

Results of the 2007 Illinois Conservation Order Light Goose Hunter Survey



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Sam Flood, Acting Director
Illinois Department of Natural
Resources

Paul Vehlow
Federal Aid Coordinator

John E. Buhnerkempe
Chief, Division of Wildlife
Resources

Stacy A. Lischka
Program Leader and Principal Investigator
William L. Anderson,
Principal Investigator
Human Dimensions Research Program
Illinois Natural History Survey

Prepared by
Stacy A. Lischka,
William L. Anderson, and
Linda K. Campbell



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RESULTS OF THE 2007 ILLINOIS CONSERVATION ORDER LIGHT GOOSE HUNTER SURVEY

JOB COMPLETION REPORT

WILDLIFE HARVEST AND
HUMAN DIMENSIONS RESEARCH PROGRAM

STATE OF ILLINOIS

PROJECT NUMBER: W-112-R-16
STUDY 101
JOB NO. 101.6

Prepared by
Stacy A. Lischka, William L. Anderson, and Linda K. Campbell
Illinois Natural History Survey
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Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration
W-112-R-16

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Sam Flood, Acting Director
Illinois Department of Natural Resources

John E. Buhnerkempe, Chief
Division of Wildlife Resources

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ABSTRACT

A random sample of 2,000 potential goose hunters was selected from National Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program (HIP) registrants in Illinois. Survey participants were mailed an 8-page questionnaire, reminder postcards, and a follow-up 2-page questionnaire, between April and July 2007. We received 1,052 usable responses, which included 841 responses to the original 8-page questionnaire (44% response) and 211 to the follow-up 2-page questionnaire (20% response). Based on these responses, we estimate 5,962 hunters were active during the Conservation Order snow goose season in Illinois in 2007, slightly more than the 5,543 hunters estimated for the 2006 season. Days of hunting were estimated at 39,170 in 2007, which was 26% less than the estimate of 53,154 days in 2006. An estimated 44,514 snow geese were harvested during the 2007 Conservation Order snow goose season. This represents a 40% decrease from the 2006 estimated harvest of 74,268 snow geese. The South Zone accounted for 46% of total days of hunting and 61% of total harvest. Statewide, 73% of the harvest occurred during February. Of respondents who did not hunt during the Conservation Order season, 39% indicated they had no place to hunt. Two-thirds (66%) of hunters pursued snow geese by using decoys over land. Hunters expressed a preference for hunting multiple species of geese (snow geese, white-fronted geese, Canada geese) at the same time. Although large acreages of land are potentially available to snow goose hunters, survey responses indicate hunters may have difficulty accessing this available land.

OBJECTIVE

To annually determine activities, harvests, and attitudes/opinions of hunters participating each year in the Light Goose Conservation Action.

METHODS

A sample of 2,000 goose hunters was randomly selected from the population of goose hunters who registered with the National Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program (HIP) in Illinois for the 2006-2007 season. On 11 April 2007, these potential Conservation Order snow goose hunters were mailed an 8-page mail-back questionnaire and cover letter (Appendices A and B). Non-respondents were mailed a thank you/reminder postcard (Appendix C) on 1 May, a second copy of the questionnaire and cover letter (Appendix D) on 16 May, and another thank you/reminder postcard on 6 June. Due to a lower than expected response rate to the full survey, a follow-up 2-page questionnaire and cover letter (Appendices E and F) were mailed to non-respondents on 16 July 2007. Estimates of number of hunters, days of hunting, and snow geese harvested were based on confirmed sales of 63,965 Illinois Migratory Waterfowl Stamps (2006-2007 series). The estimated snow goose harvest was adjusted for reporting bias using 0.478 as the adjustment factor (Anderson et al. 1996). Ninety-five percent confidence intervals were calculated for number of hunters, days hunted, and geese harvested, as described in Lischka et al. (2006). We entered and analyzed data using SPSS 12.0 (SPSS Inc. 2003). Results are summarized in Appendices A and E.

SEASON LENGTHS AND BAG LIMITS

The 2007 Conservation Order Light Goose seasons extended from 15 January to 31 March in the North Zone, and from 1 February to 31 March in the Central Zone and South Zone. In each zone, the light goose season began the next day after the regular Canada goose season closed. There was no daily or seasonal bag limit for snow geese during the Conservation Order season.

RESULTS

The questionnaire was not deliverable to 97 recipients, thus the sample population was reduced to 1,903 individuals. A total of 1,057 questionnaires were returned, of which 1,052 were usable. The usable responses included 841 responses to the original 8-page questionnaire (44% response) and 211 to the follow-up 2-page questionnaire (20% response). These low response rates and small sample sizes compromise the findings of this survey. This shortcoming should be addressed when designing future Conservation Order snow goose hunter surveys.

