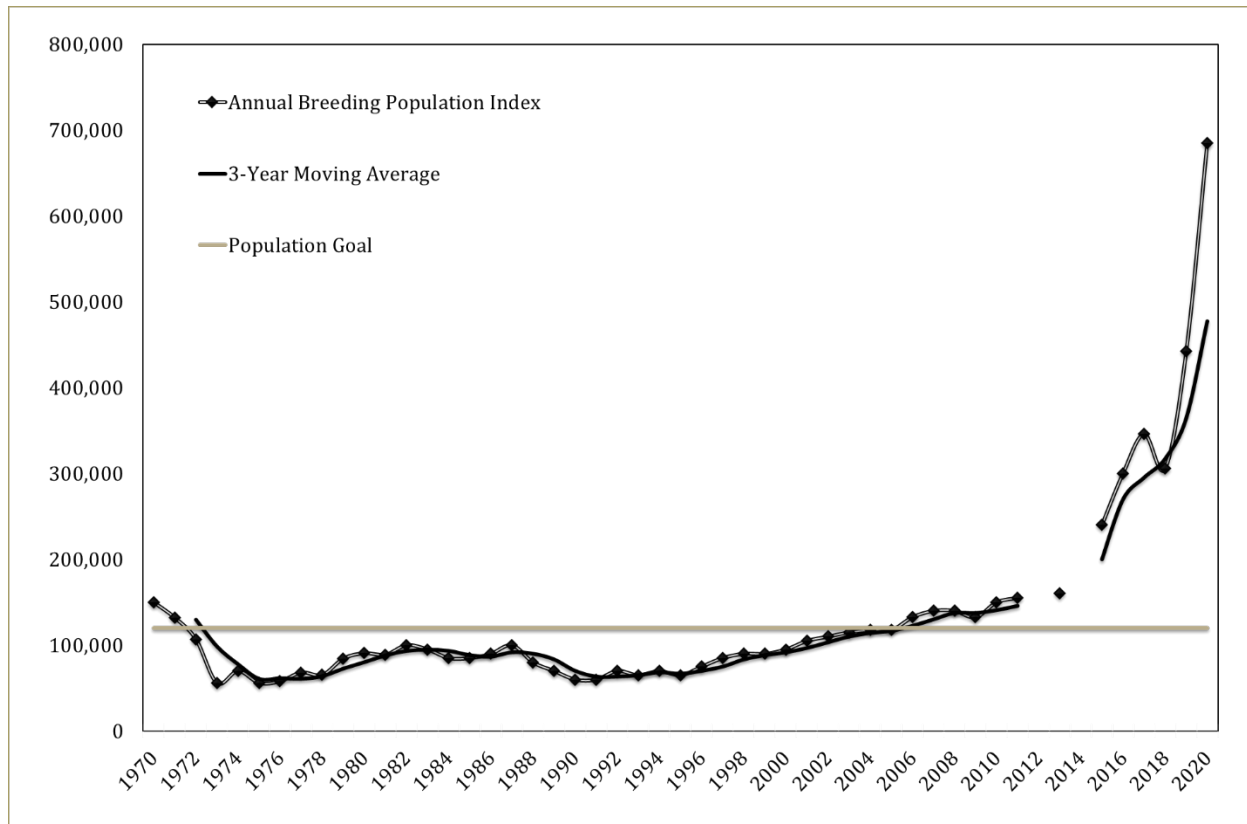


Figure 6. Breeding population indices for the Wrangel Island snow goose population, 1970 – 2020.

to shift some of the harvest effort into February to help alleviate some of the depredation that is occurring, the Department is recommending establishment of a new late-winter hunt period, targeting snow geese in this area. The intent of this change is to encourage harvest of snow geese in this area, at a time when they can be destructive to agricultural crops. However, the MBTA limits the overall length of the season to not more than 107 days and Oregon’s white goose season in this area is already 102 days long. Therefore, to implement a late hunt of meaningful length, hunt days must be shifted from earlier in the season. We are proposing a delay for the opening day of the white and white-fronted goose seasons from mid-October until early-November, and utilizing those saved days during a late hunt period in February.

