



## SEPTEMBER 2024

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### GETTING READY

Well, I did not get drawn this year again for the dove hunt out at Columbia bottoms, did you? Kind of curious about that if anybody got drawn from MVDHA, if you did, let me know at the next members meeting.

Now is the time to start really getting ready for the up and coming hunting season. As waterfowlers, it amazes me of the amount of gear we accumulate to pursue our sport. Think about it, between guns, decoys, calls, specialized clothing, waders and everything else you can throw in, it amazes me we have enough space to store it all, don't even get me started if you have a boat, ATV or a dog! All of this so that we can chase a bird that only weighs a couple of pounds if that! But we love it!

Getting ready for the up and coming season, for me, comes in phases, hope this sort of check list helps you. I first start off checking or finding all my gear from last year. I try religiously to store my gear so that it is easily found the up and coming year, but that is never the case, there is always something missing and I have to find it. I check over my notes from my previous year or reflect on my previous year to remember what worked and what did not, so I can get ready for this season, then I start to work.

Once I get everything located, I check it over and make sure nothing is broke or needs fixing. Mojos, Any wires broke? Do they still work, along with the remotes? Do they need oiling so they don't squeak out in the field? Do my waders need replacing, if they do, this is the time to replace them since you have the time. Does my hunting jackets need replacing, same reason as your waders, you have the time now to get them replaced. If they don't need replacing give them a good coat of waterproofing spray like Scotchgard. Check your head lamps, do they still work, do you need to replace them? This is the time to find what you want to use, since you have that time. If your existing ones are fine, put fresh batteries in.

Decoys, you can talk forever about them. But for the basics, do they need replacing? Do they need a good cleaning or a fresh coating of paint? Do you need to re-rig them? Go from a J hook weight to a texas rig?

Blinds, either boat blinds, layout blinds or home built field blinds. What do they look like, how did they or are they performing. This is the time to spruce them up and make sure they work correctly.

This is the time of year to check all your gear, prioritize what needs fixing, getting stuff on order or replacing it so you will be ready on opening day. Don't be that guy on opening day that is not ready.

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## MEMBERS MEETING

Change of plans for this month's members meeting. MDC never got back to us for the annual waterfowl status meeting, even after a couple of tries, so Jerry SR is going to give a talk about a relatively new product called the MoMarsh Invisiman blind. If you hunt public, this is something you need see, to me, this thing is a game changer, so much, I went out and got one just to have in my arsenal.

James Krohn will also be at the meeting, who makes custom duck calls, he will show his work and also have a discussion on how to cut reeds for calls. This is valuable info for a seasoned waterfowler since we probably have all split a reed or two. He is also going to provide some material for reed cutting.

## PRE SEASON DRAW

The application time frame for the managed waterfowl hunts at MDC conservation areas begins on 1 September. Go to the MDC website and select hunting and trapping link off of the main menu, top navigation. Under the popular species listing on the right hand side select Waterfowl. On the left hand navigation screen of the next page select Managed Hunts Waterfowl. On that page on the left hand side select Waterfowl Reservations and Draw Procedures. Scroll down the page and you will see a link for Apply For a Waterfowl Reservation. On the next page you will be able to put in your reservation on 1 Sept. Draw registration period is from Sep 01 2024 to Sep 18 2024. Draw results will be available Oct 01

## THE ANIMATOR

A lot of you bought the Animator for last years season and I received an email from The Animator that stated they came out with a new splasher that is 30% lighter than the original

one. Evidently for those who were running their MOJOS on AA batteries the original ones were draining the battery too quickly and the owner/President, George Parker, came up with a solution and stated to contact them, which I did. He sent me 13 new splashers for the baby mojos and lucky duck decoys at no costs. Now that is SUPERIOR CUSTOMER SERVICE! Thanks George!

For more info about this product go out to:

<https://bluebirdwaterfowl.com/>

I will have the replacement splashers at the next members meeting.

