



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



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WIDGEON HEART WORMS

Finding out that you have a dog with heart worms is heart wrenching. What do you do? You basically have three options, don't do anything and let the heart worms spread, which will be a death sentence for the dog causing either heart failure, kidney failure or liver failure, put the dog down so the dog does not have to go through that agony or to treat the dog for heart worms, which in itself is very expensive and dangerous for the dog. Since I just got Widgeon back and he seemed relatively healthy with the exception of his weight I decided to treat him and give him a shot.

Ever look into the treatment that a dog goes through for heart worms? For one, it is very expensive, currently the cost is anywhere from \$1,000 to \$1,500 or more, at the time I had him treated I believe it was around \$600 to \$800, which during that time frame was still a good chunk of change. The treatment entails two injections of medication called Immiticide or Me-lasomine which is an arsenic-based anthelmintic, injected into the muscles in the third through fifth lumbar region of the dogs back. So basically, the vet is injecting poison used to kill rats, insects and parasites into the spinal area of your dog. Not a fun thing to think about. Not only is the injection something to cringe about, you have to keep your dog as calm as possible after the first injection since it kills the worms fast, where they break up and the dog's body absorbs them, but since they are in the heart area when the worm breaks down, pieces of the worm get introduced into the blood stream which can cause blood clots, stroke or heart attacks. As you all know, those who have or own labs, trying to keep that type of dog calm is a challenge in itself, especially an 85lb over weight one. The second shot is kill any new worms that formed after the first shot was administered.

On Widgeon's first injection all went well until I got him home. I made arrangements to work from home so I could keep him calm and give him assurance that he would not be alone during this. When we got back home from the vet you could tell he was not doing good. He went to lie down and couldn't, he paced back and forth, he came to me and put his head on my knee looking up at me with those big brown eyes of his and you could see in his eyes asking the question 'what the hell is going on?'. He was quivering all over as the medication took. The look of him and what he went through those first few hours I will never forget and will not go through that again. He settled down after a while and all was getting better with him, still a bit listless, but that was expected. He improved greatly the next few days and I was able to keep him calm throughout so that the heart worms would be absorb. He went for his second shot and that was not nearly as bad as the first one. After a further while down the road (about six months) he was heart worm free and back to his happy self.

Hopefully as a dog owner you do know that the best defense against heart worm is the best offence. Heart worm preventative is in itself expensive, at today's price, for a six month supply is about \$70 for a dog over 50 pounds, but I would gladly pay double that to not go through what I went through with Widgeon and I hope you do not have to experience this either.

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NOVEMBER MEETING

NO MEETING THIS MONTH!!!

See you at our annual Christmas party in December!

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!

DUCK BROOD NUMBERS

From North Dakota Game and Fish:
Wed, 08/23/2023

State Game and Fish Department migratory game bird biologists expect a fall flight of ducks similar to 1998, 2004 and 2020.

If those past seasons don't ring a bell, the fall flight is anticipated to be about 23% above last year's fall flight, based on observations from the annual mid-July duck production survey.

According to Mike Szymanski, migratory game bird management supervisor, the department's 76th annual breeding duck survey conduct-

ed in May indicated the 2023 duck index was the 23rd highest on record, up 1.5% from 2022, and exceeded the 1948-2022 average index by 39%.

"After a very dry summer and fall last year, a snowy winter helped wetland conditions rebound nicely going into breeding season. However, precipitation has been spotty across the Prairie Pothole Region of the state since spring thaw, with the southern and central areas of the Missouri Coteau receiving more consistent rainfall," Szymanski said. "Habitat conditions in uplands and wetlands were in good shape for a majority of the breeding season. A relatively strong number of ducks present in May helped to support breeding efforts that, despite a late thaw, were not delayed to a great degree."

The number of broods observed during the department's July brood survey was up 79% from 2022, and 88% above the 1965-2022 average index. The average brood size was 6.5 ducklings, down 10% from 2022.

While there remains a shortage of upland nesting habitat across the state, Szymanski said overwater nesting species such as canvasbacks, redheads and ring-necked ducks all set records for number of broods observed this year, along with ruddy ducks nearly breaking their previous record.

Game and Fish biologists will conduct a separate survey in mid-September to assess wetland conditions heading into the waterfowl hunting season.

WATERFOWL SURVEY

From the Delta Waterfowl Website:

Annual Breeding Waterfowl Population Survey Estimates 32.3 Million Ducks

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Total ducks and mallard numbers decline, but pintails and canvasbacks increase

BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

— The breeding population of ducks declined 7% this spring, while pond counts dropped by 9% compared to last year, according to the 2023 Waterfowl Population Status report released today by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Those numbers resulted from the Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey, which has been conducted annually by the USFWS and Canadian Wildlife Service since 1955, except for 2020 and 2021 because of COVID-19 concerns. The survey, which is used to set hunting regulations throughout North America, estimated a breeding duck population of 32.3 million ducks in the traditional survey area, which is 7% less than 2022 and 9% below the long-term average. Importantly, the May pond count, a key indicator of duck habitat and potential production, showed 4.98 million ponds, a 9% decrease and 5% below the long-term average.

