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IT'S THE GOING NOT THE GETTIN

Just came in from goose hunting this morning, had to cut the hunt short since I had to get the newsletter out. When sitting out in the blind watching the skies and was wondering what to write about for this month's short story I struck up a conversation with one of the individuals I was hunting with.

Now, I never hunted with this individual before and he thought very highly of himself and his hunting abilities and had a very good conversation of hunts in the past. Since the birds were flying for a change we were sitting there looking at the myriad numbers of ducks flying around and also flocks of geese that were flying way too high and did not want to come down and play. We began to talk, between the ducks wanting to land in the goose spread, it is amazing how they can get so close when they know they will not be shot at, but it is fun to watch, but I digress, we began talking about past hunts and the ones that we remember the best. If you are a seasoned waterfowler, we have all been there, the hunts that we remember best are not necessarily the ones where we limited out in under an hour, but actually the ones where it seems like nothing in the world goes right.

He was reflecting on a story where he was hunting with his buddies one time many a year ago and they had a dog with them. The weather was quite bad and they decided to bring the dog into the blind to protect it from the weather, well, the dog started to get antsy in the blind, whimpering and whining. One of the hunters told the dog's owner that he believed the dog needed to go to the bathroom which the owner flat out denied stating he only goes twice a day and he has already done that. Well, needless to say, the dog had other ideas and produced a pile of excrement almost as large as he was! The guys in the blind got creative and put two sticks together to shovel it out of the blind. They found out later the dog ate half a bag of dog food. I have always stated, trust the dog, they never lie, either they are looking at the birds or trying to tell you something.

One of my memories was when I got down to the boat ramp, launched my boat and the motor would not start. After cussing it and playing with it, got it started and motored on out. Got lost in the fog, finally found a spot that could be hunted, which was not the spot I wanted. Fell in trying to set up my decoys and even after that when the fog lifted I was a hundred yards down from where I wanted to be!

Another time was when after I worked a Swing shift and got off work at midnight would drive two hours to get into the sweat line with a buddy of mine at 3 AM and play cribbage in my camper till 4:30 AM when the draw took place. Don't remember the hunts very much, but I do remember the fun times we had in that camper listening to other hunters and the ducks and geese flying over.

On this hunt today, we did not get any geese, but we had a great time. One of the guys brought all the fixings for breakfast. Bacon, eggs, hash browns with biscuits and gravy. Sitting there in a warm blind on a cold day eating a breakfast like that watching hundreds of Pintails, Mallards and Teal buzzing you is a memory you do not forget. 'It's the Going, not the Getting!'

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MEMBERS MEETING

For this month's members meeting we are going to have shotgun deep cleaning with Gun Smith Eric Olson. With the end of the season this is a very prudent meeting before we put our guns up before next season. He is going to be bringing in an 870, a Benelli and a Beretta for discussion.

So come on out and bring your membership dues if not paid!

HOLIDAY PARTY

If you missed the annual holiday party, you missed a great time enjoyed by all. Below are some pics that I took to share:



Jerry being Jerry and our wonderful Hostess Cassie! Who kept track of us all and took great care of us. Thanks!!



Mike and his grandson, Scott and Gary enjoying festivities. Mike's Grandson made out pretty good on

the gift table that night, his numbers kept on getting drawn!



Members enjoying themselves.



Marvin, Doc, Bill, Art M. Art W. and great to see Scott out and about!



Jerry, Jim and Max enjoying the evening.

MVDHA BOARD

- President:** Ken Liebel
- First V. Pres.:** Scott Thoele
- Fin. Secretary:** Rob Mueller
- Rec. Secretary:** Bill Hilgeman
- Correspondence Secretary:** Bill Hilgeman
- Membership Chairman:** Erik Liebel
- Board of Directors:**
 - Chairman of the Board** Jerry Mercurio
 - Asst Chairman of the Board** Art Wende
 - Directors:** Brad Douglass, Jerry Mercurio Jr., James Edwards, Nick Witte, Gary Hirsch

2024 FUND RAISER

The fund raiser for this year was a grand success. A HUGE thanks to Ken Liebel for making the knife and sheath, donating all materials and labor for this effort.

The winner of the knife was our very own Nick Witte!



Congratulations Nick!

Thanks to all for your assistance in this fund raiser. We raised over \$600.00 for YOUR MVDHA.

ANNUAL DUES

Your annual membership dues are due now. Please consider renewing your membership dues of \$25. If you have not paid your dues yet, you can bring your money to the next members meeting or mail your check to the address on the back.

TROUT TRIP

MVDHA is planning on our annual Trout Trip this coming year. The dates are going to be 14 March 2025 through 16 March 2025. Coming home on the 16th. We will be staying at Trout Hollow Lodge at Taneycomo as we did last year. The address for Trout Hollow Lodge is: 1500

Acacia Club Rd, Hollister, MO 65672. To reserve your room call Trout Hollow at 417- 334-2332 and tell them you are part of MVDHA or online at <https://trouthollow.com/>

Don't forget that if you need to reserve a boat or a slip to set that up also. If you are a military veteran they also give discounts for that too. If you have never gone to one of our annual fishing trips to Taneycomo you are really missing out on one of the best trips or events that we do. It is always a great trip and Trout Hollow is one of the best areas to go to down there.

