

PACIFIC FLYWAY COUNCIL

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Recommendation 1 — Pacific Brant Harvest Strategy Revision

Recommendation

The Pacific Flyway Council (Council) adopts the revised population objective and harvest strategy to inform harvest management decisions beginning in the 2025-2026 hunting season.

Justification

This addendum updates the 2018 Management Plan (Plan) for Pacific Brant. The Plan identifies as a priority the need to improve the current management index (Winter Brant Survey; [WBS]) because the survey lacks a measure of precision. To address the shortcomings, the Service has developed a new fall photographic aerial survey (referred to as the Fall Brant Survey; [FBS]) at Izembek Lagoon, Alaska. The Pacific Flyway Pacific Brant Subcommittee approved replacing the WBS with the FBS to inform harvest management decisions at their February 2024 meeting. As such, the population objective and harvest strategy thresholds needed to be rescaled by a factor of 1.99 to fit the relationship between the WBS and FBS. In addition, the original closure and reopening thresholds will be maintained for consistency with other closure thresholds used for Pacific Flyway geese.

The harvest strategy will be revisited as new FBS data becomes available and additional analysis can be conducted to assess the thresholds.

The 2024 addendum to the Pacific brant harvest strategy* is as follows and would replace the harvest strategy, in part, found on page 15 of the plan:

The harvest strategy is intended to maintain a minimum Pacific brant population of 102,000 (black and Western High Arctic [WHA] brant combined) and to allow the population to increase toward the objective of 322,000 while maintaining fall-winter harvest opportunity. Similar to the population objective, harvest guidelines are based on the three-year average number of brant estimated during the fall photographic aerial survey at Izembek Lagoon, Alaska (fall brant survey [FBS]). If the annual FBS is not completed, the most recent 3-yr average will be substituted for the missing year.

A prescriptive harvest strategy is established as follows for fall/winter harvest seasons in Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and California.

Regulation Package	FBS (3-year average)
Closed ¹	<102,000
Restrictive	102,000–243,000
Moderate	243,001–293,000
Liberal	>293,000

Regulation Package	Restrictive	Moderate	Liberal	Framework Dates (All Packages)
AK	51 days 2 daily bag	107 days 2 daily bag	107 days 4 daily bag	September 1 through January 26
OR/CA	16 days 2 daily bag	27 days 2 daily bag	37 days 2 daily bag	Saturday closest to September 24 through December 15
WA	16 days 2 daily bag	27 days 2 daily bag	37 days 2 daily bag	Saturday closest to September 24 through last Sunday in January

¹*If the population declines to a level which prescribes a closed brant season, a restrictive hunting season may not resume until the 3-year average population index surpasses 112,000 brant.*

*There is no change to the additional harvest guidelines for WHA Brant in Washington.

Adoption

Pacific Flyway Study Committee
August 28, 2024

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Sean Yancey, Chair

Pacific Flyway Council
August 30, 2024



Doug Brimeyer, Chair