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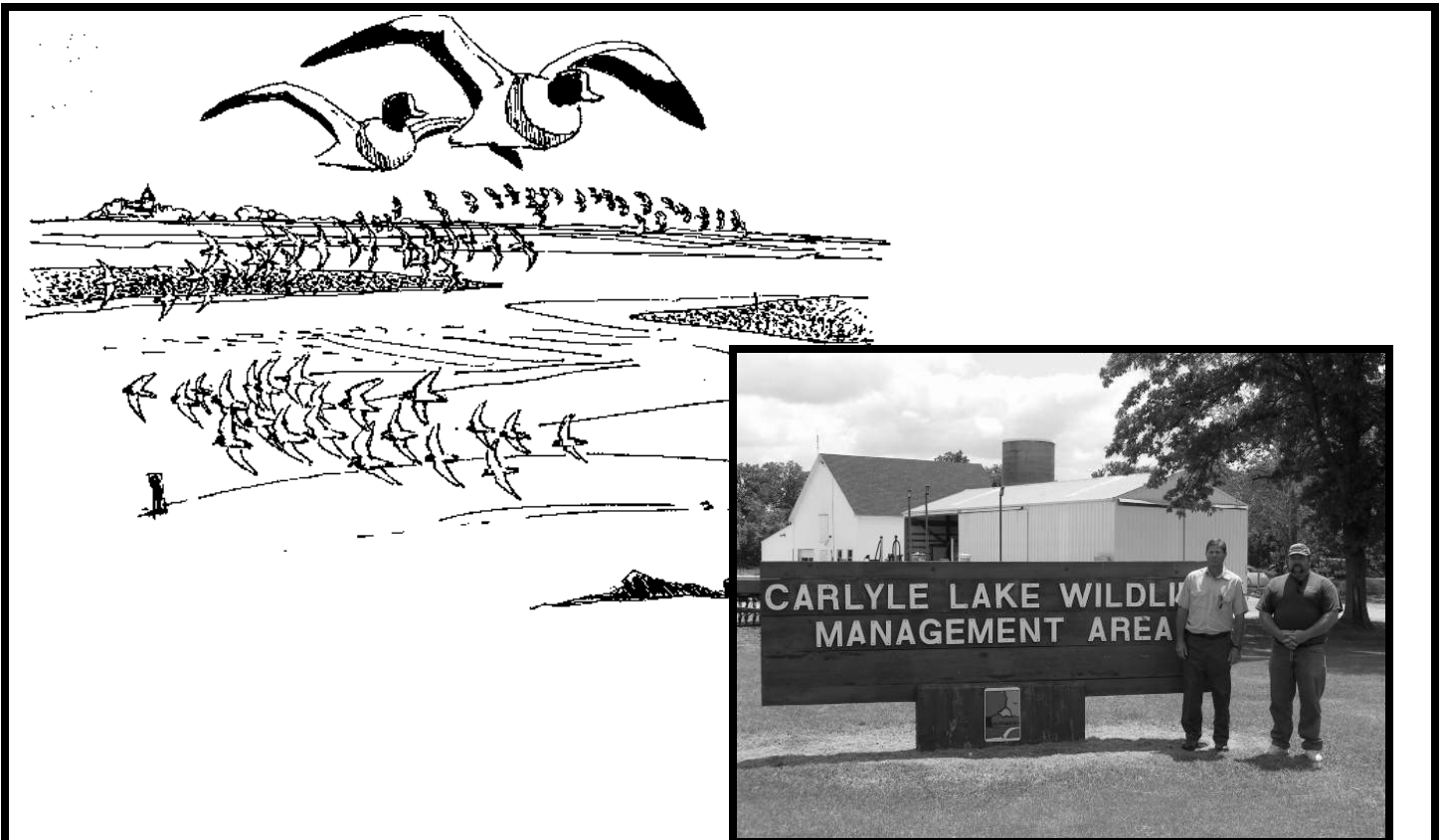
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MWHI President Scott Bryant toured Carlyle Lake Wildlife Management Area this spring.

