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

NOVEMBER 2026

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TO BE A MENTOR OR TO BE MENTORED

If you attended last month's members meeting you would of saw a young man who is not a member who attended. His name is Brandon Falish. He came and spoke to us at this past month's board meeting to give us his pitch. To say the least, Brandon is an interesting individual and I applaud his attitude and endeavors.

Brandon is a Fisheries Biologist graduating from University of Wisconsin - Green Bay. After graduating he got a job with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service where he worked for ten years. While working for the Service as a Biological Science Technician and as an ardent hunter and fisherman coming from Wisconsin he was always mentoring or promoting the great outdoors of hunting and fishing and he found this as his calling. Soon he discovered he could get paid for this, which blew him away, to work with the Council To Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports (https://cahss.org/) and getting paid for something he truly loves to do.

MDC sees the numbers of those Missourians declining to participate in the hunting and shooting sports and put up a grant of $250,000 to the CAHSS to promote the hunting and shooting sports. Brandon and Tara Zuber (tara@cahss.org) is canvasing the entire state of Missouri to get out the message.

The message is this, CAHSS is reaching out to not only people who would like to learn how to hunt, (pick a game animal) or fish (pick a species) or learn to shoot but also to those people who already know how to hunt, fish or shoot and would like to teach or mentor those individuals who have the interest.

There is a web site set up to enter information at www.learnhunting.org/mo Here you enter in your information of who you are and what you want to do. CAHSS will do a background check of you to make sure you are legit and pair you up with either a mentor or to be mentored. CAHSS will pass onto you contact information to hook you up and then you will work out the fine details of when to meet up and what you want to do. They try to pair up individuals relatively close to each other, but Brandon did state it is up to the person if they want to travel clear across the state to have an opportunity to hunt or fish, it is all between the two of you. This is just an avenue of pairing two people up who want to learn and to teach. For questions reach out to Tara or Brandon at brandon.falish@cahss.org or 920-639-3226

With all the bad news of MDC doing layoffs due to financial concerns pumps not running at Eagle Bluffs (which have been fixed this past week), Columbia Bottoms becoming a dump, this is good news in my opinion, tax payer dollars being used to promote the great outdoors. Could be wrong, been wrong many times before, but to support the great outdoors that we all love and cherish is a plus from MDC, which is what they are supposed to be doing.

To Be a Mentor or To be Mentored, THAT is the question.

(had to do it, good luck this season and be safe!)

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SELL THOSE MEAT TICKETS!!!

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MEMBERS MEETING

No members meeting this month, we are hunting.

ANSWERS

The answers to the questions that were given to Jeff Breuer field agent from last meeting:

1. With the layoffs going on at MDC, will this affect any of the Field Agents being laid off? **Some realignment but no lost agents. Currently 212 field agents throughout the state.**
2. Will there be any waterfowl hunts out at Columbia Bottoms? We know there will not be a draw, but what about free lancing or open hunting there? **Opportunity hunting only**
3. Can you have multiple guns hunting as long as they maintain the three shell regulations? **Yes**
4. Please review the Deer Season regulation changes. **See Regs to many to go over**
5. With the advent of the legalization of Copper Shot, IE BOSS CIC CuProX shot and Ballistic Products CIC Copper Shot, who is telling reloaders to load in translucent hulls, how are you prepared for checking those loads that are not magnetic to verify nontoxic loads for waterfowl? **They will cut open hulls. If copper must load in translucent hulls**
6. Define 'Reasonable Effort' in trying to retrieve downed game? Is it ticketable? **It is ticketable and you must make an effort which is defined by discretion of the Field Agent.**
7. If a Farmer specifically states to stay out of a certain bean field and a crippled or downed bird lands in that field and you observed that, what is the course of action if you confront the hunter and he explains the situation? **If you are not trespassing then no laws are being broken, it is his/her property.**
8. Your opinion, what do you believe is the course of action with Columbia Bottoms future? Who is the driving force behind the changes or lack thereof with Columbia Bottoms? **No changes seen in the future of CB, going to be primarily developed for Deer hunting, small game and opportunistic hunting. Mother Nature is the driving force.**
9. How is River Hunting going to work? **Blinds must be constructed and removed daily. Cannot hunt from existing blinds. Decoys must be removed after hunt. You can hunt anywhere you want.**
10. What are the rules of usage of Electric Bikes on Conservation Areas? **Look under each conservation area under pedal bikes and follow those rules.**
11. If Bow Fishing, what license is required? **Fishing**
12. Does the total possession limit include butchered birds/game in your freezer. (this was added later) **Yes it does**

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. As in the past, we will be having a Gift table, we are hoping some members can bring in some items since we are low on gifts as in 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.