The numbers might seem discouraging on the surface, but Dr. Frank Rohwer, president and chief scientist of Delta Waterfowl puts forth an important reminder: “We don’t hunt the breeding population. We hunt the fall flight, which is made of the breeding population plus this year’s duck production. Duck production is the key to the upcoming hunting season.”

Rohwer and other waterfowl managers see plenty of reasons for optimism. Timely rains after the survey was conducted should boost duck production in key areas of the prairie pothole

region, including the Dakotas and southern Saskatchewan.

I think duck production is going to be a much better picture than what we’re seeing in these survey numbers,” Rohwer said. “The Dakotas got rain in late May after the pond count data was assessed, and then we’ve had intermittent rain throughout the summer. Many areas of the key PPR breeding grounds stayed relatively wet, and that’s really good for renesting and duckling survival—two of the big drivers of duck production. Saskatchewan started the spring with better water conditions than in 2022, and summer rains helped keep that water later in the nesting season than we have seen in recent years. I was impressed by the number of blue-winged teal broods I saw in southern Saskatchewan in July.”

While water is the key driver of duck nesting and renesting effort, predation is the key determinant of whether duck eggs hatch or fail. According to Mike Buxton, waterfowl programs director for Delta Waterfowl, the extreme winter that socked the Dakotas and southern Manitoba helped knock back the populations of duck-nest predators such as raccoons and skunks. Buxton runs Delta’s Predator Management Program.

“The Dakotas got a lot of snow in early November, and winter never let up until mid-April,” Buxton said. “We never had that winter thaw. It was a long, hard, cold winter. Any animal that wasn’t in tip-top shape going into the winter probably had it rough.”

Fewer predators on the landscape always helps nest success, and in turn, duck production.

Looking at breeding survey estimates for individual species, mallards came in at 6.1 million in the traditional survey area, an 18%

drop from last year. The estimate puts mallards 23% below the long-term average—the lowest index since 1993. Regionally, mallard numbers declined by 36% in the eastern Dakotas and 50% in southern Saskatchewan, while increasing 8% in southern Alberta.

Blue-winged teal, the second most abundant duck in North America, declined a shocking 19% from last year. At 5.25 million, bluewings are still 2% above the species’ long-term average. The Eastern Dakotas, which were exceptionally wet in 2022, still had fairly good spring water this year. According to the survey, the region attracted just over 2 million breeding bluewings, which is down a whopping 39% from the previous year.

“Bluewings are the big surprise for me,” Rohwer said. “I thought they had pretty good production last year in the prairies, especially in the eastern Dakotas, yet the number went down. This spring, some of those teal kept going past the 49th parallel and settled in southern Saskatchewan, where their numbers jumped by 16% this year. However, the total breeding population dropped more than I would have predicted.”

Pintails, a favorite duck for many, bounced back nicely from a record low in 2022. The pintail estimate is 2.22 million, up 24% year over year, but still a troubling 43% below the long-term average. Of interest, pintail numbers jumped 54% in the eastern Dakotas, 203% in southern Saskatchewan, and 126% in southern Alberta.

“Pintails made a big improvement,” Rohwer said. “They’re an early nesting species. The pin-

tails arrived in the Dakotas right when the huge winter snows melted, so they settled in to take advantage of the good early water conditions.”

Green-winged teal breeding populations also climbed. Greenwings are estimated at 2.5 million, up 16% from last year and 15% above the long-term average. Greenwings nest predominately in boreal forest regions such as northern Alberta, British Columbia, and the Northwest Territories.

Among other puddle ducks in the survey, gadwalls declined 5% but remain a healthy 25% above the long-term average. Similarly,

Shovelers declined 6% but stand 8% above the long-term average. Wigeon are not doing as well—they dropped 14% and sit 28% below the long-term average.

Goldeneyes in the Eastern Survey were up this year as the Atlantic Flyway saw more rains. Dr. Chris Nicolai, who oversees Delta research program, said production from prairie nesting puddle ducks—particularly blue-winged teal, gadwalls, and shovelers—appears to be good to excellent across the Dakotas and eastern prairie Canada.

“My observation from field work and driving around is that duck production was really good in the

Dakotas,” Nicolai said. “I’ve been seeing broods of puddle ducks all over.”

Results are mixed for diving ducks. Canvasbacks increased to 619,000, up 6% and 5% above the long-term average. Redheads declined to 931,000, down 13% but still 27 above the long-term average. Scaup continued to trend downward, dropping 4% in 2023, which puts them 29% below the long-term average.

