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FIREARM LEGACY

Every firearm you own has some sort of legacy, being it good, bad or ugly, it has a legacy. Recently I was in a discussion with one of our members where he gave his grandson some specialize bullets for a firearm, his grandson looked at them in awe, knowing he had something special, then granddad asked him if he had anything to shoot those special rounds and he said no and he reached around and gave him a firearm for those rounds and he broke down in tears. That grandson will never forget that moment, a firearm given to him by his grandfather along with ammo to shoot it with, that is a legacy of that firearm.

Every firearm that we own has a story, some good, some not so good and those stories need to be preserved to be passed down to the next generation.

As being hunters, we all have our firearms stored somewhere, hopefully in a safe. Each one of those firearms has a story behind them and they cannot be told unless those stories are written down somewhere when you do pass those firearms down to the next generation so that they know the history behind them and what they have in their hands.

For me, I did just that. I recently decided to distribute my collection of my firearms to my kids. Like my single shot Remington 410 that I have written about to my oldest daughter, who herself, shot her first duck with. This shotgun was given to me by my Dad when I was only ten. She would not know the significance of that single shot without the story behind it.

Another firearm that was given was a 32 special with open sights that was also given to me by my Dad who I gave to my son with a story of when my Dad took me deer hunting and he shot at a deer about 100 yards away and missed, by a lot. He was so upset over that and could not figure out why he missed, when he looked at the front sight and saw it was bent over quite a bit making him miss the shot. That rifle harvested many a deer, not only by my Dad but also by me, these stories were all written down and passed onto my son.

Another firearm was my Remington 1100, given to me by my step father when I was sixteen to replace my Remington single shot 410. This was my go to shotgun for waterfowl for about the next forty years. To be honest, I hated that gun. It was a magnum 1100, and if you know your guns, the 1100 magnum was a very finicky shotgun. It required to be meticulously clean in order for it to cycle. I had to develop a special load for it to address just that. This was written down for my son.

My point is about this, is that every firearm has a story, and if you do not write down those stories for each of your firearms, those stories, incidents or the greatest hunts you had with that firearm will be lost to the next generation. If those stories are not passed down to the next generation and they receive that firearm and do not know the significance of it, they will just be sold off or put in a pawn shop because all they know is that Dad just gave them a gun with no background information.

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**BRING YOUR
 MEAT TICK-
 ETS AND
 MONEY TO
 THE HOLI-
 DAY PARTY!!!**

HOLIDAY PARTY

WE WILL BE MEETING AT 7 PM FOR THE HOLIDAY PARTY!!!!!!

We will be having our end of year holiday party for our December meeting. We are planning on providing two free drink tickets FOR JUST BEER OR SODA. We are selling raffle tickets for two hand made and tuned duck calls that were contributed by Doc and some TSS loads by yours truly. Speaking of the Gift table, we are hoping some members can bring in some items since we are low on gifts as is past years. So please check your stuff and if you have anything you would like to donate bring it in. For food, we are planning on sandwiches from Borgettis Bar & Grill, chips and cake.

FUND RAISER UPDATE

Once again we will be having our popular fund raising event of the Kenrick's meat certificates. This is for a gift certificate of \$300 towards a meat package of your choice from Kenrick's Meats at 4324 Weber Rd, St. Louis, MO 63123. Tickets will be \$5 each **OR 5 TICKETS FOR \$20** and the winner of the certificate will be drawn at this years Holiday party in December. Contact any board member for tickets or contact Jerry for tickets to sell at 314-603-6548 and he will get them to you. Remember, this is for your MVDHA Club.

IF YOU HAVE NOT BROUGHT YOUR TICKETS TO JERRY BRING YOUR TICKETS AND MONEY TO THE HOLIDAY PARTY SO THEY WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE DRAW.

BOARD ELECTIONS

Ever had or thought there was a problem with the association? Ever complained about one thing or another on why this association does

this or that and should do it this way? Ever thought about becoming a solution to these problems instead of just complaining about them? Here is your chance! There will be board member elections. Step up now and put your name in the hat. So if you are interested in becoming a board member, or if you have questions on becoming a board member, you can ask any board member, talk to Jerry, email your questions or interest to mvdha@mvdha.com or mail them to the address on the back of this newsletter and they will be forward to Jerry. We currently have our Membership position vacant and need it filled. If you want to make a change, here is your chance.

