

Draft Management Program for Magpie Goose 2009–2014

Summary of major issues raised by submission from public consultation phase and how issue has been addressed

The Management Program for the Magpie Goose in the Northern Territory has been reviewed and the revised draft was released for public comment in August 2008. A number of submissions were received and where appropriate, suggestions were incorporated into the document. A summary of the key issues raised in public submissions, and how they have been dealt with in the revised management program follows.

ID#	Issue	Response	Management Program Sections	Submissions ID#
1	Statement in management program that magpie goose range has contracted from former range covering south-eastern Australia without adequate recognition of the re-colonisation and reintroduction of magpie geese into south-eastern Australia.	Range contraction and the causal factors are well documented in the published literature. Management Program clearly identifies that range contraction occurred in late 1800s, early 1900s, with significant populations remaining in the NT and tropical northern Qld and WA, and successful reintroductions and re-colonisation in south-eastern Australia, but in relatively small numbers when compared with the total population. Management Program identifies substantial range expansion in south-east Queensland.	Executive Summary; sec. 1.2	4, 10, 11, 14, 19
2	Population estimates provided in management program are substantial underestimates. Management plan does not identify the lack of monitoring data, either population or harvest for Arnhem Land.	<p>Reworded references to population estimate in management program to identify that estimates are for surveyed area only and that since the late 1980s surveyed area has been the western Top End of the NT only.</p> <p>Management Program reworded to identify that based on 1984/85 survey data western Top End abundance represents >95% population distribution across the Top End. Management Program identifies that populations are highly variable in response to environmental conditions.</p> <p>Management Program reworded to identify that aerial survey estimates are subject to potentially high degree of negative bias and acknowledged as underestimates that must be treated as population indices or absolute minimum estimates only.</p> <p>Management program identifies the need to review population monitoring to develop improved monitoring program as a key action.</p>	Executive Summary; sec. 2.2; sec. 4.2 - objective 1, criteria 2	3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16, 19

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3	<p>Estimates of Aboriginal harvest in management program are highly variable and likely to be extreme over-estimate based on alternate calculation supplied in two submissions.</p>	<p>Estimates of aboriginal harvest in management program are best available at present, early published estimate was 280,000 (Vardon et al 1994), now considered substantial overestimate. Latest estimate in the management program of 60,000 is based on unpublished research (Griffiths, NRETAS 2008) and is updated from the initial estimate of 50,000-150,000 in the public draft program based on Griffiths work and recent information on shot shell sales. It is still considered a potential overestimate, but is the best available. Proposed alternate calculation is likely to be equally inaccurate as presented.</p> <p>Using the volume of shot shells sold based on average number of shells expended per bird is viable where average number of shells per hunter per bird is known or available. Figures provided in the calculations in two of the submissions are for non-Aboriginal hunters who shoot birds on the wing. Available information suggests that a substantial proportion of Aboriginal hunters shoot birds on the water and can have kills of a number of birds per shot in some instances. This means that the number of shells expended per hunter per bird is potentially much lower for aboriginal than non-aboriginal hunters due to differences in hunting methods.</p> <p>Unpublished research from Maningrida (Griffiths, NRETAS 2008) suggests that averages of 2 shot shells per bird are realistic. This means the estimate of 18,346 geese harvested by aboriginal hunters as calculated in the submissions is a potentially substantial underestimate. Using 2 shot shells per bird an estimate of $119,250/2 = 59,625$ geese harvested by aboriginal hunters is derived.</p> <p>Management program identifies development of monitoring program to obtain accurate estimates of aboriginal traditional harvest as a key action.</p>	<p>Executive summary; sec. 2.4.1; sec. 3.1; sec. 4.2 - objective 3, criteria 1</p>	<p>3, 4, 7, 10, 11, 14, 17,19</p>

