

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES – JANUARY 17, 2018

Chairman Compton called the meeting to order at 9:29 a.m.

Approval for the January 17, 2018 Meeting Agenda

- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Michael moved to approve the January 17, 2018 Wildlife Advisory Commission Meeting Agenda.
 2. Commissioner Boyles Griffin seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

Approval for Minutes from November 15, 2017 Meeting

- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Schroyer moved to approve the November 15th meeting minutes as presented.
 2. Commissioner Michael seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

2018 Legislative Session Update – Presentation given by Associate Director Glenn Therres.

- Associate Director Glenn Therres handed out the Summary of 2018 Proposed Legislation – Wildlife and Heritage Service (as of January 16, 2018). [ATTACHMENT A]
- Eight bills have been introduced since January 16th – four House bills and four Senate bills.
- Associate Director Therres provided a summary of the bills to the Commission.
- Discussion ensued about SB94 Natural Resources –Unprotected Birds – Pigeons. The pigeon species listed in this bill is a non-native species to the U.S. Commissioner Boyles Griffin pointed out that HSUS has an amendment to SB94 to make pigeon shoots illegal. This pigeon species is an introduced species by European men to this Country; therefore, not wild by nature.
- Chairman Compton will be testifying on HB7 Income Tax Credit – Venison Donation - Feed the Hungry Organizations.
- The Commission requested that the Summary of the 2018 Proposed Legislation be submitted to the Commission members the Tuesday before the WAC meeting so that the members can review the bills before the meeting.
- The Commission can review natural resources related bills by going to <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frm1st.aspx?tab=home>, then click on By Broad Subject, where you can select Natural Resources (M1) or Hunting and Fishing (M2); this will provide the list of all bills under the Department’s jurisdiction or hunting and fishing section.
- Chairman Compton informed the Commission if a member of the Commission has a bill that he or she would like to discuss at a WAC meeting, please let Ms. Tracey Spencer know via email to ensure that there are enough copies for the Commission.
- Commissioner Gulbrandsen expressed that it may be useful to reiterate on the record the Commission’s position on things like mandatory seasons via local bills along with local Sunday hunting bills.
- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Michael moved to authorize the testimony of the WHS staff to express that the Wildlife Advisory Commission is against legislatively-mandated seasons.
 2. Commissioner Gulbrandsen seconded.
 3. Discussion:
 - a. Commissioner Weinberg indicated that he was uncomfortable voting on this topic because this decision was prior to his appointment to the Commission.

- b. Commissioner Michael responded that Commissioner Weinberg has been involved in discussions about not supporting local bills. Commissioner Michael continued to provide background information about a mandated extended deer season in parts of Southern Maryland. Commissioner Michael added that it was difficult to police and there was no way for the Department to develop regulations. The Commission wrote a letter to condemn the bill but it passed - it was abrogated by subsequent statute.
 - c. Commissioner Weinberg supported the motion after explanation.
4. All in favor. Motion passed.
- Director Peditto explained to the Commission that if he is in an internal meeting with DNR leadership, he will reinforce the Commission's position on local bills.

Staffing Updates:

- Director Peditto reminded the Commission that Associate Director Karina Stonesifer is responsible for the Game Program and Tim Larney is now an Associate Director and responsible for Regional Operations.
- Emily Wilson is now Acting Assistant Secretary for Land Resources and Director of Land Acquisition and Planning.

2018-2020 Hunting Regulation Concepts (Brian Eyler) – Presentation given by Deer Project Leader Brian Eyler.

- The internal stakeholder meeting was held with no significant changes suggested from that meeting.
- The Mountain Maryland Branch of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) expressed their opposition to the original antlered white-tailed bag limit concept.
- The external stakeholder meeting is scheduled for February 7th. The Commission members are invited to attend.
- The public meetings are as follows: Allegany County on February 20th and Annapolis on February 21st.
- Ms. Spencer will send the stakeholder meeting dates, times, and locations along with the public meetings locations and times.
- Commissioner Schroyer informed the Commission that QDMA along with landowners that practice quality deer management on their properties do not want more bucks harvested.
- In Region A, hunters cannot take more than one buck in a weapon season. There is no bonus antlered deer allowance in Region A.
- There was a point made by NRP about simplifying our regulations when possible so changing the buck limit would be one that we could simplify for uniformity purposes.
- Commissioner Michael stated for the record that he supports clarity/simplification of the antlered bag limit.
- Director Peditto mentioned if both groups (QDMA and Maryland State Chapter) could come up with a concept that they can agree upon before the external stakeholders meeting that would be very helpful.
- Chairman Compton pointed out that it may be time to reduce the amount of deer taken statewide because in the lower Eastern Shore there has been a lack of quality hunting. Chairman Compton expressed to staff members the need to be more conservative with deer bag limits in Region B.
 1. Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) had an impact on the deer population on Eastern Shore. Staff received confirmation of the disease in the deer population on the Eastern Shore from Caroline County to Wicomico County along with Dorchester County and Talbot County.
 2. Deer taken under the Deer Management Permits are up compared to last year's numbers.

3. Discussion ensued about deer density and the outreach component about deer management objectives along with possible suggestions from Maryland Farm Bureau.
4. Commissioner Michael recommended that the Sundays during the late muzzleloader season should be closed for uniformity and law enforcement simplicity. The participation of muzzleloader hunters is low on those Sundays during the late muzzleloader season. It would be less conflict on those days.
5. Commissioner Weinberg and Commissioner Gregor would not want to see the two Sundays in December during the late muzzleloader season taken away due to family participation during those important weekends.

Break 11:05 AM – 11:15 AM

2018 WAC Annual Schedule and Draft Monthly Agenda – WAC Review and Approval

- The Commission received a proposed 2018 WAC Annual Schedule and Draft Monthly Agenda for review and approval.
- The November 21st WAC meeting was moved to November 14th. Chairman Compton will not be able to attend so Vice-Chair Gregor will be chairing the November 14th WAC meeting.
- The Office of Tourism Presentation and the Fishing and Hunting in Maryland Initiative were added to the June 20th meeting.
- Pittman-Robertson Reversion was added to the August 15th meeting.
- Motion
 1. Commissioner Gulbrandsen moved to accept the changes to the 2018 WAC Annual Schedule and Draft Monthly Agenda.
 2. Commissioner Weinberg seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.
- Additional presentations may be added to April 18th, October 17th, and November 14th with the Commission's approval.

Pittman-Robertson (PR) Funds Reversion Update – Presentation given by Glenn Therres

- The Commission requested Federal PR Funds returned to USFWS for the past 10 years.
[ATTACHMENT B]
 1. The codes starting with W that have titles next to them are the PR grants that WHS received.
 2. The row with "Total Awarded" is the amount in each fiscal year that WHS was allowed to spend.
 3. The row with "Total Returned" is the amount in each fiscal year that WHS returned to USFWS.
 4. Associate Director Glenn Therres provided the Commission some reasons for the unspent PR funds. WHS has until the end of the grant period to spend the PR funds and when WHS is unable to spend the PR funds, the funds are reverted to USFWS for redistribution to the states so WHS gets some of the money back.
 5. The Pittman-Robertson Funds Reverted for FY16 and FY17 document was handed out to the Commission **[ATTACHMENT C]**
 6. NRP and the Office of the Secretary receive PR funds from WHS.
 7. WHS has been trying to spend the bump money by increasing staff (which has its limitations), buying/upgrading equipment (which has to go through the procurement process even though it is not general funds), increasing research contracts with universities, and some little items. These items are not enough to spend all the bump money.

8. There is a Pittman-Robertson (PR) Funds Project Implementation Team (PIT) recently formed within the WHS to develop ideas for big-ticket items for consideration in regards to spending PR funds. The Team met once and will be meeting again in February.
9. The WMAs grant has changed from a one-year grant to a two-year grant that will help reduce the PR funds that would have been reverted due to a one-year grant.
10. WHS receives a preliminary projection of PR funds around this time of the year and then WHS receives a final PR appropriation in April or May. WHS does spend that money until year two.
11. At this time, WHS does not have a match issue.
12. Maryland was the highest in reverting PR funds in the Northeast Region. Other states are buying land to help them spend their PR funds but Maryland already has a system in place to purchase lands through Open Space Funds Program so WHS is not using PR for purchasing lands.
13. Commissioner Michael indicated that Colleen Sculley, Chief of the Northeast Region's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration outlined that MD DNR is not alone; four of the 13 states in the Northeast reverted PR funds.
14. The PIT is considering some of the spending ideas from the larger states in Region 5. Some of the ideas are upgrades on WMA roads, replacing some of the water control structures on impoundments, shooting ranges, and conserve, protect, enhance WMAs from sea level rise.
15. Commissioner Michael suggested that if it is possible to streamline the procurement process to some degree for PR fund when it exceeds a certain amount that the Commission should get behind and support. Chairman Compton agreed.
16. The State procurement process meets the federal requirements for spending PR funds.

Old Business – No Old Business

New Business – No New Business

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 12:01 P.M.

The next meeting will be held at 9:30 A.M. on Wednesday, February 21, 2018 in the Tawes State Office Building, C-1 Conference Room; Annapolis, Maryland.

Attendance

| | |
|----------|--|
| Members: | L. Compton, T. Gregor, E. Gulbrandsen, S. Boyles Griffin, J. Michael, J. Schroyer, and R. Weinberg |
| Absent: | M. Goetze |
| Guest: | |
| Staff: | B. Eyler, T. Larney, P. Peditto, T. Spencer, and G. Therres |

**Summary of 2017 Proposed Legislation
Wildlife and Heritage Service
(as of January 16, 2018)**

| <u>Number / Chapter</u> <u>(Cross File / Chapter)</u> ▼ | <u>Title</u> | <u>Primary Sponsor</u> | <u>Status</u> | <u>Original House</u> <u>and Hearing Dates</u> |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| HB0007 | Income Tax Credit – Venison Donation – Feed the Hungry Organizations | Delegate Mautz | In the House - Hearing 1/17 at 1:00 p.m. | Ways and Means 1/17/2018 - 1:00 p.m. |
| HB0091 | Natural Resources - Hunting - Outerwear Exception | Delegate Grammer | In the House - Hearing 1/24 at 1:30 p.m. | Environment and Transportation 1/24/2018 - 1:30 p.m. |
| HB0104 (SB0149) | Natural Resources - Electronic Licensing - Voluntary Donations | Delegate Robinson | In the House - Hearing 1/24 at 1:30 p.m. | Environment and Transportation 1/24/2018 - 1:30 p.m. |
| HB0119 | Calvert County – Hunting – Deer Management Permits | Delegate Clark | In the House - First Reading Environment and Transportation | Environment and Transportation |
| SB0089 | Ches Bay and Coastal Zone Advisory Commission and Captive Wildlife Advisory Committee - Repeal | Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee | In the Senate - Hearing 1/16 at 1:00 p.m. | Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 1/16/2018 - 1:00 p.m. |
| SB0094 | Natural Resources - Unprotected Birds - Pigeons | Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee | In the Senate - Hearing 1/16 at 1:00 p.m. | Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 1/16/2018 - 1:00 p.m. |
| SB0113 | Natural Resources - Recreational License Incentive Discount Program | Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee | In the Senate - Hearing 1/16 at 1:00 p.m. | Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 1/16/2018 - 1:00 p.m. |
| SB0149 (HB0104) | Natural Resources - Electronic Licensing - Voluntary Donations | Senator Astle | In the Senate - First Reading Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs | Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs |

Federal PR Funds Returned to USFWS

| | FY08 | FY09 | FY10 | FY11 | FY12 | FY13 | FY14 | FY15 | FY16 | FY17 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| W-61-R Research & Surveys | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 39,749.25 | 315,600.55 | 372,164.87 | 441,340.34 |
| W-62-D Land Management | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 223,517.93 | 246,731.27 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| W-63-C Fed Aid Coordination | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 153.48 | 7,941.91 | 8,935.51 | 0.00 | 6,265.36 |
| W-64-T Technical Guidance | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 127,694.39 |
| W-65-S Hunter Safety | 22,373.88 | 58,398.69 | 59,913.23 | 10,488.81 | 24,531.47 | 45,639.33 | 93,502.77 | 97,418.05 | 143,576.63 | 141,755.33 |
| W-67-E Recruitment & Retention | | | | 5,543.72 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 15,876.36 | 0.00 | 48,126.59 | 59,593.56 |
| Total Returned | 22,373.88 | 58,398.69 | 59,913.23 | 16,032.53 | 24,531.47 | 45,792.81 | 380,588.22 | 668,685.38 | 563,868.09 | 776,648.98 |
| Total Awarded | 2,137,000.00 | 2,617,000.00 | 2,680,000.00 | 3,565,000.00 | 2,761,250.00 | 3,761,250.00 | 4,650,000.00 | 5,215,000.00 | 5,725,000.00 | 5,830,000.00 |

Pittman-Robertson Funds Reverted

| | MD's P-R Allotment | Funds MD reverted to Feds | % of funds reverted |
|------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| FY16 | \$6,742,718 | \$1,732,412 | 25.7% |
| FY17 | \$7,545,171 | \$1,198,761 | 15.9% |