TROUT TRIP UPDATE

MVDHA is planning on our annual Trout Trip this coming year. The dates will be 13 March 2026 through 15 March 2026. Coming home on the 15th. 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/>

Reserve your room now so you can get the room you want. If something comes up that you have to cancel, you have two weeks before the trip to cancel without any penalties.

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.

MVDHA BOARD

- President:** Ken Liebel
- First V. Pres.:**
Scott Thoele
- Fin. Secretary:**
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James Edwards
Nick Witte
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One note to mention, if you bring any food to be cooked at the cookout, please make sure it is totally thawed out so there are no issues when it is deep fried. Hopefully we will see you there!

ANNUAL DUES

Might as well start this now, your annual membership dues are due at the end of this year. 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.

REFUGES

From Delta Waterfowl:

Delta Waterfowl Launches Major Initiative to Restore U.S. Wildlife Refuges

Our goal is to improve waterfowl hunting throughout North America by investing more resources into public lands

BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA — Delta Waterfowl is launching Restoring Our Refuges, an impactful advocacy campaign to secure enhanced public funding to revitalize the health and waterfowl value of federal refuges and state-owned wildlife management areas throughout the United States.

The 573 national wildlife refuges throughout the United States, which encompass 95 million acres of land and 760 million marine acres, serve as critical assets for the continent's waterfowl and waterfowl hunters. Refuges provide important waterfowl nesting habitat in the prairies and other key breeding grounds, as well as foraging and loafing habitat along migration

routes and at wintering areas. In addition, U.S. federal refuges host an estimated 2.6 million hunting days each year.

The National Wildlife Refuge System is ailing because deep reductions in staffing and maintenance budgets have led to a backlog of failing infrastructure. Funding in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service budget to operate the NWR System has declined 35% or more since 2010. The NWR System has lost 711 full-time staff since 2011, a 29% workforce reduction. To compensate, many NWRs have been clustered into complexes to stretch staff over several refuges, resulting in decreased time and ability for biologists and staff to manage habitat effectively on each property.

“To keep refuges running well, you need efficient water delivery and fairly intensive management to maximize habitat productivity,” said John Devney, Delta’s chief policy officer. “In too many cases, there’s not the staff or infrastructure to do it.”

During the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown in early 2020, Delta helped to identify more than \$250 million in “deferred maintenance” on priority waterfowl and wetland projects within the NWR System. Over the broader NWR System, the shortfall of unmet infrastructure needs is an estimated \$2.6 billion. Both deficits likely have increased since 2020.

Delta’s Restoring Our Refuges initiative aims to increase funding for refuges in the federal budget and to work with Congressional appropriators to ensure the money is spent to improve wetland and waterfowl habitat.

“It’s about improving habitat, but it’s also about significantly improving hunting opportunity,” Devney said. “Since the majority of the fed-

eral refuges were acquired using duck stamp dollars, and duck stamp dollars come from duck hunters, those resources should go back to improving conditions for ducks and duck hunters.”

In addition, Delta will continue to work with USFWS staff at all levels to increase waterfowl hunting opportunities on priority refuges. Delta’s advocacy work during the past decade has directly led to significant new public waterfowl hunting opportunities across the United States.

“When we talk about hunting opportunity, the value is in opportunity to high-quality habitat,” Devney said. “It’s not just being able to go through the gate, it’s going through the gate and having a chance to see and shoot a few ducks.”

Restoring Our Refuges also strives to address waterfowl habitat and hunting opportunities on state-owned lands, enlisting the help of Delta’s chapter volunteers to amplify the effort.

“We’re asking our members and volunteers help engage in this topic to help drive the investment back into public lands — both at wildlife management areas and refuges,” Devney said.

Last month, Jason Tharpe, Delta’s chief executive officer, met with Doug Burgum, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior at the White House during a conservation leadership forum to provide input regarding the management of public lands.

“The discussion emphasized aligning conservation outcomes with federal land management priorities,” Tharpe said. “Delta Waterfowl was at the table to ensure the perspectives of waterfowl hunters were represented and heard.”

Tharpe, a native of Louisiana, keenly understands the perspectives and challenges of being a duck hunter who relies on public properties to provide good opportunities.

