

LIGHT GOOSE CONSERVATION ORDER REPORT *2014*

PERFORMANCE REPORT STATEWIDE WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND SURVEYS

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Arlington, VA, 22203**

Introduction

In an effort to reduce the mid-continent light goose (MCLG) population, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) issued a Conservation Order for MCLG in February 1999 (Federal Register 64(30): 7517-7529). The Conservation Order allows expanded measures, including electronic calls, unplugged shotguns, and extended shooting hours. States are required to collect information on the total number of participants, total number of birds killed, number of birds shot but not retrieved, and number of birds taken with each of the special methods of take allowed by the Order.

Methods

A paper survey was mailed to a sample of hunters who purchased a Kansas Waterfowl Stamp between July 1, 2013 and April 30, 2014. All waterfowl hunters 16 and older who are required to obtain a hunting license must also have a Kansas Waterfowl Stamp before hunting ducks, geese, or mergansers in the state.

The survey (Appendix A) asked hunters if they attempted to hunt during the 2014 Conservation Order, the county in which they primarily hunted, number of birds harvested, number of birds they shot but did not recover, and the number of days hunted. In addition, hunters were asked whether they used special hunting methods authorized by the Conservation Order (electronic calls, unplugged shotguns, and hunting after sunset) and to quantify the number of birds harvested with each method.

Results

Licenses and Responses

A total of 32,197 individuals between the ages of 16 and 74 purchased a Kansas Waterfowl Stamp between July 1, 2013 and April 30, 2014. A paper survey was mailed on May 1, 2014 to a randomly selected 2,531 stamp purchasers. A second mailing of 1,685 was sent out June 1, 2014 to the non-respondents. As of July 15, 2014 1,174 survey responses (46.4%) were received.

Number of Light Goose Hunters in Kansas Conservation Order

A total of 11.53% of the respondents indicated that they had participated in Kansas's 2014 Light Goose Conservation Order. Extrapolation to the total number of waterfowl stamp purchasers yields a statewide estimate of Conservation Order participants of 3,697, which is an increase of 36.2% from the 2013 estimate and 105% above the long-term average. As displayed in Table 1, participation can greatly vary from year to year, likely resulting from variation in light goose numbers, distribution and length of spring stopover in Kansas.

Participant Activity in Kansas Conservation Order

Based on responses, a mean of 4.5 days per hunter and range of 1 to 35 days was spent afield during Kansas 2014 Light Goose Conservation Order. This is slightly below 2013 where the mean days per hunter were 5.0 and range of 1 to 30 days. Of the respondents, 77.4% hunted 1 to 5 days, 17.3% hunted 6 to 10 days, and 5.3% hunted 11 or more days (Figure 1). The extrapolated estimate of the number of days hunted in Kansas was 16,748, which was 22.7% greater than 2013 and 91.0% above the long-term average.

Hunting was reported in 50 of 105 Kansas counties. Jewell (8.2%), Brown (6.7%), Sedgwick (4.5%), and Barton (4.5%), were the most reported counties. This slightly differed from previous years where Miami, Butler, Harvey, and Mitchell were popular counties to participate in the Spring Conservation Order. Like hunter participation, hunt location can greatly vary from year to year, likely resulting from variation in light goose numbers, distribution and length of spring stopover in Kansas.

Harvest in Kansas Conservation Order

The mean seasonal bag (24.6 geese per hunter) was 3.1% lower than 2013. The seasonal bag per hunter in 2014 ranged from 0 to 604, with a median of 5.0 geese per hunter (Figure 2). The 2014 extrapolated estimate for statewide retrieved harvest is 90,990 geese, which is 31.9% greater than the 2013 season estimate (68,974 geese). An estimated 4,773 light geese were shot but not retrieved during the 2014 Light Goose Conservation Order. This brings the total estimated harvest (retrieved and unretrieved) for the 2014 Kansas Conservation season to 95,772, which is 32.2% greater than 2013.

Conservation Order Methods in Kansas Conservation Order

Hunter reported use of special methods allowed during the Conservation Order varied. Forty-four percent of hunters reported using electronic calls, 39.6% reported using unplugged shotguns, and 12.7% reported hunting after sunset. An estimated 1,628 hunters harvested 52,862 light geese by aid of electronic calls. An estimated 1,462 hunters used unplugged shotguns to harvest 19,809 geese with the 4th, 5th, or 6th shell, and an estimated 469 hunters harvested 5,739 geese after sunset. Electronic calls were used in 58.1% of the estimated retrieved take, unplugged shotguns in 21.8%, and after sunset 6.3%.

Figure 1. Distribution of number of participation days during the 2014 Light Goose Conservation Order, February 10 – April 30, 2014.