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4	<p>Estimates of amount of lead shot entering wetland systems are old data based on pre- lead shot ban research and not applicable to current situation.</p> <p>Any total ban on lead shot for waterfowl hunting needs to be applied to all hunters (aboriginal and non-aboriginal) equally.</p> <p>A target date for the introduction of total ban on lead shot for waterfowl hunting needs to be set in plan.</p>	<p>Management program clearly identifies estimates as 1990 data and is reworded to clarify that this was the level of input in 1990 and an estimate for Australia not NT. The lead shot input is expected to have decreased with the existing bans, but reflects the potential amount of shot that could enter the system without a ban.</p> <p>Use of lead shot on all tenures during waterfowl hunting season will be banned under the declaration of the season from 2009 onwards. Presently there is no legislative capacity to manage the Aboriginal traditional harvest component of the overall harvest. This lack of management capacity includes any prohibition on the use of lead shot by Aboriginal people engaged in traditional harvest.</p> <p>Prohibiting the sale of specific sizes of shot is not considered viable since the shot sizes involved are used for other hunting activities that are not implicated in lead poisoning of waterfowl.</p> <p>Management program identifies both the introduction of total ban on lead shot for non-Aboriginal waterfowl hunting across all land tenures and negotiation with Aboriginal hunters to promote use of non-toxic shot for traditional harvest as key actions.</p>	<p>sec. 3.3; sec. 4.2 - objective 2, criteria 1 & 2; sec 4.3.4; sec. 4.3.5</p>	<p>1, 4, 8, 9, 12, 14,17, 19</p>

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5	<p>Disagree that hunting activity is a threat to magpie goose populations and particularly dispute that it is a major threat. Threats such as habitat loss, feral animals and weeds are the major threats.</p> <p>Hunting off-take is recognised as a regulated component of best practice sustainable wildlife management and should be identified and treated as such in the management program.</p> <p>Use of the term 'recreational hunting' to describe hunting by non-Aboriginal hunters is not acceptable as it infers a sporting activity rather than a consumptive harvest.</p>	<p>Management program identifies hunting as a potential threat, not as a realised threat under the current management regime. Published literature clearly identifies hunting as one of the major factors leading to the initial decline of geese in south-east Australia. Unmonitored or unmanaged harvest could potentially lead to population declines if not managed to remain within sustainable harvest levels.</p> <p>The management program does not indicate that the current harvest is exceeding sustainable levels and has as a key action of management of all hunting activity to maintain harvest at or below maximum sustainable level. The management program clearly recognises hunting as a legitimate managed component of the sustainable use of magpie geese populations. Other major threats are clearly identified in management program and include a key action to develop monitoring of these threats.</p> <p>The management program clearly identifies that the annual Waterfowl Hunting Season is declared as a consumptive harvest; all reference to 'recreational hunting' removed from the management program and replaced with non-Aboriginal harvest.</p>	<p>Sec. 2.4.2; sec 3.1; sec. 3.2; sec. 3.4; sec. 3.5; sec 3.6; sec. 4.2 - objective 2, criteria 2 & 3; objective 3, criteria 1; sec. 4.3.1; sec 4.3.3; sec 5.3</p>	<p>7, 9, 10, 11, 14, 19</p>
6	<p>Maximum sustainable level provided in the management program - 8.5% of total population - is set too low and is in conflict with latest published data (Brook & Whitehead 2005a & b).</p>	<p>The maximum sustainable harvest level in the management program has been revised to an average of 10% of total population over any 3 year period and a maximum of 14% in any single year. This brings the estimate into better accord with the mid-point of the range provided in Brooke & Whitehead (2005a & b) (5%-14% mid-point equals 9.5%) for long-term average harvest and does not exceed the maximum from Brooke and Whitehead 2005 in any single year.</p> <p>The management program has been revised to present the reasoning for these maximum sustainable harvest levels and is based on Brooke & Whitehead (2005a & b) which is the latest, best available modelling of harvest impact and sustainable harvest levels.</p>	<p>Executive summary; sec 3.1; sec 4.2 objective 3, criteria 1; sec. 4.3.3; sec. 5.2</p>	<p>10, 11, 14, 19</p>