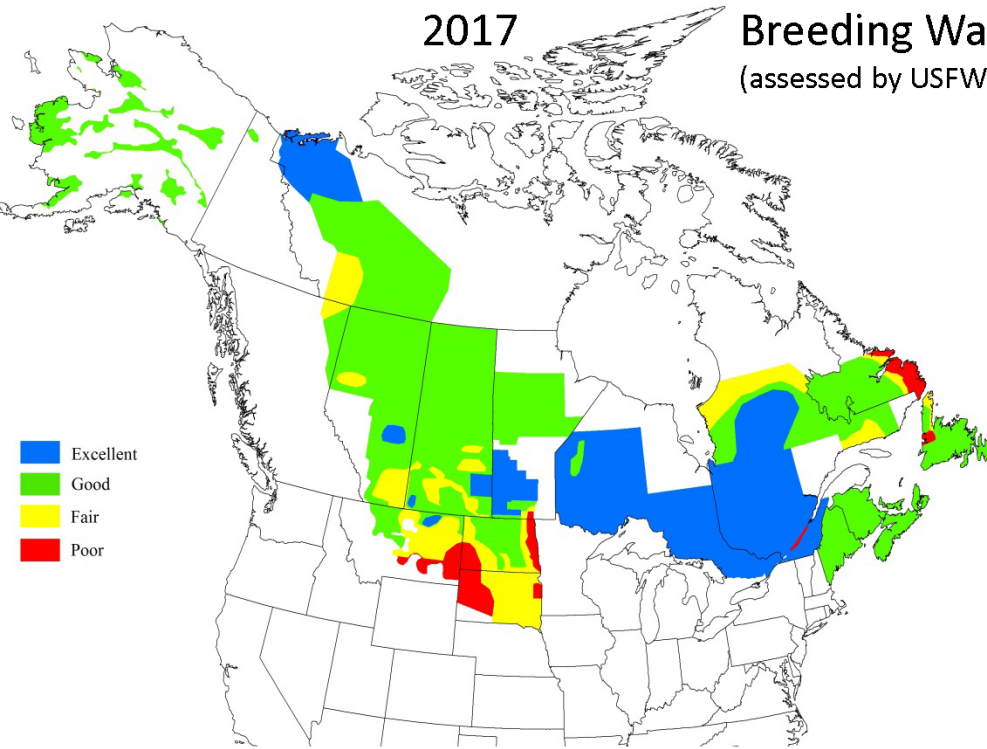
2018/2019 Migratory Game Bird Status Update



2017

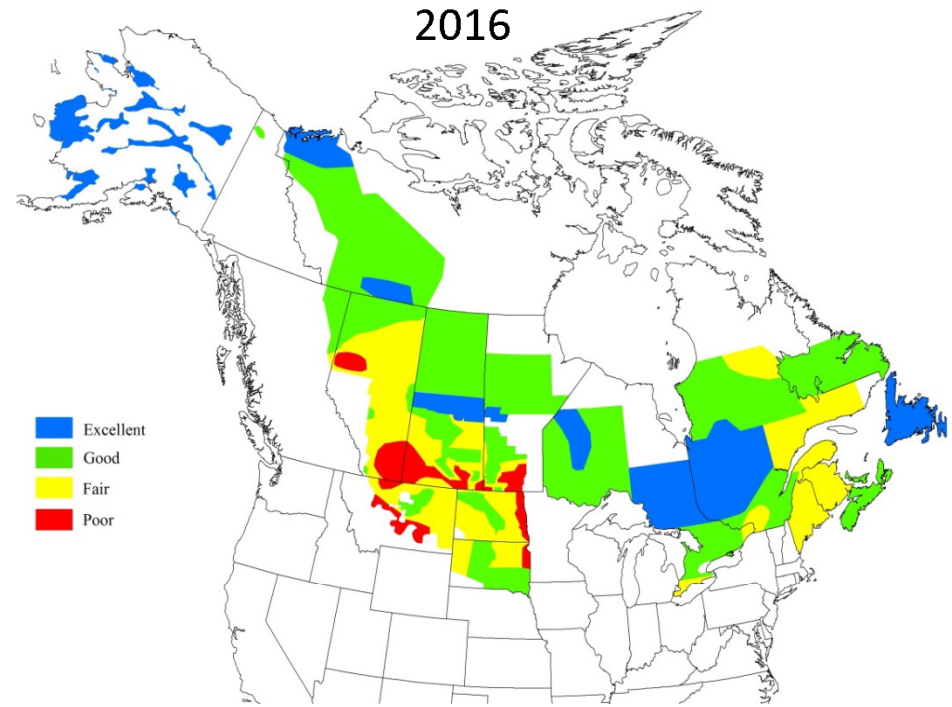
Breeding Waterfowl Habitat Conditions

(assessed by USFWS wildlife biologist-pilots during spring waterfowl surveys)



- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

2016



- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Total ponds in U.S. and Canada – 6.1 M

22% above 5.0 M in 2016, and 17% above the LTA (1955 -2014)

Eastern Mallard

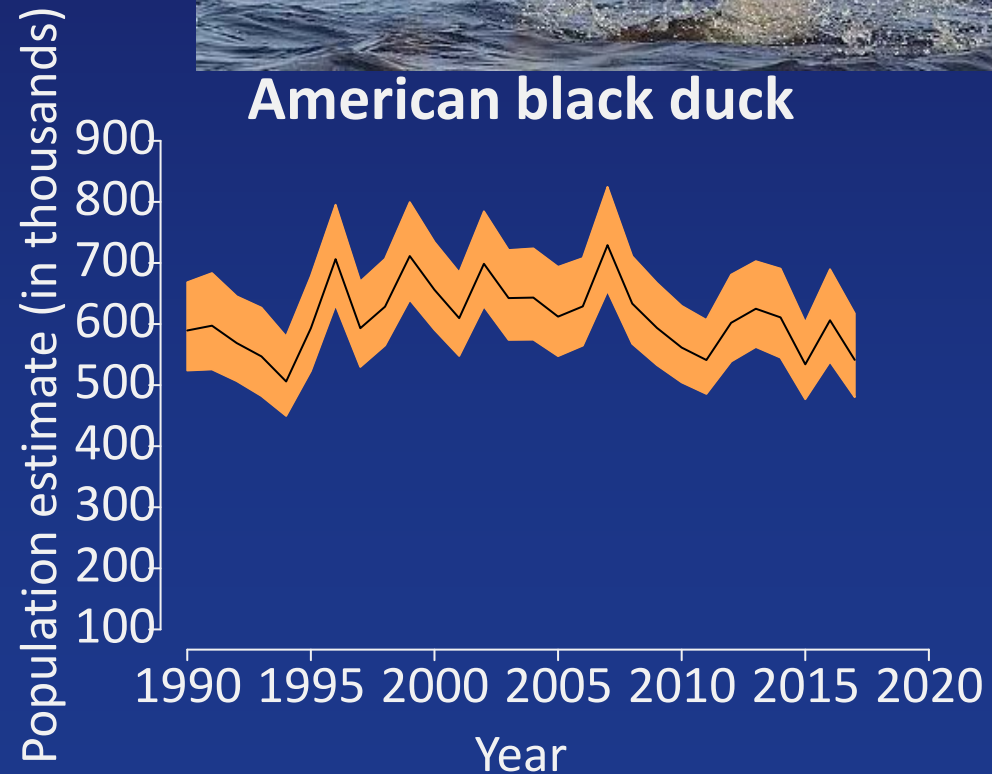
- Eastern Mallard breeding population (BPOP) currently used to set AF duck hunting regulations.
- Eastern mallard AHM Recommends a liberal regulation (60-day season and 6-duck bag limit) for AF in 2018/19.



American Black Duck Population Status



American black duck

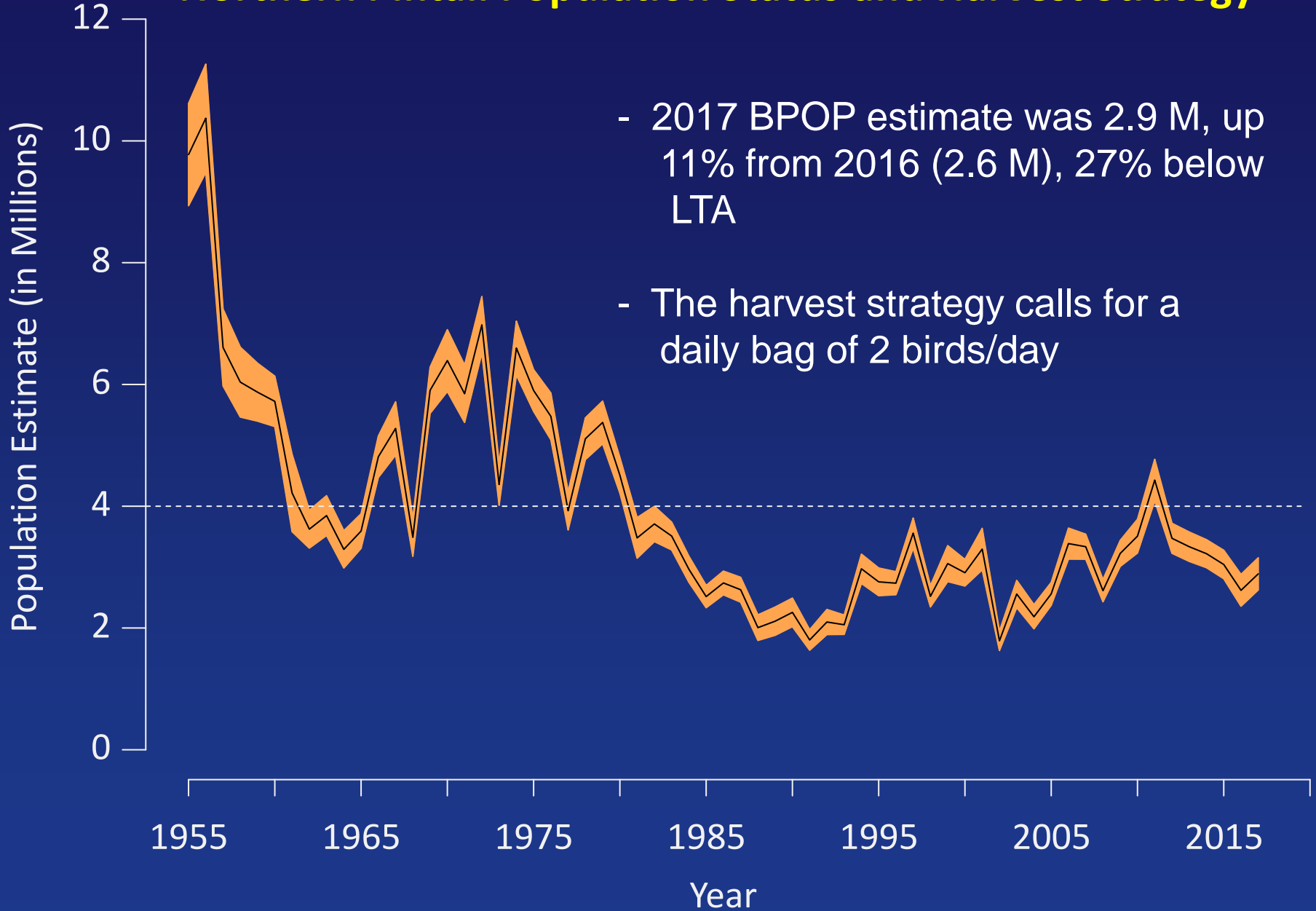


- Estimated Black Duck breeding population in 2017 was 500,000 and has been relatively stable over the last 30 years.

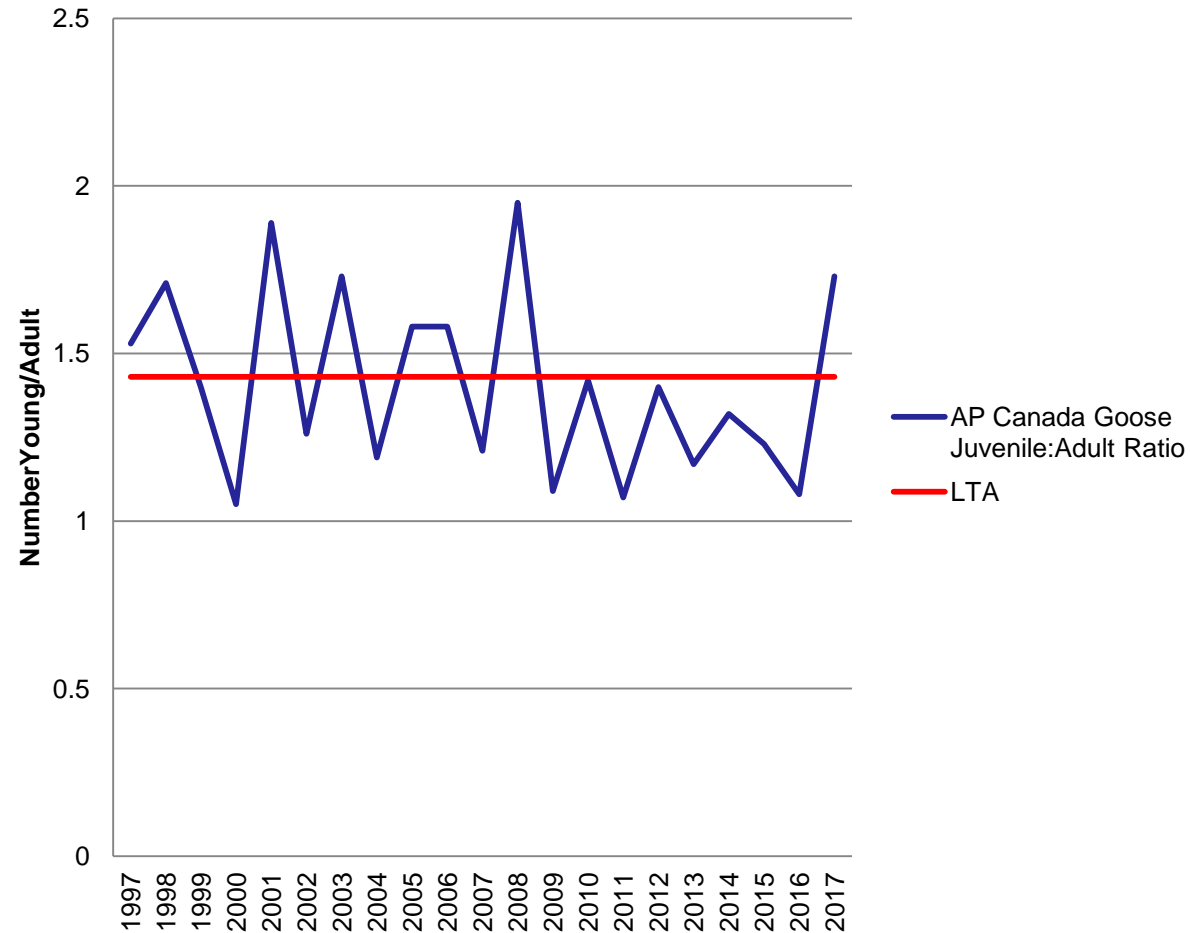
- Prescribed Black Duck hunting regulations in the U.S to remain in the moderate package.

