

2014-2015 Preliminary Waterfowl Hunting Recommendations



Fish and Game Commission Meeting
April 16, 2014



Major Recommendations

- Increase White goose daily bag limit from 10 to 15 in all zones. White geese = snow and Ross's geese.
- Increase Dark goose daily bag limit from 6 to 10 in most zones. Dark geese = Canada geese and white-fronts.
- Increase the Total goose daily bag limit to 25 in NE, So. San Joaquin Valley, & Balance of State zones.
- Increase the Total goose daily bag limit to 18 in So. CA Zone.

Minor Recommendations

- Change the name of the Humboldt South Spit Special Management Area to Humboldt Bay South Spit (West Side)
- Increase the Coot possession limit to match other species (3x the daily bag)

Goose Bag Limit Increases

- Intended to reduce population sizes toward management goals
 - Respond to specific request from Canada
 - Reduce depredation complaints

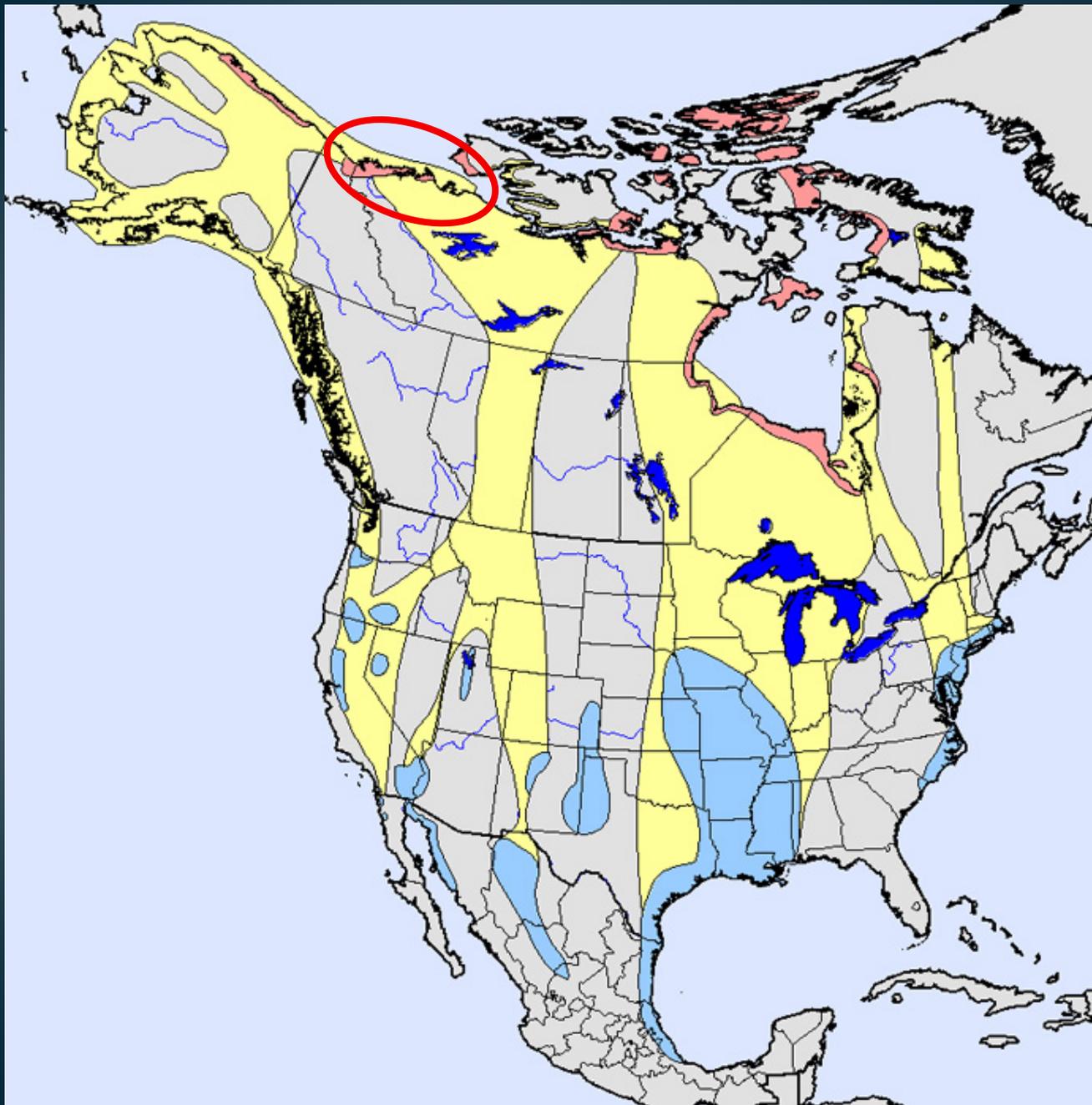


Pacific Flyway Goose stocks important to California

	<i>Status</i>	<i>Goal</i>
NE Canada geese (breed)	930	1,250
BOS Canada geese	13,400	NONE
Cackling Canada	231,600	250,000
Aleutian Canada	166,300	60,000
Black Brant	160,800	162,000
Pacific Whitefront	616,200	300,000
Snow geese (Russia)	155,000	120,000
<u>Snow geese (Canada)</u>	434,000	200,000
Ross' geese	770,000	100,000

