



MISSISSIPPI VALLEY DUCK HUNTERS ASSOCIATION
A NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATION OF, BY, AND FOR THE DUCK
HUNTERS.



JUNE 2025

VOLUME 69 ISSUE 6 JUNE 2, 2025

28 GAUGE

As many of you know, I got into the small bore craze last year and basically love it. Granted, this is a niche area and not for everybody since it is rather expensive. I cannot afford buying the TSS shells from commercial sellers at almost \$7 to \$10 a round so I got into developing my own rounds which is really really fun.

I mainly develop for my .410, for ducks, which is a 9/16 ounce load and a 5/8 oz load and for my 20 gauge for geese which is a 3/4 ounce load up to a 1 ounce load. Now, I was looking at the wonderful 28 gauge, I could develop a 9/16 ounce load all the way up to a 7/8 ounce load and cover both species with a single gun.

If you know the history of the 28 gauge, it is not meant for waterfowl. It is mainly a gentleman's gun used for upland game birds or for shooting trap or skeet. They have rich grained stock and forearm, some, as with just about all shotguns are detailed etched. These guns you would not want to take out into the marsh or into the mud laden duck blinds. I wanted a semi auto, synthetic stock, 28" barrel killing machine. The choices were very limited.

After a thorough search I truly only had two choices, one was a Mossberg SA28, it was black synthetic, but only a 26" barrel and a gas system, the other was the gun that is probably the number 1 duck killing machine that has graced the blind of those who can afford it, the Benelli Super Black Eagle. This version was the SBE3. When comparing the two, the SBE3 had all the bells and whistles. 28" barrel, synthetic stock, Max7 camo, could shoot 2 3/4 and 3" shells and inertial system, which I prefer. The price comparison was shocking though, the SA28 I could get for under \$600 and it was made by the same company that my 410 was made by, however, the SBE3 was around \$1,800. I thought about it long and hard and decide to pull the trigger and get it. I mean, one gun that could do it all and it had everything I wanted, man, was that a mistake.

If you attended my reloading session about small bore I talked about patterning your gun, I took that SBE3 out to the patterning board to see what it would do. I put in the full choke, set it up at 20 yards and set off three factory rounds. It was off, and not by a bit, I mean 12" high and 12" to the left, at 20 yards!!!! Long story short, after many a shim change and wasting a lot of ammo testing, I got it down to about 6" high and 6" left. So I took it back to the 35 yrd line. If I wanted my POI to be close to center with an IC choke I would have to aim 18" to the right and 18" low! On a target that was straight in front of me! Think about hunting with that! The gun has been returned to Benelli. That SA28 is looking better and better, I can get three of them for the price of one SBE3, hmmmmmm.

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**SELL
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MEAT
TICKETS!!!**

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MEMBERS MEETING

The June meeting will take place on 10 June, **WHICH IS A TUESDAY**, out at Jay Henges. We are fortunate to be able to have the Trap Night again this year on Tuesday, June 10th at Jay Henges Conservation Area. The scenario is the same as last year. Show up between 5 PM and 5:30 PM to get the MDC safety briefing. MDC will furnish the clay targets while members need to bring their own ammo (size 7 1/2 or smaller lead shot). MVDHA will furnish hot dogs, chips, and water for members and their significant other.

AGAIN, plan on arriving BETWEEN 5 AND 5:30 pm to enjoy a dog and listen to the safety rules. We should get in a good two to three rounds of shooting before darkness. Recommend to bring at **LEAST THREE TO FOUR BOXES OF SHELLS.**

BRING EAR PROTECTION AND SAFTY GLASSES. While there, please tell the MDC staff how much we enjoy this event.

JULY MEMBERS MEETING

Mark your calendars now, we have a rescheduled date for Dr. Brian Reiter who is a Vet and a Waterfowler who gave us an outstanding presentation last year about emergency care for your dog when out in the field. We have asked him to bring in the example of the stapler he mentioned at last years meeting.