One note to mention, if you bring any food to be cooked at the cook-out, please make sure it is totally thawed out so there are no issues when it is deep fried.

Hopefully we will see you there!

JUST A REMINDER TO MAKE YOUR RESERVATION. YOU HAVE UP TO TWO WEEKS FOR THE DATE TO CANCEL YOUR RESERVATION WITH NO PENALTY.

MDC WORKSHOPS

Attend MDC waterfowl workshops to give input on upcoming seasons

Workshops in January and February will solicit hunter input about duck season dates and zone boundary locations for the 2026-2030 seasons.

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. -- The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) invites waterfowl hunters to a series of public workshops around the state to gather hunter input about duck season dates and zone boundary locations for the 2026-2030 seasons.

Participants will have the opportunity to review long-term waterfowl data about weather, migra-

tion, habitat use, harvest, and hunter opinions, and discuss their season date and zone preferences with other hunters and MDC staff. MDC will use hunter input gathered through the workshops combined with hunter opinion surveys to establish Missouri's 2026-2030 duck season dates and zones.

The 2025 workshops will be held from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Registration is not required. Call the related phone number for more information.

FEB. 13 IN SPRINGFIELD: MDC Springfield Conservation Nature Center, 4600 S. Chrisman, 417-895-6880;

FEB. 14 IN JOPLIN: MDC Shoal Creek Conservation Education Center, 201 W. Riviera Drive, 417-895-6880;

For more information, visit the MDC website at <https://huntfish.mdc.mo.gov/hunting-trapping/species/waterfowl/waterfowl-reports-prospects/duck-zones-and-season-dates>

AVIAN FLU

MDC encourages public to use caution amidst suspected avian influenza outbreak

The Department is investigating numerous reports of sick and dead waterfowl across Missouri.

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. -- The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is monitoring reports of sick and dead waterfowl, such as geese and ducks, across the state. The Department is actively collecting birds to determine the cause of illness but suspects highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) to be the cause. Other states, including Kansas and Iowa, are experiencing similar occurrences.

Avian influenza, commonly referred to as bird flu, spreads as birds along the North American flyways intermingle with infected birds from Europe and Asia. The viruses are transmitted from bird to bird through fecal droppings, saliva, and nasal discharges. There is a risk for spillover from wild birds into domestic poultry and then back again from poultry to wild birds, resulting in further spread.

Though HPAI does not present an immediate public health concern, MDC recommends the following:

Do not touch dead geese, waterfowl, or other bird species.

Report any sightings of dead geese to MDC online at <http://short.mdc.mo.gov/4KD>

Ensure that pets do not come into contact with dead animals to help prevent the spread of disease.

If you have inadvertently come into contact with a dead goose, wash your hands thoroughly and contact a healthcare professional if you experience any unusual symptoms.

Due to ongoing waterfowl hunting seasons, waterfowl hunters should dress game birds in the field whenever possible or at a location away from poultry or other birds. Hunters should also properly dispose of harvest waste by placing the remains in trash bags and disposing of them through trash collection or a permitted landfill. Bald eagles and other raptors are particularly susceptible to avian influenza. This simple action could help prevent bald eagle and other raptor mortalities.

Hunters should also be aware it is possible to transport avian influenza viruses on boats, wad-

ers, or other equipment, especially if it isn't dry before moving it from one site to another. Allowing hunting equipment to dry between outings will reduce this chance.

Avian influenza does not present an immediate public health concern, though on rare occasions it has infected humans and other animals. It is safe to eat poultry and wild game as normal cooking temperatures are hot enough to kill the virus if present. Meat should be cooked to an internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

More information can be found on the Missouri Department of Agriculture website at <https://agriculture.mo.gov/avian-influenza.php>.

DU DINNER

The St. Charles Chapter of Ducks Unlimited is having their annual Banquet on Saturday, February 22, 2025 at 5:30 PM.

It will again be at the Pezold Banquet Center located off Highway N in Cottleville.

Only a limited number of tickets are available and seating is by tables of 8. Please order your tickets early as the Event has sold out the past three years.

No tickets will be available at the door.

Event prices:

Single - \$60.00
(includes a membership)

Couples - \$110.00
(includes a membership)

Greenwing (17 & under) - \$35.00

Sponsor Table (8 persons) - \$550.00

Tier I Table - \$950.00
(seating for 8, Bronze Sponsorship, Sportsman's Banner selection)

Tier II Table - \$1250.00 (seating for 8, Bronze Sponsorship, Great Guns & Gear Banner selection)

Please go to the Ducks Unlimited website (<https://www.ducks.org>) and search under "Events" in Missouri using your Zip code to get tickets.

