

2404 E. Broadway, Alton, IL 62002

VOLUME 37 ISSUE 8

SEPTEMBER 2007

Rosi Franke, Editor

Tel: 618-396-2509

e-mail: rgfranke@frontiernet.net

Batchtown EMP Project, Phase III



Looking West



Coffer Dam construction

MWHI Guest Speaker Brian Markert, St. Louis Corps of Engineers, gave an update on the Batchtown EMP at the August 15, 2007 General Membership Meeting

Phase III earthen closure and the temporary Coffer Dam in which the water control structure will be built. The finished product will be protected with rock and geo-tech fabric.

MWHI OFFICERS

President

Scott Bryant
618-466-1836 (home)
618-535-0151 (cell)

Vice-President

Bob Jones
Area Projects Chairman
618-498-4724

Treasurer

Larry Franklin
618-466-2173

Membership Secretary

Mike Devening
618-259-6181

Correspondence Secretary

Jessie Bryant
618-466-1836

Recording Secretary

Jeremy Maggart
618-535-4997

MWHI DIRECTORS

John Gineris
Banquet Chairman
618-786-2596

Eric Rhuede
Golf Tournament Chairman
618-410-9853

John Popov
Legislation Chairman
618-344-8636

Duane Hahnenkamp
Wood Duck Nest Box Chairman
Refuge Chairman
618-535-7053 (cell)

Greg Franke
COE Chairman
618-396-2509

Chance Funk
618-223-0034

Dave Geisler
618-576-9845

Justin Wolfe
Carlyle Lake Area Projects Chairman
Catfish Tournament Chairman
618-377-0397

Jeremy Arnold
618-779-8313

Adam Smith
671-498-7010

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, September 10, 2007

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

Saturday, September 22, 2007

MWHI Sponsored Catfish Tournament
at Alton Marina, Alton, IL

from 6 am – 3 pm

**YOU MUST HAVE FINISHED IN THE TOP 12 OF A
QUALIFYING TOURNAMENT TO ABLE TO FISH THIS
TOURNAMENT.**

for information contact Justin Wolfe 618-377-0397

Monday, October 1, 2007

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

Wednesday, October 17, 2007

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

MESSAGE from the PRESIDENT

Scott Bryant

I, as president of MWHI, am very disappointed in waterfowl hunters between the ages of 35- to 45-years old.

People on the Board ask me why, and here it is. I see hunters enjoying some record-setting seasons and overall good hunting and I believe some of this was made possible by many years of hard work by the past and present officers and board members over the 37-year span of MWHI.

This is what I see at my board meetings when I look down the table: Seven 50+ year olds, seven between the ages of 20 to 30 years old and one 18 year old who is doing the corresponding secretary job as best as possible for someone who has only waterfowl hunted twice in her life, but she is here.

Where are all the hunters I see during the season, the people between 34 and 45 years old, who always have a problem with something or other or always have complaints, the ones that hunt every day. This is my generation of hunters, people between 35 and 45 who are doing nothing to ensure public hunting for their children and grandchildren, or even themselves, in the future.

I ask you what does it take for the hunters in this State and in these MRA Areas to realize that there is no guarantee.

The last five years I have heard a lot of complaints about the way the MRA Areas are managed from the same folks who do nothing but bitch because they didn't get their way. And then there are always those people who complain about corn and feed not getting planted. Next year Neil Booth is planning on retiring. Watch and see what happens. There might not be any planting or draw downs of water at all, and depending on who takes over, no check stations and no pumping. In addition, the experience to get funding for the MRA Areas to run like they have in the past is leaving with Neil. Who will be his replacement and will he or she be qualified for the job? I wonder where these hunters will get their information from on how to fix these problems?

Let's see who will show up this fall to run for an officer's spot or a board of director's position and let's see who will step up and get involved. My guess is nobody will, not until something gets taken away. But, then it is too late.

If you think this stuff can't happen, just look on the US Fish and Wildlife Service's website. There it will tell you how they just removed 265 public blinds on the Mississippi River, where duck hunting has been done for 100 years, and replaced them with 60 staked sites. How many of you even knew about it? You can be assured that they are not going to tell you about it until it is a done deal.

My question is what happens when we have a battle like this coming up? I am sure everyone will show up then. The problem is, we need to stop things like these before they happen. The way this can be done is by having a united and strong membership. Unfortunately, our membership has been on the decline for the past two years. We need to built up our membership ... \$20 a year to have representation to ensure public hunting and fishing and defend our gun rights is cheap.

I wrote this letter because I am tired of the lack of participation from members and hunters, and if it stays this way, come this fall this organization will be looking for a new president. I hope things will change because it has been my honor to stand up for our rights as your president, but I will not continue to do this without participation from the membership.



Ducks Unlimited Canada
CANADA'S CONSERVATION COMPANY

Summer Habitat Conditions in Canada

July 20, 2007

With a few exceptions, brood-rearing habitat is good or better across Canada, and waterfowl production should be very good this year. The 2007 Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey showed a 14 per cent increase in breeding duck numbers over last year's survey, and a 24 per cent increase over the survey's long term average.

