



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



MARCH 2024

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WIDGEON AND LIPOMAS

Widgeon's weight loss program was going great. We settled into a normal routine of him eating decent food, long walks and building up his stamina in the back yard doing retrieves and basic drills. His weight was coming down to where he had lost about ten pounds but something became more and more apparent with his weight loss. His fat was hiding a multitude of bumps all over his body, I am not talking about a couple, he had probably about thirty or forty of them and one big one on his right hip. So off to the Vet we went.

The Vet informed me what these were and are called Lipomas, which are common on middle aged and older dogs. From the internet Lipomas are defined as: Fatty Tumor (Lipomas) in Dogs. Frequently seen in middle-aged and senior dogs, simple lipomas are painless, soft, and mobile lumps made up of fat cells. Although most often found on the abdomen and chest these lumpy masses can develop anywhere, just under the skin, on your dog's body. This was Widgeon, and he was covered in them.

Lipomas are really not that big of a deal, other than being unsightly and ugly on your dog, the only problem with them is that they can impact mobility if they start growing into the joints. Widgeon had one very large one growing on his right hip. The fatty deposit on his hip was about the size of my hand. The Vet advised me to keep an eye on that one and that he might have to remove it if it becomes more apparent that it was impacting his mobility. So we went home with this new found information and took a wait and see mentality.

After about a month, this Lipoma on his hip kept growing and became very large to the point I had to do something. The Vet took a look at Widgeon and agreed we needed to remove it because it was growing so fast. He took the preop blood work to make sure he could withstand the surgery (remember this part in future short stories) and scheduled the surgery.

Two weeks later he had the surgery to remove this large Lipoma and any others the Vet could remove while Widgeon was sedated. He was under the knife for about 30 to 45 minutes and the Vet remove about 15 to 20 Lipomas off of his body. Later that day I was informed that Widgeon did well with the surgery and was ready to be picked up which I was very glad to hear.

On arrival at the Vet to pick up Widgeon I really did not know what to expect. When he came out of the back where they kennel the animals, he saw me and just started to jump all over me, so very happy to see me, wagging his whole body, you know how Labs are. Looking him over his coat was a mess, one that I was quite proud of, it was like a patch work of shaved skin all over his body and stitched up incisions where the Vet removed the Lipomas. He looked like Frankenstein! His right hip was the worse of it, an incision of about ten inches. All in all, Widgeon came out of this ordeal quite well, his coat grew back to it's luxury self and life was good with the battle against these Lipomas, this time.

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

MEMBERS MEETING

We had a bit of a scheduling issue with getting Gary to come in to speak with us so we had to move things around a bit to accommodate Gary's schedule. He will be coming in to talk to us on this month's meeting. We have several questions lined up for Gary to discuss about the future of waterfowling in Missouri, specifically on this side of the state. Believe me when I say this, this is going to be one of those meetings you will not want to miss.

NEW BOARD MEMBER

Gary Hirsch has decided to join YOUR MVDHA board to help make a difference in the future of your club. Welcome Gary and thanks for stepping up to help!

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 reenactor 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

MVDHA BOARD

President: Ken Liebel

First V. Pres.:

Scott Thoele

Fin. Secretary:

Rob Mueller

Rec. Secretary:

Bill Hilgeman

Correspondence

Secretary: Bill Hilgeman

Membership Chairman:

Erik Liebel

Board of Directors:

Chairman of the Board

Jerry Mercurio

Asst Chairman of the Board

Art Wende

Directors:

Brad Douglass,

Jerry Mercurio Jr.,

James Edwards

Nick Witte

Gary Hirsch

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!!

DELTA BANQUET

Confluence Chapter – St. Louis, MO

Location: PFEM Hall & Banquet Center, 115 McMenamy Rd, St. Peters, MO 63376

Saturday, March 23, 2024
Doors Open – 5:00 PM | Dinner – 7:00 PM

Single Ticket – \$60

Couples Ticket – \$110

Silver Sponsor Table of 8 – \$500

Gold Sponsor Table of 8 – \$1,000

Platinum Sponsor Table of 8 – \$2,500

For more information contact: David Baruch at (954) 494-3557 | ddbaruchjr@gmail.com

If purchasing tickets online, your tickets will be at the door. Please bring your emailed receipt as proof of purchase.

GOOSE EGG ROLLS

Recently I had the opportunity to enjoy something new, which really surprised me since I really do not care for the taste of duck or goose, but I always eat what I kill, just flavor it quite a bit, but this was something special:

Sear goose each side in iron skillet. Still very raw, just quick sear.

Package cream cheese, green onions chopped, Pickled jalapeños chopped, Shredded Monterey jack cheese, Lawrys, Cayenne pepper and Garlic salt

Mix all together and add meat.

Roll up in egg roll wraps and deep fry till golden brown.

RELOADING

If you have an old MEC reloader you want to get rid of send me an email at bjd7960@att.net and tell me what you have and how much you want for it. I might be interested.

MDC QUESTIONS

In our January Board meeting where we read the answers that we sent to MDC it was apparent we did not agree with the answers to those questions or we had follow-up questions to MDC about their answers. In our April meeting you will be given the opportunity to voice your concerns about those answers and we will formulate a rebuttal or follow-up questions to MDC about those answers.

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. Last month I posted the first five, here are the next set:

6. Have there been assessments done on the viability of drawing down water on Dresser Island during the summer months?

Answer: The Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for the water levels of Lock and Dam 25 to accommodate the 9-foot-deep navigation water channel for commerce. This is part of a stair-step system of locks and dams to account for the 420-foot elevation drop between Minneapolis and Granite City, Illinois. MDC does provide recommendations on how water level management could

benefit fish and wildlife, but it is up to the Corps to implement. Water levels inside of Dresser Island are tied to the elevation of the river. Each year a water drawdown is attempted, but when the river is high the interior water levels do come up.

7. Instead of eliminating a blind if not drawn on the second attempt, is there possibility of repositioning the blind spot to a more suitable location?

Answer: If this question is specific to the Upper MS Blind Program, please contact the St. Louis Regional office at 636-441-4554 to discuss. If a site is not drawn in the even-year drawing, which never happens, that site is put in the redraw the same year. All sites are allocated each year. If the site holder does not hunt a site, or decides not to build a permanent blind, the site can be hunted with a temporary blind or from a boat provided it is hunted within 10 yards of the stake. If the question is not referring to the Upper MS Blind Program, we are unsure of the question.

8. Over the past two decades, how many blind sites have been eliminated among the numerous Mississippi River Blinds? **Answer:** In 2007, there were 91 blind sites as compared to 92 in 2023. Some of the sites have been moved due to the changing river conditions that have silted in some of the sloughs to the point the water is too shallow to hunt or navigate.
9. Is there a plan in place to support native trees and plants with supplementary resources like corn or rice? **Answer:** To support native

trees, we often focus on the impact of infrastructure, such as levees and water control structures, that may hold water on trees too long. Or, if an area is open to the river, then this may be a good opportunity to plant or encourage natural regeneration of native bottomland species, which are more resilient to flooding than other land uses like crops, along with slowing down water flow and reducing potential for erosion. On areas where we do have bottomland hardwoods, we may delay flooding the timber and flood non-timbered habitats like moist soil or food plots to still provide waterfowl habitat and hunting opportunities. Another important consideration is the timing of when waterfowl use the timber. Early in the fall, birds are looking for nutrients and protein to help complete their molt so they can look fit for pair bonding. They can find ample bugs in more aquatic habitats where aquatic insects are already present or are responding to recent flooding and breaking down the leaves of grasses, sedges, smartweed, and cocklebur. Mallards use flooded timber typically later in the year when these late migrants are more abundant, they are searching for thermal cover, and wanting a little more seclusion to strengthen their pair bonds.

10. What research has been conducted on the impact of wind-powered generators on migratory waterfowl? Are there concerns about electric discharge affecting the magnetic homing ability of these birds? **Answer:** There is a substantial research hub

managed by the Renewable Energy and Wildlife Institute, an independent nonprofit organization that works to solve renewable energy, wildlife, and related natural resource challenges through science and collaboration, which can be found here: <https://rewi.knack.com/rewiresearch-hub#>. The Audubon Society states the main concern regarding birds and wind turbines are mortalities caused by birds striking the turbines themselves. According to their website, "An estimated 140,000 to 679,000 bird deaths occur per year due to turbine collisions, which is substantial, but significantly less than deaths caused by outdoor cats and building collisions." Bird species that are more disproportionately affected by wind turbine-related mortality are those whose behaviors put them more at risk while flying through wind energy facilities, for example foraging for prey (raptors) or nocturnal migration (cranes and other wetland species). In the recent materials provided by these two internationally recognized organizations, electromagnetic disturbance of birds' migratory behavior is not discussed as a concern.

