

2017 WISCONSIN CANADA GOOSE HARVEST SUMMARY

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Methods:

A legislative rule implemented during the regular goose season eliminated the requirement that hunters register their goose harvest. This rule change required the Wisconsin DNR to change how it estimated harvest. Using similar methods to how the Wisconsin DNR obtains our small game harvest estimations, the 2017 goose harvest estimate is based on a non-mandatory random goose hunter survey. This was the first year of using this new method, and comparing harvest estimates from 2017 to any prior years should not be done. **The results of this survey should not be compared to prior Canada Goose harvest estimates or reports.**

A random selection of 10,000 survey participants was drawn from the goose applicant file and sent a survey inquiring about their goose hunting activity at the end of the regular goose season in December. The survey asked recipients for information on whether they hunted, season hunting dates, county hunted, and number of birds harvested. A second mailing was sent to non-respondents. These data were entered into the DNR production server and analyzed using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

Early Canada Goose Harvest Estimation:

Using the new harvest survey methodology, the 2017 estimated early season goose harvest is 31,146 geese. It is important to note during the early season hunters were still required to report Canada goose harvest using mandatory registration, which was the methodology used in past harvest estimates. Mandatory registration produced a harvest of 19,897 geese. This prior method estimate is an increase from the 2016 estimate of 16,880 geese harvested during the early goose season (see Figure 1). The number of applicants for an early season Canada goose permit was 56,416, which was a slight decrease from 2016 (Figure 3). Weather conditions can affect hunter and goose behavior. The start of the early season goose had abnormally low temperatures, which lead to favorable conditions for hunters and may have led to an increase in harvest.

Regular Canada Goose Harvest Estimation:

Using the new harvest survey methodology, the statewide exterior season Canada goose harvest in 2017 was 73,047 geese, again we caution comparing this estimate of harvest to previous years (Figure 2). Exterior Zone permits totaled 69,116 in 2017 (Figure 3). This represents 91% of the total regular season permits issued in 2016. The total Canada goose harvest for the Horicon Zone in 2017 was 5,063 (Figure 2). There has been a gradual decline in the number of Horicon permits over the last 20 years and in 2017 a similar trend continued with 6,375 permits issued compared to 6,740 in 2016 (Figure 3). The progression of agricultural crop harvest in Wisconsin has a significant impact on Canada goose harvest success. In 2017, agricultural crop harvest was delayed offering fewer areas to effectively harvest Canada geese in late September and early October.