Inside this issue:

2007 Waterfowl Survey Shows Good News:
Canvasbacks, redheads, northern shovelers break traditional survey area records
(See article on page 12)

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, August 4, 2007

MWHI 9th Annual Golf Tournament
at Wolves Crossing, Jerseyville
for more information contact Eric Rhuede 618-410-9853

Monday, August 6, 2007

MWHI BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
at 2404 E. Broadway, Alton at 6:15 p.m

Wednesday, August 15, 2007

MWHI GENERAL MEETING
at the Alton-Wood River Sportsmen Club
in Godfrey, IL at 7:00 p.m

Saturday, August 18, 2007

MWHI Sponsored Catfish Tournament -
5th of 5th Qualifying Tournament
at Grafton City Ramp (Pool 26 only)
from 6 am – 3 pm
for information contact Justin Wolfe 618-377-0397

Monday, September 10, 2007

MWHI BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
at 2404 E. Broadway, Alton at 6:15 p.m

HELP YOUR CLUB!

Recruit a New Member this Month

The *Sentry* is published monthly except for December and January by Migratory Waterfowl Hunters, Inc., 2404 E. Broadway, Alton, IL, 62002. The *Sentry* deadline is always the second Monday of each month.

Statements and opinions expressed in the *Sentry* are those of the individual and do not necessarily represent the views of Migratory Waterfowl Hunters, Inc. Officers, Directors, Advisors, Members or the Editor. The appearance of an ad in this newsletter does not necessarily constitute an endorsement of a product or service. We encourage our members to take note of those businesses advertising in our newsletter and shop with them when they are in the market for their product or services

What Makes a Good Duck Hatch

Duane Hahnenkamp

When I started duck hunting thirty years ago, most hunters never knew if we had a good duck hatch coming until they read their September issue of Sports Afield magazine. Jimmy Robertson was the Sports Afield editor for around 40 years, and his article was the first hint of the season to come. Today, in our computerized world, it is not hard to pick up information from Ducks Unlimited, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or other wildlife organizations 24 hours a day. With little time and research, it's fairly easy to find weather data of the northern duck factories. This includes weather radar and satellite imaging of any pothole region of our northern prairies plus Canada.

When I started duck hunting back in the early 1970's, all I was told was that if Canada had a lot of snow last winter, then we would have lots of ducks the next season. With all the new information put out the last 30 years like by people from DU and Delta Waterfowl, you may find out that a good hatch depends on a combination of things.

First, a giant blizzard, like the winter of 1996-97, will mean a lot of ducks. But these blizzards don't happen that often and the normal snow fall of pothole regions is not enough to guarantee a good duck hatch. When I first hunted North Dakota in the fall of 1997, the year after the big blizzard, there was water and ducks everywhere. But almost every year since, the water levels in the big potholes fell and by 2002 most of the water holes were gone. You have to remember that the pothole region is not a swampy land but actually a semi arid surface. With average winter snow, it still takes a lot of moisture to keep the potholes producing ducks. This area can get heavy snow, heavy spring rains, summer storms that can drop 2 to 5 inches of rain, and even a wet October. Many years it takes a combination of two or three of the above to keep the potholes going.

Back in June 2002, my friend in North Dakota stated that the water levels in the big potholes were up about two feet from the year before and that we could probably hunt our old hot-spots that coming fall. When I talked to him two months later, things looked bad and it did turn out that the hunting was poor that fall. He told me that during July-August, the rains had totally stopped, with the temperature staying around 100 degrees for 7 weeks.

On the other hand, you can have poor spring conditions like they had this year in Canada where they had little snow fall and little early spring rains. Then they received heavy rain in late May and things now look great.

The question is, did the ducks stay there and take advantage of the new water or had they already left to go north to the lake areas?

About the summer of 1999, a state biologist told me that the mallard and pintail hatch for that year was down but a lot of other ducks were up. When I asked why, he said that the U. S. Fish and Wildlife theorized that June had been hot and dry about the time that the main mallard hatch hit. Ducklings, after they hatch, can live 3 days without food or water, but if the hen can't lead them to a waterhole in time they will die. They figured the mallard hatch was a bust. About 2 weeks later, heavy rains hit across the pothole country, just in time to save the breed of ducks that usually hatched later. The teal, gadwall, widgeon, all had a good hatch and what mallards that did hatch were from a low percentage of hens that re-nested.