Snow Goose

Chen caerulescens

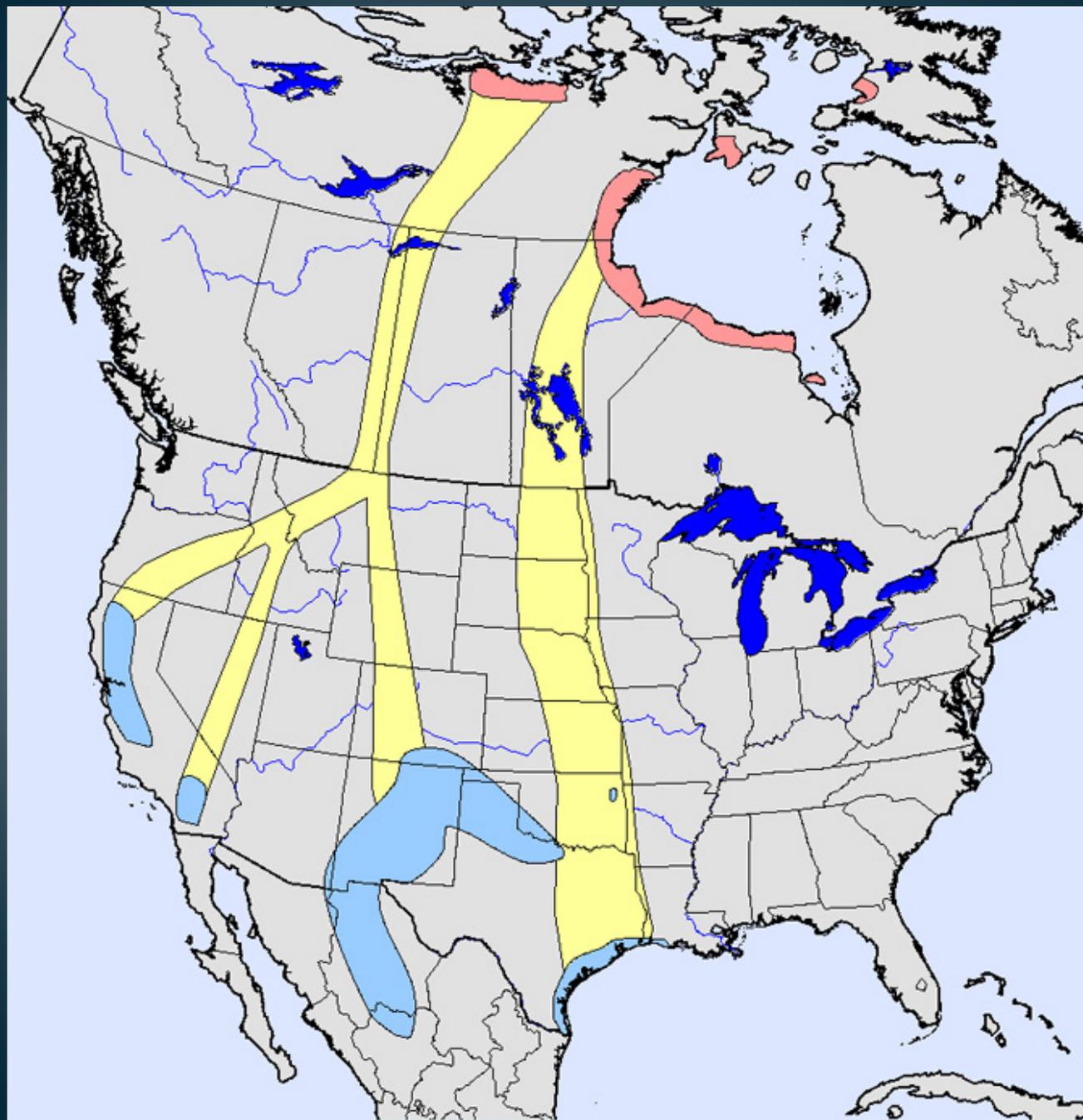


-  Permanent Resident
-  Breeding Resident
-  Nonbreeding Resident
-  Passage Migrant
-  Introduced
-  Uncertain Status
-  Vagrant