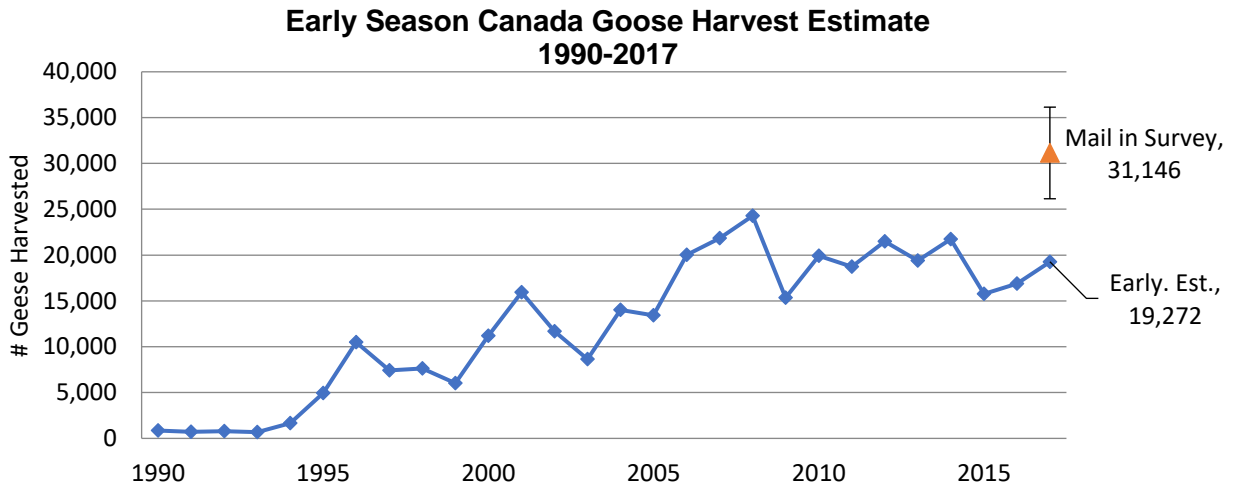


Figure 1

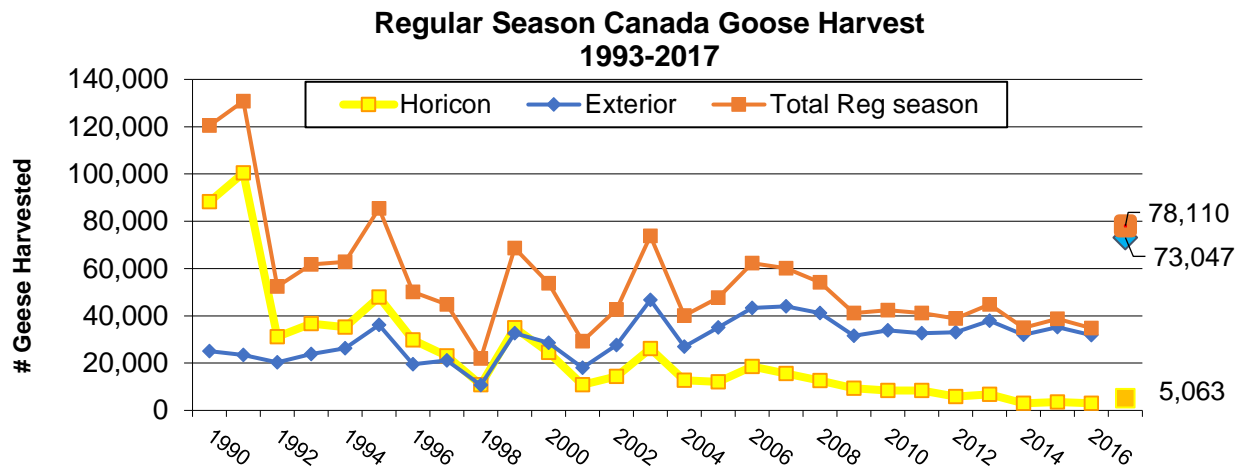


Figure 2

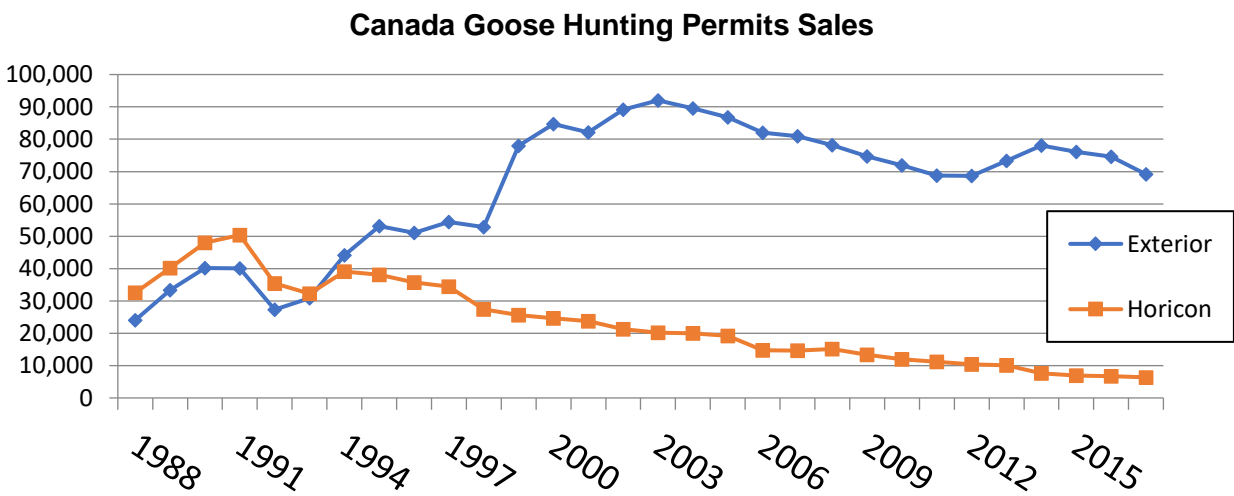


Figure 3