This illustrates that the amount of water and timing of the rains can make a big difference.

If water was the only factor in having a good hatch, then any river or pond in the country would produce ducks. Locally we know this to be not true on our areas because of one big problem, "predators." MWHI's duck release showed us a high mortality rate due to owls, turtles, coons and coyotes. Even wild ducklings, when small, fall prey to fish like bass when they are only a few days old. This is one of the main reasons the ducks don't reproduce as well in the boreal forest areas. Medium to large Pike lay in every shallow bay just looking for something to swim by. This is also why the northern pothole region produces so well. Most potholes freeze solid in the winter or go dry once in a while, which means no fish or turtles live in them. With water also comes grass for nesting habitat and cover. The more water and grass we have out there, the better the odds that the hen will survive to reproduce.

The duck factory prairie pothole region is actually a complex system of weather events happening on relatively dry ground. But when everything goes well, the end result is a great duck hatch.

Did you know?

More mallards are harvested in Illinois from Wisconsin (22 percent), than from southeastern Saskatchewan (19), North Dakota (16), northern Saskatchewan (16), southwest Manitoba (14) or South Dakota (11). The top mallard producer for Illinois is northern Manitoba, where 36 percent of our greenheads hail from.

Batchtown EMP Update

Greg Franke

Phase III, the closing levee for the Batchtown WMA, began Monday July 16. This phase like most others faced some setbacks this spring. A new burrow site, closer to Smith Lane, was located by the contractor and it took time for the COE juggernaut to digest.

Now the trucks are rolling from Chad Brodbeck's farm, ½ mile south of Smith Lane on Calhoun's Westside Road, down Smith Lane to the river. Please exercise caution while driving in this area. The trucks are big and the road is narrow.

Pool #25 is roughly 1 ½ ft low as of this writing, and no doubt will be close to the full pool 434 ft level as you read this column. So, if you must check out the phase III progress, do it by boat.

Check out the Sentry and MWHI website for up-to-date project photos.

Duck Populations Reach Seven-Year High

Submitted by George Hamilton

News is positive for the 2007-2008 waterfowl season, based on preliminary data just released by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as part of its annual, preliminary report on breeding ducks and habitats across the traditional western survey area of the United States and Canada.

Based on USFWS surveys conducted in May, overall duck populations reached a seven-year high of an estimated 41.2 million, rising 14% for the second consecutive year.

Habitat conditions were also said to be similar to or slightly better than last year, thanks to winter snowfall and good precipitation.

Improved duck populations and habitat conditions are likely to have positive implications for duck hunters and corresponding non-toxic shotshell sales this fall.

More detailed information on the outlook for the 2007-2008 waterfowl season will be forthcoming over the next month as waterfowl biologists analyze all collected data -- including the eastern survey data -- which will ultimately be used by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in partnership with state representatives from the four flyways to establish regulatory frameworks on waterfowl hunting season lengths, dates and bag limits.

Pond Counts

One of the most important elements in duck-breeding success is the amount of water present on the prairie breeding grounds. When the survey was conducted in May, total pond counts for the United States and Canada combined showed 7 million ponds, a 15% increase from last year's estimate, and 44% higher than the long-term average.

Individual Duck Species

Nine of the 10 surveyed species saw their populations increase this year, with populations of redheads (+10%), canvasbacks (+25%), and northern shovelers (+24%) reaching record highs.

Populations of mallards, the predominant duck species, increased by 10% and are 7% above the long-term average.

Blue-winged teal jumped 14% to an estimated population level that is the third highest since 1955, and 48% above their long-term average.

Green-winged teal also increased 13% to achieve a level 55% above the long-term average.