## BOSS SHELLS

It is that time of the year again to look at gear. Last year I talked about Boss Shells, which are quite an excellent product.

**WE SET OUT TO MAKE THE MOST DEPENDABLE STEEL SHOTSHELL ON THE MARKET.**

<p><b>COPPER-PLATED STEEL SHOT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground smooth for true flight with minimum drift.</li> <li>• Copper-plated to demonstrate uncompromising quality regardless of price.</li> </ul>	<p><b>MODIFIED WARCHIEF WAD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biotec additive to aid in environmental breakdown of the plastic.</li> <li>• Double gas seal for efficient powder burn.</li> <li>• Cushioned section to dampen recoil and stabilize shot during setback. Steel Reserve may very well be the smoothest shooting steel shell ever made.</li> <li>• Fast opening wad petals to separate shot from the wad for dense, uniform pellet distribution at 30 yards.</li> <li>• Wad stripping chokes are not needed. We recommend a Factory Modified or similar constriction aftermarket choke.</li> </ul>
<p><b>1500 FPS VELOCITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our testing found that 1500 fps yielded the best patterns and most consistent velocities and pressures across our internal testing criteria of 0F-72F.</li> <li>• Average pattern percentages are 95-98% at 30 yards through a Modified choke.</li> <li>• Average pressure of 11,000 PSI</li> </ul>	

**GET 'EM WHILE YOU CAN!**

Now, you cannot buy Boss shells from a dealer, they come directly from Boss. The pellets are bismuth with a thin layer of copper over

## MVDHA BOARD

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them. You can get 2 3/4 shells up to 3" shells. Duplex loads or any single shot size. They come in 12, 16, 20 and 410 gauges. Granted, they are a bit pricey, \$1.90 a round for 12 gauge, on average, and you get twenty rounds per box of shells. After the season I bought some 20 gauge shells that I am looking forward in trying out. These shells are perfect for legacy guns that cannot shoot steel without damaging the barrel.



Easy on your shoulder... and your wallet.

The folks at Boss listen to us waterfowlers and know that the shells they produce are quite pricey, but for the performance you get from them and they are a top tier shell you should expect to pay a bit more. Plus it is the knock down power of these shells that sell. But as I stated, they listen, and developed the Steel Reserve line of shells which cost in the range of a \$1.20 a round. The 1 1/8 oz load of copper plated steel is smoking round traveling at 1500 fps.

Check them out at:

<https://bosshotshells.com/>

## SURVEY

From Delta Waterfowl:

Annual Breeding Waterfowl Population Survey Estimates 33.99 Million Ducks, Up 5% From 2023

Mallards, wigeon, green-winged teal, and scaup post increases; Pintail bag limit for 2025-2026 season will increase to 3 daily in all flyways

BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA — Duck numbers are up, and wetland habitat conditions have improved over important portions of the key prairie pothole region.

The breeding population of ducks was estimated at 33.99 million, a 5% increase over last year, ac-

ording to the 2024 Waterfowl Population Status report released today by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In addition, May pond counts, a key indicator of breeding habitat conditions and potential production, also increased by 4% over the previous spring.

The report details the results from the Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey, which has been conducted annually by the USFWS and Canadian Wildlife Service since 1955. The survey is used to set hunting regulations for the following year, so in this case, for the 2025-2026 season. Based on these results, waterfowl hunters



## 2024 WATERFOWL BREEDING POPULATION AND HABITAT SURVEY

SPECIES	2024	2023	% CHANGE FROM 2023	% CHANGE FROM LTA
 MALLARD	6.61	6.13	▲ 8	▼ 16
 GADWALL	2.28	2.56	▼ 11	▲ 11
 AMERICAN WIGEON	2.92	1.89	▲ 55	▲ 12
 GREEN-WINGED TEAL	3.01	2.50	▲ 20	▲ 38
 BLUE-WINGED TEAL	4.60	5.25	▼ 12	▼ 10
 NORTHERN PINTAIL	1.98	2.22	▼ 11	▼ 49
 NORTHERN SHOVELER	2.65	2.86	▼ 7	0
 REDHEAD	0.78	0.93	▼ 16	▲ 6
 CANVASBACK	0.57	0.62	▼ 8	▼ 4
 SCAUP	4.07	3.52	▲ 16	▼ 17
<b>TOTAL DUCKS</b>	<b>33.99</b>	<b>32.31</b>	<b>▲ 5</b>	<b>▼ 4</b>

NUMBERS IN MILLIONS. LTA (LONG-TERM AVERAGE)

will again enjoy a liberal season framework next season.

