

establish a regulation authorizing State wildlife agencies (or their authorized agents) to conduct (or allow) management activities, including the take of birds, on resident Canada goose populations. This proposed rule would authorize indirect and/or direct population control strategies such as aggressive harassment, nest and egg destruction, gosling and adult trapping and culling programs, expanded methods of take to increase hunter harvest, or other general population reduction strategies. The intent of this proposed rule is to allow State wildlife management agencies sufficient flexibility, within predefined guidelines, to deal with problems caused by resident Canada geese within their respective States. Other guidelines would include criteria for such activities as special take authorization during a portion of the Treaty closed period (August 1–31); control for the protection of airport safety, agriculture, and public health; and the take of nests and eggs without permits.

States could choose to implement specific strategies, such as specific depredation orders that address goose control at airports, agricultural sites, public health sites, and the non-permitted take of nests and eggs, identified under the regulation conditions and guidelines. The Orders would be for resident Canada goose populations only and, as such, in order to ensure protection of migrant Canada goose populations, could only be implemented between April 1 and August 31, except for the take of nests and eggs which could be additionally implemented in March.

Special Canada goose hunting seasons within the existing Treaty frameworks (*i.e.*, September 1 to March 10) would continue to be handled within the existing migratory bird hunting season regulation development process. This proposed rule would also provide new regulatory options to State wildlife management agencies to potentially increase the harvest of resident Canada geese above that which results from existing special Canada goose seasons that target resident Canada geese. This proposed rule would authorize the use of additional hunting methods such as electronic calls, unplugged shotguns, and expanded shooting hours (one-half hour after sunset). During existing, operational, special September Canada goose seasons (*i.e.*, September 1–15), these additional hunting methods would be available for use on an operational basis. Utilization of these additional hunting methods during any new special seasons or other existing, operational special seasons (*i.e.*,

September 15–30) could be approved as experimental and would require demonstration of a minimal impact to migrant Canada goose populations. These experimental seasons would be authorized on a case-by-case basis through the normal migratory bird hunting regulatory process. All of these expanded hunting methods and opportunities under Special Canada goose hunting seasons would be in accordance with the existing Migratory Bird Treaty frameworks for sport hunting seasons (*i.e.*, 107-day limit from September 1 to March 10) and would be conducted outside of any other open waterfowl season (*i.e.*, when *all other waterfowl and crane hunting seasons were closed*).

Take of resident Canada geese outside the existing Migratory Bird Treaty frameworks for sport hunting seasons (*i.e.*, 107-day limit from September 1 to March 10) would also be available under this proposed rule by creation of a new subpart to 50 CFR part 21 specifically for the management of overabundant resident Canada goose populations. Under this new subpart, we would establish a regulation under the authority of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act with the intent to reduce and/or stabilize resident Canada goose population levels. The “managed take” regulation would authorize each State in eligible areas to initiate aggressive resident Canada goose take strategies, within the conditions that we provide, with the intent to reduce the populations. The regulation will enable States to use the general public acting under strict program controls to kill resident Canada geese, by way of shooting in a hunting manner, during the August 1 through September 15 period when all waterfowl and crane hunting seasons, excluding falconry, are closed, inside or outside the migratory bird hunting season frameworks. The regulation would also authorize the use of additional methods of take to kill resident Canada geese during that period. The regulation would authorize the use of electronic calls and unplugged shotguns, liberalize daily bag limits on resident Canada geese, and allow shooting hours to continue until one-half hour after sunset. The Service would annually assess the overall impact and effectiveness of the “managed take” regulation to ensure compatibility with long-term conservation of this resource. If at any time evidence is presented that clearly demonstrates that there no longer exists a serious threat of injury to the area or areas involved for a particular resident Canada goose population, we will

initiate action to suspend the regulation, and/or regular-season regulation changes, for that population.

Suspension of regulations for a particular population would be made following a public review process.

Under this proposed rule, the Service would maintain primary authority for the management of resident Canada geese, but the individual States would be authorized to implement the provisions of this regulation within the guidelines established by the Service. In addition to specific strategies, we would continue the use of special and regular hunting seasons, issued under 50 CFR 20, and the issuance of depredation permits and special Canada goose permits, issued under 50 CFR 21.41 and 21.26, respectively. Participating States would be required to annually monitor the spring breeding population to assess population status and provide for the long-term conservation of the resource. Additionally, States or other applicable parties (such as airports or public health officials) would be required to annually report all take of geese under authorized management activities.

#### References Cited

- Atlantic Flyway Council. 1999. Atlantic Flyway resident Canada goose management plan. Canada Goose Committee, Atlantic Flyway Technical Section. 42 pp.
- Ball, I. J., E. L. Bowhay and C. F. Yocom. 1981. Ecology and management of the western Canada goose in Washington. Washington Department of Game, Biological Bulletin No. 17.
- Bellrose, F. C. 1976. Ducks, geese and swans of North America. Stackpole, Harrisburg, PA. 543 pp.
- Bent, A. C. 1925. Life histories of North American wild fowl. Order Anseres (Part II). U.S. National Museum Bulletin 130. Washington, D.C. 396 pp.
- Conover, M. R., and G. G. Chasko. 1985. Nuisance Canada goose problems in the eastern United States. Wildlife Society Bulletin 13(3):228–233.
- Delacour, J. T. 1954. The waterfowl of the world. Volume 1 (Swans and geese). Country Life Ltd., London. 284 pp.
- Dill, H. H., and F. B. Lee, eds. 1970. Home Grown Honkers. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 154 pp.
- Gabig, P. J. 2000. Large Canada geese in the Central Flyway: management of depredation, nuisance and human health and safety issues. Central Flyway Council. 53 pp.
- Giant Canada Goose Committee. 1996. Mississippi Flyway giant Canada goose management plan. [c/o USFWS, MBMO] Twin Cities, MN. Unpublished report. 61 pp.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2000. Unpublished notes from the February 25, 2000 meeting of the Giant Canada Goose Committee of the Mississippi Flyway Council Technical Section in Little Rock, AR. 8 pp.