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TRUST YOUR GUT

If you attended last month's members meeting you would have been educated/informed (I hope) about TSS and it's wonderful abilities in making a sub gauge shotgun into a viable waterfowl shotgun.

Recently I was out at Jay Henges on the patterning board testing a new load I had developed and had an incident. This round was of a proven recipe that I got from a commercial source with the exception of a different, but similar hull. I thought the roll crimp was too deep but went with it. That was a mistake that could of killed me. You see, a deep roll crimp causes increase pressures, and in 410 reloading there is very little room for error, my gut instinct was screaming at me that this was wrong and could of caused me physical harm and damage my gun. Needless to say I am still here and the gun is also fine which leads me to this months article.

Gun Safety. This years' season is underway. For the most of us in YOUR MVDHA have been handling shotguns or hunting for many many a year. For myself, I passed my hunters safety course back when I was 12 and have been hunting, handling firearms, every since for over 50 years and that is a problem. Since I have been handling firearms for so long (which you can put yourself in this category) you get complacent and that can get you or your hunting buddy killed or injured. So lets go over some basic firearm handling:

1. Always keep your breech open unless hunting.
2. When loading your gun always point it out of the blind or up in the air.
3. Never point gun at anything you do not plan on shooting. Always know where your muzzle is pointing
4. Be sure of your target and what is beyond it.
5. If your gun misfires use extreme caution to make sure there is no obstructions in the barrel.
6. Know where your buddy or other people hunting near you are so you do not accidentally shoot towards them.
7. If hunting in close proximity of each other or in a blind, shoot your lane. Do NOT shoot over someone's head. People have gotten their heads blown off when all of a sudden ducks come and an individual stands up right in front of your buddies barrel.
8. Know your firearm BEFORE you take it to the field.
9. Don't trust your safety, ensure it is on and keep your finger off of the trigger unless ready to fire.
10. Ensure your gun is always in a stable location when you are not holding it when in a blind or out in the field.

Almost all of you know these, don't get complacent, trust your gut, when you see something or about to do something that goes against it, act. By either correcting or say something. Be safe this year and don't be a statistic.

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MEMBERS MEETING

NO MEETING FOR NOVEMBER

ART WENDE

Art went and had his three year colonoscopy completed recently and the doctor found about 8 polyps in his intestines where he had to undergo surgery to remove since they were so embedded. He had about a foot of his colon removed to get it all. He is resting at home recuperating. When you think about it for us older folks, this is kind of scary since he had one 3 years ago. So if you have not gotten one, you need to think about it!

Get well soon Art!

SCOTT COMBS

Scott had a medical incident happen at his house last Monday and his wife went and had him checked out. An MRI was performed to see if he had a stroke. Which thankfully he had not but did disclose signs of an early blood vessel disease. The next day Scott's doctor determined he did in fact have a minor stroke. He is recuperating at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in O'Fallon Il. From what I understand he is having issues with memory and numbers.

Take care of yourself Scott and get well soon, those ducks are calling!!

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 are considering selling raffle tickets for a box of 3/4 ounce number 9 TSS 20 gauge loads if there is interest. We also with have other TSS Turkey loads on the gift table. Speaking of the Gift table, we are hoping some members can bring in some items since we are low on gifts as is past years. So please check your stuff

and if you have anything you would like to donate bring it in.

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.

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.



2024 FUND RAISER

The fund raiser for this year, Kenny Liebel has created a custom made hunting knife.

- Made out of 496 Staret Tool Steel
- 5 to 7 inch blade length

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 Wendé

Directors:

Brad Douglass,

Jerry Mercurio Jr.,

James Edwards

Nick Witte

Gary Hirsch

- 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

Huge thanks to Kenny for making this knife.

We will be drawing the winning ticket at the up and coming Holiday party in December.

If you have any money or tickets from this fund raising please make sure you get them to Jerry before the drawing.

Thanks to all for your assistance in this fund raiser.

SURVEY

From Delta Waterfowl:

Annual Breeding Waterfowl Population Survey Estimates 33.99 Million Ducks, Up 5% From 2023

Mallards, wigeon, green-winged teal, and scaup post increases; Pintail bag limit for 2025-2026 season will increase to 3 daily in all flyways

BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA — Duck numbers are up, and wetland habitat conditions have improved over important portions of the key prairie pothole region.

The breeding population of ducks was estimated at 33.99 million, a 5% increase over last year, according to the 2024 Waterfowl Population Status report released today by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In addition, May pond counts, a key indicator of breeding habitat conditions and potential production, also

increased by 4% over the previous spring.