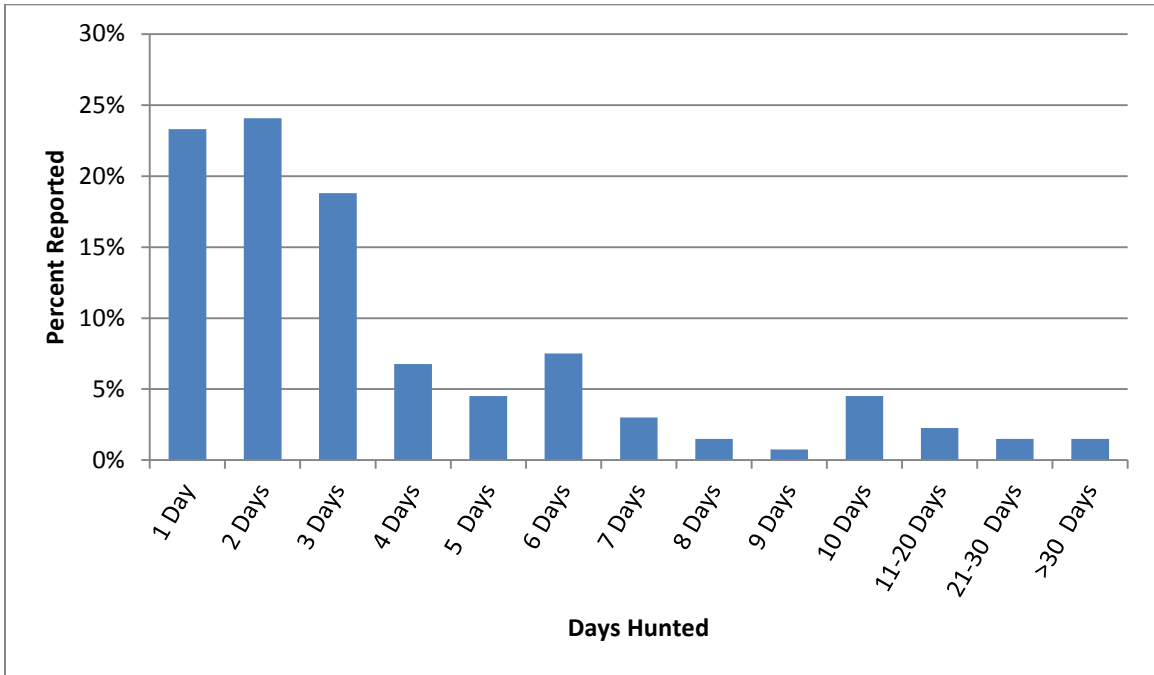


Figure 2. Distribution of seasonal take during the 2014 Light Goose Conservation Order, February 10 – April 30, 2014.

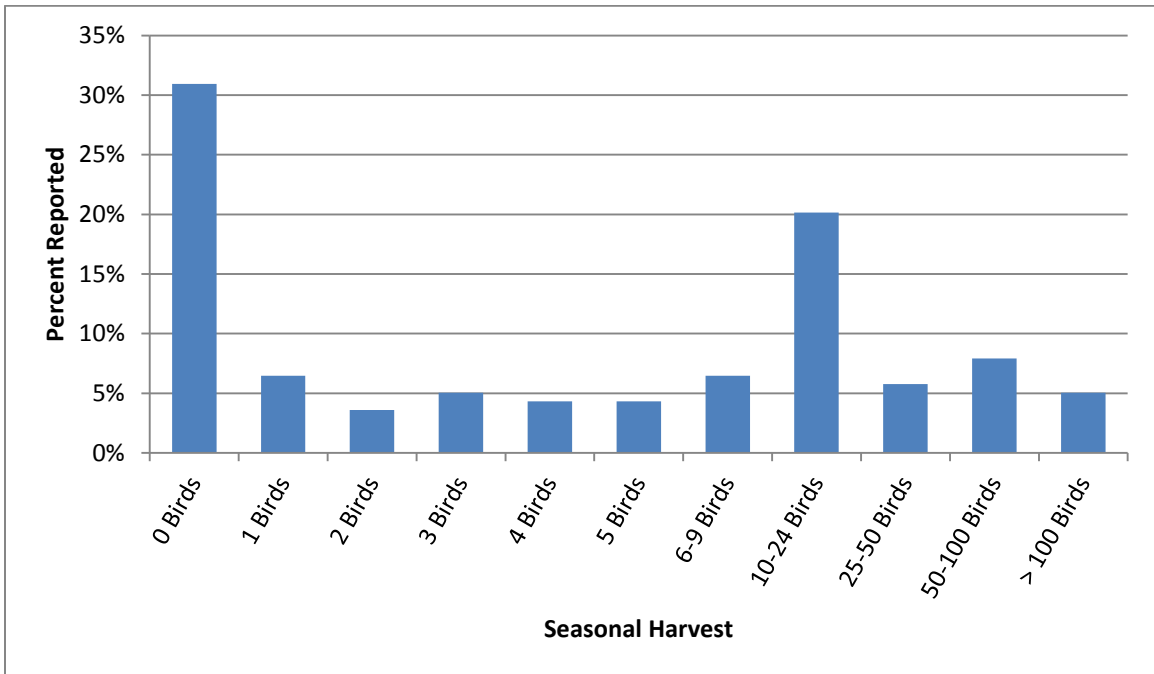


Table 1. Estimated take of light geese (Snow, Blue, and Ross's) in Kansas, during the Light Goose Conservation Order, 2000-2014.