Map created by Terry Sohl,
Data from NatureServe

Ross's Goose

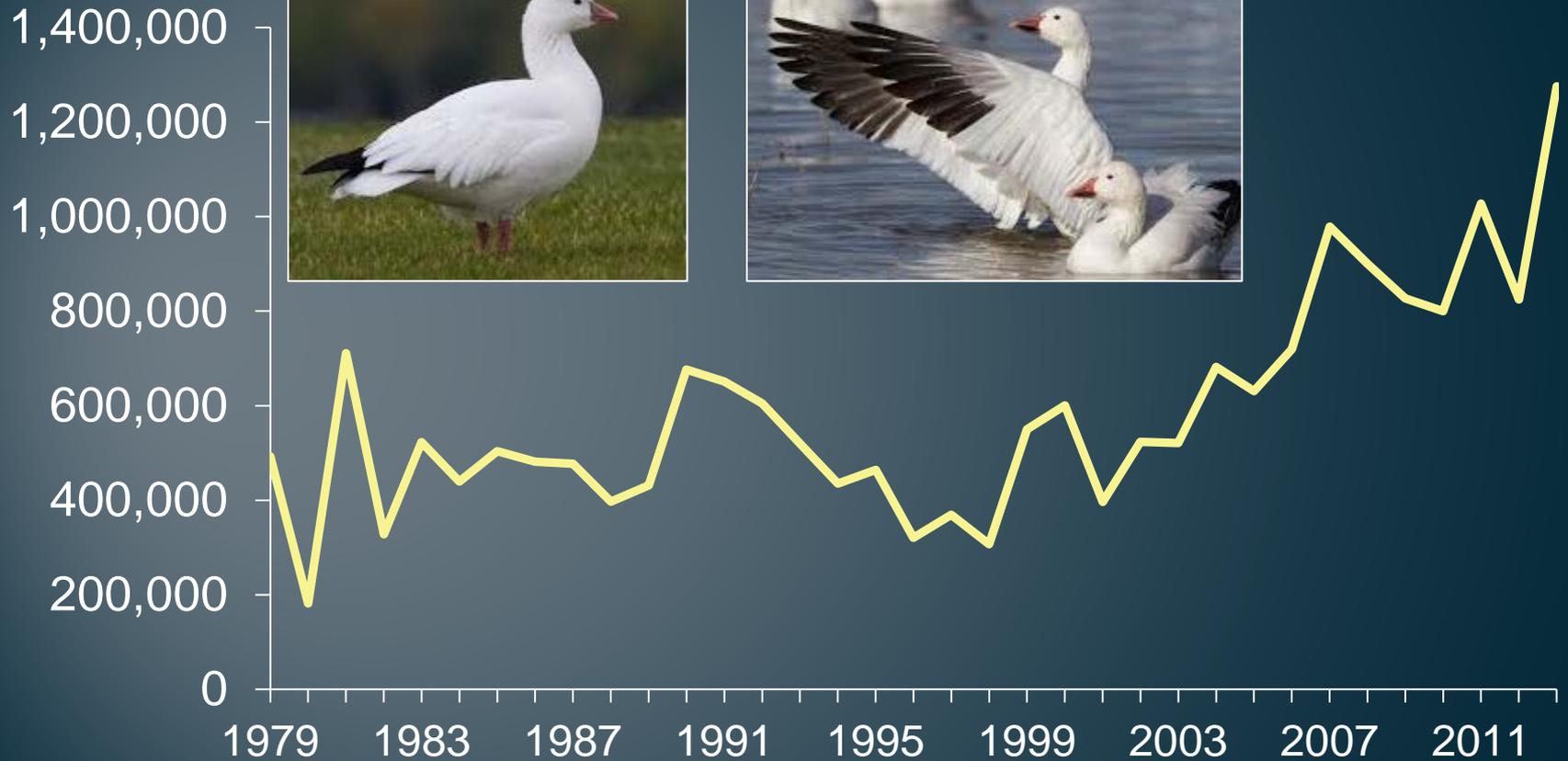
Chen rossii



