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# PACIFIC FLYWAY COUNCIL

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## Recommendation 3 — Revised Harvest Strategy for Emperor Geese

### Recommendation

The Pacific Flyway Council (Council) adopts the revised harvest strategy for emperor geese to inform harvest regulations beginning in the 2027–2028 hunting season.

### Justification

This addendum revises the harvest strategy in the Council’s 2016 Management Plan for the Emperor Goose (Plan). The revised harvest strategy maintains many of the guidelines in the current strategy but reduces the federal quotas of birds allowed under a permit hunt in the State of Alaska and updates the terms of the strategy.

In 2016, the Plan was revised to include a harvest strategy that specified a regulatory framework for reopening the fall-winter season in 2017 after 30 years of closure. The Plan served as a companion to the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council (AMBCC) emperor goose Management Plan, which specified regulations for the spring-summer subsistence harvest of emperor geese. As such, the two plans contain identical population assessment methods, population objectives, and regulatory harvest thresholds. Because the harvest strategy represented a significant departure from previous management, the Plan stipulated that after a 3-year period (2017–2019) the subcommittee in cooperation with the AMBCC emperor goose committee would conduct a thorough review of available data to determine efficacy of the harvest strategy and consider alternative strategies if warranted. The review was initiated in 2021 and concluded in 2026.

The current harvest strategy is based on using the indicated total bird index (index) from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Coastal Zone Survey (Coastal Zone) to assess population status relative to prescribed regulatory thresholds. The harvest strategy specifies the fall-winter season will open if the Coastal Zone index from the previous year is greater than 23,000 birds. If the Coastal Zone index is above 28,000 (Liberal), the annual quota will be 1,000 birds, and if the index is between 23,000 and 28,000 (Restrictive), a reduced annual quota of 500 birds is specified. The fall-winter season will close if the Coastal Zone index is less than or equal to 23,000.

Since 2017, the Coastal Zone index declined from a 30-year-high of 33,277 in 2016 to below the closure threshold in 2024 (index of 17,223). Accordingly, both hunts were closed in 2025, and a closed season was also recommended for 2026 (index of 22,180 in 2025). The declining population status in eight years prompted the committees to recommend additional conservation measures in their respective harvest strategies to reduce annual total harvest with the intent of maintaining the population above an index of 23,000. Thus, for the AMBCC strategy, the Executive Committee approved a mandatory reduced spring season length and egg harvest

closure in the Conservation Measures package (akin to the Restrictive package in the Council strategy). For the Council strategy, the subcommittee recommended reduced harvest quotas during an open fall-winter season.

This update reduces the quota of 1,000 to 500 birds if the Coastal Zone index is higher than 28,000 (Standard) and reduces the quota from 500 to 250 birds if the index is greater than 23,000 and less than or equal to 28,000 birds (Restrictive). The revised strategy maintains the closed season prescription if the index is less than or equal to 23,000 (Closed).

The 2026 addendum to the Plan (below) would replace the harvest strategy found on pages 18–19 of the 2016 Plan.

**Adoption**

Contact: Jason Schamber

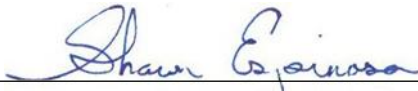
Pacific Flyway Study Committee  
March 13, 2026



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Russell Woolstenhulme, Chair

Pacific Flyway Council  
March 31, 2026



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Shawn Espinosa, Chair

**REVISED HARVEST STRATEGY FOR EMPEROR GEESE**

This harvest strategy is complementary to the spring-summer subsistence harvest strategy in the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council Emperor Goose Management Plan.

The harvest strategy is based on using an indicated total bird index from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Coastal Zone Survey (index) from the year before the regulatory year to assess population status relative to management thresholds that determine the annual regulation package. If the index from the previous year is unavailable, the index from the most recent year will be used unless missing data spans >1 year then the Subcommittee will meet to consider all pertinent data and determine appropriate action.

The term of this harvest strategy is 10 years: 2026-2035. However, the Subcommittee in cooperation with the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council will periodically review available data and propose modifications to strategy prescriptions if needed.

A prescriptive harvest strategy is established as follows for the fall-winter hunting seasons:

	Regulation Package		
	Closed	Restrictive	Standard
Management threshold	≤23,000	>23,000 to ≤28,000	>28,000
Annual bird quota <sup>1</sup>	0	250	500
Hunt Zones <sup>2, 3</sup>	Game Management Units 8–10, 17–18, 22–23		

<sup>1</sup>Annual quotas for emperor goose harvest will be administered by registration permit with a harvest reporting requirement. A permit allows the harvest and possession of 1 emperor goose per hunter per season.

<sup>2</sup>Season dates follow those for the respective Alaska Migratory Bird Hunting Zone.

<sup>3</sup>Kodiak Island Roaded Area in GMU 8 is closed to hunting emperor geese: the closed area consists of that portion of Kodiak Island (including exposed tidelands) south of a line from Termination Point along the north side of Cascade Lake to Anton Larsen Bay and east of a line from Crag Point to the west end of Saltery Cove. Marine waters adjacent to the Kodiak Island Roaded Area within 500 feet from the water’s edge are included in the Kodiak Island Roaded Area. The Kodiak Island Roaded Area does not include islands offshore of Kodiak Island.