The report details the results from the Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey, which has been conducted annually by the USFWS and Canadian Wildlife Service since 1955. The survey is used to set hunting regulations for the following year, so in this case, for the 2025-2026 season. Based on these results, waterfowl hunters will again enjoy a liberal season framework next season.

“An increased breeding population of ducks and pair counts, along with wetland habitat conditions that improved throughout May and June with good spring rains across most of the prairies, should help boost duck production,” said Dr. Frank Rohwer, president and chief

scientist for Delta Waterfowl. “We definitely have potential bright spots for duck production in the eastern Dakotas and possibly in Manitoba. The spring rains really helped in those areas, as well as parts of Alberta that started the spring quite dry.”

The survey, which was completed in May, estimated 5.16 million total ponds, a 4% increase overall. However, the location of those ponds differed greatly from 2023. The ponds estimate on the Canadian prairie and parklands, which includes southern regions of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, decreased 19%. Meanwhile, ponds in the United States, including Montana and the Dakotas, increased by 49%.



2024 WATERFOWL BREEDING POPULATION AND HABITAT SURVEY

SPECIES	2024	2023	% CHANGE FROM 2023	% CHANGE FROM LTA
 MALLARD	6.61	6.13	▲ 8	▼ 16
 GADWALL	2.28	2.56	▼ 11	▲ 11
 AMERICAN WIGEON	2.92	1.89	▲ 55	▲ 12
 GREEN-WINGED TEAL	3.01	2.50	▲ 20	▲ 38
 BLUE-WINGED TEAL	4.60	5.25	▼ 12	▼ 10
 NORTHERN PINTAIL	1.98	2.22	▼ 11	▼ 49
 NORTHERN SHOVELER	2.65	2.86	▼ 7	0
 REDHEAD	0.78	0.93	▼ 16	▲ 6
 CANVASBACK	0.57	0.62	▼ 8	▼ 4
 SCAUP	4.07	3.52	▲ 16	▼ 17
TOTAL DUCKS	33.99	32.31	▲ 5	▼ 4

NUMBERS IN MILLIONS. LTA (LONG-TERM AVERAGE)

“The prairies didn’t have a good snowpack last winter,” said Mike Buxton, waterfowl programs director for Delta Waterfowl. “Heading into last fall, conditions were OK in the Dakotas, but prairie Canada was dry. Manitoba got decent snow, but not so much in Saskatchewan and Alberta. So, the wetland habitat there started spring in poor condition. That really affects where ducks settle. If the table isn’t set early on, ducks don’t stick around to nest. Alberta was really dry, so not many ducks settled there. Saskatchewan was a little bit better.”

While the number of total ducks in the Traditional Survey Area increased slightly over 2023, all of the gains were in the far north and west. Just three survey regions (out of eight) posted increases. The Central and Northern Alberta/Northeast British Columbia/Northwest Territories estimated 11.25 million ducks, up 35% and 49% above the long-term average for the region. The Alaska Yukon Territory/Old Crow Flats region showed a 28% increase over 2023, while Northern Saskatchewan/Northern Manitoba/Western Ontario was up 5%. In contrast, duck estimates across the prairie pothole regions were down 10% to 16%, except for the Eastern Dakotas, which was down less than 1% from 2023.

ANNUAL DUES

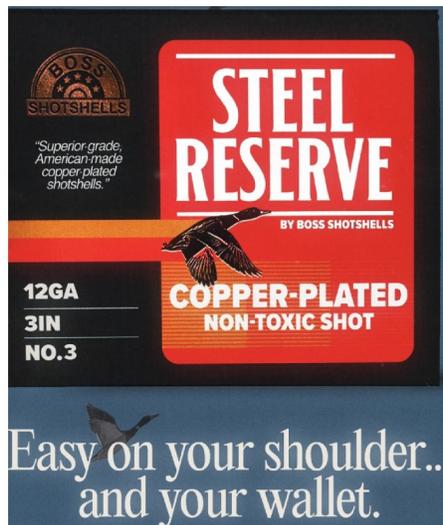
Your annual membership dues will be due at the end of the year. Please consider renewing your membership dues of \$25. You can bring your money to the Holiday party or mail your check to the address on the back.

BOSS SHELLS

It is that time of the year again to look at gear. Last year I talked about Boss Shells, which are quite an excellent product.

Now, you cannot buy Boss shells from a dealer, they come directly from Boss. The pellets are bismuth with a thin layer of copper over them. You can get 2 3/4 shells up to 3” shells. Duplex loads or any single shot size. They come in 12, 16, 20 and 410 gauges. Granted, they are a bit pricey, \$1.90 a round for 12 gauge, on average, and you get twenty rounds per box of shells. After the season I bought some 20 gauge shells that I am looking forward in trying out. These shells are perfect for legacy guns that cannot shoot steel without damaging the barrel.