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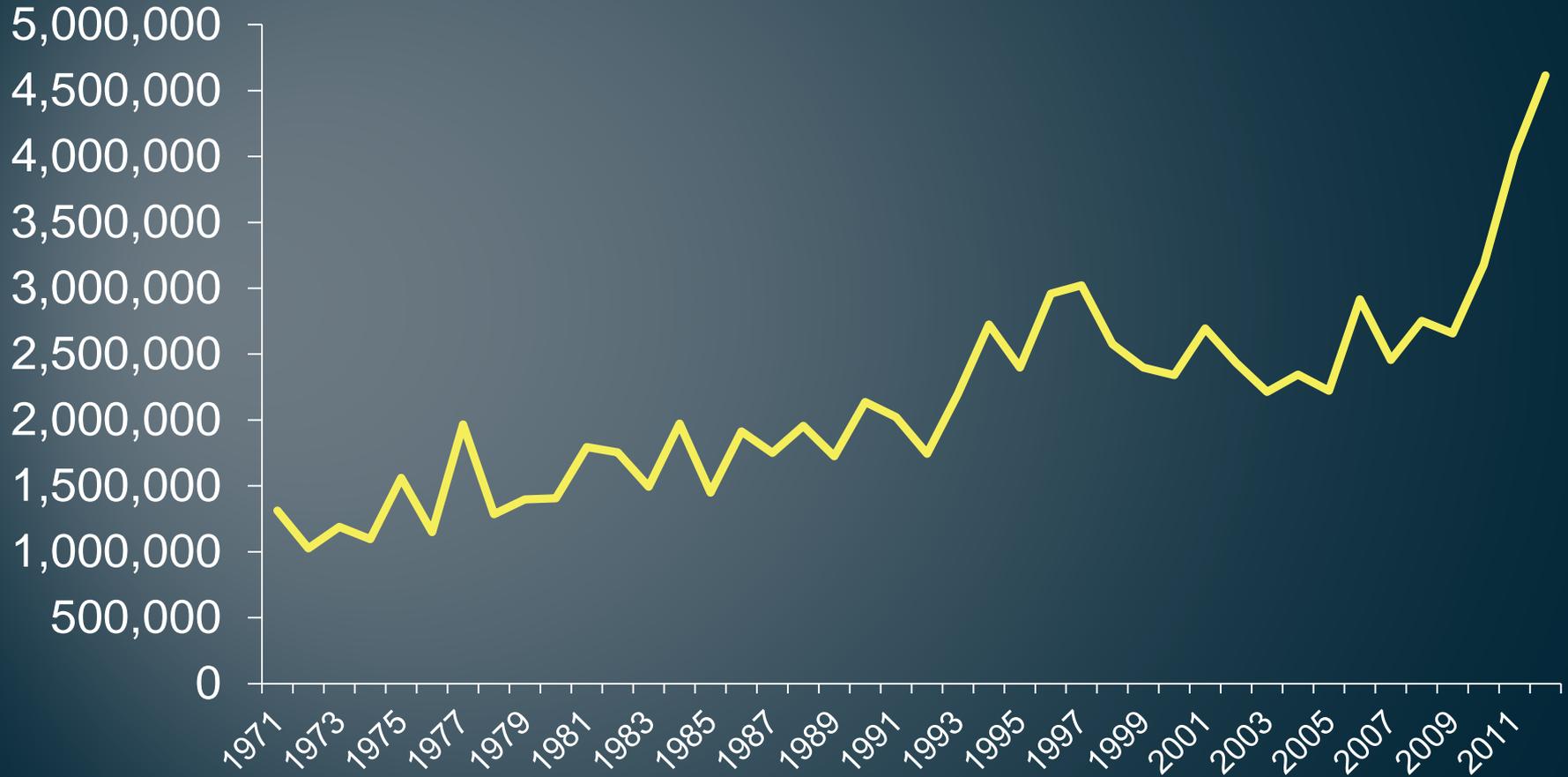
CA Special White Goose Survey