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

We were notified at our last board meeting that Erik Liebel is getting married and moving to Wisconsin to start his new life with his new bride. First off, congratulations to Erik! Hope you have a long and fruitful marriage with lots of happiness! Second off, this leaves an opening for our Membership Chair. If you are interested in becoming a board member and fill this very important position please step up now and let a member of the board know!

FUND RAISER

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 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.

FAMILY FUN DAY

We have a date for our annual Family Fun Day. Mark your calendars for 28 June 2025. We will be going to:

1350 Loughboro Road

Bismark, MO 63624

This is the home of Mark Haberberger. Looking at google maps, this looks like an outstanding location, the lake looks awesome!

Couple of notes:

- Scott Thoele stated he is going to set up signs for directions
- This is a persons home, so respect that
- There will not be any restrooms here, but Bismark is about two to three miles down the road with a nice gas station
- The lake is 30 acres in size
- The lake is stocked, primarily with bass and Crappie
- The lake is very accessible from shore
- Bring chairs, drinks, bug spray, sunscreen, everything you need for an outdoor activity, fishing etc. Hotdogs, chips and water will be provided for lunch

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

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Art Wende

Directors:

Brad Douglass,

Jerry Mercurio Jr.,

James Edwards

Nick Witte

Gary Hirsch

- There are two docks and a cleaning station for your use
- There is no boat ramp, but hand launch boats are ok with no motor restrictions
- Not sure yet on where to park but follow the group since many will arrive early

This looks like it is going to be a great time, so come on out and enjoy the day!! Thanks Scott for arranging this for us!

MDC SETS SEASONS

MDC sets upcoming migratory game bird and waterfowl seasons

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – The Missouri Conservation Commission approved recommendations from the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) at its April 4 meeting for upcoming 2025 migratory-game-bird-hunting seasons and 2025-2026 waterfowl-hunting seasons.

2025 MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING

2025-2026 WATERFOWL HUNTING

Teal Season: Sept. 13 - 21

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

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

3 pintail 2 scaup for first 45 days and 1 scaup for last 15 days

1 mottled duck

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

YOUTH HUNTING DAYS

North Zone: Oct. 25 and 26

Middle Zone: Oct. 25 and 26

South Zone: Nov. 22 and 23

MFOR

Craig Sondker had the first meeting of forming MFOR (Missouri Federation of Outdoor Resources) on 1 June and had a huge success. Board members were selected and are getting organized. This organization is similar to IFOR in Illinois. More info to be passed in the future.

To give you an idea, from the IFOR website of:

<https://if-or.com/>

STAYING CONCEALED

Tips For Staying Concealed

From Ducks Unlimited

By By: John Pollmann

WF360 Central Flyway Migration Editor

With their highly developed sense of vision, waterfowl can make life tough for those hunters trying to keep out of sight. In the following article, Ducks Unlimited's John Coluccy explains how ducks and geese spot danger and provides

five tips on how to stay hidden and put more birds in your decoys.

1. Faces and Hands Covered

Having studied the habits of black ducks for his work with Ducks Unlimited, biologist John Coluccy knows a thing or two about wary waterfowl. Chief among the ways black ducks and other species of waterfowl keep themselves safe is using a highly developed sense of vision.

Waterfowl, like most bird species, live an aerial life at high speeds, Coluccy says, so having an acute sense of vision is a necessity for protection and navigation.

"Their vision is highly developed with adaptations that allow them to see a color spectrum that we can't," says Coluccy, who serves as Ducks Unlimited's director of conservation planning at the Great Lakes/Atlantic regional office in Ann Arbor, Michigan. "They see the same colors that we do, but what they see is much more rich and vivid."

A hen pintail, for instance, relies on her visual capacity during courtship behavior to detect differences in the quality of plumage worn by competing drakes, Coluccy says, which allows her to differentiate between a juvenile and adult bird based on the different shades of brown at the nape of their necks and colors within their wing speculums.

