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END OF THE SEASON

As I write this the North Zone season ended yesterday and by the time this goes to print the Middle Zone will have ended as well. During this time I like to think back about the season and determine what worked and what did not and make some notes on what to fix or correct on the off season.

For what worked. For me, I had a relatively very good season. As many of you know I started reloading TSS in 410 and 20 gauge. This season I was field testing a lot of loads, some loads were absolutely outstanding, where others were dismal. The hype about TSS is very true. I had very few cripples this year when I did hit a bird. It is very hard hitting. I had two triples, one with the 410 5/8 ounce load of number 9s where three Spoonies met their end, (I have the video if you want to see it) the other was with the 20 gauge 3/4 ounce number 9s, again, three Spoonies met their end. Five of the six birds were dead when they hit the water. Yesterday, on the last day of Duck Season, I was hunting with our very own Scott Thoele, I had my 20 gauge loaded up with 7.5 TSS hunting Snow Geese. Scott and I were sitting in the pit when a flock of about a dozen Snows came in locked up pretty as could be. One Snow on my side was just too tempting so I called the shot and Scott and I both went up. For me, two shots, two dead Snows before they hit the water. Scott did the same, though he sailed one of them which was retrieved. We also believe Scott tripled, but could not find the third bird, search as we did. It was a great hunt for the last day. (I have that video too if you would like to see it.)

For what did not work. Things that needs to be addressed before next season. My waders have two pin holes in the crotch area. If I wade anywhere near my thighs I get some seepage. Right now, it is just annoying and I can live with. My best hunting jacket from Drake zipper broke. Drake would not warranty it since it was two years old, I had our local laundry/Clothes seamstress but a new zipper in and that lasted a whole twenty minutes, so I need to find a dive shop that will put in a waterproof zipper or at least a heavy duty one. Just an fyi, if you are looking for an inexpensive medium size waterfowl jacket that does not cost you two to three hundred dollars, check out Academy Sports Magellan series jackets. For less than \$80 it is a nice jacket, warm and plenty of pockets to store stuff. If interested, definitely need to go try it on first since each one, appears, to be manufactured differently. Main problem I saw when I was selecting one was the sleeve cuff. Some were so small I could not get my hands through but the one I selected, no problems at all.

Here is an item under what did work. For those of you that fight the cold, I splurged a bit this Christmas and went and got a set of heated socks from Ororo. I have tried heated socks before and the battery is always too clunky or hits you in the waders and are just uncomfortable. These socks, though at first are a bit hard to get on, go up to the bottom of your knee and the battery is small and contoured to your leg. I have only used them twice, the first time I had them on for 5 hours on low setting and I was very toasty standing in 35 degree water for three hours of that time. They are a bit pricey. As your season ends, think about improvements for next year and write it down while it is still fresh in your brain.

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MEMBERS MEETING

For this month's members meeting we are going to discuss your wants and desires for season dates and zones. MDC is having workshops to discuss this very thing and we want your input so we have an idea of what the members would like when Board members or members in general go to these workshops. See dates and locations of those workshops in this newsletter.

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!

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, migration, 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.

JAN. 13 IN COLUMBIA: Riechmann Indoor Pavilion at Stephen's Lake Park, 2300 E. Walnut St., 573-815-7900;

JAN. 16 IN HARRISONVILLE: Cass County Sherriff's Office, 2501 W. Mechanic, 660-885-6981 or 816-622-0900;

JAN. 21 IN ST. JOSEPH: MDC Northwest Regional Office, 701 James McCarthy Drive, 816-271-3100;

JAN. 22 IN CHILLICOTHE: Comfort Inn and Suites, 250 E. Business 36, 816-271-3100;

JAN. 23 IN CARROLLTON: Carrollton Public Library, 1 North Folger Street, 816-622-0900;

JAN. 28 IN ST. CHARLES: Wapelhorst Park Gould Upper Level, 1875 Muegge Road, 636-441-4554;

JAN. 29 IN ELSBERRY: American Legion, 111 Legion Drive, 636-441-4554;

JAN. 30 IN KIRKSVILLE: MDC Northeast Regional Office, 3500 S. Baltimore St., 660-785-2420;

FEB. 4 IN PORTAGEVILLE: Fisher Delta Research Center, 147 State Hwy T, 573-290-5730.

FEB. 5 IN DEXTER: National Guard Armory, 1702 Missouri Hwy 114, 573-290-5730;

FEB. 6 IN JACKSON: Jackson Civic Center on 381 E. Deerwood Dr., 573-290-5730;

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, waders, 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>.