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7	<p>Management of harvest (hunting) proposed in management program if monitoring indicates harvest is exceeding maximum sustainable levels targets one segment of the total harvest effort only.</p> <p>Management targets the non-Aboriginal segment of harvest which the management program identifies as <25% of total harvest, with no identified management of traditional aboriginal component of harvest (>75% harvest). This is neither equitable nor fair.</p>	<p>The rights of Aboriginal people to use wildlife for traditional purposes are protected in legislation (TPWCA S. 122). Currently there is no capacity for any sort of regulatory management of the traditional Aboriginal harvest. Management of traditional Aboriginal harvest will only be possible through negotiated agreements. This has been identified in the management program and included in the key action to manage harvest should it exceed sustainable limits.</p> <p>Non-Aboriginal harvest (hunting) can only be carried out in accordance with the declared hunting season and is managed through conditions listed in the declaration. This is reflected in the potential management actions listed if total harvest exceeds set limits, which include variation of the conditions of the declared season and negotiation with Aboriginal traditional hunters to reduce harvest levels.</p> <p>Management program states that any variation to either Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal harvest would involve consultation with stakeholders prior to introduction. Regulation of traditional Aboriginal hunting would require new legislation.</p> <p>Updated harvest figures for the Aboriginal harvest indicate that the current harvest is made up of approximately 60% Aboriginal and 40% non-Aboriginal.</p>	<p>Executive summary; sec 4.2 - objective 3, criteria 1;sec. 4.3.3; sec. 4.3.4; sec. 4.3.5</p>	<p>4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 14, 17, 19</p>
8	<p>Management program identifies a range of health and socio-economic benefits to both aboriginal and non-aboriginal hunters with little or no evidence to support these.</p>	<p>Aboriginal health benefits from land management activities have been documented Burgess et al 2005 and by the Desert Knowledge CRC. Economic benefits associated with hunting activity have not been monitored, but the model presented is considered relatively conservative in terms of replacement offset of magpie goose to commercial food supply.</p>	<p>sec. 2.1.3; sec. 2.1.4</p>	<p>2, 15, 16</p>

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9	More public land needs to be made available as managed hunting reserve.	<p>Information contained in management program may be used to determine if areas of public land are suitable for waterfowl hunting, but the management program is about the management of the wild magpie goose population which includes ensuring harvest does not exceed sustainable limits.</p> <p>Issues of lack of public land for management as hunting reserves needs to be addressed through parks and reserves planning and land use planning processes undertaken by Government. This has been identified as a component in the development of a waterfowl hunting management plan which would address the specific issues associated with the regulatory framework for the management of non-Aboriginal waterfowl hunting.</p>	Executive summary; sec. 4.3.6.	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 17, 19
10	Hunting activity near or next to private land or on small hunting reserves surround by rural development needs to be prohibited or stringently managed due to impact on lifestyle and safety.	<p>Management program is about management of wild goose population and recognises the need to develop a waterfowl hunting management plan. Impact of hunting activity associated with Hunting Reserves on matters other than magpie goose population is addressed in the Plans of Management for the Reserves, other aspects of the season such as duration and bag limits are part of the annual declaration and are determined on the basis of sustainable harvest of population.</p> <p>The management program identifies the proposed waterfowl hunting management plan as the mechanism to manage the annual declaration of the waterfowl hunting season.</p> <p>The impact of hunting activity on lifestyle and safety when conducted on private land is addressed by relevant legislation such as the <i>Firearms Act</i>. Permit does not allow waterfowl hunting anywhere that other legislation prevents the use of firearms. The proposed waterfowl hunting management plan is identified as a potential means of addressing lifestyle issues and the interaction of hunters and rural residents.</p>	Executive summary; sec. 4.3.6.	15, 16, 18, 20, 21