- Daily bag 2/day

Northern Pintail Population Status and Harvest Strategy

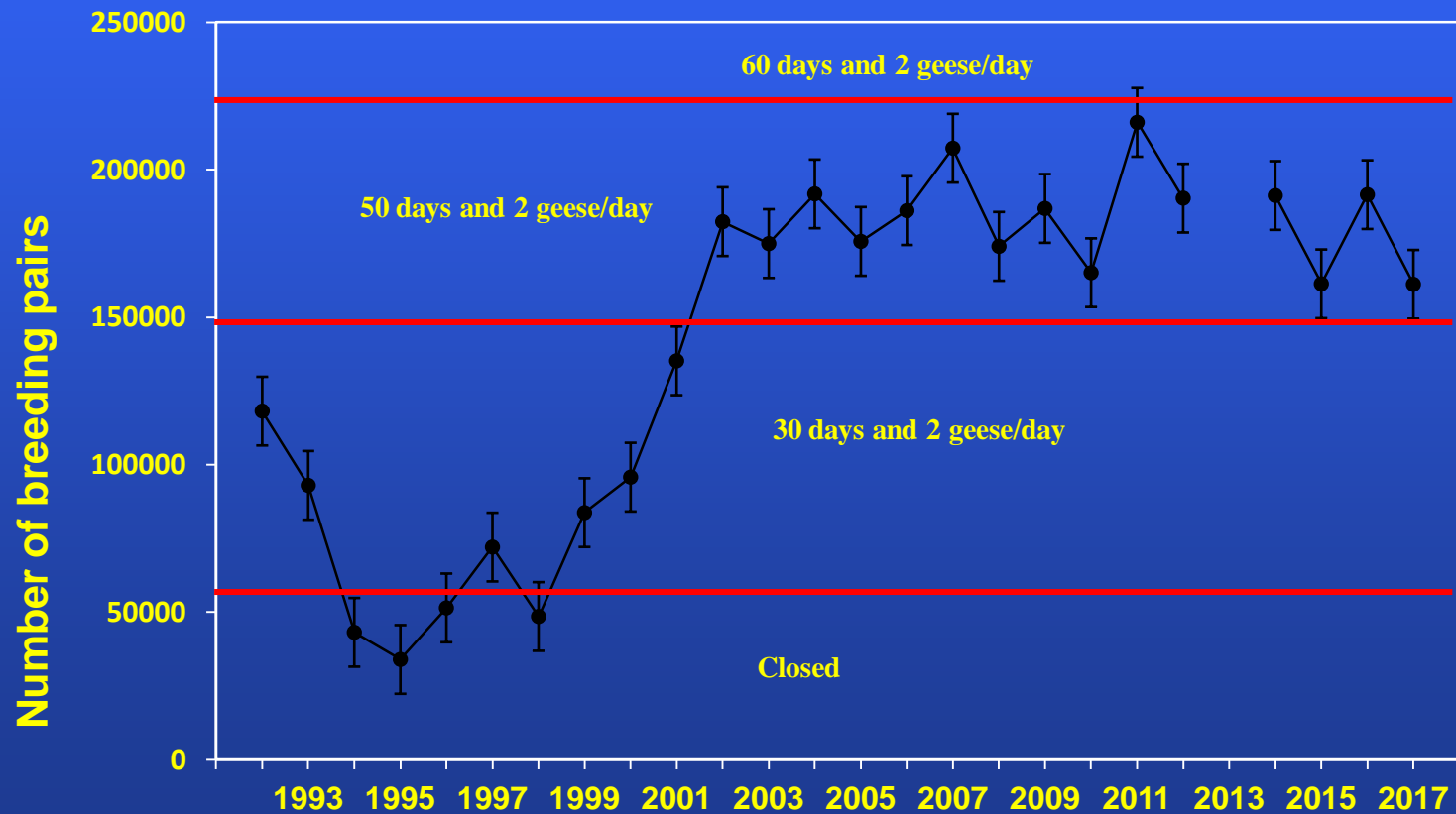


AP Goose Production

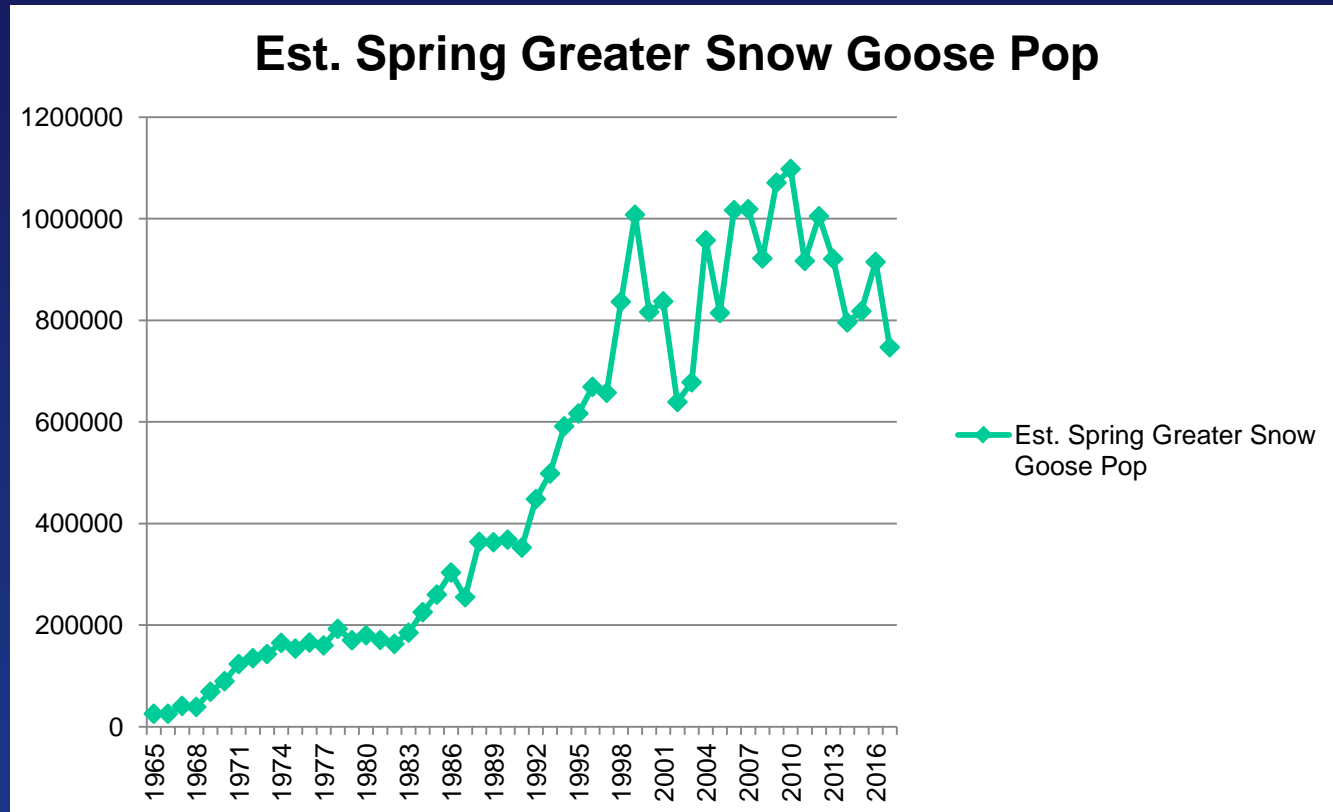


- In 2017, 161,147 (SE = 17,246) breeding pairs were estimated on the Ungava Peninsula....similar to 2016 (191,526).