In addition, population increases were seen in two of three species of concern: American wigeon (+ 29%) and scaup (+6). While the scaup increase is a positive mark on a 20-year decline, scaup remain 33% below their long-term average. Pintail numbers remained similar to last year (down 2%) and are 19% below the long-term average. However, this year's excellent habitat conditions could benefit pintail recruitment.

| Species | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2007 vs. 2006 | Change from Long-Term Avg. |
|-------------------|------|------|------|---------------|----------------------------|
| Mallard | 6.8 | 7.3 | 8.0 | 10% | 7% |
| Blue-winged Teal | 4.6 | 5.9 | 6.7 | 14% | 48% |
| Shoveler | 3.6 | 3.7 | 4.6 | 24% | 106% |
| Scaup | 3.4 | 3.2 | 3.5 | 6% | -33% |
| Gadwall | 2.2 | 2.8 | 3.4 | 19% | 96% |
| Northern Pintail | 2.6 | 3.4 | 3.3 | -2% | -19% |
| Green-winged Teal | 2.2 | 2.6 | 2.9 | 13% | 55% |
| American Wigeon | 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.8 | 29% | 7% |
| Redhead | 0.6 | 0.9 | 1.0 | 10% | 60% |
| Canvasback | 0.5 | 0.7 | 0.9 | 25% | 53% |
| All Other | 3.1 | 3.6 | 4.2 | 18% | |

Third Riverbend Catfish Tournament

Justin Wolfe

On June 2, 2007, the Riverbend Catfish Tournament Trail held their 3rd qualifying tournament in Alton, IL from 3:00 pm to 12:00am. With this being the only night tournament on our schedule, there were expectations of a good turnout of anglers. Not only was there a good turnout, the Riverbend Catfish Tournament Trail hit an all time high with a total field of 45 teams signed up. Out of the 45 teams, 12 of them were fishing from SeaArk boats, which meant there was a good chance of someone taking home the SeaArk contingency bonus.

Conditions on the river, in my opinion, couldn't have been any better, with the river on a slow rise after a couple of thunderstorms blew through earlier that week, and the day of the tournament the bite was sure to be on. So, with the stage set, it was time to go fishing.

Here are the results of the June 2, 2007 tournament:

- 1st place & big fish – Mat McIntyre and Rodney Foiles from Alton, IL. They had a

fishing near St. Louis in 20-30 ft of water. They also took home the SeaArk BONUS!

- 2nd place – Steve Mead and Nikki Ballhurst from Alton, IL had a total weight of 132.0 lbs. They were also fishing near St. Louis, using 6 to 7 inch pieces of skipjack in 20-30 ft water.
- 3rd place – Bill Parfitt and Jason Rath from Springfield, IL weighed in 188 lbs. The team said they bottom bounced (drifting) and used skipjack.
- 4th place – Kevin and Jason Raymer from Hartford, IL finished with 95 lbs.

I would like to give a special thanks to Bluff City Tackle for paying for the plaques for this tournament. I would also like to thank our other sponsors: Migratory Waterfowl Hunters, Inc., Clark Boat & Motor, Mercury Outboards, McIntyre Construction Comp., and Cassens Bait & Tackle.

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Free Ice Cream for Everyone

**Richard A. Pearson
Executive Director, ISRA**

Free ice cream for everyone is the attitude some legislators in Springfield have about solving the problems of crime and everyday complications of life. If everyone had free ice cream everyone and everything would be all right and perfect. Their thoughts go like this: "The reason he became a mass murderer is that 'we' did not supply everyone with enough ice cream as a child." Of course if we did supply everyone with free ice cream, nothing would get better. In fact, they would probably become worse. Of course these same people would then proclaim that it really wasn't ice cream that would do the trick – it was really free pizza for everyone.

The fact is, of course, these people are constantly proposing solutions in desperate search of a problem. They do not like the idea of personal responsibility and they don't have the cojones for holding bad guys' feet to the fire. It is easier to pick on the law abiding citizen.

They avoid the obvious solutions of arming citizens to protect them from attacks by criminals in places like Chicago or Washington D.C. They pretend that massacres like Rwanda never happened. These people live in a fairyland.

Here are some inconvenient facts they ignore:

- 88% of the murders are previously convicted criminals.
- 98% of all crimes are premeditated.
- A violent crime occurs every 22 seconds.
- Half of all Americans will be robbed or burglarized in their lifetime.
- One of every 32 people in the United States is in prison, on parole, or on probation.
- One out of every 20 illegal aliens is in prison.

It is no longer a question that you or your family will come into contact with a violent criminal – you will. The best way to defend yourself or your family is with a firearm. Don't let the "free ice cream for everyone" people take your firearms away. Ice cream won't protect you – not even butter pecan or rocky road.