Year	Dates	No. of Hunters	Hunter Days	Special Harvest Methods						Unretrieved Harvest	Total Harvest
				Electronic Calls		Unplugged Guns		After Sunset			
				No. of Hunters	Harvest	No. of Hunters	Harvest	No. of Hunters	Harvest		
2000	Mar 11 - Apr 30	2,207	9,528	201	.	651	.	402	.	.	11,165
2001	Feb 5 - Apr 30	1,798	7,354	187	.	819	.	174	.	.	11,937
2002	Feb 4 - Apr 30	1,939	10,704	413	.	980	.	185	.	.	35,138
2003	Feb 3 - Apr 30	1,579	8,100	473	.	717	.	183	.	.	17,087
2004	Feb 2 - Apr 30	3,270	15,548	969	.	1,582	.	361	.	.	65,608
2005	Feb 7 - Apr 30	1,400	8,679	450	.	876	.	53	.	.	25,272
2006	Feb 13 - Apr 30	1,575	7,136	282	.	845	.	253	.	.	18,802
2007	Feb 12 - Apr 30	863	2,509	261	.	393	.	131	.	.	12,711
2008	Feb 18 - Apr 30	354	1,193	167	.	40	.	11	.	.	4,260
2009	Feb 16 - Apr 30	931	3,613	237	.	426	.	132	.	.	11,924
2010	Feb 15 - Apr 30	1,024	6,367	325	5,424	536	3,734	228	1,692	853	15,244
2011	Feb 14 - Apr 20	1,753	9,098	673	23,258	754	11,659	347	2,202	5,320	53,863
2012	Feb 13 - Apr 30	1,944	11,273	666	33,534	958	22,572	237	6,142	2,436	62,092
2013*	Feb 11 - Apr 30	2,715	13,654	780	32,958	1,030	10,924	312	7,834	3,473	72,447
2014*	Feb 10 - Apr 30	3,697	16,748	1,916	52,866	1,462	19,811	469	5,739	4,773	95,772
Long-term Average (LTA)		1,803	8,767	533	29,608	805	13,740	232	4,722	3,371	34,221
% Change from LTA		105%	91%	259%	79%	82%	44%	102%	22%	42%	180%
% change from previous		+36%	+23%	+146%	+60%	+42%	+81%	+50%	-27%	+37%	+32%

*Sample of survey participants were drawn Kansas Waterfowl Stamp instead of Kansas Harvest Information Program.

Appendix A. Kansas 2014 Light Goose Conservation Order Survey

Emporia Research & Survey Office
1536 Merchant, PO Box 1525
Emporia, KS 66801
Robin Johnson, Secretary



Phone: 620-342-0658
Fax: 620-342-6248
www.kdwr.state.ks.us
Sam Brownback, Governor

Dear Waterfowl Hunter:

We need your assistance in obtaining harvest and hunter activity information for this past spring's Light Goose Conservation Order Season (February 10 through April 30, 2014). This information is a federal requirement that must be met to conduct this season. **Please complete and return this short survey, even if you did not hunt or did not harvest any geese during this season.** Only report light geese (snow geese, blue geese, and Ross' geese) you took during the Conservation Order Season in Kansas on this form. To eliminate the need for additional mailings, please return the completed survey in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided by June 1st. The survey can also be completed online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/lightgoose2014>.

1. Did you attempt to hunt during the 2014 Light Goose Conservation Order Season in Kansas?
 - NO, I did not hunt light geese in the 2014 Conservation Order Season in Kansas.
End of survey; please return survey in envelope provided
 - YES, I hunted light geese in the 2014 Conservation Order Season in Kansas.
Please respond to all questions below and return survey in envelope provided
2. How many days did you hunt light geese in Kansas between February 10 and April 30, 2014? _____
3. How many light geese did you harvest in Kansas from February 10 through April 30, 2014? _____
4. How many geese did you shoot but were unable to retrieve? _____
5. County where you did most of your light goose hunting during the 2014 Light Goose Conservation Order Season in Kansas? _____
6. Did you use electronic callers? YES NO
_____ Number of geese harvested while using electronic callers
7. Did you use unplugged shotguns? YES NO
_____ Number of geese harvested with the 4th, 5th or 6th shell
8. Did you hunt light geese after sunset? YES NO
_____ Number of geese harvested after sunset

Thank you for your cooperation!