“We understand how bad things have become on our public hunting lands,” Tharpe said.

“We’re talking about a legacy of conservation. As waterfowl hunters, our refuge system is the flagship.”

Restoring Our Refuges is a major effort to improve waterfowl hunting throughout North America by investing more resources into our public lands.

“It’s a challenge,” Tharpe said. “I think it’s a matter of putting some attention to it and getting our policy makers focused on the right things. I think we’ve lost a bit of focus on game management in North America, and it’s been replaced by ecosystem management, species at-risk, endangered species management. Those are valuable things. But we need game management. It must be part of the system, especially in a system largely supported by hunters. Delta Waterfowl is committed to leveraging our resources to ensure it happens.”

HUNTER DECLINE

From Delta Waterfowl

Waterfowl Hunter Numbers Drop

Reports reveal slight decrease from prior season, duck harvest also dips

The number of active waterfowl hunters in North America continues to decline, following a decades-long trend.

According to the Migratory Bird Hunting Activity and Harvest

Report issued annually by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1.26 million people actively hunted ducks and geese in the United States during the 2024-2025 season. The USFWS estimate shows a 2.5% decrease in active waterfowl hunters from the 2023-2024 season.

A separate report from the Canadian Wildlife Service puts the number of active resident hunters at 127,082 in 2024, a 1.4% decline from the previous year and Canada’s second-lowest number of waterfowl hunters in data records beginning in 1966.

The number of North American waterfowl hunters peaked in the 1970s, with 505,681 Canadian hunters in 1978 and 2.02 million U.S. hunters in 1970-1971.

So, who’s still hunting ducks and geese, and where?

In the United States, Texas has the most active waterfowlers with 119,700, with Arkansas firmly in second at 79,400. Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Louisiana round out the Top 5. In Canada, Ontario leads with 44,052 resident waterfowl hunters, with Quebec next at 27,216. That means 56% of Canada’s resident waterfowlers live in Ontario and Quebec. Alberta, Newfoundland, and Saskatchewan complete Canada’s Top 5.

Harvest Stats

The USFWS report estimates hunters shot 14.34 million ducks in the United States during the 2024-2025 season, a 2.2% decrease from the previous year’s estimate of 14.76 million.

Arkansas hunters took 1.42 million ducks, the most of any state. Louisiana hunters shot 1.25 million ducks, with California next with 1.11 million. Texas hunters harvested 1.1 million ducks, while

Minnesota ranked fifth at 655,700.

California hunters averaged 21.9 ducks per hunter, while Louisiana hunters shot 21.2 ducks. The average Arkansas hunter shot 18.8 ducks. Pennsylvania hunters have the dubious distinction of the least ducks killed per hunter, averaging only 4.4 last season.

The most popular duck in North America—the mallard—tops all other species in harvest. U.S. hunters shot 3.47 million last season. Arkansas led with 530,183 mallards, but the next states on the list might surprise people. Oklahoma was second with 201,683, while Missouri ranked third with 187,251. Tennessee was fourth with 180,965, followed by North Dakota at 164,401.

Green-winged teal at 2.39 million were the second-most-commonly harvested duck, with wood ducks third at 1.78 million. Gadwall were fourth, and blue-winged/cinnamon teal fifth. Among diving ducks, ring-necked ducks ranked 7th at 626,648, with buffleheads 10th at 275,897.

While U.S. hunters shot fewer ducks than the previous year, the goose harvest increased 2.4% to 3.48 million during the 2024-2025 season. Of those, hunters shot 2.37 million Canada geese, 416,769 white-fronted geese, and 381,471 snow/blue geese, 235,793 cackling geese, 64,428 Ross’s geese, and 14,461 brant.

California hunters shot 276,100 geese, the highest total of any state. California’s take of 97,174 snow/blue geese also led the country, as did the state’s harvest of 22,443 Ross’s geese.

California hunters harvested 89,534 white-fronted geese, second only to Arkansas hunters who shot 134,741. Arkansas was third overall in goose harvest with 256,400 total geese. Kansas hunters ranked second with 258,200 geese, averaging an impressive 13.6 geese per hunter.

North Dakota hunters shot 184,400 geese, with Michigan closing out the Top 5 with 169,400 total geese. Michigan hunters harvested the most Canada geese, with 167,809 honkers.