2007 Waterfowl Survey Shows Good News; Canvasbacks, redheads, northern shovelers break traditional survey area records

Submitted by John Mabery, USFW Two Rivers Refuge Manager, 7/13/2007

Preliminary results from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Canadian Wildlife Service's Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey indicate a total duck population estimate of more than 41 million birds in the traditional survey area. This represents a 14 percent increase from 2006 and is 24 percent above the 1955-2006 average.

"There's a lot of good news in the survey this year for the total duck population and waterfowl breeding habitat," said H. Dale Hall, director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "We have five species that are at record or near record highs, including canvasbacks, and there are good breeding conditions on the prairies. However, we remain concerned that pintails and scaup are well below long-term averages."

The Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey, the largest and most comprehensive survey of its kind in the world, samples 1.3 million square miles across the north-central United States, south-central and northern Canada, and Alaska. The survey estimates the number of ducks in the continent's most important nesting grounds.

Annual survey results help guide the Service in managing waterfowl conservation programs under authority of the 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The Service works in partnership with state representatives from the four Flyway Councils--the Atlantic, Mississippi, Central and Pacific--to establish regulatory frameworks for waterfowl hunting season lengths, dates and bag limits.

Overall, habitat conditions for breeding waterfowl in 2007 were similar or slightly improved compared to conditions in 2006. The total pond estimate (Prairie Canada and United States combined) was 7 million ponds, 15 percent greater than last year's estimate of 6.1 million ponds and 44 percent higher than the long-term average of 4.9 million ponds. For the third year in a row, habitat conditions were good or excellent in the northern grasslands and parklands of southern Saskatchewan and southern Manitoba.

Conditions in the eastern Dakotas, which experienced drought in 2006, were improved by abundant fall and winter precipitation, especially in eastern South Dakota.

Highlights in the north-central United States, south-central and northern Canada, and Alaska:

- The estimated number of 8 million mallards is 10 percent greater than last year's estimate of 7.3 million birds and 7 percent above the long-term average.

- The estimated number of 6.7 million blue-winged teal is 14 percent greater than last year's estimate and 48 percent above the long-term average. This year is the third highest estimate on record.
- The estimated number of 2.9 million green-winged teal is similar to last year and 55 percent above the long-term average.
- The estimated number of 3.4 million gadwall is 19 percent greater than last year and 96 percent above the long-term average, and the second highest estimate on record for the traditional survey area.
- The estimated number of 1 million redheads is similar to last year and 60 percent above the long-term average. This is a record high for the traditional survey area.
- The estimated number of 865,000 canvasbacks is similar to last year and 53 percent above the long-term average. This is a record high for the traditional survey area.
- The estimated number of northern shovelers at 4.6 million birds is 24 percent above last year and 106 percent above the long-term average. This is a record high for the traditional survey area.
- The estimated number of American wigeon at 2.8 million birds is 29 percent greater than last year and similar to the long term average for this species.
- The estimated number of scaup (lesser and greater combined) at 3.5 million birds, similar to last year and 33 percent below the long-term average. This is the third lowest scaup estimate on record for the traditional survey area. The 2007 estimate for scaup was greater than in 2006; however, this increase was not statistically significant.
- The abundance of northern pintails at 3.3 million birds is similar to last year and 19 percent below the 1955-2005 average.

For the eastern survey area -- which includes Maine, Maritime Canada, Newfoundland, Labrador, eastern and northern Ontario, and Quebec -- estimates for all species were similar to last year. Estimates for

American black ducks and ring-necked ducks were significantly above their long-term (1990-2006) averages.