Duck numbers in the eastern survey area—birds most likely to migrate down the Atlantic Flyway—are strong. Although mallards declined 4%, they held



2023 WATERFOWL BREEDING POPULATION AND HABITAT SURVEY

SPECIES	2023	2022	% CHANGE FROM 2022	% CHANGE FROM LTA
 MALLARD	6.13	7.43	▼ 18	▼ 23
 GADWALL	2.56	2.69	▼ 5	▲ 25
 AMERICAN WIGEON	1.89	2.19	▼ 14	▼ 28
 GREEN-WINGED TEAL	2.50	2.15	▲ 16	▲ 15
 BLUE-WINGED TEAL	5.25	6.49	▼ 19	▲ 2
 NORTHERN PINTAIL	2.22	1.78	▲ 24	▼ 43
 NORTHERN SHOVELER	2.86	3.04	▼ 6	▲ 8
 REDHEAD	0.93	1.07	▼ 13	▲ 27
 CANVASBACK	0.62	0.59	▲ 6	▲ 5
 SCAUP	3.52	3.66	▼ 4	▼ 29
TOTAL DUCKS	32.32	34.66	▼ 7	▼ 9

NUMBERS IN MILLIONS. LTA (LONG-TERM AVERAGE)

above 1.2 million, which should keep a four-mallard daily limit in place for the 2024-2025 season. Black ducks, at 732,000, rose 8% and are now 6% above the long-term average. Green-winged teal increased by 17%, while goldeneyes were up 28%. Ring-necked ducks declined by 3% and mergansers fell by 1%. Populations of wood ducks, one of the species in the formula used to determine season lengths and bag limits in the east, held steady at a robust 1 million in the Atlantic Flyway.

Overall, this year's duck production—and hunting during the upcoming season—is likely to be a mixed bag.

The Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey data is released in late August—months after the actual counting because it is a massive effort to survey the continent's waterfowl. Ironically, the survey is simply a snapshot of the breeding population and habitat in early spring. Although the breeding population numbers are slightly below average, remember that production in the summer has far more to do with fall hunting success than a snapshot of pair numbers.

"I think production this summer was far better than what pair numbers would suggest," Rohwer said. "We had very timely rains in much of the PPR and water stayed on the landscape. Couple that with reduced predator numbers, and it is a recipe for success. I've seen teal broods everywhere across the prairie, and young mallards dominate the ducks caught during banding efforts in Manitoba. That makes me very excited about the upcoming hunting seasons."

2023-2024 SEASON

Ducks Season:

North Zone: Oct. 28 - Dec. 26

Middle Zone: Nov. 4 - 12 and Nov. 18 through Jan. 7, 2024

South Zone: Nov. 23 - 26 and Dec. 7 through Jan. 31, 2024

Bag Limit: 6 ducks daily with species restrictions of:

4 mallards (no more than 2 hens)

2 scaup for first 45 days and 1 scaup for last 15 days

3 wood ducks, 2 redheads, 2 hooded mergansers, 1 pintail, 2 canvasbacks, 2 black ducks, 1 mottled duck

Goose Season

Nov. 11, 2023– Feb. 6, 2024

Limits

20 light geese (snow, blue, and Ross's geese), Three Canada geese and brant (combined total of both species), Two white-fronted geese

Possession limits are three times the daily bag limits for Canada geese, brant, and white-fronted geese. Light geese have no possession limit.

Light Goose Conservation 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).

HOLIDAY PARTY

We will be having our end of year holiday party for our December meeting. We are planning on providing two free drink tickets FOR JUST BEER OR SODA. We will be selling raffle tickets for \$5

each for a chance to win an Animator. We have one Lucky Duck Animator and One Baby Mojo Animator along with one case we will be raffling off. For food, we are planning on sandwiches from Borgettis Bar & Grill, chips and cake. We need a head count of all those planning on attending so we can order enough food to cover all members planning on attending. Please let Jerry know or give him a call 314-603-6548.

ANNUAL DUES

Your annual membership dues will be due at the end of the year. Please consider renewing your membership dues of \$25. You can bring your money to the Holiday party or mail your check to the address on the back.

BOARD ELECTIONS

Ever had or thought there was a problem with the association? Ever complained about one thing or another on why this association does this or that and should do it this way? Ever thought about becoming a solution to these problems instead of just complaining about them? Here is your chance! There will be board member elections. Step up now and put your name in the hat. So if you are interested in becoming a board member, or if you have questions on becoming a board member, you can ask any board member, talk to Jerry, email your questions or interest to mvdha@mvdha.com or mail them to the address on the back of this newsletter and they will be forward to Jerry. If you want to make a change, here is your chance.

Up Coming Events

Nov 8 : NO MEETING

Dec 13 : Holiday Party

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: NO MEETING

Next Board Meeting: November 27, 2023

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