If you are unable to attend the Event please consider renewing or becoming a member of Ducks Unlimited by making a \$35.00 donation to help our fundraising effort which includes the national Ducks Unlimited magazine. You can do that at the website (<https://www.ducks.org/>).

Hope you can attend to help raise money for the Ducks!

EMPEROR GOOSE

Looking for some articles for filler came across this one from Delta. Do not know if we have too many trophy hunters but this one might be of interest if you are:

USFWS and State of Alaska to Close Hunting of Emperor Geese

Federal regulations reopened hunting of the species in 2017, but a decline in population signals closure per the current management plan

Federal, state, and regional wildlife managers have recommended that the emperor goose hunting season in Alaska be closed for both subsistence and sport hunting in the 2025 season. The most recent survey information recorded a single-year population index of approximately 19,000—well below the 23,000-

threshold set by the Pacific Flyway Council's management plan to allow hunting.

Emperor geese, known for their striking white heads, gray bodies, orange feet, and two-tone pink and gray beaks, breed primarily on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta in western Alaska. Unlike many waterfowl species, they generally remain in Alaska year-round, wintering along coastal areas like Kodiak and the Aleutian Islands.

Federal regulations reopened the emperor goose hunting season in 2017, allowing Alaska an annual harvest of up to 1,000 birds for the fall-winter hunt under liberal regulations or 500 under restrictive regulations. Harvest is managed through a registration permit system across seven hunt areas, each with an individual quota. A total of 25 non-resident drawing permits were available to non-residents per year.

"Like any wild population, many factors affect the population growth, decline, or stability," said Julian Fischer, a supervisory wildlife biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "For emperor geese, which are slow to mature and reproduce, adult birds are critical to population stability." He explained that harvesting adults, along with habitat changes, food availability, and potential pathogens, are all possible contributors to the recent decline.

Fischer also emphasized the unique challenges of managing this species, explaining that with a small, remote population like emperor geese which are entirely reliant on natural habitats, significant events like storms or disease outbreaks can have outsized impacts. Predators, such

as Arctic and red foxes, may also play a role in population changes.

Jason Schamber, waterfowl program coordinator for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, emphasized that these factors are taken into consideration when re-evaluating the species' management plan, which happens every three years.

"We're currently in the process of revising the Pacific Flyway Management Plan and the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council is responsible for managing the subsistence harvest in the state. So, both of those plans are open to revision currently," he said.

The proposed rule to implement the closure will be available to the public soon, where public input will be welcomed and later considered in the final rule.

You can find more information regarding emperor goose hunting regulations for the fall-winter season on the Alaska Fish and Game website, adfg.alaska.gov.

NEWSLETTER

As part of membership to the Mississippi Valley Duck Hunters Association this newsletter is distributed to the members either by mail or via email. All members who have an email address will be receiving this newsletter via email. With the cost of postage, printing, labeling and handling on the increase this will save YOUR MVDHA a little over \$1.50 per month per member that can be used in other areas. That is a substantial savings, with a projected cost savings of over \$250.00 a year if all members received the newsletter via email. If you still wish to receive your newsletter via snail mail, just let me know at the next member's meeting or if you wish to no longer receive it by snail mail and want to

save the association funds you can provide me your email address by sending me an email at mvdha@mvdha.com. Please consider this, it will save the association money over the time of your membership that can be used else where.

2024—2025 SEASON

Light Goose Conservation Order

Season: Feb. 7 through April 30, 2025

Limits: No daily or possession limits

Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset

Up Coming Events

Feb 12 : Shotgun Deep Cleaning with Gun Smith Eric Olson

Mar 12 : TBD

General Information

This newsletter is distributed to our active members. For non-active members check the website for the current newsletter. We have our general meeting the second Wednesday of every month at 7:30 PM and our Board of Directors' Meeting every fourth Monday at 7 PM. Members meetings are held at Borgettis Bar & Grill 1667 South Old Hwy 141 Fenton MO. Board Meetings are held at various locations, contact Jerry Mercurio at 314-603-6548 for this month's location. In case of bad weather call Ken Liebel at 314-822-8030 or Jerry Mercurio at 314-603-6548.

Visit YOUR web site at <https://mvdha.com> to get the most recent news, events and updates. There you will find this newsletter and other helpful information concerning conservation and the great outdoors that we love. If you would like to be added to the email listing of important news and updates you can do that through the web site through the contact us link, fill out the form and make sure you add your email address.

Any comments or suggestions concerning the newsletter or the website can be sent to mvdha@mvdha.com. I am always looking forwards to suggestions concerning content and what you would like to see or be presented in these publications.

Next members meeting: February 12, 2025

Next Board Meeting: February 24, 2025

Members are invited to the Board Meeting

Member's meeting start at 7:30, Board meeting starts at 7:00

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY DUCK HUNTERS ASSN. INC.

"A Nonprofit Association of, by, and for the Duck Hunters"

"ST. LOUIS' NONPROFIT ASSOCIATION"

P.O. BOX 6, VALLEY PARK, MO 63088