“An increased breeding population of ducks and pair counts, along with wetland habitat conditions that improved throughout May and June with good spring rains across most of the prairies, should help boost duck production,” said Dr. Frank Rohwer, president and chief scientist for Delta Waterfowl. “We definitely have potential bright spots for duck production in the eastern Dakotas and possibly in Manitoba. The spring rains really helped in those areas, as well as parts of Alberta that started the spring quite dry.”

The survey, which was completed in May, estimated 5.16 million total ponds, a 4% increase overall. However, the location of those ponds differed greatly from 2023. The ponds estimate on the Canadian prairie and parklands, which includes southern regions of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, decreased 19%. Meanwhile, ponds in the United States, including Montana and the Dakotas, increased by 49%.

“The prairies didn’t have a good snowpack last winter,” said Mike Buxton, waterfowl programs director for Delta Waterfowl.

“Heading into last fall, conditions were OK in the Dakotas, but prairie Canada was dry. Manitoba got decent snow, but not so much in Saskatchewan and Alberta. So, the wetland habitat there started spring in poor condition. That really affects where ducks settle. If the table isn’t set early on, ducks don’t stick around to nest. Alberta was really dry, so not many ducks settled there. Saskatchewan was a little bit better.”

While the number of total ducks in the Traditional Survey Area

increased slightly over 2023, all of the gains were in the far north and west. Just three survey regions (out of eight) posted increases. The Central and Northern Alberta/Northeast British Columbia/Northwest Territories estimated 11.25 million ducks, up 35% and 49% above the long-term average for the region. The Alaska Yukon Territory/Old Crow Flats region showed a 28% increase over 2023, while Northern Saskatchewan/Northern Manitoba/Western Ontario was up 5%. In contrast, duck estimates across the prairie pothole regions were down 10% to 16%, except for the Eastern Dakotas, which was down less than 1% from 2023.

## PROPOSED RULE

This is an article from Outdoor Life and is a rather lengthy article so will probably run it in the next few newsletters, but for the full article you can find it at:

<https://www.outdoorlife.com/conservation/wildlife-refuge-predator-control-rule/>

This is scary stuff for us waterfowlers, our passion is in more jeopardy each and every day.

(continued, second part)

Why Hunting Groups Oppose the Rule

What’s so incendiary about the USFWS’s proposed rules, and why is it bothering traditional conservation groups so deeply?

Partly, it’s because of the way the rules are framed. While another land-management agency in the Department of Interior, the Bureau of Land Management, says in its recent proposed rules that most recreational activities are allowed unless explicitly prohibited, the USFWS refuge rule casts blanket prohibitions that allows

specific activities only if they are explicitly approved. That’s a major shift in traditional uses on the federal properties, say critics.

But a deeper angst among hunters and anglers is that the rules could change their relationship with refuges that, in many cases, were purchased with funds contributed by duck hunters. The Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp, more commonly known as the federal Duck Stamp, was created in the 1930s to establish a funding mechanism that could be used to purchase critical migratory-bird habitat. According to the USFWS’s own narrative, “ninety-eight cents of every duck stamp dollar goes directly into the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund to purchase or lease wetlands and wildlife habitat for inclusion in the National Wildlife Refuge System.”