This preliminary report does not include information from surveys conducted by state or provincial agencies or information on the status of geese and swans. The entire 2007 Trends in Breeding Duck Populations Report is available on the Service's Web site at <<http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/>

The 2007 Waterfowl Status Report will be available at this same site in late July. This report will include information from state and provincial surveys as well as goose and swan information. Interviews with the pilot/biologists and video of the conditions can be seen at <<http://www.fws.gov/video/wmv/statusprelim2007a.wmv>>

WATERFOWL UPDATE

Duane Hahnenkamp

First, let me say that my June fishing trip to northern Saskatchewan turned out to be a great one. My brother, nephew and I caught around 250 fish in 6 days of actual fishing. Temperature ran from 40 degrees at night to high 50 degrees during the day with one day in the 60's. The morning we got up to fly into the bush, there was frost on the gear that had been left out the night before. We saw rain on four of six days, with one day being heavy rains. Before we flew into the bush, the Canadian weatherman had forecasted the chance of rain for all week across Canada.

For fishing, this weather made things a little tough at times, but for waterfowl nesting conditions it was perfect. I had flown to Denver on June 7th to meet my brother and then left around 6 am the next morning, driving north. By 2 pm that afternoon we drove out of the Black Hills into the rolling grass lands of western South Dakota. Everything was green grass and wet, and lots of waterholes with ducks sitting on them.

We were going north on Rt. 85, which runs parallel along the Montana line, and there was not much change till we got to Canada. When we crossed the border about 7 pm at Fortuna, ND, the terrain had changed to farm crop land. The crops were only a few inches high, so the pot holes stood out in every direction. The fields were muddy and you could see that a lot of the potholes had filled with water after the fields had been spring planted.

What mallards and pintails I saw were all drakes, which is supposed to mean that the hens were all sitting on eggs. What pairs I saw were mostly teal, spoonies and gadwalls. I had been told that these are late nesters and hatch out a few weeks after the mallards. A friend told me that this region had been dry all spring but had picked up a lot of water in late May. To me, the conditions looked good, but the big question is whether the bulk of the ducks go on north before the rains hit or did the rain get there in time.

The water conditions looked great except for one small dry area between Regina and Saskatoon that had some dry potholes mixed in. Everything north from Saskatoon looked wet again with new potholes all the way to the forest and lake areas.

On the way up and back, I saw a lot of Canada geese with young ones around the potholes. As for seeing young ducks, I believe it was a little early because I saw only one mallard hen with ducklings and two hen common mergansers with young ones.

We were in Canada from June 9th through June 16th and everything seemed to be a little late. One thing that really surprised me was the number of migrating Canada geese we saw still going north. I know we saw 20 to 40 large flocks of high flying geese. There were over 50 birds in each bunch and they were all talking their heads off. I've been told that these were probably the young non-breeders going north to molt in the cooler areas.

According to DU, this area was considered to be the driest part of the Canadian prairie as of 10th of May. The weeks between then and the 10th of June must have been wet ones because when I compared the same areas I saw in 2005, the conditions this year looked as good if not better. That year I flew to Saskatoon and then drove north for 250 miles, with the first half being in grass and farm land. When you fly into Saskatoon, you can see the vast number of potholes and then you realize why this area is so good when it is wet. I would have to say that Saskatchewan is in good shape and I hope it keeps raining across Canada.

Back in western North Dakota, things looked wet after going through a very dry spring. When I got back, I talked to my contact in North Dakota, and he claims the water conditions in the eastern half of the state are very good and the rains are still coming. Bob said that mallards and pintails are everywhere with broods. He went on to say that if the rest of the summer is normal with no drought, then the potholes should stay around and our hunting should be as good as it was 5 or 6 years ago. We might even get to hunt some of our old hot spots that have been dry and plowed under the last 5 years.



Legislative Update

John Popov

There is a lot of trouble brewing in our Nation's Capitol for anyone who owns any type of guns. Let me fill you in as briefly as I can. This information comes from the NRA and other news sources.

Billionaire Michael Bloomberg, Mayor of New York City who heads up a coalition of 200+ anti-gun mayors, has gone after the Tiahrt Amendment legislation that the NRA-ILA must renew every year to protect your privacy rights as a gun owner. The purpose of this amendment is to prevent sensitive gun store purchase information from being publicly released to politicians and anti-gun groups who want to use it to further their gun ban agenda.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Fraternal Order of Police have opposed the release of those records because they contain information that could compromise ongoing criminal investigations. The anti-gun people like Michael Bloomberg want to make these records public, so together with their trial lawyer friends they can resurrect lawsuits to bankrupt American firearm manufacturers.

This must be stopped this year.