Teal Hunting

Duane Hahnenkamp

To most people September means the end of the hot summer months, although many years September starts out pretty hot, the kids are back in school and the football season is taking off. To the die-hard duck hunters, September means only one thing: Teal season is here.

Now, I am not saying that a true duck hunter won't shoot a dove or two come September 1, but I about bet you money that in the back of his mind he is just warming up for teal and duck season.

Even with the die-hard duck hunters I see a split camp between the hunters. One group sees teal season as just a practice before the regular duck season. They may hunt opening day of teal season and maybe another day or two, just to get a little bonus out of this year's duck season. The second group sees teal season as a special event on its own. I kind of fall into the second group because I enjoy teal season as a different kind of hunting experience; that is, if the teal do migrate through our area during the season.

My first real exposure to duck was teal hunting at Stump Lake back in 1973. Since I could only hunt weekends and my first weekend was a bust, it came down to the last two days of that season to shoot my first teal. Luckily, the second Saturday turned out to be a cloudy, rainy day and teal were eating up the bay blinds. Needless to say, I shot into a flock of blue-wings, killed two with one shot, and have chased the little devils ever since. I can assure you that for a first time hunter, a really good teal hunt can be a lifelong memory. For someone like me, it can start an addiction that won't let go.

Believe me when I say that in the last 30 plus years, I've seen many good years and a lot of bad ones. There have been teal seasons like 2003 when we saw and shot teal every day. I have seen teal seasons when the only things flying were mosquitoes and black birds, with only a few woodies to scare you as they flew by. Then there were the late 1980s when we had no teal season at all.

I know there are a lot of guys out there who killed a lot more teal than I have, but I have had my share of memorable teal hunts and these are what keep drawing me back every year. And of all of these great hunts, there have been a few that really stand out and are the reason I love teal hunting. These were the mornings of migration days, with cool winds blowing instead of the ungodly hot weather of the days before.

On one of these hunts, I was the only hunter on the Lake. The morning seemed different, if not eerie, as the winds grew stronger and colder. Teal were coming into the Lake in waves with 40 to a 100 birds in a bunch, and I

was the only one there to experience it. If I knocked a bird down, I didn't even have to shoot again until my dog finished making her retrieve. I just stood back and watched as more flocks buzzed the decoys, with some landing next to the swimming dog. It still didn't take very long to reach my limit, so I just stood and watched as teal poured in by the hundreds if not thousands over the next hour or so.

Yeah, I could have shot way over the limit and maybe even gotten away with it, but why ruin the moment by looking over your shoulder while you are shooting and then have to leave the area in a hurry. With no other hunters around or shooting in the distance, it seemed like I had stepped back in time and was seeing what the Indians saw before the white man came.

The waves seemed endless, and after a while, it almost didn't seem real anymore. The funny thing was that I almost stayed home that day and would have missed the experience of a lifetime. As I stood and watched this almost unbelievable sight, it brought back old memories and an old saying, "if a tree falls in the woods and there is no one there to hear it fall, does it make any sound?"

So, if there wouldn't have been any hunters in the marsh that day, including me, how would anyone know that it really happened? But it was real because I was there that day and will always have my memories to prove it.

This is why I go teal hunting and why it always be special to me.

For Picture please see website Picture Gallery

Lower Swan Lake drawdown – picture submitted by Brian Markert St. Louis District Corps of Engineers

Area Project Updates

Bob Jones

Blind Inspections:

1st inspection will be September 30th

2nd inspection will be October 9th

Red tag drawing will be Sunday October 14th

Calhoun Point

For the first time that I can ever remember 95% of Calhoun point area is dry. There is feed everywhere. The EMP project has proven to be a success. The water has been drawn down and we all know what happens when the river bottom is exposed. We see a smorgasbord growth of all types of feed for ducks. I have submitted some pictures of this year's transformation of the Calhoun Point. I cannot wait to see all the ducks using this area for roosting and feeding. Look for some good hunting at the Point.

Monday August 20, the gates to the river will be opened to allow the area to fill to river level. Neil is scheduled to start pumping the area the first week of September. I cannot wait to see how fast the new 48,000 gpm pump fills the Point.

Stump Lake

Crull has a good stand of corn, but this year the deer are eating a lot of it.

Aquatics look good and water will be raised at the beginning of September.

Flat Lake pump site needs some work and will be fixed at the end of the August before refill pumping begins. Good feed growth in Flat and Fowler also.

Dan Hudgins rest area has been planted with millet and Buckwheat and is awaiting a good rain for germination.

Glades

Good growth of feed. A tube that supplies and helps to hold water needs to be replaced but for this year. A saddle has been fit over the end of the tube which will get us through this year without problems. Pumping should start around the first week of September.

Helmbold

It was sprayed for Cottonwood and willow encroachment, which seems to have been successful.

