



Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council

## News Release

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### **Annual Federal Subsistence Migratory Bird Harvest Opens, April 2nd** *Emperor goose subsistence season opens for the first time in more than 30 years*

The annual spring/summer federal subsistence migratory bird harvest regulations for 2017 will take effect on April 2. The regulations include a season for emperor goose, following decades of conservation. The subsistence harvest of emperor goose had been closed since 1987.

“I would like to thank all subsistence users for their conservation efforts over the past 30 years,” said Patty Schwalenberg, Executive Director of the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council. Their conservation commitment to the emperor goose and their willingness to share indigenous knowledge with federal and state managers has greatly contributed to making this opening possible.”

In 2015, the Council recommended opening an emperor goose subsistence season after the population reached a threshold to allow the consideration of harvest. The Council then wrote a new management plan for emperor geese to set the foundation for opening a season, including implementing a survey to improve monitoring the population on its primary breeding grounds, the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, and a harvest strategy that includes potential harvest restrictions and hunting closures.

The Council-authored management plan is the first of its kind, developed cooperatively for management of a migratory bird population in Alaska. The plan establishes guidelines for cooperative management of emperor geese among the members of the Council. The goal of the plan is to ensure sustainable subsistence harvest, while keeping the population size at a level that maintains its role in the environment. The plan specifies regulations for the spring/summer subsistence harvest. The Council agreed to adopt the plan for an initial 3-year trial period (2017–19) to allow careful evaluation of the emperor goose population response to harvest. A fall/winter harvest is specified in the Pacific Flyway management plan for the emperor goose, a companion to the Council plan. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has developed criteria for the fall/winter harvest.

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*The Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council was formed in 2000 to collaboratively manage the spring/summer subsistence migratory bird harvest in Alaska. Members include representatives of Alaska Native peoples, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.*



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"The recovery of the Emperor Goose population is a huge accomplishment made possible by tribal, state, and federal partners working together," said Greg Siekaniek, Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska. "It required enormous sacrifice over three decades by rural residents, especially community elders, who depend on the wild resources of Alaska for sustenance. My heartfelt thank you to all who contributed to the conservation of this important species."

Other changes for the 2017 season open cackling goose egg gathering on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta; expand the Cordova subsistence harvest eligibility to include residents of Tatitlek and Chenega Bay; and amend the spring subsistence harvest season dates in the Northwest Arctic Region.

**Learn more about the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-management Council at:**

[www.fws.gov/alaska/ambcc/](http://www.fws.gov/alaska/ambcc/). The public regulations booklet, Emperor Goose Management Plan, and other information will be available at this site.

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