Also, Senator Frank Lautenberg, with the blessing of U. S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, has introduced S1237. This would give him and any future Attorney General the power to put your name on a government "watch list" and deny you the right to buy a firearm, with no due process of law.

This proposal would allow a single elected official, perhaps elected by a future president who is anti-gun, to ban any American from exercising his or her Second Amendment Rights with the stroke of a pen.

If this doesn't get your attention, nothing will. This is serious!!

Don't forget HR984, the Executive Branch Reform Act of 2007. If this bill becomes law, you and every gun owner will be registered in a government computer any time and every time you write, phone, fax or e-mail any official in the executive branch of government. You may say it can't happen, but a few years ago, legislation was passed to silence PACS like the NRA-ILA at election time.

What could an anti-gun president do with HR984? A lot.

I am very thankful for the NRA. I hope you are a member. If not, join today.

If it is to be, it is up to you and me.

###

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

NRA Update on Gun Bills **1-800-392-8683**

Federal Senate Office **1-202-224-3121**

Federal House Offices **1-202-225-3121**

Illinois State Rifle Association **1-815-635-3198** www.isra.org

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Shimkus - <http://www.house.gov/shimkus>

IDNR Announces Proposed Waterfowl Season Dates for 2007-08

Proposals sent to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for concurrence

IDNR News Release July 18, 2007

SPRINGFIELD, IL – Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Acting Director Sam Flood today announced the state's recommendations for 2007-08 waterfowl hunting season dates and regulations. The recommendations include 60-day duck seasons in all zones, 85-day Canada goose seasons in the North and Central zones, and a 66-day Canada goose season in the South Zone.

The state's proposed regulations, endorsed by the IDNR Natural Resources Advisory Board, will now be forwarded to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for final approval later this summer.

"These recommendations reflect our best effort at setting waterfowl season dates and regulations that will put hunters in a position to be successful," said Dir. Flood. "After reviewing the results of aerial surveys, weather information and surveys of hunter preference, we believe these proposals will help give hunters the most possible days in the field when ducks and geese are there."

Illinois set duck season dates in the North and Central zones for a five-year period beginning in 2006.

"Preliminary results of the 2006 Illinois Waterfowl Hunter Survey indicate hunters were satisfied with our decision last year on a five-year plan for setting duck seasons in the North and Central zones," Flood said. "Duck season dates in the South Zone were to be reevaluated after the 2006 season, and hunter survey results and other key data were helpful in establishing the dates for the upcoming season."

An analysis of six years worth of South Zone aerial duck survey data and a comparison of three early seasons to three late seasons at Carlyle and Rend lakes was conducted. The analyses showed that the starting date of a 60-day season would provide about the same number of ducks and opportunity for hunters for the next 60-days if the season started on November 10 or November 22. Finally, IDNR reviewed preliminary results from the 2006 South Zone Illinois Waterfowl Hunter Survey, which indicated 60 percent of duck hunters preferred that the South Zone duck season begin November 22. Only 37 percent preferred November 10 or earlier. The first firearm deer season weekend of November 17-19 was not listed as an option due to strong preferences from hunters in past years to avoid this conflict.

Based on a new Canada goose harvest management strategy the IDNR implemented a year early last year, the use of a goose harvest quota system has been eliminated. Other states in the MVP Canada goose range including Wisconsin, Michigan and Kentucky will begin the "no-quota" five-year experiment this season.

"Goose hunters in the state were pleased with the elimination of the goose quota and an assurance that goose seasons would not close early," Flood said.

Last March, IDNR received tentative approval from other Mississippi Flyway states to increase the Canada goose season from 79 days in the North and Central zones to 85 days and from 57 days in the South Zone to 66 days for the next five years. These increased opportunities will be further enhanced by the prospects of a good hatch of MVP Canada geese this summer. Late May aerial surveys found 402,640 breeding MVP Canada geese, the highest level since 1999. Indications of an early spring suggest better reproduction on the breeding grounds. A higher percentage of young geese in the flock often indicates better hunting. Production of local giant Canada geese is expected to be normal again in Illinois.