However, the area affected by the wintering snow goose flock is relatively small compared to the old East Goose Zone, which contained Morrow and Umatilla counties. In order to ensure that the season for white and white-fronted geese remained open during the fall migration in most other counties (typically the only time these geese are present) the boundaries of the two eastern Oregon goose zones have been modified by the USFWS (Figures 4 & 5). Under these new boundaries, duck and goose zone boundaries in eastern Oregon are identical, which allows the Department to propose opening days for duck and Canada goose seasons which align in all eastern Oregon counties. Previously, in some counties, the duck season opened the week prior to the Canada goose season, and it was not uncommon for Oregon State Police troopers or wildlife area staff to encounter Canada geese taken by duck hunters on opening weekend of the duck season, when goose season was closed. This change would render this issue moot.

*Public Comment:* As of March 18, one person commented that electronic calls should be allowed to be used for white goose hunting during late-winter hunt periods. Additionally, another person would like to see the Lower Klamath NWR open to hunting during the late winter hunt period.

- **NORTHWEST PERMIT ZONE GEESE**

*Background:* Goose hunting seasons in Northwest Oregon have been restrictive since the 1950s to protect the dusky Canada goose which winters in this area. Dusky Canada geese have a small population size (range 7,000 – 18,000 over the last 30+ years) and are more vulnerable to harvest than other geese. Beginning in 1985, after steep declines in the dusky Canada goose population, a quota-based season was implemented which assigned a quota of dusky Canada geese to Oregon, which if reached would mandate a closure of the goose season. This system allowed goose seasons to be long, provided the dusky Canada goose quota was not attained, but also required all successful goose hunters to bring their geese to check stations so dusky Canada geese could be tallied toward the season quota.

When the first quota season was implemented only a small portion of the area was initially open for goose hunting (Sauvie Island Wildlife Area and adjacent private lands), however, over time this hunt program grew to encompass nearly the entire winter range of the dusky Canada goose in Oregon. The season achieved its objectives of keeping dusky Canada goose harvest minimal, while allowing long, liberal seasons for other types of geese to provide agricultural depredation relief and hunting opportunities. Dusky Canada goose subunit quotas were rarely exceeded, though overall goose harvest during the last 10 seasons with check stations sometimes exceeded 10,000 geese a season; on average only 28 of those were dusky Canada geese (last 10 seasons with check stations).

However, the quota system had some significant drawbacks. It was generally disliked by the hunting community as it forced all hunters harvesting geese to drive to hunter check stations (sometimes over 20 miles from their hunting area), which were only open limited hours. Additionally, the agricultural community was frustrated that goose hunting could not be allowed every day of the week. Hunting was limited to fewer than seven days a week since an entire new check station staff would be required to keep the stations open every day. Hunting geese everyday may help alleviate some of the depredation issues in this area. Lastly, due to increased personnel costs the program became costlier for the Department to administer. Staffing the nine check stations annually cost the agency approximately \$200,000, which traditionally was funded by the sale of waterfowl validations. Additionally, in past years a special \$50,000 overtime contract was in place with Oregon State Police to devote additional hours to enforcement, bringing the total cost for administration of this season to \$250,000. Validation sales are approximately \$500,000 annually, so 50% of the waterfowl stamp budget was being used to administer the season.

Beginning in 2013, the Department began working with the USFWS and our Pacific Flyway partners to revise the Flyway's Dusky Canada Goose Management Plan. A major discussion item was to review the quota-based harvest strategy and determine if a different approach could obtain similar results without the negative aspects which accompany the quota system. The Flyway's revised 2015 harvest strategy calls for a closed dusky Canada goose season in northwest Oregon and southwest Washington, the core wintering area for dusky Canada geese. Since the Federal framework for the dusky Canada goose seasons is a closed season, there is no need to use check stations to monitor harvest toward a quota. Additionally, the strategy recommends seasons for

other geese should follow the regular goose season frameworks for the rest of the state. This strategy applies to all of northwest Oregon, not just that portion delineated as the Northwest Permit Zone prior to 2015.

In recommending this strategy, the Flyway did recognize there are some risks of moving to a closed season for dusky Canada geese. One concern the Flyway has is that without check stations there is no way to monitor the harvest of dusky Canada geese, except in those cases where law enforcement detects a hunter with a dusky Canada goose. The Department will continue to work with Oregon State Police and USFWS law enforcement officers to promote the importance of hunter compliance checks during this season. Another concern is what to do if the dusky Canada goose population begins to decline in the future. If that happens, the overall goose season may need to become more restrictive. If the dusky Canada goose population falls below 7,500 geese, the plan calls for goose hunting to only be allowed over crops or pastures which could be damaged by geese.

