



*Lower Sherman Island  
Duck Hunters Association*

January 25, 2016

Ms. Jacque Hostler-Carmesin, Member  
California Fish and Game Commission  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1320  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Mr. Anthony Williams, Member  
California Fish and Game Commission  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1320  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Mr. Eric Sklar, Member  
California Fish and Game Commission  
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1320  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: 2016/17 Waterfowl Regulation Proposals**

Dear Commissioners:

As representatives of waterfowl hunters across California, our organizations respectfully request that you include and/or support the following proposals in the 2016/17 Waterfowl Regulatory Package:

- **Provide Public Opportunity for Late Season Goose Hunts**

California currently has a number of late season goose hunts that, with the notable exception of the Balance of State (BOS) Zone, are authorized on private lands only. When these special hunts were first authorized by the Commission several years ago, the need for some public hunt opportunity was addressed through the SHARE Program, a voluntary public access program which provides incentives to private landowners and is administered by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW).

However, the SHARE Program no longer operates in conjunction with any of the late season goose hunts, which has eliminated any meaningful public hunting opportunity. It should be noted that many of these late season hunts were created by shifting hunt days from the regular season (when public lands are open) to exclusively private lands. This resulted in a direct loss in public hunting opportunity.

***Recommendation:*** *Amend regulations for late season goose hunts in each zone to include public access language similar to the existing BOS Zone late season goose hunt regulations. This change, which could be tailored to the needs of each zone, would effectively allow hunting on some public waters and public lands (e.g. Type C Wildlife Areas). The Commission should also direct DFW to incorporate the SHARE Program into all of the late season hunts, to the extent possible.*

- **Provide White Goose Hunting Opportunity Early in Season in Northeast (NE) Zone**

As indicated by waterfowl surveys from the Klamath Basin, there may be thousands of white geese (i.e. snow and Ross' geese) in the Klamath Basin on the opening day of the regular waterfowl season. White geese numbers typically increase through November and then decline significantly by December when much of the region freezes. White geese often then return to parts of the NE Zone (e.g. Lassen County) in January. Also please note that the greatest number of hunters using the NE Zone tends to occur during the first few weeks of the regular season.

***Recommendation:*** *Open the white goose season concurrent with the regular waterfowl season opening day within the NE Zone to provide additional hunting opportunity for the greatest number of hunters. This should include the implementation of a split season for white geese, whereby the white goose season closes in December and then re-opens in January.*

- **Allow Junior Licensed Hunters Under 18 to Participate in Federal Youth Hunts**

California expanded its junior hunting license age eligibility by two years when AB 1709 (Frazier), which was supported by our organizations, went into effect in 2015. Despite

this change, hunters 16 and older still could not participate in the federal youth waterfowl hunt days because of the lack of conforming regulations at the federal level. Recently, the various Flyways agreed to allow states the option to permit 16 and 17 year olds to participate in the youth hunts, which was approved as part of the Federal Framework.

***Recommendation: Adopt the federal allowance for 16 and 17 year olds to participate during federal youth hunts, which would increase youth hunting and mentorship opportunities. Regulatory language should clarify that all junior licensed hunters participating in federal youth hunts be accompanied by an adult age 18 years of age or older.***

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and we look forward to continuing to work with the Commission as you consider the final waterfowl hunting regulations for the 2016/17 season.

Sincerely,

Mark Hennelly, California Waterfowl

Dennis Slater, Tulare Basin Wetlands Association

Maddy Folk, The Black Brant Group

Roger Mammon, Lower Sherman Island Duck Hunters Association

John Devney, Delta Waterfowl

Bill Murphy, California Hawking Club

Steve Chappell, Suisun Resources Conservation District

Ric Ortega, Grassland Water District