MVP Canada geese comprise about 40 percent of the Illinois harvest during the regular waterfowl season. Giant Canada geese comprise about 54 percent (less than half of those from Illinois, with the remainder from other Mississippi Flyway states and provinces). Eastern Prairie Population Canada geese (Manitoba) comprise 5 percent of the Illinois harvest.

During the 2006-07 waterfowl season, both duck and goose hunters enjoyed excellent hunting success in Illinois. Preliminary results of the 2006 Illinois Waterfowl Hunter Survey indicate that 50,437 duck hunters harvested 507,464 ducks, the third highest total since 1981. The mallard harvest of 308,000 was the second highest recorded.

An estimated 41,521 Canada goose hunters shot 122,294 geese last season, which is second only to 2000 when 128,387 were taken. White-fronted geese (specklebellies or specs) were unusually abundant in the Central Zone last January and a record harvest of 4,648 white-fronts was taken statewide, compared to the old record of 2,831. For the first time ever, Central Zone hunters shot more specs (2,348) than south zone hunters (2,042). North Zone hunters took just 166. This year, the Central Zone white-front season has been shortened to allow hunters in that zone to take two white-fronted geese per day, but the season does not start until the day before Thanksgiving. Aerial survey data indicates that there are no appreciable numbers of white-fronts in the Central Zone until about Thanksgiving and populations peaked in January in past seasons.

The Illinois recommendations sent to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for 2007-08 waterfowl hunting seasons are outlined below. Final approval is expected after the August 1-2 Service Regulations Committee meeting.

DUCKS

60-day Season and 6 Duck Daily Bag Limit
North and Central Start on Saturday and end on Tuesday
South Starts on Thanksgiving Day and ends on Sunday

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
| North | October 20 - December 18 |
| Central | October 27 - December 25 |
| South | November 22 - January 20 |

CANADA GEESE

85-day Season in North and Central Zones and 66-day Season in South Zone
2 Goose Daily Bag Limit
North & Central Start on Saturday
South Starts on Thanksgiving Day

| | |
|----------------|--|
| North | October 20 - January 12 (Sat.) |
| Central | October 27 - November 8 (Thu.) and November 21 (Wed. after deer season) - January 31 (Thu.) |
| South | November 22 - November 25 (Sun.) and December 1 (Sat.) - January 31 (Thu.) |

SNOW GEESE

| | |
|----------------|--|
| North | Regular Season: Oct. 20 - Jan. 12 (85 days) Conservation Order: Jan. 13 - Mar. 31 (79 days) |
| Central | Regular Season: Oct. 27 - Jan. 31 (97 days) Conservation Order: Feb. 1 - Mar. 31 (60 days) |
| South | Regular Season: Nov. 22 - Jan. 31 (71 days) Conservation Order: Feb. 1 - Mar. 31 (60 days) |

| | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| North | Nov. 2 - Jan. 12 (72 days) |
| Central | Nov. 21 - Jan. 31 (72 days) |
| South | Nov. 22 - Jan. 31 (71 days) |

WHITE-FRONTED GEESE

YOUTH HUNT DATES

| | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| North | Oct. 13-14 |
| Central | Oct. 20-21 |
| South | Nov. 10-11 |

Illinois is also recommending September Canada goose and teal hunting seasons as outlined below:

2007 SEPTEMBER WATERFOWL SEASON PROPOSAL

| | | Bag Limit | Possession Limit | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---|---|
| Teal | Sept. 8-23 | 16 days | 4 | 8 |
| Canada Goose | Sept. 1-15 | 15 days | 5 - Northeast 2 - Remainder of State | 10- Northeast 4 - Remainder of State |

For more detailed information on the proposed Illinois waterfowl season hunting dates and regulations for 2007-08, check the IDNR web site at <http://dnr.state.il.us>. Click on the "Proposed 2007-08 Waterfowl Hunting Seasons" link on the home page.

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A young boy arrived to Sunday School class late. His teacher knew that the boy was usually very prompt and asked him if anything was wrong.

The boy replied no, that he was going to go fishing but his dad told him that he needed to go to church instead. The teacher was very impressed and asked the boy if his father had explained to him why it was more important to go to church than to go fishing.

To which the boy replied, "Yes he did. My dad said that he didn't have enough bait for both of us."