"If she can spot those minute differences in color on another duck, imagine what she can see when approaching a duck blind," says Coluccy. "Little things that may not appear to you or I as concerns while hunting will stick-out like a flashlight to a duck or goose."

Faces and hands left uncovered are two of the more common mistakes, Coluccy says, making a face-mask or face paint and gloves must-haves for every waterfowl hunter.

"Keeping those hands and faces covered is even more important if you've got hunters shifting around in the blind," says Coluccy. "Waterfowl possess an acute sense of vision that allows them to detect very, very slight movements, so wearing something on your face and your hands and minimizing movement is critical."

2. Finding the Right Pattern

That same ability by waterfowl to detect minute differences in color also means that hunters need to maintain an appropriate sense of fashion when selecting what to wear to the marsh and field.

"Occasionally my work as a biologist will put me in the air during the hunting seasons, and I'm amazed when I fly over a decoy spread at how a hunter sticks out when he is wearing a coat or other piece of clothing that does not fit in with the surrounding cover," says Coluccy. "Again, if I can spot those differences, imagine what a duck or goose will see."

Hunters wearing a dark brown pattern in lightly colored surroundings—or vice versa—will appear silhouetted against their surroundings, Coluccy says, and the outline of a person is as much a sign of danger as that of a fox or aerial predator.

Coluccy says that matching your surroundings is especially important when blue, sunny skies have been replaced by clouds and grey.

"The flat-light associated with overcast days really calls attention to what you are wearing

and, again, to any movement in the blind," says Coluccy. "If your camo doesn't match or you're moving around, you're going to stick out."

3. Staying in the Shadows

When it comes to hiding from the watchful eyes of waterfowl, Coluccy says that shadows can be both a hunter's best friend and his worst enemy.

"Natural shadows allow you to disappear—with the sun shining in their eyes, they just can't pull you out of that dark background," says Coluccy. "Whether you're in a permanent blind or hunting in natural cover, utilize those shadows when the conditions are bright and sunny."

And while shadows cast by a full-bodied duck or goose decoy are natural, Coluccy says that field hunters are at a disadvantage when the sun hits a lay-out blind.

"The result is a shadow that, from an aerial perspective, is really going to stick out," says Coluccy. "It's going to look like a blob of dark matter that just doesn't fit."

Placing the lay-out blind in a natural depression in the field or digging a shallow foot-print to lower the profile of the blind are two ways to minimize any unwanted shadows. Hunters can also try placing decoys on elevated stakes around the blind at its highest points to break-up its outline and create an illusion that plays on waterfowl's weakened sense of depth perception.

4. Don't Let Your Guard Down

Keeping movement to a minimum while waterfowl are approaching a decoy spread is important, but so, too, Coluccy says, is to stay still when the birds are headed the other direction.

"With eyes on the sides of their head, waterfowl lack binocular vision, but they compensate for that by moving their heads from side to side, continually getting images from both eyes," says Coluccy.

"Because of this, ducks and geese can see just about any direction all the way around them. Hunters then make the mistake of shifting in the blind or sticking a head up when birds are going away, thinking it is safe to move."

Using movement—a dark flag or hat—can be very good, Coluccy adds, to gain the attention of birds passing at a distance, but with a level of vision 2 to 3 times that of humans, both ducks and geese will often reach the point where the motion may keep them out of the decoys.

"There is a breaking point when you wave that flag and the birds are too close," says Coluccy. "They are going to pick that movement apart when they are in within or just outside of gun-range. Watch the reaction of the birds; they are going to tell you if they like the motion or not."

5. Provide a Distraction

When limited surrounding cover, flat-light or other conditions affect a hunter's ability to hide, Coluccy recommends that hunters take a lesson from the birds.

"Anyone who has ever been fortunate to have a mob of ducks or geese over the decoys knows that you can get away with some things because the birds are distracted by the motion of all those wings in the air or birds hitting the ground," says Coluccy.

"Hunters can use this to their advantage when they are having a tough time hiding by using well-placed motion in the decoys

and, if possible, by shifting blind location."

A quiver magnet, jerk string or spinning-wing decoy will focus the attention of swinging birds away from hunters, while lay-out blinds or a make-shift blind positioned to the side of the decoys will provide quartering or crossing shots.

The shooting opportunities may be different than those provided by a traditional set-up, but with birds in the decoys rather than flaring from hunters or blinds exposed by a modest hide, Coluccy says unique shots are better than none at all.

"In a situation where it is tough to hide, you do what you can to keep the eyes of those ducks and geese off of you and on the decoys," says Coluccy. "Even in a perfect set-up, they aren't always going to give you an ideal shot. You just can't give them anything to look at and see danger, and ducks and geese see a lot, that's for sure."

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma Is Making Nonresidents Get Permission, Pay \$100 to Hunt Public Land

A new law limits access for out of state hunters to public lands, including on some federal lands

By Alice Jones Webb

Published Apr 25, 2025 1:10 PM EDT Outdoor Life

Hunting in Oklahoma could look a lot different this fall, particularly for nonresident hunters and professional guides, thanks to two key pieces of legislation – one of which is already law, while the other is gaining rapid support.

Signed by Gov. Kevin Stitt into law on Wednesday, Senate Bill 448 creates a lottery-style permit

system for nonresident hunters who want to hunt Oklahoma's Wildlife Management Areas, or WMAs, and National Wildlife Refuges in the state. Nonresident hunters will have to obtain written authorization from the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission.

If demand outpaces the number of hunters these areas can support, a lottery will determine access. On top of regular license costs, successful applicants will also pay a permit fee of up to \$100. It's not clear how many nonresidents will be allowed to hunt a given property before the lottery kicks in.

Supporters claim the new rules will help manage hunting pressure and protect public land access for Oklahoma residents.

"The passage of Senate Bill 448 marks a significant step forward in safeguarding Oklahomans' access to our state's wildlife management areas," said Sen. Warren Hamilton, a sponsor of the bill. "This legislation prioritizes the rights of our citizens while continuing to welcome visiting outdoorsmen from other states through the lottery system and permitting process outlined in this bill."

ODWC has backed the move, calling it a tool to prevent overcrowding on popular public lands. But not everyone's thrilled. Some hunters have voiced concern about limiting access for DIY traveling sportsmen and the potential impact on local hunting economies.

Before reaching the governor's desk, SB 448 passed the state Senate with a unanimous vote, then proceeded to the House, where it passed 78-1. The new law takes effect on Nov. 1.

More Regs for Outfitters

While SB 448 is now officially law, SB 208 is still moving through the

legislative process, but is gaining momentum quickly.

SB 208, written by Rep. Ty Burns, would require all hunting guides operating in Oklahoma to register and obtain a state license through the ODWC. Commercial hunting preserves and landowners guiding only on their own property are exempt from this requirement. The ODWC will handle details like license fees, training, and background checks.

Supporters say SB 208 is about raising standards and ensuring professionalism in the field. Critics argue it could burden small, independent guides and shrink Oklahoma's hunting tourism.

The bill passed the Senate unanimously in March and has cleared key House committees. It's expected to reach the House floor for a vote in the coming weeks. Like SB 448, if passed, SB 208 would go into effect on Nov. 1, 2025.

Both SB 448 and SB 208 reflect a broader push for tighter management of Oklahoma's public lands. If SB 208 becomes law, out-of-state hunters and guides will face a dramatically different system this fall.

Up Coming Events

June 10 : Trap Shoot at Jay Henges

July 9 : Dr. Brian Reiter Vet

Aug 13 : NO MEETING

Sept 10 : TBD

Oct 8 : Waterfowl Forecast

Nov 12 : NO MEETING

Dec 10 : Holiday Party

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: June 10, 2025 (Jay Henges)

Next Board Meeting: June 23, 2025

Members are invited to the Board Meeting

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

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

"ST. LOUIS' NONPROFIT ASSOCIATION"

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