Overabundant Status in Canada

- Concern about Western Arctic Habitat
- Canadian wildlife officials requested CA to increase harvest on white geese
 - Fall hunting as a first step
- Conservation seasons likely to occur in Canada
- Direct control ultimately possible

Can there really be too many? Mid-continent snow geese

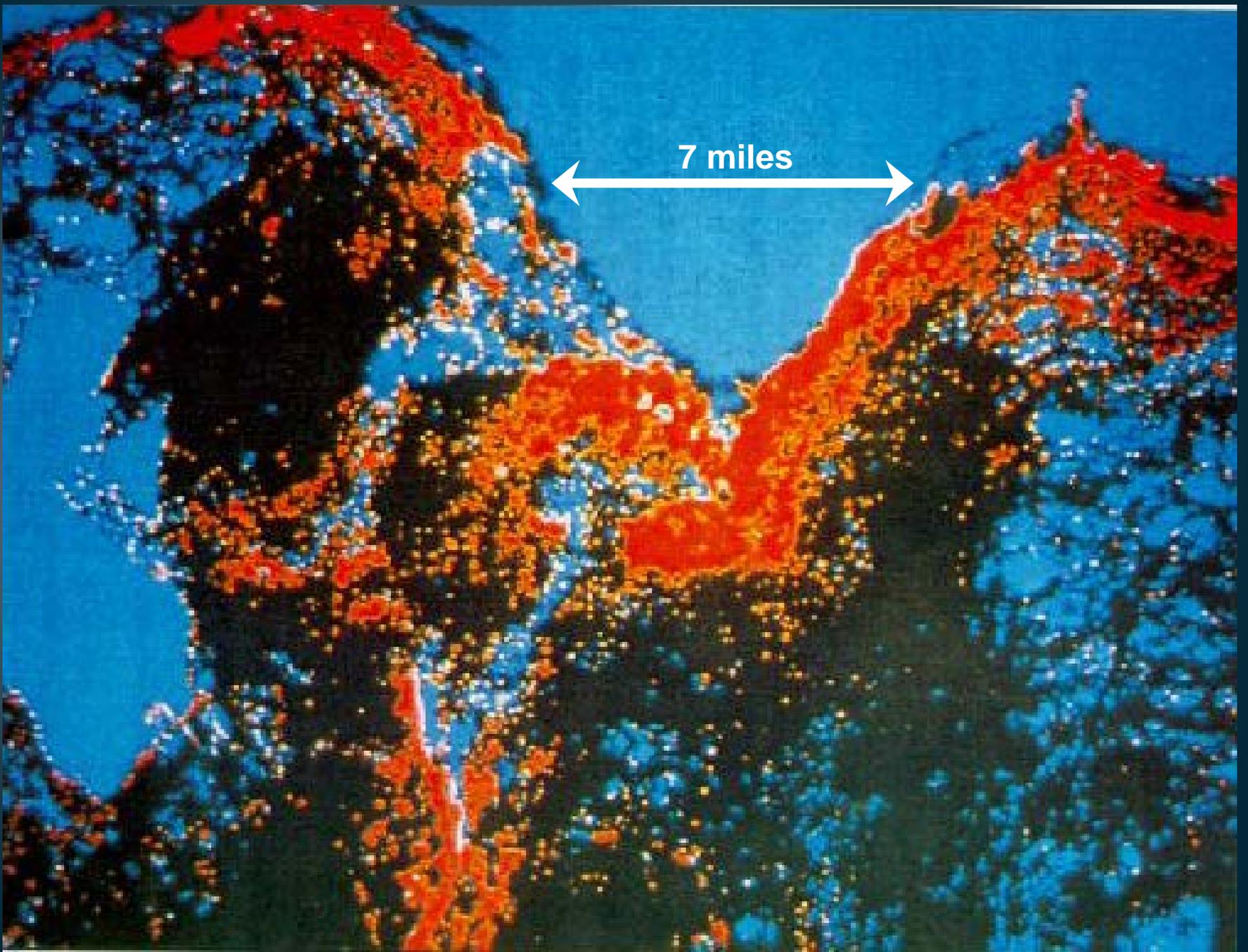


Cause of Dramatic Population Increase in Mid-Continent Region

- Expansion of cereal grains in winter and migratory routes
- Lower harvest rates from:
 - Hunter decline
 - Refuge expansion & geese dispersing over wide areas
- Climate change in Arctic – geese nesting earlier
- Fewer “bust” years and more “boom” years

Geese Are Destroying Arctic Ecosystem





Solutions?

- Regular season length & bag limits increased
 - But not enough harvest to change trend
- Conservation seasons established
 - Take outside of MBTA hunting seasons (9/1-3/10)
 - Unplugged shotguns
 - No limits
 - Electronic calls allowed

[House Report 106-271] [From the U.S. Government Printing Office]