Frameworks guided by this new strategy were first adopted by the USFWS for use during the 2015 season and remain in effect for the 2021-22 season. Additionally, the states of Washington and Oregon entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the USFWS in 2015 which outlines all of the voluntarily actions the states will take to ensure hunters are equipped to identify the different types of geese in the hunt area and avoid taking dusky Canada geese. The MOU requires the Department to continue to conduct surveys for neck collared dusky Canada geese. The data is used to estimate annual adult survival rates, which are used as an index to determine if dusky Canada goose harvest has changed over past levels. Currently, there is some evidence that adult survival has decreased since the check station program ended. From 2001–2015 survival was 0.809 (SE = 0.005, 95% CI = 0.799–0.818), while from 2016–2019 survival was 0.724 (SE = 0.013, 95% CI = 0.699–0.748). We are not certain if this apparent decrease in survival of adult dusky geese is related to closed season take on the winter grounds or some other factor.

*Framework:* A maximum season length of 107 days is allowed between the Saturday closest to September 24 (September 25) and March 10. Maximum daily bag limits are 4 Canada geese, 10 white-fronted geese, and 20 white geese, except that the season for dusky Canada geese is closed. For all species the possession limit is three-times the daily bag limit. Shooting hour frameworks are from sunrise to sunset. The season may be split into three segments.

*Recommendation:* Adoption of maximum days and bag limits as allowed by framework. Maintain shooting hours of sunrise to sunset. The adoption of a September Canada season and a youth waterfowl weekend require a reduction in regular season of eleven days. Adoption of a Veterans and Active Military Personnel Waterfowl Hunting Day does not affect the length of this season since the season is proposed to be open on February 5, 2022 for all hunters. This season recommendation represents no change from last season, except to increase the bag limit of white geese from 6 per day to 20 per day.

Proposed Seasons:

<b>Northwest Permit Zone:</b> (all of Benton, Clatsop, Columbia, Clackamas, Lane, Linn, Marion, Multnomah, Tillamook, Washington, and Yamhill counties)	October 23 – October 31 & November 20 – January 11, 2022 & February 5 – March 10, 2022
<b>Daily Bag Limit:</b>	4 Canada/cackling geese ( <i>except dusky Canada geese are closed to harvest</i> ) 10 white-fronted geese 20 white geese
<b>Sauvie Island Wildlife Area:</b> Eastside, Westside and Oak Island Only	Wildlife Area hunt days occurring from October 23 – October 31 & November 20 – January 11, 2022
<b>Daily Bag Limit:</b>	20 white geese
<b>Possession Limit (all areas):</b>	Three times the daily bag limits
<b>Shooting Hours (all areas):</b>	Sunrise to sunset

Additional Regulations:

- Maintain goose hunting during all days of the week. Hunting all days of the week allows hunters to hunt on their preferred days and provides landowners suffering depredation the opportunity to utilize hunting to address the damage whenever it occurs.
- Maintain the goose hunting closure area near Pacific City in Tillamook County, where a small closure is in place to protect Aleutian Canada geese which nest on the Semidi Islands, Alaska. Maintain all other private lands being open for goose hunting. Maintain the goose hunting closures on state wildlife areas (Sauvie Island, Fern Ridge, and E. E. Wilson) except maintain the white goose hunting opportunity at Sauvie Island Wildlife Area. Wildlife Area closures are meant to encourage Canada geese to forage on public lands in an effort to reduce agricultural damage to neighboring private lands.
- Maintain the requirement that all hunters must possess a valid Northwest Oregon Goose Permit while hunting.
- In addition to potentially receiving a citation; maintain the penalty that any hunter taking a dusky Canada goose have their Northwest Oregon Goose Permit invalidated for the remainder of the season and must retake the goose identification exam prior to hunting geese in the permit zone during subsequent seasons.
- Maintain the goose hunter education program for permit zone hunters. This will continue to improve knowledge of goose management issues and the role hunters play in this process.