Consideration should be given to increasing the number of names on the mailing list, shortening and simplifying the questionnaire design, and initiating the mailings earlier in the year.

Eighty-five percent of respondents to the follow-up survey indicated they did not respond to the original questionnaire because they did not hunt during the 2007 Conservation Order season or they have never hunted light geese in Illinois (Table 1).

Ninety-eight (9.3%) of the 1,052 respondents reported hunting during the Conservation Order snow goose season in Illinois in 2007. These hunters included 95 males and 3 females. The average age of respondents was 38.4 years, with a range of 12 to 83 years (n=95). Nearly one-half (45%, n=36) of hunters currently live in a rural (farm, non-farm, or rural subdivision) setting, and nearly one-half (45%, n=36) indicated an annual household income of \$60,000 or greater. Respondents are listed by county of residence in Appendix G.

Based on survey responses, we estimate there were 5,962 active snow goose hunters statewide during the Conservation Order season in Illinois in 2007 (Table 2). These hunters expended an estimated 39,170 days hunting, and they harvested an estimated 44,514 snow geese. An estimated 11,078 snow geese were hit but not retrieved. These estimates indicate an 8% decrease in hunters, a 26% decrease in days hunted, and a 40% decrease in snow goose harvest

in 2007 compared to the 2006 season. Fifty-four percent of the hunters successfully harvested ≥ 1 snow goose during the 2007 season. The harvest rate was 7.5 snow geese per hunter or 13.8 snow geese per successful hunter. The South Zone accounted for 46% of total days of hunting and 61% of total harvest (Table 3). Statewide, 73% of the harvest occurred during February.

Of the 954 respondents who did not hunt during the Conservation Order season in 2007, 39% indicated they had no place to hunt snow geese, 32% said they did not have enough time, and 29% were not interested. Twenty-six percent did not have proper equipment to hunt and 23% had no snow geese in their areas (Table 4).

Conservation Order snow goose hunters reported harvesting ≤ 5 geese on 84% of their days of hunting in 2007. Almost all of the snow goose hunters used auto-loading (61%) or pump-action (38%) shotguns in 2007 (Table 6). Nearly one-half of the snow goose hunters took advantage of the regulations that allowed the use of electronic calls (47%) and unplugged shotguns (48%). Fewer hunters hunted until $\frac{1}{2}$ hour after sunset (28%). Electronic calls and unplugged shotguns were used in conjunction with taking one-half (49% and 50%, respectively) of the total snow goose harvest, whereas hunting until $\frac{1}{2}$ hour after sunset was associated with 30% of the harvest (Table 7).

The most popular technique used for hunting snow geese during the Conservation Order season was decoying over land, selected by 65% of the hunters (Table 8). About one-third (35%) of the hunters used decoys over water to pursue snow geese. A majority (82%) of hunters reported that decoying over land was either effective or very effective on snow geese. In addition, 46% felt that sneaking/creeping was effective or very effective.

Two-thirds (66%) of all snow goose hunters reported using shell decoys to hunt snow geese (Table 9). Other types of decoys used included silhouettes (48% of all hunters), rags

(43%), and wind socks/kites (37%). Relatively few (18%) of these hunters used rotating-wing decoys to lure snow geese.

A majority of snow goose hunters felt that rags (61%), shells (78%), silhouettes (73%), and windsocks/kites (65%) were effective or very effective for hunting snow geese (Table 9). Only 40% of the hunters felt that rotating-wing decoys were effective or very effective for attracting snow geese. Thirteen percent of the snow goose hunters reported hunting without any type of decoy.

Most (79%) snow goose hunters indicated that having an unlimited bag limit for light geese was very important or somewhat important to them (Table 10). Hunters also felt that hunting light geese concurrently with Canada geese (84%), white-fronted (specklebelly) geese (85%), and Canada geese and white-fronted geese (87%), was important. Hunters prefer to hunt as many species of geese as possible when they are afield.

For the white-fronted goose season in 2007-2008, snow goose hunters showed a preference for a 72-day season with 2 geese per day limit (49%, n=40) over an 85-day season with 1 goose per day limit (35%, n=28).

Eighty-seven (93%) 2007 Conservation Order snow goose hunters said they plan to participate in the Conservation Order season in Illinois in 2008. For all survey respondents, 40% ($n = 567$) said they plan to hunt snow geese during the 2008 Conservation Order season.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this survey suggest that a relatively small segment of the waterfowl hunting community pursue snow geese during the spring Conservation Order light goose season in Illinois. From 2004 to 2007, hunter estimates ranged from 5,543 to 5,976 (Table 2). Harvest

has been variable, ranging from 37,189 to 74,268 during these years. Nearly two-thirds (61%) of the harvest takes place in the South Zone (Table 3). Of hunters who did not participate in the Conservation Order, 39% said they had no place to hunt (Table 4). Although large acreages of land are potentially available to these hunters, survey responses indicate hunters may have difficulty accessing this available land.