Of the 580 federal wildlife refuges, more than 300 were purchased in full or partially with Duck Stamp funds and were established specifically for conservation of migratory birds, which includes shorebirds as well as waterfowl. Other refuges, especially those in central California’s rice-growing region, were established to minimize crop depredation by waterfowl by setting aside areas specifically for birds. On some of these refuges, which include conservation easements on private property, cooperative agricultural practices are an established management activity. Those practices could be prohibited or curtailed under BIDEH.

Some refuges actively cultivate what are called “warm foods,” cereal grains that sustain waterfowl and other birds on their long and calorie-depleting migrations. That practice could be totally or partially banned by the proposed rules.

“The idea that there is a unique founding purpose for each refuge is extremely important,” said one member of a hunting group who spoke on background. “These were never intended to be wilderness areas where there is no management activity. We think that everything the Service does on each refuge should go back to that founding purpose. Our concern with BIDEH is that it flips that on its head and creates a top-down approach that will remove managers’ flexibility to manage for the specific purpose of their property.”

(To be continued)

**DELTA BANQUET**

The Cuivre River Chapter of Delta Waterfowl will be having a fundraising banquet on 21 September in Troy Missouri at the Knights of Columbus, 500 State HWY J, Troy MO 63376. Doors open at 5 PM and dinner will be at 7 PM.

Tickets are \$100 per couple or \$60 single. Contact Keith Schultz at (303) 944- 5348 for questions or tickets.

**AUDIT**

Missouri State Auditor Scott Fitzpatrick wants to provide an additional layer of accountability for the Missouri Department of Conservation, which now has unprecedented autonomy over its approximately \$215 million budget due to a 2023 Missouri Supreme Court decision that resulted in limiting the oversight authority of the General Assembly. Fitzpatrick announced today that his office has begun an audit of the department that will review how effectively it is using taxpayer dollars to accomplish its mission.

“With every other state department, the General Assembly has a level of oversight provided through the appropriations process that can ensure tax dollars are allocated and used appropriately. However, with that authority now limited due to the court decision, specifically in regard to the Department of Conservation, it makes it vitally important that we stand in the gap for taxpayers and provide what will be the only layer of accountability for the department and its spending decisions,” said Fitzpatrick.

The Missouri Department of Conservation is funded by a one-eighth of one percent sales tax, which generates approximately \$160 million in funding each year that goes directly to the agency. The department also receives funding from permit sales, federal aid, and income from sales and rentals. While the department has a dedicated funding stream, the General Assembly appropriates the funds to the department each year.

A decision by the legislature in 2020 to not include appropriations for the Department of Conservation’s plan to pay \$1 million to acquire 510 acres of land and \$900,000 for payments to replace lost property taxes from conservation lands prompted a lawsuit by the Missouri Conservation Commission. In 2023, the Missouri Supreme Court handed down its decision, which said the legislature cannot restrict the Conservation Commission from using appropriated funds for any of the purposes listed in the Missouri Constitution.

The department was last audited in 2018 when it received a rating of “fair.” That report included details of a separation agreement that resulted in more than \$120,000 in additional benefits to the former director after he re-

signed. The report also recommended changes to the department’s comp time policies, which had no limits on some comp time earned or accrued by employees.

Individuals may provide confidential information for consideration during the audit of the Missouri Department of Conservation to the State Auditor’s Whistleblower Hotline at 800-347-8597, by email at moaudit@auditor.mo.gov or by visiting www.auditor.mo.gov/hotline.

**TERRY BERTHOLOMEY**



Last week MDC had a retirement get together for Terry who has been a long time friend to YOUR MVDHA putting on our annual trap shoot out at Jay Henges along with giving us the annual waterfowl status presentations in the fall. He will be greatly missed, but we congratulate him on a well deserved retirement.

Thanks Terry for all the help and well deserved!!

**Up Coming Events**

**Sept 11: INVISIMAN, REED CUTTING**

**Oct 9: SUB GAUGE RELOADING TSS**

### 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](mailto: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: **SEPTEMBER 11, 2024**

Next Board Meeting: **SEPTEMBER 23, 2024**

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.

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