*Discussion:* Goose hunters in northwest Oregon have proven over the last 30+ years that they can shift their harvest towards other geese and avoid taking dusky Canada geese. Significant changes occurred to this season in 2015 which were generally very well received by hunters and the agricultural community. No major issues related to closed season dusky Canada goose take have been noted during the previous seasons. Managers believe the Flyway's Dusky Canada Goose Management Plan has the necessary checks in place to respond appropriately should the dusky Canada goose population decline in the future.

*Public Comment:* As of March 18, one person commented that the cackling goose bag limit should be increased and that the Department should consider a more modest increase in the white goose bag limit. Another person commented that the white goose season should be open concurrent with the duck season at Sauvie Island Wildlife Area.

- **BRANT**

*Framework:* A maximum season length of 27 days is allowed between the Saturday closest to September 24 (September 25) and December 15. Maximum daily bag limit is 2 brant and the possession limit 6. Shooting hours are from one half hour before sunrise to sunset. Additionally, in the past the Commission has supported brant seasons in Oregon which purposefully overlap with seasons in California.

*Recommendation:* Adoption of 16-day season with a daily bag limit of 2. This recommendation represents no change from last season.

*Proposed Season:*

<b>Statewide:</b>	November 27 – December 12
<b>Daily Bag Limit:</b>	2 brant
<b>Possession Limit:</b>	6 brant
<b>Shooting Hours:</b>	One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

*Discussion:* Oregon coastal bays are a minor wintering site for brant in the Pacific Flyway, with only three bays (Tillamook, Netarts, and Yaquina) regularly hosting concentrations of wintering brant. Surveys conducted each January typically tally fewer than 400 brant among the three bays. There are also very few concentrations of migrating brant in in other Oregon estuaries during the framework period. Due to the low numbers of wintering birds, relative to the overall Pacific Flyway wide population, the brant season in Oregon has been short in duration with restrictive bag limits.

Reasons for the low wintering numbers in Oregon are unknown, though human disturbance has been documented to have detrimental effects on brant populations in other areas of the Flyway. Development and aquaculture (oyster plats) in estuaries, which can destroy eelgrass beds, and other non-hunting recreational activities in Oregon, are of concern. Brant hunter numbers in Oregon are low and minimal harvest occurs in Oregon. Even though Federal frameworks allow more hunting opportunity for Oregon than proposed here, the Department continues to support a conservative approach to brant hunting adopted by the Commission over two decades ago. Two objectives of the approach were to overlap Oregon and California seasons whenever possible and maintain harvest in Oregon at a moderate level.

*Public Comment:* None

- **AMERICAN COOT**

Framework: Concurrent with duck season with a daily bag limit of 25 and a possession limit of 75. Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

Recommendation: Adoption of maximum days and bag limits as allowed by framework. This recommendation represents no change from last season.

Proposed Season:

<b>Statewide:</b>	Concurrent with duck season
<b>Daily Bag Limit:</b>	25 coot
<b>Possession Limit:</b>	75 coot
<b>Shooting Hours:</b>	One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

Public Comment: None

- **WILSON'S SNIPE**

Framework: A maximum season length of 107 days between September 1 and February 28, with a daily bag limit of 8 and a possession limit of 24. A two-way season split can be selected. Hunting zones may be selected by established duck hunting zones.

Recommendation: Adoption of maximum days and bag limits as allowed by framework with the season in Duck Zone 1 beginning three weeks after the duck season begins and the season in Duck Zone 2 running concurrent with duck season, except the snipe season would be open during the 3-day split in the duck season. This season recommendation represents no change from last season.

Proposed Season:

<b>Duck Zone 1:</b>	November 6 – February 20, 2022
<b>Duck Zone 2:</b>	October 9 – January 23, 2022
<b>Daily Bag Limit:</b>	8 snipe
<b>Possession Limit:</b>	24 snipe
<b>Shooting Hours:</b>	One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

Discussion: Snipe are a lightly hunted game bird species in Oregon. Federal surveys estimate an average of about 500 hunters pursue snipe in Oregon and they generally harvest about 1,000 snipe per season. Snipe season dates have varied over the years to a season concurrent with duck season to a season which opens later than duck season or has a split in December which allows some hunting into February, when duck season is closed. From 2005 – 2010 the season was concurrent with duck season, but after several public requests in 2011 the Department recommended a season that opened later than duck season in Zone 1 only and closed in mid-February. Hunter effort and harvest estimates are difficult to generate accurately for lightly hunted species, so federal survey data cannot be used to gauge the impact of the season change. Some hunters do take advantage of the opportunity to hunt snipe during February.