The folks at Boss listen to us waterfowlers and know that the



shells they produce are quite pricey, but for the performance you get from them and they are a top tier shell you should expect to pay a bit more. Plus it is the knock down power of these shells that sell. But as I stated, they listen, and developed the Steel Reserve line of shells which cost in the range of a \$1.20 a round. The 1 1/8 oz load of cop-

per plated steel is smoking round traveling at 1500 fps.

Check them out at:

<https://bosshotshells.com/>

TROUT TRIP

MVDHA is planning on our annual Trout Trip this coming year. The dates are going to be 14 March 2025 through 16 March 2025. Coming home on the 16th. We will be staying at Trout Hollow Lodge at Taneycomo as we did last year. The address for Trout Hollow Lodge is: 1500 Acacia Club Rd, Hollister, MO 65672. To reserve your room call Trout Hollow at 417- 334-2332 and tell them you are part of MVDHA or online at <https://trouthollow.com/>

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.

One note to mention, if you bring any food to be cooked at the cookout, please make sure it is totally thawed out so there are no issues when it is deep fried.

Hopefully we will see you there!

PROPOSED RULE

This is an article from Outdoor Life and is a rather lengthy article so will probably run it in the next few newsletters, but for the full article you can find it at:

<https://www.outdoorlife.com/conservation/wildlife-refuge-predator-control-rule/>

This is scary stuff for us waterfowlers, our passion is in more jeopardy each and every day.

(continued, forth and last part)

Predators and Mosquitoes

While the BIDEH rules offer general guidance about improving the ecological health of refuges, they also contain some very prescriptive prohibitions. They include:

Native predator control would be prohibited “unless it is determined necessary to meet statutory requirements, fulfill refuge purposes, and ensure biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health.” Refuge managers would be able to remove invasive predators for any reason and manage native predators for public health and safety concerns. Authorized subsistence harvest could also be allowed.

Conservation translocations of species outside their native range could be allowed on refuges in order to avoid extinction or to restore a species.

Genetically engineered organisms would be prohibited on refuges “unless their use is determined necessary to meet statutory requirements, fulfill refuge purposes, and ensure biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health.”

Invasive species would be eradicated on refuges as part of an integrated pest management plan.

Pesticides may be used as part of an integrated pest management plan that doesn’t have adverse effects on non-target species.

Agricultural practices would be prohibited “unless they are determined necessary to meet statutory requirements, fulfill refuge

purposes, and ensure biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health, and where we cannot achieve refuge management objectives through natural processes.”

Control of native mosquitoes would be prohibited unless determined to meet refuge purposes and protect human health. “In these situations, chosen control methods must be the least injurious to fish, wildlife, and their habitats. We may coordinate with public health agencies or mosquito control organizations to implement the most effective control methods that minimize risk to refuge ecosystems and public health.”

Concerns Over a Wider Change

Like so many natural resource issues over the last couple years, the BIDEH rule seems to be creating a battleground on national wildlife refuges between two very different user groups: those who would use refuges for hunting and other consumptive activities, and those who would like to see them managed as wildlife sanctuaries and de facto wilderness areas.

A news release issued by the Humane Society of the United States even before the proposed rules were widely known, celebrates them as “a huge victory for countless wildlife living on refuges,” and further noted that the rule “proposed to ban predator control, which would save these species from senseless slaughter and provide them with the protections they deserve and need to survive.”

To opponents of the rules, this all looks like preferential treatment for anti-hunting groups.

The notion that hunting might be de-emphasized on refuges that were established by hunters and generally managed for hunting is unlikely in the foreseeable future.

The Biden administration has moved to expand hunting opportunities on some refuges (while also implementing rules to phase out lead ammo use in the refuge system). However, the Humane Society’s characterization of BIDEH as a major course-correction is concerning, says the hunting group source.

“I think our community is generally worried to hear that the Service calls this a very minor change, but then you have groups as wildly dissimilar as HSUS and the Safari Club calling BIDEH a major change,” they said. “That makes me wonder what’s really going on here, and so far the Service hasn’t been able to adequately answer that question.”

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service received nearly 40,000 comments during the 60-day BIDEH comment period that closed last week. Service administrators will respond to those comments and incorporate them in a final rule, which is expected to be issued later this summer.

Congress could act to rescind the rules. Alternatively, the Biden administration could delay or modify their implementation. Or the rules could be implemented in upcoming refuge management plans.

Up Coming Events

Nov 13: NO MEETING

Dec 18: 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 FOR NOVEMBER

Next Board Meeting: November 25, 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