AP Breeding Pairs and AP Harvest Strategy

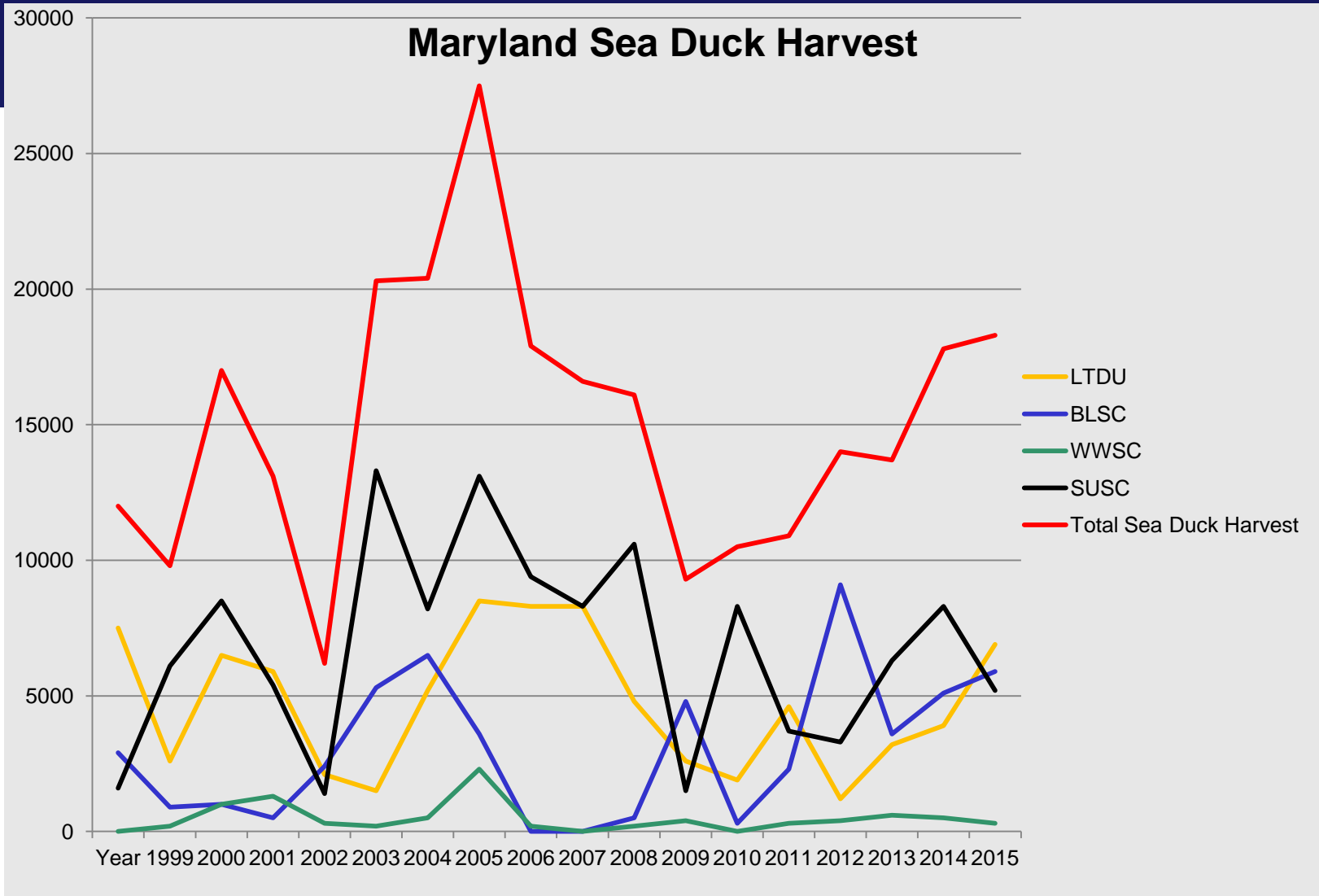


Greater Snow Goose Photo Count 1965 - 2017



- Population appears to be declining

Sea Duck Harvest



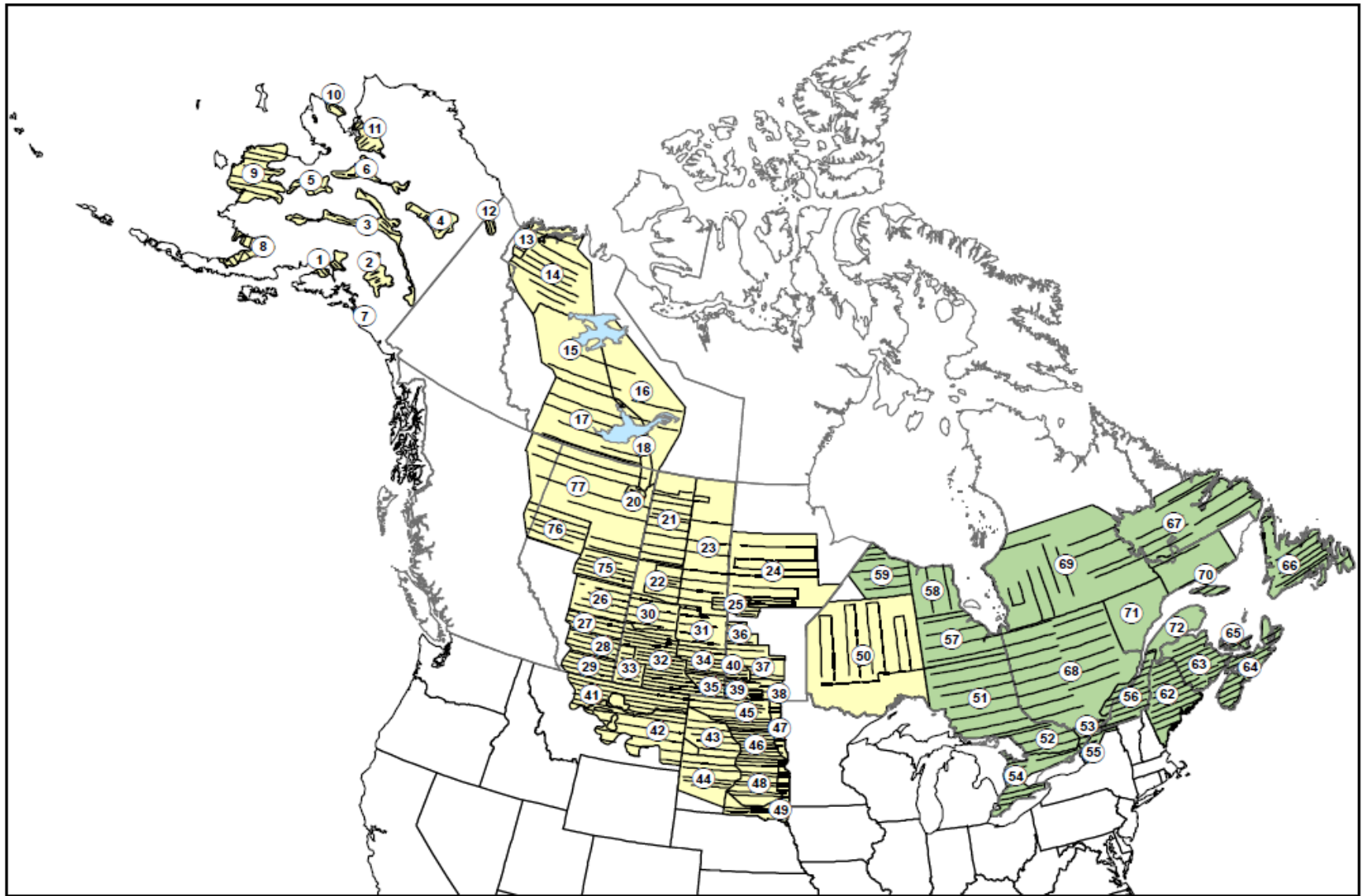
Compensatory Days for Webless Species

- USFWS approved compensatory days for webless migratory game birds in states that do not allow Sunday hunting for these species.
- Beginning in the 2018-19 season, the federal framework will allow a maximum number of hunting days, rather than calendar days
- States were granted compensatory days for waterfowl in 1997.

Multi-stock Management

- In the past, Eastern mallard AHM determined general duck season structure for the Atlantic flyway.