Oklahoma hunters took 42,432 cackling geese, the highest total for that species, with Texas at 40,845 and Kansas at 39,943 close behind.

New Jersey led in brant harvest with 2,535, while Alaska was next at 1,978.

Flyway Snapshots

In the United States, the Atlantic Flyway had 287,100 active waterfowlers, or 22.8% of the nation's duck and goose hunters. Atlantic hunters shot 2.41 million ducks, representing 16.7% of the total U.S. harvest, and 579,100 geese equaling 16.6%. Wood ducks were the most taken duck, with the flyway's total of 579,417 woodies making up 32.5% of the country's harvest. The Atlantic Flyway led in black duck harvest with 149,448, or 79.8% of the total. Atlantic hunters also shot 84.3% of the country's scoters. Florida hunters accounted for nearly half of the mottled duck harvest and led all states with 140,058 ring-necked ducks.

The Mississippi Flyway had 512,200 waterfowl hunters, or 40.7% of the total. They shot 6.4 million ducks, or 44.4%, and 1.38 million geese, or 39.7%.

Mississippi Flyway hunters accounted for 51% of the U.S. mallard harvest, 60.7% of the wood ducks, and 49.2% of blue-winged/cinnamon teal. In addition, the flyway's harvest of 1.38 million Canada geese was 58.2% of the total for the species. Mississippi Flyway hunters also shot the most shovelers and pintails. Arkansas was the top state in the nation for mallards and gadwalls, while Louisiana led in wood duck and canvasback harvest and ranked second for green-winged teal and blue-winged/cinnamon teal.

The Central Flyway had 291,500 active hunters, or 23.1%. They shot 3.18 million ducks or 22%, while 986,600 geese equaled 28.3% of the U.S. harvest. The Central finished second in harvest of mallards, gadwalls, wigeon, and green-winged teal. Led by Texas, the Central Flyway accounted for 125,138 redheads, which was 57.7% of the harvest.

At 162,900 hunters, the Pacific Flyway had only 12.9% of the country's waterfowlers. However, they shot 2.39 million ducks or 16.6%, and 535,000 geese, a mark of 15.4%. Pacific hunters shot 363,874 wigeon, 49.5% of the total U.S. harvest. The flyway ranked second in harvest of shovelers and pintails. California hunters shot 86,358 pintails, more than double the total taken in any other state.

Canada Stats Incomplete

Harvest statistics for the 2024 season were not yet available, but a quick snapshot of 2023 numbers showed 874,613 geese and 776,610 ducks were taken by 145,847 licensed hunters, including 16,902 non-Canadians.

In 2023, hunters shot 353,464 mallards, 53,689 black ducks, 53,572 green-winged teal, and 51,181 pintails in Canada. Hunters

took 619,883 Canada geese, 141,199 snow/blue geese, 81,270 whitefronts, and 32,214 Ross's geese.

Saskatchewan hunters led all provinces with 184,632 ducks and 281,469 geese. Alberta was second in goose harvest with 194,059, but third in ducks at 134,205. Ontario was second in ducks with 176,364 and third in geese at 150,291. Quebec ranked fourth with 102,027 ducks and 135,360 geese. — Paul Wait

SEASONS

2025-2026 WATERFOWL HUNTING

Ducks Season:

North Zone: Nov. 1 — Dec. 30

Middle Zone: Nov. 1 - 9 and Nov. 15 through Jan. 4, 2026

South Zone: Nov. 27 – 30 and Dec. 7 through Jan. 31, 2026

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

Season: Nov. 11 through Feb. 6, 2026

White-Fronted Geese

Season: Nov. 11 — Feb. 6, 2026

Canada Geese and Brant

Season: Oct. 4 - 12 and Nov. 11 – Feb. 6, 2026

Light Goose Conservation

Season: Feb. 7 — April 30, 2026

South Zone: Nov. 22 and 23

Up Coming Events

Dec 10 : Holiday Party

Jan 14 : Taxidermy

Feb 11 : Movie Night

Mar 11 : Decoy Carving

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 also held at Borgettis Bar & Grill 1667 South Old Hwy 141 Fenton MO. 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: December 10, 2025 (7 PM)

Next Board Meeting: NO BOARD MEETING

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