11. Could Swan Lake consider opening three days a week, similar to Maries Temps Clair, for duck hunters? **Answer:** Swan Lake is managed by the USFWS. We can pass this recommendation along but are not in charge in administering their hunt program.
12. Due to an increasing number of hunters, is there a plan to expand hunting opportunities at Otter Slough, similar to ac-

commodations made at Eagle Bluffs? **Answer:** Our waterfowl hunt program doesn't singularly focus on maximizing opportunity, as this would detract from other preferable attributes. Ensuring quality hunting experiences and also providing habitat and refuge for migratory birds are other aspects area managers consider as part of the waterfowl hunt program.

13. Would it be feasible to flood water to trees in MDC wade and shoot areas (e.g. Duck Creek) at the start of waterfowl season and draw it off at the end without causing harm to the trees? **Answer:** No. Flooding the trees at the beginning of waterfowl season is a lesson learned that is not sustainable with our current knowledge of forest management. Flooding forested areas before the trees are fully dormant is stressful to the trees, often leading to declining health and poor recruitment in the understory of the next generation of trees. Unfortunately, tree dormancy and waterfowl seasons don't always line up perfectly. Varying water management timing across multiple forested areas/pools over several years can diminish some of the forest impact while still providing some opportunity for waterfowl hunting. The real danger becomes flooding the trees early year after year without any variation or consideration for the forest health. Hence, we are taking a similar approach to green tree reservoir management as Arkansas and working to conserve the legacy of flooded timber by being more mindful about the variation and timing of flood-

ing. For more information about Arkansas's efforts check out Conserving Arkansas's Flooded Timber Legacy (enclosed).

14. For areas with split seasons, has the idea of draining water down when the first half is closed, and reflooding after two weeks been considered?

Answer: No. Whether the season is open or not, we have responsibilities to provide habitat for migratory waterfowl moving through the state, as well as other wetland dependent species, some of which are reliant on groundwater levels through the winter. Dropping and raising water levels in this short time span would be unproductive, an extra strain on staff and infrastructure, incur additional pumping costs, and could have negative consequences on the number of birds using these areas.

15. Is there a strategy to drain areas closed for waterfowl hunting at the end of the season to facilitate movement of ducks? Additionally, will these areas be re-flooded to support returning waterfowl during their northern migration? **Answer:** Like the question above, the answer to this question is no. Whether the season is open or not, we have responsibilities to provide habitat for migratory waterfowl moving through the state as they migrate and/or overwinter. Dropping water levels at the end of season is a strategy we see on private land which reduces the amount of habitat available and thereby minimizes the extent and abundance of waterfowl. The transition from

overwintering to spring migration is not a clear time period. As natural resource managers we would like to see habitat available throughout the fall, winter, and spring to benefit the wide range of migratory species, as well as the resident species that don't migrate across the continent.

16. Are there any discussions about consolidating Missouri's hunting zones into just a North and a South Zone, rather than having three separate zones?

Answer: Zones and season boundaries are reviewed every five years and open to changes by reviewing data, garnering public input, and accounting for the federal season structure. The last time this was done was in 2020 and will be revisited in 2025.

17. What specific factors contribute to the preference of using corn and rice in MDC areas instead of moist soil, considering the limited availability of food for waterfowl due to efficient farming practices?

Answer: Several environmental factors are considered involving soils and its water holding capacity. Area infrastructure involving levees, water control structures, and water sources that help in getting water on and off are also considerations. Staff capacity and local interest in ag-crop programs are also considered in managing habitat to ensure invasive species and woody encroachment are controlled and early successional management can provide opportunity for native plants to provide seeds and bugs as a food base for migratory birds.

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>

2023-2024 SEASON

Light Goose Conserv Order

Feb. 7–April 30, 2024

Up Coming Events

Mar 13: Gary Calvert MDC

April 10: MDC QUESTIONS

May 8: TBD

June 11: Trap Shoot

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: MARCH 13, 2024

Next Board Meeting: MARCH 25, 2024

Members are invited to the Board Meeting

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

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