RIGHT TO FISH

Jerry Jr sent me this article from Outdoor life. Interesting read and we are going to look into to see if we have something similar in Missouri.

Florida Voters Pass 'Right to Fish and Hunt' Amendment

Unofficial election results show Florida is the latest state to adopt a constitutional amendment to protect hunting and fishing as a wildlife management tool

By Natalie Krebs

Posted on Nov 6, 2024

Preliminary election results show that voters in Florida passed the No. 2 Amendment to "preserve forever" the right to fish and hunt in the state. It's the 24th state to adopt such a resolution, according to the Congressional Sportsmen Foundation, as more wildlife-related ballot measures crop up across the U.S. and anti-hunters work to join wildlife commissions.

Ballot measures require 60 percent approval to pass in Florida, and voters there easily outstripped that margin with 67 percent of voters, or 6.8 million people, casting their ballots to protect hunting and fishing, according to the unofficial results posted Tuesday evening by the Florida Division of Elections. Roughly 33 percent of voters, or 3.3 million people, voted against adopting the amendment. (For comparison, roughly 1.2 million residents bought recreational fishing licenses in 2021, according to the American Sportfishing Asso-

ciation; about 207,000 residents bought hunting licenses that year.) Interestingly this trend bucks the urban-rural divide often seen in wildlife-based ballot measures; every single reporting county was in favor of the amendment, including the large metropolitan areas of Orlando, Tampa, and Jacksonville.

The ballot measure asked Floridians to vote yes or no on the following: Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to preserve forever fishing and hunting, including by the use of traditional methods, as a public right and preferred means of responsibly managing and controlling fish and wildlife. Specifies that the amendment does not limit the authority granted to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission under Section 9 of Article IV of the State Constitution.

Unsurprisingly, the amendment was vehemently opposed by anti-hunting organizations like the Humane Society of the U.S., who argued that the inclusion of “traditional methods” in the amendment would legalize gill net fishing, which was banned there in the 1990s. This is inaccurate, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission.

“Both our conservation and legal teams have stated that the current language proposed in Amendment 2 does not change or alter the existing net ban or the ability for it to be enforced. ‘Traditional methods’ does not undo regulation, nor reset FWC’s regulatory authority. Moreover, the net ban is protected by the constitution already, similar to private property rights. Nothing in Amendment 2’s language affects these laws,” FWC

chairman Rodney Barreto said in September. “The FWC maintains regulatory authority over all fish and wildlife in our state. Seasons, bag limits, methods and licensing are still in place and will continue to govern time, place and manner should Amendment 2 pass.”

In other words, adopting Amendment 2 won’t change any existing fishing regulations or the agency’s ability to set seasons, bag limits, or methods, and sportsmen will still have to purchase fishing and hunting licenses.

“A constitutionally-protected right to hunt or fish would make it substantially more difficult for attempts by the state to ban or restrict the hunting or fishing of species of animals,” reads a guide to the state’s amendments. The measure was placed on the ballot with ready approval in the Florida legislature after it was introduced by state representative Lauren Melo. She referenced hunting and fishing’s economic contribution to the state and its role in funding the FWC.

2024—2025 SEASON

WATERFOWL HUNTING

Ducks

South Zone: Nov. 28 through Dec. 1 and Dec. 7 through Jan. 31, 2025

Bag Limit: 6 ducks daily with species restrictions of:

4 mallards (no more than 2 females), 3 wood ducks, 2 red-heads, 2 hooded mergansers, 2 canvasbacks, 2 black ducks, 1 pintail, 2 scaup for first 45 days and 1 scaup for last 15 days, 1 mottled duck

Possession Limit: Three times the daily bag or 18 total, varies by species

Snow Geese (White and Blue Phases) and Ross's Geese

Season: Nov. 11 through Feb. 6, 2025

Limits: 20 blue, snow, or Ross's geese daily with no possession limit

White-Fronted Geese

Season: Nov. 11 through Feb. 6, 2025

Limits: 2 daily and 6 in possession

Canada Geese and Brant

Season: Oct. 5-13 and Nov. 11 – Feb. 6, 2025

Limits: 3 Canada geese and Brant in aggregate daily, 9 in possession

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

Jan 8 : Zone Discussion

Feb 12 : Shotgun Deep Cleaning with Gun Smith Eric Olson

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: January 8, 2025

Next Board Meeting: January 27, 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