- Starting with the 2019-20, the season structure (days, total bag) will be determined by a matrix of species representative of the Atlantic Flyway harvest (green-winged teal, wood ducks, ring-necked ducks, and common goldeneye) .
- The Eastern mallard population, particularly those nesting in New York-New England, has been in decline and will likely be managed by an individual species harvest plan in a manner similar to black ducks, scaup, northern pintail, etc.
- It is also likely that the mallard bag limit will be 2 birds per day for the 2019-20 season.

B. Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey map

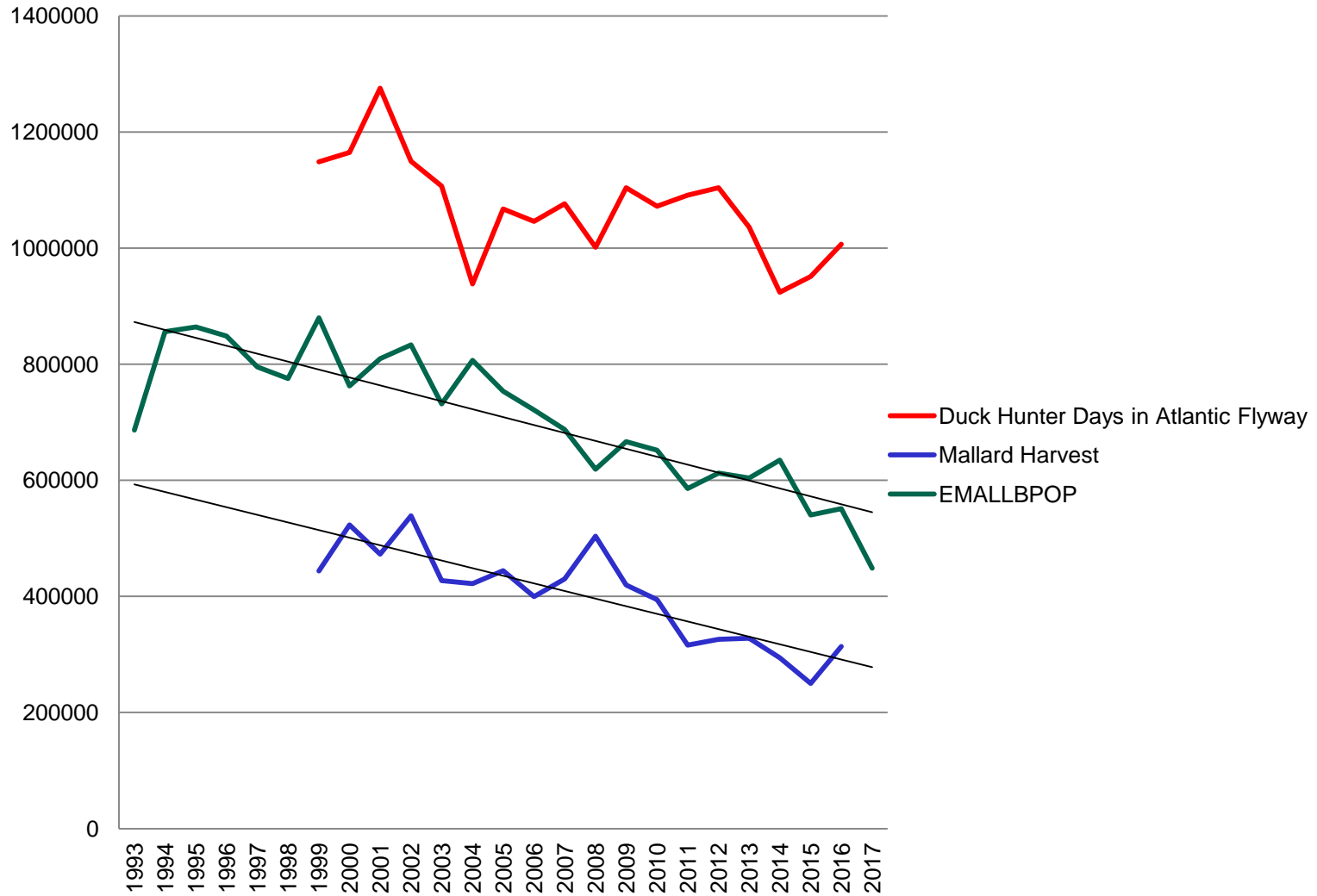


Strata and transects of the Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey (yellow = traditional survey area, green = eastern survey area).

