
PACIFIC FLYWAY COUNCIL

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Recommendation 3 — Interim Population Objectives for Western Arctic and Wrangel Island Populations of Lesser Snow Geese

Recommendation

The Pacific Flyway Council (Council) adopts the interim population objectives for Western Arctic and Wrangel Island populations of lesser snow geese to inform harvest management decisions until alternative monitoring programs and population objectives have been identified and implemented.

Justification

This addendum provides interim population objectives for Western Arctic and Wrangel Island populations of lesser snow geese. Interim objectives are necessary because existing population objectives in Pacific Flyway Council management plans for these populations are based on monitoring programs that no longer exist. Both management plans recommend spring or breeding area surveys to assess population status, but these surveys have either been discontinued or are no longer feasible. However, annual counts of snow geese during winter in parts of California, Oregon, and Washington are available. The interim population objectives rely on these operational winter surveys, and will be used to inform harvest management decisions until alternative monitoring programs and population objectives have been identified and implemented. In August 2022, the Pacific Flyway White Goose Subcommittee endorsed a study that will evaluate all available monitoring data for both populations to determine the most effective approach for monitoring these populations into the future.

This interim strategy will be re-evaluated by the White Goose Subcommittee as additional information and analyses are made available to the group.

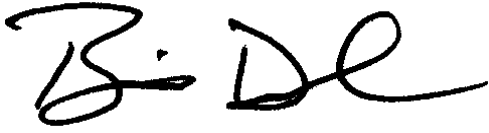
Adoption

Pacific Flyway Study Committee
February 17, 2023

Contact: Kyle A. Spragens

Adam Behney, Chair

Pacific Flyway Council
March 21, 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Dreher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Brian Dreher, Chair

Recommendation 3 (Addendum)

February 17, 2023

INTERIM POPULATION OBJECTIVES FOR WESTERN ARCTIC AND WRANGEL ISLAND POPULATIONS OF LESSER SNOW GEESE

This addendum provides interim population objectives for Western Arctic and Wrangel Island populations of lesser snow geese. Interim objectives are necessary because existing population objectives in Pacific Flyway Council management plans for these populations are based on monitoring programs that no longer exist. Both management plans recommend spring or breeding area surveys to assess population status, but these surveys have either been discontinued or are no longer feasible. However, annual counts of snow geese during winter in parts of California, Oregon, and Washington are available. The interim population objectives rely on these operational winter surveys. The objectives will be used to inform harvest management decisions until alternative monitoring programs and population objectives have been identified and implemented. In August 2022, the Pacific Flyway White Goose Subcommittee endorsed a study that will evaluate all available monitoring data for both populations to determine the most effective approach for monitoring these populations into the future.

For the Western Arctic Lesser Snow Goose Population

If the winter index (3 year-average) in the California Central Valley exceeds 300,000 total snow geese, then maintain liberal season and bag-limit regulations.

For the Wrangel Island Lesser Snow Goose Population

If the winter index (3-year average) in Fraser-Skagit region exceeds 70,000 adult snow geese, as determined by age-ratio surveys, then maintain liberal season (past January 31) and bag-limit regulations.

This interim strategy will be re-evaluated by the White Goose Subcommittee as additional information and analyses are made available to the group.

Table 1. Summary of available Western Arctic population (WAP) breeding photo inventory and California winter survey time series, accounting for and removing Ross' geese from the California winter estimate.

Year	WAP photo inventory (summer)	White Geese (CA winter)	ROGO proportion ¹	Snow Goose	correction factor ²
1976	181,975				
1981	225,745	711,300	0.377	443,069	1.96
1987	205,072	477,600	0.404	284,602	1.39
1995	486,019	464,400	0.407	275,621	0.57
2002	579,753	523,700	0.377	326,213	0.56
2007	310,775	978,622	0.338	647,750	2.08
2009	427,528	827,055	0.318	563,803	1.32
2013	419,800	1,275,890	0.272	929,486	2.21
2022	discontinued	1,093,828	0.131	950,427	--
				average	1.44
				original objective	200,000
				corrected	288,499
<p>1 = Ross' goose composition estimated for years with WAP photo inventory based upon fitted relationship across time series.</p> <p>2 = California winter snow goose divided by WAP photo inventory.</p>					