Fuller

Great amount of submersed aquatics of coon tail and sago. Aerial sprayed for cocklebur looks to be a success. While we toured the area, we saw several small flocks of Teal. That is a good sign to me of what is to come later.

Diamond

Tree encroachment was removed along boat ditch at Diamond Island and Hurricane Island. The ditch from south of 408 to 409 has been dug out. Aerial spraying of cocklebur has been a success and if need spot spraying will be done to finish the job. For all those concerned, the "hurricane hump" should be gone by now. Do not forget to keep track of how many more ducks are killed with that removed. Pumping to be at normal time.

Batchtown

Moist soil units have good growth and the refuge looks pretty good. But wait what do I see at the south end of Batchtown. It looks like dirt piled up above the water level. Yes, it is dirt being hauled out for the closing levee. That is a comforting and long awaited start of the closing levee phase of Batchtown hunting area.

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Please see website Picture Gallery for pictures from Calhoun Point

TROUBLE SHOOTING

Tree Huggers ‘R’ Us

Greg Franke

I began my career as conservationist in 1980 serving on Calhoun County’s first Ducks Unlimited Committee. It wasn’t so easy back then. DU had passed its 40th birthday but was virtually unheard of between the rivers.

After three years I decided there just wasn’t enough red conservation meat in spending 2 or 3 weeks a year putting on a banquet and sending the cash to Canada. And although, from time to time, righteous DU employees have labeled me a DU basher, I have remained a faithful member for 27 years, not to mention attending countless banquets, shooting events, state conventions and even one international symposium. Lord only knows how many raffle tickets I have bought.

Beyond my lack of commitment to a DU committee position, I have always admired their conservation leadership. That admiration was increased tenfold with the M.A.R.S.H. program and others like it that funneled my hard earned dollars back into conservation projects in the USA.

My permanent membership was cinched with the Red’s Landing 500-acre Green Tree Reservoir project. DU pledged a quarter of a million dollars. That along with match-money from MWHI and other private and governmental groups built a wetland conservation project in my backyard.

That said, it should come as no great surprise that when I crack open a new DU magazine, rather than read about duck counts and habitat conditions in the duck factory, the first page I visit is the conservation project section. And this brings me to the crux of this article.

On page 24B of the ‘project section’ of your July/August DU magazine, there is an article entitled “Restoration Plan Complete for Illinois’ Rockwood Island.” Along with 100-acres of wetlands, this project restored 170-acres of bottom land forest.

Then, on the last page of the ‘project section,’ there is a small box entitled “DU Facts.” Here is what it says:

1. Number of acres of bottom land hardwood forest restored by DU on former agricultural lands enrolled in the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP): 165,857 acres.
2. Number of tree seedlings planted by DU on WRP lands in the southern United States: More than 50 million.

Amazing, isn’t it? Ducks Unlimited is behind transposing nearly 200,000 acres of agricultural fields to

forest. Here is a news flash for those folks who wear Gold DU merchandise or sport a duck head tattoo: Your organization has embraced tree restoration and, therefore, by proxy you are a tree hugger.

A year ago a question came to me second handedly. Someone who really didn’t want my answer asked a third party, ‘why does Greg like trees so much?’ The answer to that question is simple – I pay attention. For example, I remember when the Southern Illinois boys decided in order to kill geese, the trees around the goose fields, lakes and potholes had to go. Now the trees are gone along with the geese.

This mindset migrated to my hunting area in the mid-1980s. I helped pack fuel to the bulldozers and watched the big timber being removed. One flood later, the sloughs and potholes once protected by a buffer zone of trees were silted shut.

Flooding and low water conditions in the early 1980s caused my crew to rent a duck hole in Pike County. We arrived in time to see the last big oaks being removed from the edges of the lakes and natural potholes within the levee district. The trees gone and the potholes tiled, those areas are forever lost.

Now it seems as if every year or so, some coot-brained Einstein decides to go on a hunting area or refuge in the MRA and cut down some trees. If they can just remove a few trees, the ducks can’t help but funnel directly into their blind. Sorry, boys! I pay attention and will be most happy to argue that it ain’t helped nobody yet! On top of that, it’s illegal!

So for the record, I don’t believe an oak or pecan tree, nor a 90-year old Cottonwood for that matter, ever kept me from killing a duck. Nor do I buy into the coot-brained conjecture spewed from the mouths of self-proclaimed “Duck Hunting Illuminati” that cutting trees equals more waterfowl on my stringer.

No, I am not oblivious to the fact that woody encroachment in the form of willows and silver maple will overtake and destroy a wetland if left unchecked. Mature timer is a different matter.

Am I a tree hugger? Probably not in the purest form, but after several decades of promoting wildlife/wetland conservation and belonging to organizations and rubbing elbows with people much more in tune with the nuts and bolts associated with it, I have developed a different perspective about nature. And, yes, I like trees.

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Sportsmen Applaud President's Order to Promote Hunting U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance, August 17, 2007

An Executive Order issued by the President of the United States will spell more hunting opportunities and enhanced conservation efforts, according to the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance, the nation's premier sportsmen's rights advocacy organization.

Today, President George W. Bush released the order, entitled "Facilitation of Hunting and Wildlife Conservation." It directs all relevant federal agencies to facilitate the expansion and enhancement of hunting opportunities, wildlife management and habitat.

"The Executive Order is a great milestone for sportsmen and wildlife conservation," said Bud Pidgeon, president and CEO of the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance. "It clearly demonstrates that the President understands the unbreakable bond between successful wildlife conservation and hunting - that sportsmen are the key to abundant wildlife and habitat."

The U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance proposed that the White House issue an Executive Order on hunting early in President Bush's first term, and again in 2005. The order, number 13,443, directs federal agencies that manage public land, outdoor recreation and wildlife management to:

- Address declining trends and implement actions that expand and enhance hunting opportunities
- Consider the economic and recreational value of hunting
- Manage wildlife and habitat in a manner that expands and enhances hunting opportunities
- Work collaboratively with states to manage wildlife in a manner that respects private property rights and state authority over wildlife
- Establish goals with the states to foster healthy game populations

"The order gives federal agencies a clear-cut directive that they work to increase hunting opportunities with state wildlife agencies," said Pidgeon. "It will result in more resources directed at preserving the future of hunting and greater access to public land. The President is to be commended." ###

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

Illinois Senate Information **1-217-782-4517**

Illinois House Information **1-217-782-8223**

Sen. Deana Demuzio – 49th District
Tel: 217-854-4441 Fax: 217-854-5311

Sen. Frank Watson – 51st District
Tel: 618-664-9108 E-mail: frank_watson51@sbcglobal.net

Sen. John O. Jones – 54th District
Tel: 618-242-9511 E-mail: jojones@mvn.net

Sen. William R. Haine – 56th District
Tel: 618-465-4764 E-mail: haine@senatedem.state.il.us

Sen. James F. Clayborne – 57th District
Tel: 618-875-1212 E-mail: clayborne@senatedem.il.us

Sen. David Luechtfeld – 58th District
Tel: 618-243-9014 E-mail: sendavel@midwest.com

Rep. Jim Watson – 97th District
Tel: 217-243-6221 E-mail: jimwatson@localnetco.com

Rep. Gary Hannig – 98th District
Tel: 217-839-2859 E-Mail: hannig@hdsmail.state.il.us

Rep. Ron Stephens – 102nd District
Tel: 618-667-8669 E-mail: stephens@apci.net

Rep. Kurt Granberg – 107th District
Tel: 618-533-2153 E-mail: kgranberg@hdsmail.state.il.us

Rep. Jay Hoffman – 112 District
Tel: 618-345-2176 E-mail: jayhoffman@charter.net

Rep. Thomas Holbrook – 113th District
Tel: 618-394-2211 tholbrook@housedems.state.il.us

Rep. Wyvetter Younge – 114th District
Tel: 618-875-1691

Rep. Mike Bost – 115th District
Tel: 618-457-5787 mikebost@midwestmail.com

Rep. Dan Reitz – 116th District
Tel: 618-443-5757 E-mail: dreitz@egyptian.net

Costello - jfc.il12@mail.house.gov

Durbin - dick@durbin.senate.gov

Barack Obama – <http://obama.senate.gov>

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

2006 Waterfowl Season Harvest Report Available

August 1, 2007, Forwarded by John Mabery USFWS Refuge Manager

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently issued a new report summarizing hunter activity and harvest for the 2006 waterfowl season.

The reports shows more than 13.8 million ducks were harvested, up more than a million ducks from the previous season. Hunters also harvested nearly 3.6 million geese, down slightly the previous season.

The Service generates the estimates contained in the report based on hunting diary surveys of selected waterfowl hunters, through the cooperative State-Federal Harvest Information Program and the Waterfowl Parts Collection Survey. These surveys provide critically important information used by state wildlife agencies and the Service to establish the next hunting season and maintain healthy waterfowl populations.

Nationally, duck hunters spent about 6.8 million days in the field, compared with 6.5 million days of duck hunting the previous season. Hunters spent more than 4 million days hunting geese which is similar to the previous season. Mallards were the most prevalent duck in the bag for hunters in the United States, with nearly 4.7 million birds harvested last season. Other species popular among waterfowlers were green winged teal with nearly 1.7 million birds harvested; gadwall with more than 1.5 million harvested; wood duck, at more than 1 million harvested; and blue winged teal, with more than 940,000 harvested.

Canada geese were the most prevalent goose in the bag by hunters in the United States, with more than 2.6 million birds harvested last season.

A flyway-by-flyway summary shows:

In the Mississippi Flyway, the nearly 6.3 million ducks

harvested was an increase from the nearly 5.3 million harvested in the previous season. The more than 1.4 million geese harvested was up from nearly 1.3 million the previous season.

In the Atlantic Flyway, more than 1.6 million ducks were harvested last season, similar to the previous season. The 714,000 geese harvested was down from 841,000 from the prior season.

In the Central Flyway, hunters bagged nearly 2.5 million ducks last season. This is down from more than 2.7 million in the previous season.

The harvest of 941,000 geese was down from more than a million the previous season.

In the Pacific Flyway, hunters harvested a total of more than 3.4 million ducks, up from 2.8 million in the previous season. The number of geese harvested, more than 471,000, was up from nearly 446,000 the season before.

In Alaska, more than 65,000 ducks were harvested, down from nearly 75,000 in the previous season. The goose harvest at 7,500 was up from 5,500 in the previous year.

The waterfowl hunter activity and harvest estimates for the 2006 hunting season are available on the Service's web site at <http://migratorybirds.fws.gov/reports/reports.html>.

Survey Says: Midwesterners Value Their Outdoor Recreation

USFWS 8/7/2007

Midwest sportsmen and women led the country in pursuing their favorite activities in 2006, according to one of the nation's most important surveys of outdoor recreation.

According to preliminary state data from the new 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, in western North Central states, a section of the country that includes Iowa, Minnesota and Missouri, a nation-leading 25 percent of residents 16 or older went fishing or hunting or watched wildlife in 2006.

In the eastern North Central part of the country--which includes Great Lakes states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin--17 percent of residents 16 or older hunted, fished or watched wildlife last year.

Sportsmen and women and wildlife watchers in these two areas of the country spent more than \$25 billion on these pursuits.

REFUGE REPORT

Duane Hahnenkamp

Things look pretty good on the refuges at this time, considering that we had a cold late spring and high water to interfere with things. Both of these conditions helped to delay corn planting and de-watering of our refuges. Except for the hot temperatures of August, the summer weather was great through most of June and July, which got the refuges back on track.

Mother Nature, however, did give us some problems in the form of deer and coon predation on the crops that were planted. But how much of problems it represents is yet to be seen.

Swan Lake – The big water pump on Lower Swan, which has not worked right since it was put in, was taken out last fall and redesigned over the winter. It was put back in around mid-June and a test run was started about two weeks later. The pump worked so good that a month later Lower Swan was 90% dry and green with wild millet. With the hot weather we got around the first week of August, the millet took off and the entire Lower Swan looks great.

The middle cell was closed off from the river back in June when the river was at a low point. There was not a lot of rain in July plus the hot weather in August helped to lower the water level even more. Natural vegetation has grown around the lake edges and on the high spots in the lake.

John Mabery decided to let a little fresh water in from the river to keep the lake fresh. I saw plenty of vegetation in the middle cell to keep the ducks happy. The crops look good and the moist soil units are ready to go.

Batchtown – John said the moist soil units are ready and the vegetation growth along the water edges in the refuge is good.

IDNR Refuges – Neil had to wait to plant corn on Crull Impoundment to make sure that floodwaters would not top the Stump Lake levees in May. It got a later start than nearby corn on higher ground, but as of now is catching up fast.

Neil stated that the deer and coons are really playing havoc with the young corn plants. How much of a problem the deer are causing at Crull Impoundment is yet to be seen.

Godar Refuge, as most years, had a problem with de-watering the refuge crop fields. Some drainage tubes that have rotted through will have to be replaced by next spring. When the corn finally took off, the deer moved in and just about destroyed the young corn crop in many areas. Neil had his staff go back and replant these spots with millet. Neil fears that the corn crop damage may have been extensive.

Neil planted corn earlier on the state ground at Batchtown and hopefully it will fare better. If it was not for the massive deer and coon predation in some areas, you would have to say that the state refuges were all in good shape. It will probably be September before we know how much food for the ducks is going to be on the state refuges this fall.

SANGANOIS 2006-07 SEASON REPORT

Total ducks harvested by Blinds:	5,319
Total Ducks harvested by Walk-In:	1,010
Total Ducks harvested at Baker's:	<u>328</u>
Total:	6,657

Total hunters of Blinds:	2,789
Total ducks harvested from Blinds:	5,319
Duck per hunter average:	1,9071

Blind #	Total Harvest	Blind #	Total Harvest
2	4	3	148
4	88	5	20
6	9	7	91
8	2	9	10
10	77	11	16
12	3	13	79
14	21	15	81
16	116	17	160
18	37	19	36
20	23	21	50
22	33	23	22
24	24	25	22
26	57	27	67
28	39	29	11
30	25	31	90
32	282	33	168
40	346	41	186
42	123	43	162
44	146	45	204
46	68	47	303
48	137	49	100
50	193	51	146
52	102	57	6
58	64	61	48
62	84	64	194
65	250	66	134
67	344	68	68

Duck by Species Harvest	#
Mallard	3210
Black Duck	13
Gadwall	313
Baldpate	100
Pintail	157
Green-winged Teal	689
Blue-winged Teal	24
Shoveler	128
Redhead	69
Ringneck	199
Bluebill (Scaup)	73
Canvasback	39
Wood Duck	192
Bufflehead	25
Ruddy Duck	17
Goldeneye	6
Merganser	38
Coot	11
Goose	16
Other	0

Final Environmental Impact Statement for Light Goose Harvest Completed

USFWS News Release 7/25/2007

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently released a Final Environmental Impact Statement that examines five alternatives for managing light goose populations. The preferred management alternative would allow the use of expanded hunting methods and implementation of a conservation order already allowed by some State wildlife agencies in the Central and Mississippi Flyways. Publication in the Federal Register began a 30 day public inspection period for the impact statement.

Following the public inspection period, the Service will publish a Record of Decision in the Federal Register announcing which management alternative will be implemented. The Record of Decision will be accompanied by a final rule that implements the regulation governing the approved management strategy.

During the last few decades, populations of greater and lesser snow geese and Ross's geese have grown to historic highs. Collectively called "light geese," they have denuded their fragile arctic tundra breeding habitat to a point that many areas will take decades to recover. Birds are showing lower-than-normal body size and suffering a decrease in gosling survival due to habitat degradation. Populations of other arctic species, such as the stilt sandpiper and yellow rail, are also declining due to the damage to their breeding habitat caused by overabundant light geese.

After an extensive study of arctic light goose populations completed in

1997 by the Arctic Goose Habitat Working Group, and in the wake of dozens of scientific papers describing the problem, the Service implemented two rules in 1999 designed to give 24 southern and Midwestern States the opportunity to reduce mid-continent light goose populations. The rules were withdrawn after a court challenge but Congress passed legislation in 1999 that reinstated their provisions while the Service completed an Environmental Impact Statement. The legislation allowed for the use of "unplugged" shotguns", electronic calls and expansion of shooting hours to one-half hour after sunset while all other waterfowl and crane hunting seasons are closed. In addition, a conservation order was created allowing take of light geese outside of traditional hunting seasons. The Service published a draft EIS for public comment in 2001.

The current breeding population of mid-continent light geese exceeds 5 million birds. This is an increase of more than 300 percent since the mid-1970s and more

than 5 percent per year. The management goal for mid-continent light geese is to reduce the population by 50 percent. Since implementation of the conservation order in 1999, the harvest of light geese has more than doubled but the population goal has yet to be attained. ###

Hunting Effort and Wildlife Harvest on Public Areas IDNR Regional Summary 2006-07 Season

Region 1

Dove	Squirrel	Rabbit	Pheasant	Quail	Ducks	Geese	Wild Turkey	Deer Gun	Deer Bow	Other Species	Total Units
24112	3363	1137	2503	211	23851	1218	115	713	972	1608	59803

Region 2

7944	597	213	20752	9	5183	1460	6	59	222	280	36725
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Region 3

10456	3776	1328	6627	114	3095	256	63	230	699	920	27562
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Region 4

40075	3984	771	10999	956	37174	1398	283	574	961	3448	1000623
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Region 5

15818	4587	1181	7061	1282	25661	1227	264	761	899	499	59240
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Survey Says: Midwesterners Value Their Outdoor Recreation

Midwest sportsmen and women led the country in pursuing their favorite activities in 2006, according to one of the nation's most important surveys of outdoor recreation.

According to preliminary state data from the new 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, in western North Central states, a section of the country that includes Iowa, Minnesota and Missouri, a nation-leading 25 percent of residents 16 or older went fishing or hunting or watched wildlife in 2006.

In the eastern North Central part of the country--which includes Great Lakes states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin--17 percent of residents 16 or older hunted, fished or watched wildlife last year.

Sportsmen and women and wildlife watchers in these two areas of the country spent more than \$25 billion on these pursuits.

"The National Survey is an important tool that measures in economic and participatory terms the value that wildlife has in Americans' hearts and to the nation's economy. Wildlife related recreation rejuvenates our spirit, connects us with nature and gets us outside pursuing healthy activities," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director H. Dale Hall.

In 2006, more than 87 million Americans, or 38 percent of the U.S. population age 16 and older hunted, fished or watched wildlife. They spent \$120 billion that year pursuing those activities.

Further broken down by category, 30 million people, or 13 percent, fished and spent a total of \$41 billion on their activities, 12.5 million people, or 5 percent, hunted and spent a total of \$23 billion, and 71 million people, or 31 percent, observed wildlife, spending a total of \$45 billion.

The National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation has

been conducted every five years since 1955 and is one of the nation's most important wildlife recreation databases. It is considered to be the definitive source of information concerning participation and expenditures associated with hunting, fishing and other forms of wildlife-related recreation nationwide.

The survey is conducted at the request of state fish and wildlife agencies and is funded by grants from the Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Acts' Multistate Conservation Grant Program. A wide range of individuals and groups depend on the survey to analyze participation rates, economic impacts of expenditures, demographic characteristics, and trends in participation and activities.

It is important to note that the National Survey counts only participants who actually went hunting, fishing or observed wildlife in 2006 and does not represent the total number of anglers, hunters, and wildlife watchers in the U.S. Many people who consider themselves hunters, anglers or wildlife watchers do not participate every year. For example, examination of survey data shows that over the five year period from 2002 to 2006, a cumulative total of 44.4 million people fished and 18.6 million hunted.

This 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation State Overview report, as well as previous surveys and reports, can be found at <http://federalaid.fws.gov/surveys/surveys.html>. The Service expects to publish the final national report in November 2007.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 97-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 547 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations,

restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE USFWS

Illinois waterfowl hunting seasons announced

USFWS Service Regulations Committee endorses duck and goose hunting seasons

SPRINGFIELD, IL - The Illinois Department of Natural Resources' (IDNR) proposals for a 60-day duck hunting season statewide, 85-day Canada goose seasons in the North and Central zones, and a 66-day Canada goose season in the South Zone for the 2007-08 waterfowl season, have been endorsed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Regulations Committee. Final approval from the USFWS is expected in September.

"All indications are that duck and goose numbers will be good this fall, and we believe our plans for season dates and bag limits will provide hunters with plenty of opportunity for the upcoming Illinois waterfowl seasons," said IDNR Acting Director Sam Flood. "Illinois hunters last year harvested the third most ducks since 1981 and second most geese in state history. We are looking forward to hunters getting into the field this fall."

Illinois Duck Season Recommendations for 2007-08

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service this year is allowing a 60-day duck season with a daily bag limit of six ducks. This marks the 11th consecutive year in which hunters in Illinois have been offered a 60-day duck season. Federal regulations will allow pintails and canvasbacks to be hunted during the regular 60-day duck seasons.

The Illinois duck season dates are as follows:

North Zone - Saturday, Oct. 20 - Tuesday, Dec. 18
Central Zone - Saturday, Oct. 27 - Tuesday, Dec. 25
South Zone - Thursday, Nov. 22 - Sunday, Jan. 20

The daily bag limit is six and may include no more than four mallards (two hens), two scaup, two wood ducks, two redheads, one black duck, one pintail, and two canvasbacks.

The proposed daily bag limit of mergansers is five, only two of which may be hooded mergansers. Possession limits are twice the daily bag limits.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) annual survey of key nesting areas indicated 41.2 million breeding ducks, 14 percent greater than last year and 24 percent above the 1955-2006 long-term average.

* Mallards - The mid-continent mallard fall flight forecast is 11.4 million, 1.5 million higher than last year. The fall flight index predicts 2.3 million young mallards, compared to 1.9 million last year. (Young mallards are generally twice as vulnerable to hunting as adults).

* Pintails - The pintail population of 3.3 million is similar to last year and 19 percent below the long-term average. The population is above the threshold of 2.5 million, justifying a full season length based on the USFWS interim pintail harvest strategy.

* Canvasbacks - The canvasback population reached a record high of 865,000, 25 percent higher than last year and 53 percent above the long-term average. With the excellent habitat conditions in Prairie Canada, above average production is expected. As a result, the canvasback daily bag limit has been increased to two this year. It has been 41 years since the daily bag limit on canvasbacks in Illinois has been as high as two.

* Scaup - Scaup population estimates of 3.45 million increased 6 percent over last year but are still 33 percent below the long-term average. The

USFWS decreased the daily bag limit from three to two in 2005 because of concerns regarding a decreasing population with an increasing harvest rate for the past several years. The USFWS initially recommended reducing the daily bag limit to one scaup for this season, but approved the Flyway Councils' recommendation to retain the two-bird limit until a new harvest strategy can be developed prior to the 2008 season. There is no evidence indicating that hunting is the primary cause of scaup declines and many agencies continue to conduct research on the scaup population.

The preliminary Illinois duck harvest estimate for 2006 was 507,464, up 23 percent compared with 2005 and the third highest harvest since state estimates began in 1981. Preliminary mallard harvest last year was 308,000, second only to the 1999 harvest of 311,325. On average, duck hunters spent just over 13 days afield to harvest 10 ducks per hunter for the season. Harvest of teal during the 2006 September season in Illinois was 28,016, compared to 10,953 in 2005.

September Teal Season for 2007

The statewide 16-day teal season is Sept. 8-23 from sunrise to sunset. The daily bag limit is four teal with a possession limit of eight.

Illinois Goose Season Recommendations for 2007-08

The Canada goose season dates in Illinois are:

North Zone (85 days) - Saturday, Oct. 20 - Sunday, Jan. 12
Central Zone (85 days) - Saturday, Oct. 27 - Thursday, Nov. 8 and Wednesday, Nov. 21 - Thursday, Jan. 31
South Zone (66 days) - Thursday, Nov. 22 - Sunday, Nov. 25 and Saturday, Dec. 1 - Thursday, Jan. 31

Late May aerial surveys found 402,640 breeding Mississippi Valley Population (MVP) Canada geese, the highest level since 1999. Indications of an early spring suggest better reproduction on the breeding grounds. Nesting conditions were favorable and it should be another good

production year for MVP geese. 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 five percent of the Illinois harvest.

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, Indiana and Kentucky will begin the "no-quota" five-year experiment this season.

The preliminary Canada goose harvest estimate in Illinois last year during the regular season was 122,294, the second highest since 1981 (the record was 128,387 in 2000). During the 2006 September season, hunters took an estimated 14,578 Canada geese.

The USFWS is allowing longer Canada goose seasons in Illinois this year - six days longer in the North and Central zones and nine days longer in the South Zone.

During the regular Canada goose season in Illinois, the statewide daily bag limit will be two geese with a possession limit of four geese. Because Illinois eliminated quota zones and Canada goose harvest quotas, Illinois must adhere to the federally mandated daily Canada goose harvest possession limit of twice the daily bag limit for geese.

September Canada Goose Season for 2007

The statewide September Canada goose season in all zones will be Sept. 1-15. During the September season only, Illinois retains a Northeast Illinois Canada Goose Zone that

includes Cook, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will counties. During the September season only, the daily harvest bag limit for the Northeast Zone will be five geese (possession limit is 10 for the Northeast Zone only), with a daily bag limit of two geese (possession limit of four geese) for the North, Central and South zones.

White-fronted Goose Season - 2007-08

North Zone (72 days) - Friday, Nov. 2 - Saturday, Jan. 12
Central Zone (72 days) - Wednesday, Nov. 21 - Thursday, Jan. 31
South Zone (71 days) - Thursday, Nov. 22 - Thursday, Jan. 31

This year, the North and Central zone white-front season has been shortened from 79 days to 72 days to allow hunters in those zones to take two white-fronted geese per day. Aerial survey data indicates that there are no appreciable numbers of white-fronts in the Central Zone until about Thanksgiving and populations usually peaked in January. The maximum white-fronted goose season allowed by federal regulations is 86 days with a bag limit of one or 72 days with a bag limit of two. Last year in Illinois, hunters in the North and Central zones had a bag limit of one, while hunters in the South Zone had a bag limit of two for white-fronted geese.

The white-fronted goose population increased 43 percent in September 2006 compared with 2005, but reduced reproduction this year is expected to result in a fall flight similar to last year.

Snow Goose and Brant Season - 2007-08

North Zone (85 days) - Saturday, Oct. 20 - Saturday, Jan. 12
Central Zone (97 days) - Saturday, Oct. 27 - Thursday, Jan. 31
South Zone (71 days) - Thursday, Nov. 22 - Thursday, Jan. 31

The bag limit is 20 snow geese with no possession limit and one brant in all zones with a possession limit of two.

Conservation Order Snow Goose Season - 2007

North Zone (79 days) - Sunday, Jan. 13 - Monday, March 31
Central Zone (60 days) - Friday, Feb. 1 - Monday, March 31
South Zone (60 days) - Friday, Feb. 1 - Monday, March 31

During the Conservation Order snow goose season, there is no bag limit.

Hunters may use unplugged shotguns and electronic calls. The legal hunting hours extend to one-half hour after sunset.

During the 2007 Midwinter Survey, biologists counted more than 2.9 million light geese (snow, blue and Ross' geese), 31 percent more than in 2006. However, production is expected to be much lower than last year due to a cold, snowy spring on the high Arctic breeding grounds. During last year's regular snow goose season, Illinois hunters took an estimated 9,778 snow geese. An estimated 74,268 snow geese were harvested during the 2006 Conservation Order snow goose season, a 69 percent increase over the 2005 estimated harvest. During the 2007 conservation order season preliminary harvest estimates indicate Illinois hunters took 55,000 snow geese.

Illinois Youth Hunt Seasons for 2007

The Youth Waterfowl Hunt seasons for 2007 are listed below for each zone. (Bag limits are the same as during regular seasons for all species of waterfowl and coots)

North Zone - Saturday, Oct. 13 - Sunday, Oct. 14
Central Zone - Saturday, Oct. 20 - Sunday, Oct. 21
South Zone - Saturday, Nov. 10 - Sunday, Nov. 11

Waterfowlers are encouraged to take qualifying young people hunting during the Youth Waterfowl Season. For more information on Illinois waterfowl seasons, check the 2007-08 Illinois Digest of Waterfowl Hunting Regulations available in September.

All hunters are reminded to register with the federal Harvest Information Program (HIP) prior to heading to the field. The program is designed to produce more accurate federal waterfowl harvest estimates.

Hunters should include the free HIP certification when they purchase their

hunting license or sportsmen's combination license. Hunters can also register for HIP online through DNR Direct (<http://dnr.state.il.us>) or by phone toll-free at 1-888-6PERMIT (a convenience fee will be charged). Registration each year with HIP is mandatory.