106th Congress
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

1st Session

ARCTIC TUNDRA HABITAT EMERGENCY CONSERVATION ACT

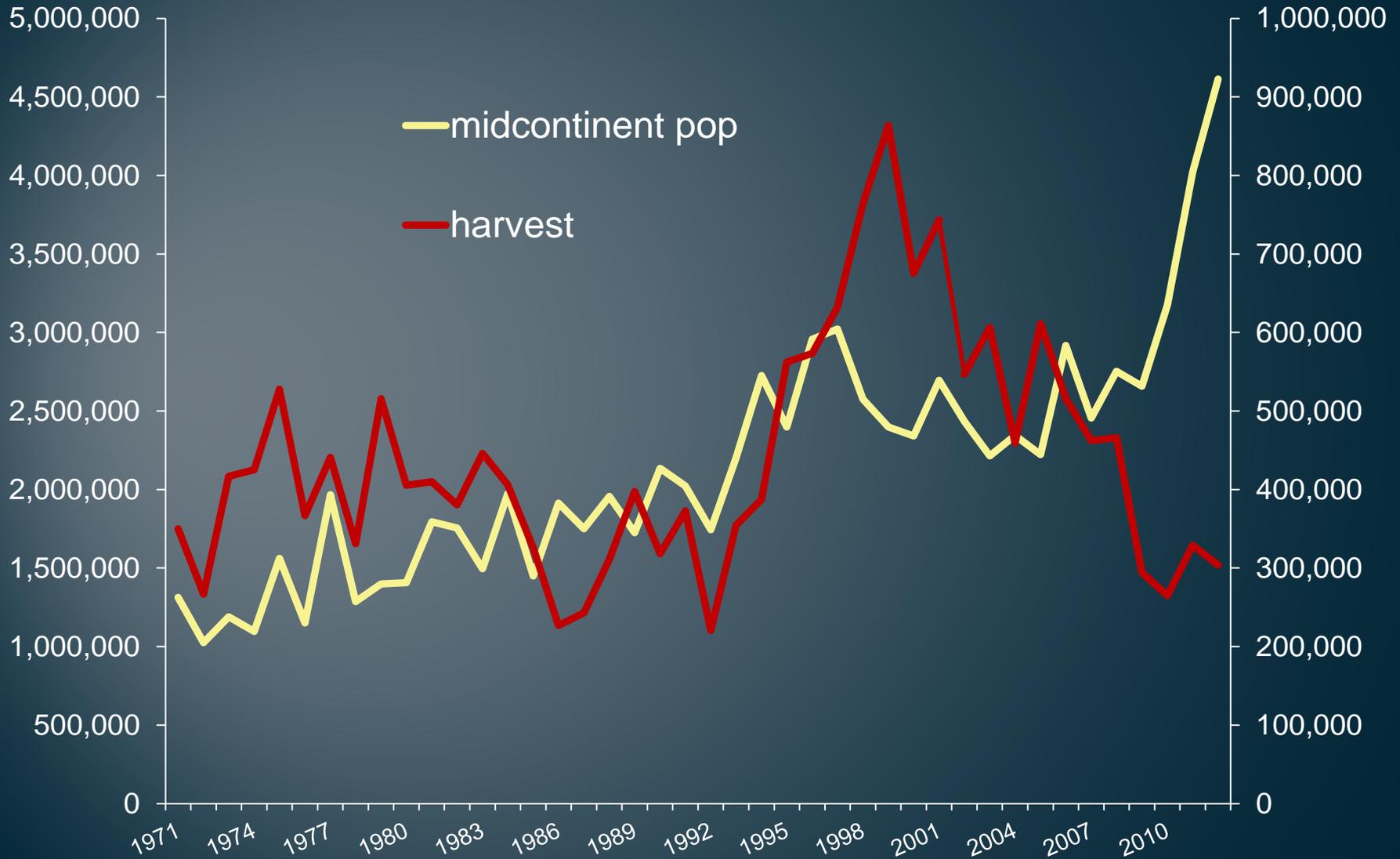
July 29, 1999.--Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

The purpose of H.R. 2454 is to assure the long-term conservation of mid-continent light geese and the biological diversity of the ecosystem upon which many North American migratory birds depend, by directing the Secretary of the Interior to implement rules to reduce the overabundant population of mid-continent light geese

Did Conservation Seasons Work?

Population

Harvest



Take Home – Mid-continent geese

- “Extreme” liberalizations in regulations = more harvest
- Increased harvest did appear to moderate population trend
- That increased harvest was not sustained
- Trajectory continues upward, and presumably, habitat destruction is continuing

Expectations in CA/Pacific Flyway

- Higher bag limits unlikely to significantly increase harvest
- Increase from 8/day to 10/day last year did not increase harvest on public hunt areas
 - Federal harvest estimates for the state published in July
- Federal harvest data indicate
 - over 50% hunters only achieve 1 snow or Ross's goose per hunt
 - less than 10% achieve 3 snow or Ross's goose per hunt.

Next Steps

- May – Conduct CA Breeding Waterfowl Survey
- June - FGC Discussion
- July 26 - Pacific Flyway Council Approval
- August 1 - USFWS Establishes Frameworks
- August 7 - FGC Adoption

Questions?



Thanks to Melanie Weaver
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