Northeast Atl. Flyway Breeding Plot Survey



Comparing Trends in AF Mallard Population, Harvest, and Duck Hunter Days



MALL Pop Estimates from AFBWS And WBPBS

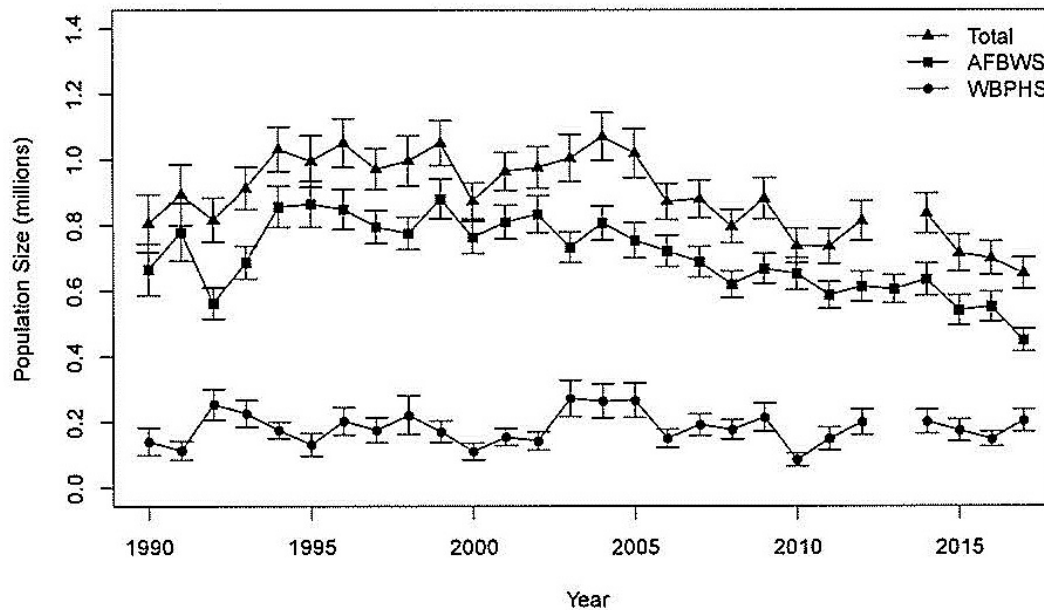
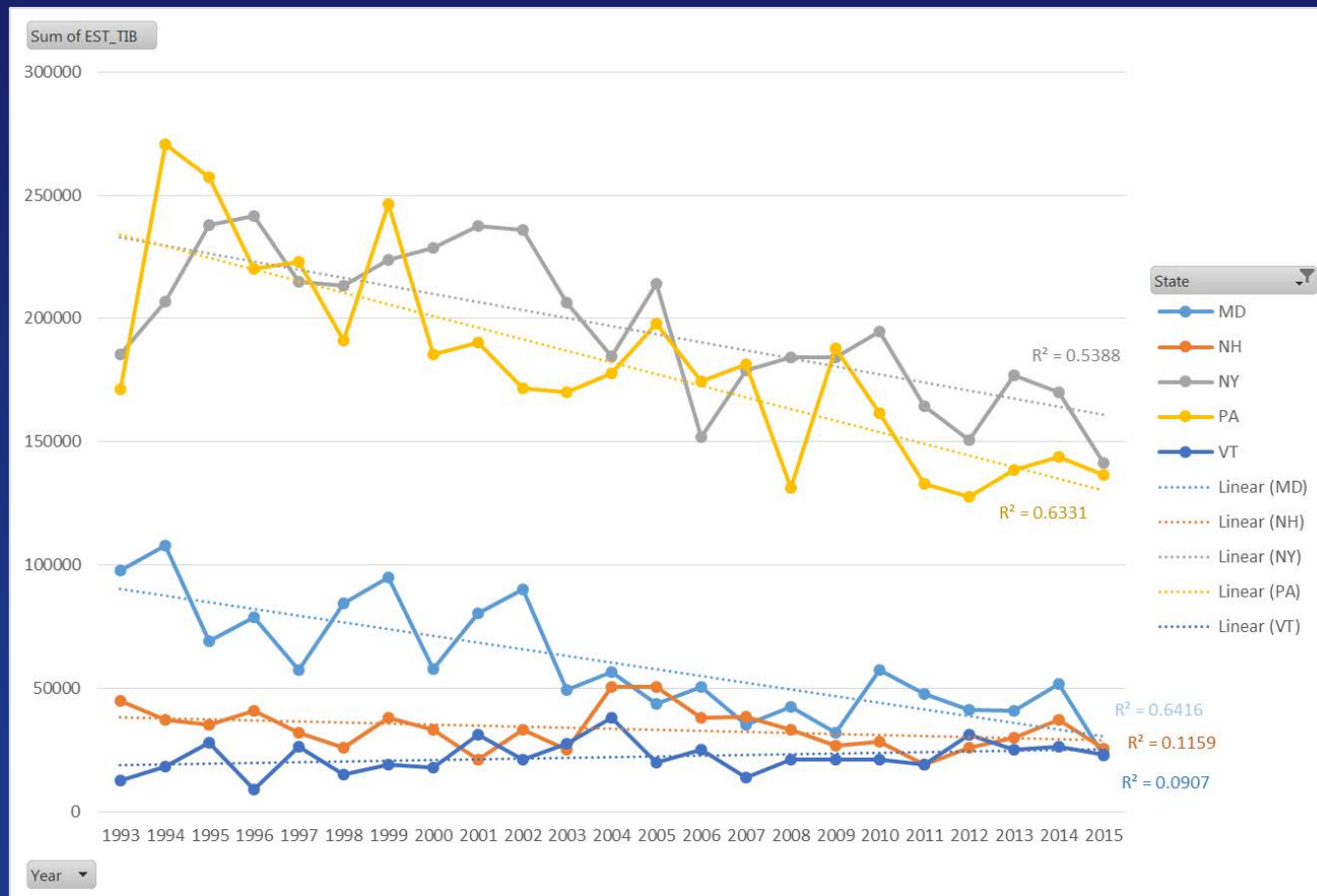


Figure 5 – Population estimates of eastern mallards observed in the northeastern states (AFBWS) and in southern Ontario and Quebec (WBPBS strata 51–53 and 56) from 1990 to 2017. In 2013, population estimates were only available for the northeastern states (AFBWS). Error bars represent one standard error.

AF Mallards in the Breeding Waterfowl Survey by State



So what is going on with mallards?



- Decline in habitat carrying capacity?
 - Not age ratio
 - Mechanism not identified
- Decline in winter “artificial” feeding sites leading to lower winter survival or poor female body condition leading into spring?
- Introgression of game-farm mallard genes resulting in “less-fit” wild ducks?
- Mallards done “riding the wave” of ‘recent’ expansion in the east and declining to lower equilibrium population? (similar to wild turkeys, cattle egrets?)

Questions?