

Pacific Brant Harvest Strategy

Reference: 90 FR 40178, August 18, 2025 (page 40190); 85 FR 51854, August 21, 2020 (page 51860); 84 FR 42996, August 19, 2019 (page 43001).

“In developing the annual hunting season frameworks for Pacific brant, the Pacific Flyway Council and the Service use the average of the three most recent abundance estimates (index) from the [Fall Brant Survey (FBS)] FBS in about February to determine the upcoming season lengths and daily bag limits. Information on abundance of Pacific brant from the FBS is available in about February each year, which is after the date that proposed frameworks are formulated in the regulatory process. However, the data are typically available by the expected publication of final frameworks. When we acquire the survey data annually, we determine the appropriate frameworks for the upcoming Pacific brant season according to the harvest strategy in the Pacific Flyway Council’s management plan for Pacific brant, as described below, and publish the results in the final frameworks rule.

- If the FBS index is <102,000 brant, then the brant season is closed, and the season may not reopen until the index exceeds 112,000 brant.
- If the FBS index is between 102,000 and 243,000 brant, then the season length and daily bag limit in Alaska is 51 days and 2 brant, and in California, Oregon, and Washington is 16 days and 2 brant.
- If the FBS index is between 243,001 and 293,000 brant, then the season length and daily bag limit in Alaska is 107 days and 2 brant, and in California, Oregon, and Washington is 27 days and 2 brant.
- If the FBS index is greater than 293,000 brant, then the season length and daily bag limit in Alaska is 107 days and 4 brant, and in California, Oregon, and Washington is 37 days and 2 brant.

Under all of the above open-season alternatives, the framework outside season dates in Alaska are September 1 through January 26, in California and Oregon are the Saturday closest to September 24 through December 15, and in Washington are the Saturday closest to September 24 through the last Sunday in January.

We note that the threshold ($\geq 112,000$ brant) to resume an open season following season closure is purposefully 10,000 brant higher than the threshold ($\geq 102,000$ brant) to maintain an open season. This adds additional conservatism into the strategy and provides more confidence that the population has recovered before open seasons resume. It also helps avoid a situation where the season toggles between open and closed among successive hunting seasons.”