



## Tundra Swan Harvest Management FAQ's

**How is harvest management of tundra swans decided?** Harvest management of tundra swans is guided by an Eastern Population Tundra Swan Management Plan developed and approved by all 4 flyway councils. Flyway councils are formal organizations that provide for collaboration among public wildlife agencies for the purpose of migratory bird conservation.

**Is there a population goal?** Yes. The population goal is to maintain the population at 80,000 birds as measured by the mid-winter survey in the Atlantic and Mississippi flyways.

**What is population trend over the long-term?** The population has trended upward since comprehensive mid-winter surveys have been conducted since the late 1950's.

**What is population trend over the last 10-15 years?** The population appears relatively stable or slightly increasing over this time period.

**How many permits are issued and is there a harvest objective?** Currently, the approved management plan recommends that the sport harvest rate remain at or below 5%. The harvest rate is the percentage of the population that is harvested. Over the last 3 years, the average sport harvest rate has been 4%. Currently, the plan allows 12,000 permits to be issued among the 5 states (MT, ND, SD, VA, NC) that hunt tundra swans.

**Is there a provision in the plan to increase the current number of permits allocated?** Yes, the number of permits will be increased by 25% if the 3-year average of the mid-winter survey count exceeds 110,000 swans. After completion of the January 2016 survey, the 3-year average was 111,892, and the total number of available permits for swan hunting states increased from 9,600 to 12,000 permits for the 2017-18 season. The current 3-year average remains above 110,000, therefore 12,000 permits will again be issued for 2018-19.

**Is there a provision in the plan to decrease the number of permits?** Yes, permits will be reduced by 25% if the 3-year average falls below 70,000 and will remain at reduced numbers until the population increases to 80,000. Further, the season will be closed if the 3-year average falls below 50,000 and will remain closed until it increases to 70,000.

**What impact would an increase in harvest have on the population?** Based on 2 separate population modeling exercises, the current permit limit of 12,000 appears in line with what the current population can support. Given that the population appears stable over the last 10-15 years and that population modeling suggests that current levels of harvest are appropriate, managers are comfortable with current harvest and permit levels.