REFERENCES

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Table 1. Reasons given for not responding to the mailings of the original questionnaire for the Illinois Light Goose Hunter Survey: 2007 season ($n = 211$).

Reason	<i>n</i>	%
I did not hunt during the 2007 Conservation Order Light Goose season	94	50.7%
I have never hunted light geese in Illinois	52	34.1%
I do not like answering surveys	38	18.0%
I did not receive the survey	9	4.3%
I was not interested in the issues covered in the survey	1	1.0%
The survey looked too long and/or complicated	1	1.4%
I prefer to be contacted by phone	1	1.0%
Other	15	9.0%

Table 2. Estimates of hunters, days hunted, and snow goose harvest during the Conservation Order snow goose seasons in Illinois in 1999-2007, as estimated by the Illinois Light Goose Hunter Survey.

Year	Estimated Hunters	Estimated Days Hunted	Estimated Harvest
1999	1,076	3,756	2,254
2000	865	6,643	7,612
2001	4,665	32,634	36,830
2002	5,107	31,204	17,875
2003	3,111	27,177	30,564
2004	5,976	44,306	37,189
2005	5,689	42,349	43,839
2006	5,543	53,154	74,268
2007 ^a	5,962	39,170	44,514

^a For the 2007 season, $n = 98$ and the 95% confidence interval was 1,147 for hunters, 15,221 for days, and 25,794 for harvest.

Table 3. Reported snow goose harvest and days hunted by waterfowl zone and month during the Conservation Order snow goose season in Illinois, as estimated by the Illinois Light Goose Hunter Survey: 2007 season ($n = 98$).

Waterfowl Zone	January		February		March		Season	
	Harvest	Days Hunted	Harvest	Days Hunted	Harvest	Days Hunted	Harvest	Days Hunted
North	2,006 29.7% ^a 4.5% ^b	3,163 40.6% 8.1%	2,675 39.7% 6.0%	2,250 28.9% 5.7%	2,064 30.6% 4.6%	2,372 30.5% 6.1%	6,745 100% 15.1%	7,785 100% 19.9%
Central	---	---	6,804 63.2% 15.3%	7,177 53.4% 18.3%	3,954 36.8% 8.9%	6,265 46.6% 16.0%	10,758 100% 24.2%	13,442 100% 34.3%
South	---	---	23,086 85.5% 51.9%	12,955 72.2% 33.1%	3,925 14.5% 8.8%	4,988 27.8% 12.7%	27,011 100% 60.7%	17,943 100% 45.8%
Statewide	2,006 4.5%	3,163 8.1%	32,564 73.2%	22,382 57.1%	9,944 22.3%	13,625 34.8%	44,514 100%	39,170 100%

^a Percent of harvest in zone.

^b Percent of statewide harvest.

Table 4. Reasons for not hunting during the Conservation Order snow goose season in Illinois, as reported by respondents to the Illinois Light Goose Hunter Survey: 2007 season ($n = 954$).

	<i>n</i>	%
No place to hunt snow geese	370	38.8%
Not enough time	301	31.6%
Not interested	277	29.0%
Did not have the proper equipment	246	25.8%
No snow geese in my area	223	23.4%
Did not know any other hunters who hunted snow geese	198	20.8%
Not enough knowledge of snow goose habits	175	18.3%
Unsatisfactory past experience	87	9.1%
Other	39	4.1%

Table 5. Daily success reported by hunters during the Conservation Order snow goose season in Illinois, as reported by respondents to the Illinois Light Goose Hunter Survey: 2007 season ($n = 83$).

	Days	%
Harvested 0 geese	226	38.6%
Harvested 1-5 geese	261	44.6%
Harvested 6-10 geese	65	11.1%
Harvested 11-20 geese	21	3.6%
Harvested 21-30 geese	3	0.5%
Harvested ≥ 31 geese	9	1.5%

Table 6. Types of shotguns used by hunters during the Conservation Order snow goose season in Illinois, as reported by respondents to the Illinois Light Goose Hunter Survey: 2007 season ($n = 79$).

Type of Shotgun	n	%
Auto loader	48	60.7%
Pump action	30	38.0%
Single shot	1	1.3%
Double barrel	0	0.0%

Table 7. Methods used to hunt snow geese and harvest using selected methods during the Conservation Order snow goose season in Illinois, as reported by respondents to the Illinois Light Goose Hunter Survey: 2007 season ($n = 83$).

Method	Hunters		Estimated Hunters That Used Each	Estimated Total Harvest
	n	%		
Electronic calls	39	47.0%	2,802	25,880
Unplugged shotgun	40	48.2%	2,862	26,229
Hunting from sunset to $\frac{1}{2}$ hour after sunset	23	27.7%	1,669	15,499
Did not use any of the above	22	26.5%	1,610	---

Table 8. Percentage of hunters using various hunting techniques and the effectiveness of each technique during the Conservation Order snow goose season in Illinois, as reported by respondents to the Illinois Light Goose Hunter Survey: 2007 season.

Technique	% of Hunters that used each (n = 83)	n	Effectiveness			
			Not at All Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Not Sure
Sneaking/creeping	27.7%	54	25.9%	16.7%	29.6%	27.8%
Decoying over water	34.9%	57	19.3%	40.4%	10.5%	29.8%
Decoying over land	65.0%	65	6.2%	53.8%	27.7%	12.3%
Pass shooting	27.7%	52	17.3%	40.4%	13.5%	28.8%
Other	1.2%		---	---	---	---
Did not use any technique	3.6%		---	---	---	---

Table 9. Types of decoys used during the Conservation Order snow goose season in Illinois, and effectiveness of each, as reported by respondents to the Illinois Light Goose Hunter Survey: 2007 season.

Decoy Type	% of Hunters that used each (n = 83)	n	Effectiveness			
			Not at All Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Not Sure
Rags	43.3%	56	19.6%	51.8%	8.9%	19.6%
Shells	66.2%	68	8.8%	51.5%	26.5%	13.2%
Silhouettes	48.1%	59	6.8%	62.7%	10.2%	20.3%
Windsocks and/or kites	37.3%	52	7.7%	38.5%	26.9%	26.9%
Mechanical or rotating-wing decoys	18.0%	47	12.8%	21.3%	19.1%	46.8%
Did not use decoys	13.2%					

Table 10. Relative importance of selected aspects of goose hunting in Illinois, as reported by respondents to the Illinois Light Goose Hunter Survey: 2007 season.

	<i>n</i>	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not at All Important	Not Sure
Having an unlimited bag limit for light geese	78	46.2%	33.3%	17.9%	2.6%
Hunting light geese and Canada geese at the same time	80	43.8%	40.0%	13.8%	2.5%
Hunting light geese and white-fronted (specklebelly) geese at the same time	78	55.1%	29.5%	11.5%	3.8%
Hunting Canada geese and white-fronted (specklebelly) geese at the same time	78	61.5%	25.6%	10.3%	2.6%

Illinois Light Goose Hunter Survey: 2007 Season Results Summary



Your comments are welcome! Please write them on a separate sheet of paper to receive proper attention.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

All of your responses will be kept confidential.

Please return this survey in the postage-paid return envelope provided.



Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Division of Wildlife Resources
and
Illinois Natural History Survey



The Department of Natural Resources is requesting disclosure of information that is necessary to accomplish the statutory purpose as outlined under the Illinois Compiled Statutes, The Wildlife Code, Chapter 520. Disclosure of information is voluntary. This study is funded by the federal Wildlife Restoration Fund through your purchase of hunting arms and ammunition.

1. Did you hunt light geese in Illinois during the 2007 Conservation Order light goose season (**North Zone: Jan. 15-March 31, 2007; Central and South Zones: Feb. 1- March 31, 2007**)? Do not include hunting light geese during the regular Canada goose season. (*Please check one.*) **n = 841**

9.9% Yes (*Please skip to question 3.*)
90.1% No

2. For which of the following reasons did you not participate in the 2007 Conservation Order light goose season in Illinois? (*Please check all that apply.*) **n = 758**

24.0% I did not have the proper equipment to hunt light geese (decoys, calls, etc.).
19.6% I did not know any other hunters who hunted light geese in Illinois.
17.4% I did not have enough knowledge of light goose habits.
36.6% I did not have a place to hunt light geese in Illinois.
22.8% There are no light geese in the area in which I hunt.
28.7% I did not have enough time to hunt light geese.
24.4% I was not interested in hunting light geese.
9.0% My past experience hunting light geese in Illinois was unsatisfactory.
4.0% Other (*Please indicate.*) _____

3. If you did hunt light geese in Illinois during the 2007 Conservation Order light goose season, please indicate your effort and harvest in the following table. **Include only harvest that occurred during the Conservation Order light goose season (North Zone: Jan. 15-March 31, 2007; Central and South Zones: Feb. 1- March 31, 2007); do not include light goose harvest during the regular Canada goose seasons.** Report the county(ies) in which you hunted, number of days you hunted, and geese harvested for each month in which you hunted light geese. Include only geese you harvested and days you hunted in Illinois. Count part of 1 day as 1 day.

	County hunted	Days hunted	Light geese harvested	Light geese hit, but not retrieved
January:	See Tables 2 & 3.			
February:				
March:				

4. On how many days during the 2007 Conservation Order light goose season did you harvest the following number of light geese? *(Please indicate the number of days in which you harvested the given number of geese.) n = 83*

Light geese harvested	Number of days	% of Reported days
0 light geese	226	38.6%
1-5 light geese	261	44.6%
6-10 light geese	65	11.1%
11-20 light geese	21	3.6%
21-30 light geese	3	0.5%
31 or more light geese	9	1.5%

5. With what type of shotgun did you hunt light geese most often during the 2007 Conservation Order light goose season? *(Please check one.)* **n = 79**

- 1.3% Single shot
- 0.0% Double barreled
- 38.0% Pump action
- 60.7% Automatic loading

6. Which of the following methods did you use to hunt light geese during the 2007 Conservation Order light goose season? *(Please check all that apply.)* **n = 83**

- 46.9% Electronic calls
- 48.1% Unplugged shotgun
- 27.7% Hunting from sunset to ½ hour after sunset
- 26.5% I did not use any of the listed methods. *(Skip to question 8.)*

7. How many light geese did you harvest using the following methods during the 2007 Conservation Order light goose season? *(Please indicate for each method you used. If you used a method, but its aid did not result in any goose harvest, enter zero.)* **n = 83**

Method	Light geese harvested
Electronic calls	See Table 7.
Unplugged shotgun	
Hunting from sunset to ½ hour after sunset	

8. Which of the following techniques did you use to hunt light geese during the 2007 Conservation Order light goose season? *(Please check all that apply.)* **n = 83**

- 27.7% Sneaking or creeping
- 34.9% Using decoys over water
- 65.0% Using decoys over land
- 27.7% Pass shooting
- 1.2% Other *(Please indicate. _____)*
- 3.6% I did not use any techniques to hunt light geese.

9. How effective do you think each of the following techniques was at increasing your harvest of light geese during the 2007 Conservation Order light goose season? (*Please check one for each item.*)

How effective was.....	<i>n</i>	Not at all effective	Effective	Very effective	Not sure
Sneaking/creeping	54	25.9%	16.7%	29.6%	27.8%
Decoying over water	57	19.3%	40.4%	10.5%	29.8%
Decoying over land	65	6.2%	53.8%	27.7%	12.3%
Pass shooting	52	17.3%	40.4%	13.5%	28.8%
Other		---	---	---	---

10. Which of the following types of decoys did you use to hunt light geese during the 2007 Conservation Order light goose season in Illinois? (*Please check all that apply.*) ***n* = 83**

- 13.2% I did not use any decoys to hunt light geese. (*Skip to question 12.*)
- 43.3% Rags
- 66.2% Shells
- 48.1% Silhouettes
- 37.3% Windssocks or kites
- 18.0% Mechanical or rotating wing decoys

11. How effective do you feel the following types of decoys was at increasing your harvest of light geese during the 2007 Conservation Order light goose season? (*Please check one for each item.*)

<i>How effective were...</i>	<i>n</i>	Not at all effective	Effective	Very effective	I am not sure.
a. Rags?	56	19.6%	51.8%	8.9%	19.6%
b. Shells?	68	8.8%	51.5%	26.5%	13.2%
c. Silhouettes?	59	6.8%	62.7%	10.2%	20.3%
d. Windssocks or kites	52	7.7%	38.5%	26.9%	26.9%
e. Mechanical or rotating wing decoys	47	12.8%	21.3%	19.1%	46.8%

Satisfaction with goose hunting seasons in Illinois. Illinois goose hunters have access to a variety of species of geese over the course of a year. Timing of multiple goose seasons in relation to each other may affect hunters' satisfaction with their ability to hunt these species. Please answer the following questions to help Illinois waterfowl biologists learn about your preferences for goose hunting opportunity in Illinois.

12. Many aspects of a goose hunt affect hunters' satisfaction with the quality of that hunt. Please answer the following question to help us understand the characteristics of goose hunting seasons which contribute to your satisfaction with a hunt. (*Please check one for each item.*)

<i>How important to you is...</i>	<i>n</i>	Very important	Somewhat important	Not at all important	I am not sure.
a. having an unlimited bag limit for light geese?	78	46.2%	33.3%	17.9%	2.6%
b. hunting light geese and Canada geese at the same time?	80	43.8%	40.0%	13.8%	2.5%
c. hunting light geese and white-fronted (specklebelly) geese at the same time?	78	55.1%	29.5%	11.5%	3.8%
d. hunting Canada geese and white-fronted (specklebelly) geese at the same time?	78	61.5%	25.6%	10.3%	2.6%

13. Illinois may choose between a long white-fronted (specklebelly) goose hunting season with a low daily bag limit and a shorter white-fronted (specklebelly) goose season with a higher daily bag limit in 2007-2008. Please indicate which season structure you prefer. (*Please check one.*) **n = 81**

- 49.4%** 72-day white-fronted (specklebelly) goose season with 2-goose daily bag limit
- 34.6%** 85-day white-fronted (specklebelly) goose season with 1-goose daily bag limit
- 16.0%** I am not sure.

14. Do you plan to participate in the Conservation Order light goose season next year (January-March 2008)?
(Please check one.) **n = 79**

92.4% Yes (Please skip to question 16.)

7.6% No

15. If you do not plan to participate in the Conservation Order light goose season next year, please explain why in the space provided below.

See Table 4.

Information about you. The following questions provide important information to help us understand more about the people who hunt light geese in Illinois. Please tell us about yourself by completing the following questions. All responses will be kept confidential.

16. As of January 1, 2007, what was your age? (Please indicate.) **n = 95**

Ave. 38.4 years

17. What is your county of residence. (Please indicate.) **n = 841**

See Appendix G. _____ County

18. What is your approximate annual household income? (Please check one.) **n = 80**

10.0% Less than \$20,000 per year

17.5% \$20,000 to \$39,999 per year

27.5% \$40,000 to \$59,999 per year

21.3% \$60,000 to \$79,999 per year

10.0% \$80,000 to \$99,999 per year

10.0% \$100,000 to \$149,999 per year

3.8% Over \$150,000 per year

19. Are you **96.9%** male or **3.1%** female? (*Please check one.*) **n = 98**

20. How would you describe the area where you currently live? (*Please check one.*)
n = 80

15.0% Rural setting, on a farm

20.0% Rural setting, not on a farm

10.0% Rural subdivision

6.3% Suburban area at the edge of a town or city

30.0% Within a small town (Population less than 25,000)

15.0% Within an urban area (Population between 25,000 and 100,000)

3.8% Within a metropolitan area (Population greater than 100,000)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ASSISTANCE!
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The Illinois Department of Natural Resources receives federal assistance and therefore must comply with federal anti-discrimination laws. In compliance with the Illinois Human Rights Act, the Illinois Constitution, Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act as amended, and the U.S. Constitution, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, or disability. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, please contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, Department of Natural Resources, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271, (217) 782-7616 or the Officer of Human Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240.

Appendix B. Cover letter #1, mailed with full questionnaire for the Illinois Light Goose Hunter Survey: 2007 season.



ILLINOIS NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY



April 16, 2007

Dear Light Goose Hunter,

I am writing to ask for your help in a study of Illinois hunters who participated in the 2007 Conservation Order light goose hunting season. This study, jointly conducted by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Illinois Natural History Survey, is an effort to learn about light goose hunting activities in Illinois and the factors that motivate hunters to take to Illinois waterways and fields to hunt light geese. Results of this study will guide waterfowl management decisions to optimize hunting opportunity, maintain or improve hunter satisfaction, and allow for effective management of Illinois's light goose populations.

You are part of a random sample of waterfowl hunters we have selected to provide information about your hunting activities during the 2007 Conservation Order light goose hunting season in Illinois. Please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire, even if you did not hunt light geese in Illinois during the 2007 season. Your responses are completely confidential and will not be associated in any way with your name or address. While your response to this questionnaire and any of the questions is completely voluntary, you can help us effectively manage waterfowl hunting in Illinois by sharing your experiences and views. We look forward to hearing from you soon. Please return the questionnaire in the postage-paid envelope provided.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, we would be happy to talk with you. Please feel free to call Linda Campbell, Survey Administrator, at (217) 244-5121 or write her at the address listed below. You may access the results of this and other studies of wildlife use in Illinois at <http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu/cwpe/hd/>. You may also find information about Illinois Department of Natural Resources wildlife management programs and wildlife in Illinois at <http://dnr.state.il.us/orc/wildliferesources/>.

Thank you very much for helping with this important study.

Sincerely,

Stacy A. Lischka
Human Dimensions Specialist
Illinois Natural History Survey

Appendix C. Thank you/reminder postcard mailed after full questionnaire for the Illinois Light Goose Hunter Survey: 2007 season.



Dear Illinois Waterfowl Hunter,

You have been selected to participate in the Illinois Snow Goose Hunter Survey. A survey questionnaire was recently mailed to you. We have not received your questionnaire at this time. **If you have returned the questionnaire, we thank you and please disregard this reminder. If you have not returned the questionnaire, please do so as soon as possible.** Your input is very important!

Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix D. Cover letter #2, mailed with second mailing of full questionnaire for the Illinois Light Goose Hunter Survey: 2007 season.



ILLINOIS NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY



May 16, 2007

Dear Light Goose Hunter,

A few weeks ago, we sent you a questionnaire asking about your light goose hunting activities in Illinois during 2007. To the best of our knowledge, the questionnaire has not yet been returned. If this letter and your completed questionnaire have crossed in the mail, please accept our sincere thanks for your participation in this study!

Your views are crucially important, even if you did not hunt light geese in Illinois during 2007. The comments of hunters who have already responded show that Illinois light goose hunters desire different types of hunting experiences and take to the field for many different reasons. The results of this study will help Illinois Department of Natural Resources biologists make informed decisions about how to manage waterfowl and waterfowl hunting in Illinois.

If you have not already done so, please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire. The enclosed questionnaire is a duplicate copy of the one you received earlier. Your responses are completely confidential and will not be associated in any way with your name or address. While your response to this questionnaire and any of the questions is completely voluntary, you can help us effectively manage ducks and geese in Illinois by sharing your experiences and views. We look forward to hearing from you soon. Please return the questionnaire in the postage-paid envelope provided.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, we would be happy to talk with you. Please feel free to call Linda Campbell, Survey Administrator, at (217) 244-5121 or write her at the address listed below. You may access the results of this and other studies of wildlife use in Illinois at <http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu/cwpe/hd/>. You may also find information about Illinois Department of Natural Resources wildlife management programs and wildlife in Illinois at <http://dnr.state.il.us/orc/wildliferesources/>.

Thank you very much for helping with this important study.

Sincerely,

Stacy A. Lischka
Human Dimensions Specialist
Illinois Natural History Survey



**Follow-up to Illinois Light Goose Hunter Survey:
2007 Season
Results Summary**



1. Was there a particular reason you did not respond to our survey about the 2007 Conservation Order light goose hunting season? (Please check one.) n = 211

- 4.3% I did not receive the survey.
- 18.0% I do not like answering surveys.
- 50.7% I did not hunt during the 2007 Conservation Order light goose season.
- 34.1% I have never hunted light geese in Illinois.
- 1.0% I was not interested in the issues covered in the survey.
- 1.4% The survey looked too long and/or complicated.
- 1.0% I prefer to be contacted by phone.
- 9.0% Other (Please indicate.) _____

Light Goose Hunting Effort and Harvest. Please answer the following questions about the 2007 Conservation Order light goose hunting season in Illinois. Answer questions 2 and 3 even if you did not hunt snow geese in 2007. Throughout this survey, the term “light geese” includes Snow, Ross’ and Blue geese. Only report your activities during the Conservation Order light goose season (North Zone: Jan. 15-March 31, 2007; Central and South Zones: Feb. 1- March 31, 2007); do not report light goose hunting during the regular Canada goose seasons.

2. Did you hunt light geese in Illinois during the 2007 Conservation Order light goose season (North Zone: Jan. 15-March 31, 2007; Central and South Zones: Feb. 1- March 31, 2007)? Do not include hunting light geese during the regular Canada goose season. (Please check one.) n = 211

- 7.1% Yes (Please skip to question 4.)
- 92.9% No

3. For which of the following reasons did you not participate in the 2007 Conservation Order light goose season in Illinois? (Please check all that apply.) n = 196

- 22.3% I did not have the proper equipment to hunt light geese (decoys, calls, etc.).
- 16.1% I did not know any other hunters who hunted light geese in Illinois.
- 14.2% I did not have enough knowledge of light goose habits.
- 29.9% I did not have a place to hunt light geese in Illinois.
- 15.2% There are no light geese in the area in which I hunt.
- 29.4% I did not have enough time to hunt light geese.
- 34.6% I was not interested in hunting light geese.
- 5.7% My past experience hunting light geese in Illinois was unsatisfactory.
- 2.4% Other (Please indicate.) _____

4. If you did hunt light geese in Illinois during the 2007 Conservation Order light goose season, please indicate your effort and harvest in the following table. Include only geese you harvested and days you hunted in Illinois. Count part of 1 day as 1 day.

	County hunted	Days hunted	Light geese harvested	Light geese hit, but not retrieved
January:	See Tables 2 & 3.			
February:				
March:				

5. Do you plan to participate in the Conservation Order light goose season next year (January-March 2008)?
(Please check one.) n = 173

34.7% Yes *(Please skip to question 7.)*
65.3% No

6. If you do not plan to participate in the Conservation Order light goose season next year, please explain why in the space provided below.

Information about you. The following questions provide important information to help us understand more about the people who hunt light geese in Illinois. Please tell us about yourself by completing the following questions. All responses will be kept confidential.

7. As of January 1, 2007, what was your age? *(Please indicate.) n = 171*

Ave. 38.5 _____ years

8. What is your county of residence. *(Please indicate.) n = 211*

See Appendix G. _____ County

9. Are you **98.6% male** or **1.4% female?** *(Please check one.) n = 211*

Please return this survey in the postage-paid return envelope provided.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ASSISTANCE!

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ILLINOIS NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY



July 11, 2007

Dear Goose Hunter,

Over the last two months we have sent you several mailings about an important research study we are conducting for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The purpose of this study is to learn about light goose hunting activities in Illinois. Results of this study will guide waterfowl management decisions to optimize hunting opportunity and maintain or improve hunter satisfaction.

This study is drawing to a close, and this is the last contact we will make with you. Your views are crucially important, even if you did not hunt light geese in Illinois during 2007. Please take a moment to fill out this **shortened survey** and return it to us in the postage-paid envelope we have enclosed. If you did not hunt light geese in Illinois in 2007, please let us know by answering questions 1-3 of this shortened survey and returning in the postage-paid envelope enclosed.

We are sending this final contact because of our concern that people who have not responded may have different views than those who have. Hearing from everyone in this small, statewide sample helps assure that the survey results are as accurate as possible. Your participation is voluntary, your responses are completely confidential and they will not be associated in any way with your name or address.

We appreciate your willingness to consider our request as we conclude this effort to learn about light goose hunters in Illinois. If you have any questions or comments about this study, we would be happy to talk with you. Please feel free to call Linda Campbell, Survey Administrator, at (217) 244-5121 or write her at the address listed below.

Thank you very much for helping with this important study.

Sincerely,

Stacy A. Lischka
Human Dimensions Specialist
Illinois Natural History Survey

Appendix G. County of residence of hunters who responded to the Illinois Light Goose Hunter Survey: 2007 season.

County	<i>n</i>	% of total	County	<i>n</i>	% of total	County	<i>n</i>	% of total	County	<i>n</i>	% of total
Adams	16	1.52	Fulton	16	1.52	McLean	24	2.28	Schuyler	0	0.00
Alexander	0	0.00	Gallatin	0	0.00	Macon	6	0.57	Scott	2	0.19
Bond	3	0.29	Greene	4	0.38	Macoupin	10	0.95	Shelby	4	0.38
Boone	9	0.86	Grundy	12	1.14	Madison	35	3.33	Stark	1	0.10
Brown	1	0.10	Hamilton	1	0.10	Marion	5	0.48	Stephenson	12	1.14
Bureau	16	1.52	Hancock	8	0.76	Marshall	8	0.76	Tazewell	56	5.32
Calhoun	4	0.38	Hardin	0	0.00	Mason	9	0.86	Union	12	1.14
Carroll	9	0.86	Henderson	1	0.10	Massac	3	0.29	Vermilion	13	1.24
Cass	5	0.48	Henry	11	1.05	Menard	2	0.19	Wabash	1	0.10
Champaign	15	1.43	Iroquois	14	1.33	Mercer	7	0.67	Warren	1	0.10
Christian	9	0.86	Jackson	18	1.71	Monroe	12	1.14	Washington	7	0.67
Clark	2	0.19	Jasper	3	0.29	Montgomery	5	0.48	Wayne	1	0.10
Clay	1	0.10	Jefferson	6	0.57	Morgan	8	0.76	White	2	0.19
Clinton	16	1.52	Jersey	9	0.86	Moultrie	5	0.48	Whiteside	7	0.67
Coles	4	0.38	JoDaviess	4	0.38	Ogle	9	0.86	Will	35	3.33
Cook	68	6.46	Johnson	3	0.29	Peoria	40	3.80	Williamson	23	2.19
Crawford	2	0.19	Kane	18	1.71	Perry	11	1.05	Winnebago	9	0.86
Cumberland	1	0.10	Kankakee	8	0.76	Piatt	4	0.38	Woodford	9	0.86
DeKalb	8	0.76	Kendall	4	0.38	Pike	2	0.19	Unknown	0	0.00
DeWitt	3	0.29	Knox	16	1.52	Pope	0	0.00	Total	1,052	100%
Douglas	4	0.38	Lake	23	2.19	Pulaski	2	0.19			
DuPage	24	2.28	LaSalle	18	1.71	Putnam	10	0.95			
Edgar	0	0.00	Lawrence	1	0.10	Randolph	20	1.90			
Edwards	2	0.19	Lee	6	0.57	Richland	4	0.38			
Effingham	13	1.24	Livingston	4	0.38	Rock Island	7	0.67			
Fayette	7	0.67	Logan	6	0.57	St. Clair	55	5.23			
Ford	5	0.48	McDonough	9	0.86	Saline	8	0.76			
Franklin	17	1.62	McHenry	30	2.85	Sangamon	29	2.76			