Public Comment: None

- **FALCONRY**

*Framework:* Maximum season length of 107 days, including those days when the gun season is open. Falconry daily bag and possession limits for all permitted migratory game birds shall not exceed 3 and 6, respectively, singly or in the aggregate. During that time when the season for dove, pigeons, crow and/or snipe, overlaps that for waterfowl, the falconer's bag may contain no more than 3 of all the federally regulated species.

*Recommendation:* Adoption of maximum days and bag limits as allowed by framework. This recommendation represents no change from last season.

*Proposed Season:*

<b>Duck, Coot, Merganser, Crow and Snipe:</b>	Concurrent with gun seasons
<b>Geese:</b>	Concurrent with gun seasons except no hunting is allowed in the Northwest Permit Goose Zone or during any September Canada goose season.
<b>Mourning Dove and Band-tailed Pigeon:</b>	September 1 – December 16
<b>Daily Bag Limits:</b>	3 in the aggregate, though not more than 1 band-tailed pigeon or goose
<b>Possession Limits:</b>	Three times the daily bag limits

*Discussion:* There are approximately 140 licensed falconers in the state, not all of who fly their raptors after game. Their collective harvest of birds is small. Most migratory game bird season proposals are concurrent with gun seasons since liberal 107-day general duck and goose seasons deny opportunities for falconers to hunt outside of normal gun seasons.

*Public Comment:* None

- **CROW**

*Framework:* Liberal seasons are offered outside of months when nesting may occur. Per treaty stipulations between the United States and Mexico, a 124-day season is allowed during a calendar year. Depredation and nuisance crows can still be taken outside of established hunting seasons under a federal depredation order; however, federal action since 2010 has made the take of depredation and nuisance birds more restrictive. Now crows taken under the depredation order must be taken with non-toxic ammunition and all take must be reported to the USFWS.

*Recommendation:* Adoption of maximum days allowed. This recommendation represents no change from last season.

Proposed Season:

<b>Open Season:</b>	October 1 – January 31, 2022
<b>Open Area:</b>	Entire State
<b>Daily Bag Limit:</b>	No limit
<b>Possession Limit:</b>	No limit

Public Comment: None

OTHER PUBLIC COMMENT RECEIVED RELATED TO MIGRATORY GAME BIRD  
HUNTING

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As of March 18, four people asked that a controlled swan hunt be created or that the Department undertake the steps to initiate a swan hunt through the Flyway process. Additionally, one person commented that persons hunting on the Columbia River, should be allowed to use an Oregon or Washington resident hunting license regardless of what state they are hunting in.

## PROPOSED CHANGES TO WILDLIFE AREA HUNT PROGRAM REGULATIONS

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*Background:* The Department, through its Information & Education Division, has been offering special waterfowl hunting workshops which include classroom education, shotgun shooting, and an actual hunt for several years. There is a desire to offer one of these workshops at Sauvie Island Wildlife Area due to the growing number of new adult onset hunters, especially from the Portland area. However, because of the controlled waterfowl hunt at Sauvie Island, these workshops have not previously been offered there.

*Recommendation:* Reserve the Mudhen unit at the Wildlife Area's Eastside for a Department sponsored Learn to Waterfowl Hunt Workshop on November 14.

*Discussion:* Currently, there are 51 hunt days at Sauvie Island, five of which are reserved for youth only hunters in the Racetrack, Hunt, and Mudhen units. This workshop would reserve one of these days, in only the Mudhen Unit, for a learn to hunt workshop. Administration of the hunt would be coordinated by the Information and Education Division.

*Public Comment:* As of March 18, two people commented on aspects of the Wildlife Area hunt programs, though not related to the proposal for a Learn to Hunt Workshop. One person suggested hunters should not be able to use more than 25 shotgun shells per day at Fern Ridge Wildlife Area. Another person commented that Sauvie Island Wildlife Area hunt days should include the day after Thanksgiving and both days of the final weekend of the season.