

ABSTRACT

The term “light geese” refers collectively to three taxa of geese that have light coloration: greater snow geese, Ross’s geese, and lesser snow geese. Various light goose populations in North America have experienced rapid population growth, and have reached levels such that they are damaging habitats on their arctic and subarctic breeding areas. Habitat degradation in arctic and subarctic areas may be irreversible, and has negatively impacted light goose populations and other bird populations dependent on such. Natural marsh habitats on some migration and wintering areas also have been impacted by light geese. In addition, goose damage to agricultural crops has become a problem. There is increasing evidence that lesser snow and Ross’s geese act as reservoirs for the bacterium that causes avian cholera. The threat of avian cholera to other bird species likely will increase as light goose populations expand. This document describes various alternatives for the purpose of reducing and stabilizing specific populations of light geese in North America. We have analyzed four management alternatives: 1) no action; 2) modify harvest regulation option and refuge management (PREFERRED); 3) implement direct agency control of light goose populations on migration and wintering areas in the U.S.; 4) seek direct light goose population control on breeding grounds in Canada. Alternatives were analyzed with regard to their potential impacts on light geese, other bird species, special status species, socioeconomics, historical resources, and cultural resources. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement will have a 60-day comment period. We will consider all public comments received during the comment period in preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement.