



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



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WIDGEON ON A DIET PART 2

At the time, Blue Buffalo dog food was one of the top of the line foods, it really helped Widgeon along with the addition of the frozen green beans to satisfy his appetite. He was losing weight, granted a bit slow by my standards, but it was coming down and his coat was looking great!

Since Widgeon was so heavy, I did not want to throw him into a vigorous training routine just yet for fear of giving him a heart attack so we would go for long walks and some short distance running to get him back in shape. On those long walks I would meet other dog walkers and they would always comment on how shiny Widgeon's coat was and silky smooth it was, and indeed it was.

The food he was on, at the time, as you know, was Blue Buffalo, and the formula was Salmon for the high omega content in it to help his skin and allergies he had developed. The Salmon really did the trick on healing his skin, but after being on it for about a month, his body absorbed so much fish oil that it came out of his pores of his skin and he began to smell like fish. He staaaaanked! He reeked of it so much I had to do something. There was no way he would continue to live in the house smelling like a dead fish running around. I had to come up with something to provide him with a good diet of omegas but decrease the smell of the fish.

The next day I went down to our friendly local PetSmart store and went to the dog food section. Low and behold a representative of Blue Buffalo was there. After talking to her a bit and explaining what was going on with Widgeon and after a good laugh about a Duck Dog running around smelling like fish she gave me an idea.

Blue Buffalo at the time came in three formulas, which were non rice based formulas for his allergies. Sweet Potato and Salmon, Sweet Potato and Bison and Sweet Potato and Duck. The Blue Buffalo Representative suggested I take one bag of Sweet Potato and Salmon formula and mix half of the bag with another half bag of a different formula. After thinking about this a bit, I thought this was a great idea! However, each 40lb bag cost about \$80, at the time, that was a pretty good chunk of change, but I went for it.

Since Widgeon was a duck dog, the choice was obvious of which formula to blend the Salmon with, so I bought a bag of Salmon and duck formula and brought it home and mixed it up. I was curious if Widgeon would balk at this new formula, but as most lab owners know, if it is food, they will eat just about anything! He dove right in, as long as his frozen green beans were on top!

Widgeon's wonderful smell subsided after while, took it a bit longer than I was hoping, but it did and his coat remained wonderful and his skin was really great too. With his work out routine his weight came off quicker too, but that materialized another issue with Widgeon, that I found out is very common with Labradors with bad breeding.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| SHORT STORY | 1 |
| HOLIDAY PARTY | 2 |
| BILL HILGEMAN | 2 |
| MEMBERS MEETING | 3 |
| MEMBERSHIP | 3 |
| TROUT TRIP | 3 |
| FUND RAISER | 3 |
| DU BANQUET | 3 |
| MDC QUESTIONS | 3 |
| DIVE BOMB | 4 |
| DU | 5 |
| 2023-2024 SEASON | 5 |
| UPCOMING EVENTS | 5 |
| GENERAL INFO | COV |

HOLIDAY PARTY UPDT

If you missed our annual Holiday Party you missed a great time. Lots of fellowship with your fellow members and enjoying a great time. Below are some pics of the event.



One of the gift tables



Drawing of the tickets for gifts is Jerry and future member.



Our lovely Hostess Jen



Enjoying the time together telling war stories.

BILL HILGEMAN

I received an update on Bill's healing progress and he is doing better day by day. He is able to go without his neck cast periodically through out the day and is feeling much better. Long road ahead of you Bill, keep healing and hopefully we will see you soon! Further update, Bill

MVDHA BOARD

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Nick Witte

made it to this month's board meeting where it was great to see him!

MEMBERS MEETING

This month's members meeting topic will be all about Snow Goose hunting. The discussion will be led by Scott Thoele and Jerry Mercurio SR. Be advised that Borgettis will be having an event that night and that the kitchen will not be available to us. So make sure to plan accordingly for food. The bar will be available.

MEMBERSHIP

This is the last reminder of renewing your membership. If you have not renewed or contacted a Board Member of your planning on renewing you will be dropped as a member. Please send your renewal to the address on this newsletter on Page 6.

TROUT TRIP

MVDHA is planning on our annual Trout Trip this coming year. The dates are going to be 15 March 2024 through 17 March 2024. Coming home on the 17th. We are going back to Trout Hollow Lodge at Taneycomo since there is a question of Blue Haven being sold. The address for Trout Hollow Lodge is: 1500 Acacia Club Rd, Hollister, MO 65672. Jerry Reserved four rooms. To reserve your room call Sam at Trout Hollow at 417-334-2332 and tell them you are part of MVDHA. Don't forget that if you need to reserve a boat or a slip to set that up also. If you are a military veteran they also give discounts for that too.

If you have never gone to one of our annual fishing trips to Taneycomo you are really missing out on one of the best trips or events that we do. It is always a

great trip and Trout Hollow is one of the best areas to go to down there. Hopefully we will see you there!

IF YOU HAVE NOT MADE RESERVATIONS YET THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE TO MAKE THEM.

2024 FUND RAISER

Our coffers are running low and we need to raise money. For a fund raiser this year, Kenny Liebel has offered to design and create a custom made hunting knife.

Until recently, I did not know much about Kenny and his extraordinary talents. I knew he created duck calls and carved decoys, and is a tool and die technician, but until recently, I found out he is an re-enactor and has also been making custom knives for years!

Kenny has graciously volunteered to design and create a custom hunting knife complete with a custom leather sheath!

The design is in it's infancy but here are the preliminary details:

- Made out of 496 Staret Tool Steel
- 5 to 7 inch blade length
- The blade will be buffed out to mirror finish
- It will have a Brass Hilt
- Laminated handle made out of wood that is similar to golf driver handles
- Leather Sheath that will be hand stitched
- The value of the knife is about \$600.00

Once the knife is completed I will be posting pictures of it here. This planning is still in it's infancy and we have not determined what the cost of the raffle tickets will be at this time, so stay tuned!!

DU BANQUET

The St. Charles Chapter of Ducks Unlimited is having their annual Banquet on Saturday, February 24, 2024 at 5:30 PM. It will again be at the Pezold Banquet Center located off Highway N in Cottleville. Only a limited number of tickets are available and seating is by tables of 8. Please order your tickets early as the Event has sold out the past couple of years. No tickets will be available at the door.

Event prices:

Single - \$50.00 (includes a membership)

Couples - \$90.00 (includes a membership)

Greenwing (17 & under) - \$35.00

Sponsor - \$250.00

Sponsor Table (8 persons) - \$500.00

Please go to the Ducks Unlimited website (<https://www.ducks.org>) to get tickets: <https://ducksunlimited.myeventscenter.com/event/>

If you are unable to attend the Event please consider renewing or becoming a member of Ducks Unlimited by making a \$35.00 donation to help our fundraising effort which includes the national Ducks Unlimited magazine. You can do that at the website (<https://www.ducks.org/>).

Hope you can attend to help raise money for the Ducks!

MDC QUESTIONS UDPT

We received an update and answers from MDC of the questions we sent them. Since the answers are long I will be parsing them out over the next couple of months so you will see them in their entirety.

1. What factors contribute to delays in the timely maintenance of water pumps? Who is responsible for such maintenance? **Answer:** The Department has a pump crew that covers pump repairs across the entire state. This **two-person** team has been short a member for over a year. The crew handles pumps for all types of needs including wetlands, fish hatcheries, commercial and domestic water wells, sewer systems, fire systems, and HVAC systems. In addition, parts or pump replacements usually have an extended timeframe to get on site after ordering.
2. Have considerations been made to implement a nominal fee for hunters, perhaps \$5-10, to help cover expenses in designated hunting areas? If so, what considerations were made? **Answer:** In the past MDC has taken a nominal fee from area users, however, **the internal cost associated with this effort was more than it was worth.** The Waterfowl Hunt committee will continue to evaluate permit costs periodically.
3. Have there been any discussions regarding the possibility of collaborating with farmers to share crops, such as corn, to enhance conservation efforts more effectively? **Answer:** There has not been anything recently. With the Deep Horizon oil spill, flooding habitat early both of wetland and crops was a program that private landowners could participate in to help try and short-stop birds from getting in the oil spill. However, **a program focusing specifically on crops,**

like corn, is more singularly beneficial to waterfowl as opposed to the wider suite of wetland dependent species. Therefore, other efforts to advance wetland conservation are typically more attractive options.

4. Could reservation holders be promptly notified if water availability becomes limited or nonexistent in their respective hunting area? **Answer:** **During periods of urgency or emergencies we may send emails to hunters informing them of changes.** For example, when COVID hit we had to make changes to the draw system and used emails to notify hunters at the last minute. This is the exception rather than the norm. We have a range of other places online that include Conservation Area webpages, Harvest Reports, and press releases to keep the public aware of changing conditions related to flood or drought.
5. Regarding the preseason draw process, what is the rationale behind providing ADA hunters with five choices while others receive only three? **Answer :** **We received input from ADA hunters when we transitioned from the call-in system on October 1 to the current online system for ADA blinds. Since there is a lower number of ADA hunters than non-ADA hunters, there were more vacancies, which allowed us to increase opportunities for the group after the first year. Even now, there is an occasion when vacancies exist after the pre-season draw and these**

ADA blinds are offered during the in-season draw.

The demand for pre-season reservations for non-ADA hunters is high and therefore increasing the choices doesn't make sense. Additionally, this isn't the only means for non-ADA hunters to hunt. They can put in for the in-season drawing each week, which gives them multiple opportunities to draw a spot to hunt throughout the season.

DIVE BOMB

Dive Bomb Squad Fest 2024

4TH Annual Squadfest is coming this summer.

JULY 19TH - 20TH 2024

370 Lakeside Park in St. Peters, MO

CALLING CONTESTS • RETRIEVER COMBINE • SHOW SPECIALS • VENDOR FAIR • RETRIEVER TRAINING DEMONSTRATIONS • FOOD & DRINK • AND MORE!

Dive Bomb Industries' Squad-Fest is an exciting free-admission, waterfowling event for the entire family. Come on out for exclusive in-person show specials, check out the latest and greatest products at our massive vendor fair, hear the world's best duck and goose callers go toe-to-toe, watch hard-charging gun dogs compete in the retriever combine, and much more, all while spending time with outdoor enthusiasts from across the country!

EVENT HOURS

Friday, July 19th — 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, July 20th — 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

For more information go to:

<https://www.divebombindustries.com/pages/squadfest-2024>

FROM DU

SHOTGUNNING: SHOOTING FROM BLINDS

If you're not hiding, the water-fowler's saying goes, you're not shooting. But concealing yourself in a blind can make shooting difficult. The following strategies will increase your chances for success and keep you safe whether you're tucked into a pit below ground, on your back in a layout blind, or crowded into an A-frame or box blind.

BEFORE THE SHOT

Before the hunt starts, take some time to settle in the blind and stow your gear. Be sure that everything is in place and easy to reach, and that there's nothing underfoot that might cause you to slip. Be especially careful where you set your ammunition. There may be shells of several different gauges in the blind, and you don't want to mix them up in the excitement of a fast reload.

Leave your gun unloaded until shooting time. If the blind is heavily brushed, take the sling off your gun so it won't tangle in brush when you shoot. Stand or sit up to familiarize yourself with the 10-to-2 window where you'll take your shots. If there are retrievers along, remind yourself to not take low shots, and that goes double for pits and layouts. A breaking dog can bolt in front of your muzzle before you know it.

Try to angle layout blinds so that any shots will come at a shooter's natural point of aim. For right-handed shooters this is about 11:00; for lefties it's about 1:00. That way, if the birds do what they're supposed to, you'll

sit up and have a shot that doesn't require twisting around. It's much easier for right-handed shooters to swing to the left than to the right and vice versa. If there's a lefty in the group, put him or her on the right end, where he or she can shoot the birds that fly to that side.

SHOOTING

As ducks or geese approach, get your hands on your gun. While keeping your head down, try to watch the birds working so you'll know what to expect when the shot is called. If you can't see, as is the case in many pits and some other blinds, listen to the shot caller, who should be giving a running commentary on what the birds are doing.

When it's time to shoot, tell yourself to get up in a hurry, then slow down. If birds have committed to the decoys, they don't know you're there. You'll have an instant before they begin to flare. It's tempting to rush, but settle yourself down, pick a bird, and really look at it. If it's close, focus on the head or the bill. After standing or sitting up, your first move is to push the gun out and toward the bird. Pushing the gun out helps you clear any bulky clothing without snagging, and it gets the muzzle moving to the target. As you move the muzzle toward the bird, raise the stock to your face and the butt to your shoulder pocket. A smooth mount is just as fast as a rushed mount because it's a more efficient move.

When you shoot a bird, stay with it until it's down and you know it's dead. Be sure there are no dogs in your line of fire before you shoot at crippled birds. Better yet, let the dog's owner shoot any birds on the water, or ask before you do.

If you have a chance to shoot a bird over the top, or on the end, say something first, or ask the blind boss: "Okay if I take this

one?" This helps avoid situations where more than one person pops up unannounced to take the shot or, worse, one person stands to shoot and another shoots sitting down next to him.

AFTER THE SHOT

If someone goes out in front of the blind, point your muzzle up. If you leave the blind, unload your gun or take it with you. Always unload it before you set it down. After each volley, check your area of the blind for empties and pick them up. This will help keep your footing safe so you won't risk stumbling when the next bunch comes in.

One other item I want to add to this list, which I am surprised the writer did not express, is that in a blind there are defined lanes to shoot in. You do not want to be swinging your gun in a crowded blind shooting over someone's head or next to their head. ALWAYS know where your fellow hunters are at and shoot your lane.

2023-2024 SEASON

Light Goose Conserv Order

Feb. 7–April 30, 2024

Limits

During the Conservation Order there is no daily bag or possession limit for light geese (snow, blue, and Ross's geese).

Up Coming Events

Feb 14: Snow Goose

Mar 13: Movie Night or Turkey

April 10: Gary Calvert MDC

May 8: TBD

June 11: Trap Shoot

July 10: TBD

Aug 14: NO MEETING

General Information

This newsletter is distributed to our active members. For non-active members check the website for the current newsletter. We have our general meeting the second Wednesday of every month at 7:30 PM and our Board of Directors' Meeting every fourth Monday at 7 PM. Members meetings are held at Borgettis Bar & Grill 1667 South Old Hwy 141 Fenton MO. Board Meetings are held at various locations, contact Jerry Mercurio at 314-603-6548 for this month's location. In case of bad weather call Ken Liebel at 314-822-8030 or Jerry Mercurio at 314-603-6548.

Visit YOUR web site at <https://mvdha.com> to get the most recent news, events and updates. There you will find this newsletter and other helpful information concerning conservation and the great outdoors that we love. If you would like to be added to the email listing of important news and updates you can do that through the web site through the contact us link, fill out the form and make sure you add your email address.

Any comments or suggestions concerning the newsletter or the website can be sent to mvdha@mvdha.com. I am always looking forwards to suggestions concerning content and what you would like to see or be presented in these publications.

Next members meeting: **FEBRUARY 14, 2024**

Next Board Meeting: **FEBRUARY 26, 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.

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

"ST. LOUIS' NONPROFIT ASSOCIATION"

P.O. BOX 6, VALLEY PARK, MO 63088