MVDHA BOARD

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Bill Hilgeman

Correspondence

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TROUT 2027 UPDATE

MVDHA is planning on our annual Trout Trip for 2027. **The dates are changing from 19 March 2027 through 21 March 2027 to 12 March 2027 through 14 March 2027. Coming home on the 14th.** This change is due to a recent scheduled fishing tournament being held at Trout Hollow. 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/

TREASURER

With Rob taking a job down in Tennessee we are in the need of a treasurer. If you ever thought about becoming a member of the board and want to fill this vacancy let Jerry know.

RECORDING SECRETARY

After many years of service and volunteering, Bill Hilgeman is stepping down as the Recording Secretary. First off we want to thanks Bill for the many years of volunteering for many jobs of YOUR MVDHA and this gives an opportunity for a member to step up to fulfill this role. You would be responsible for taking the notes and communications of YOUR MVDHA. If this interests you, please see Jerry Sr.

FUND RAISER

Once again we will be having our popular fund raising event of the Kenrick's meat certificates. This is for a gift certificate of $300 towards a meat package of your choice from Kenrick's Meats at 4324 Weber Rd, St. Louis, MO 63123. Tickets will be $5 each **OR 5 TICKETS FOR $20.** Since we are starting this late this year, the winner of the certificate will be drawn when we



SPECIES	2026	2025	% CHANGE from 2025	% CHANGE from LTA
MALLARD	5.859	6.554	-11%	-26%
GADWALL	2.351	2.414	-3%	+13%
AMERICAN WIGEON	2.940	3.191	-8%	+12%
GREEN-WINGED TEAL	2.334	2.550	-8%	+6%
NORTHERN SHOVELER	3.289	2.758	+19%	+24%
BLUE-WINGED TEAL	3.962	4.432	-11%	-22%
NORTHERN PINTAIL	1.988	2.239	-11%	-48%
REDHEAD	0.931	0.918	+1%	+26%
CANVASBACK	0.782	0.690	+13%	+32%
SCAUP	4.155	3.675	+13%	-15%
Total Ducks	33.439	33.980	-2%	-6%
May Ponds (US & Canada)	4.761	4.180	+14%	-9%

have a sufficient number of tickets sold. We do not want to go for a loss on this fund raiser. It might be in December's meeting but more than likely not, will keep you posted on when the drawing will occur. Contact any board member for tickets or contact Jerry for tickets to sell at 314-603-6548 and he will get them to you. Remember, this is for your MVDHA Club.

WATERFOWL SURVEY

From the DU Website

2026 Waterfowl Population Survey Results

Mallards declined 11% to their lowest estimate in 33 years, while May ponds increased 14%.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) today released its 2026 Waterfowl Population Status Report. This report contains results from surveys and population estimation methods conducted by the USFWS, Canadian Wildlife Service and numerous state and provincial partners.

The estimate for total breeding ducks in the traditional survey area was 33.4 million, which was similar to the 2025 estimate of 33.9 million and 6% below the long-term average (since 1955). Mallards were estimated at 5.9 million, 11% below 2025, and 26% below the long-term average. The 2026 May pond estimate was 4.8 million, a 14% increase from the 2025 estimate of 4.2 million but 9% below the long-term average.

The report also includes breeding population estimates for six common duck species groups from the eastern survey area, which encompasses eastern Canada and the northeastern U.S., from Virginia to Maine. Estimates for these six species groups were essentially unchanged from 2025. The report also provides updates on the status of goose and swan populations.

According to the companion Adaptive Harvest Management report, the USFWS is expected to recommend liberal frameworks for the 2027–2028 duck season across all four flyways.

"These results are largely consistent with our expectations, as last year saw the lowest recorded May pond count since 2004. Those dry conditions almost certainly resulted in low production in 2025 and slight to moderate declines in returning breeding populations this year. Mallards are now at their lowest level in over 30 years. This provides a stark reminder that our conservation work is far from done and underscores the need for sustained investments in science-based population monitoring and management."

- Dr. Steve Adair, Ducks Unlimited Chief Scientist

Key Takeaways

Mallards declined 11% from 2025 to 5.9 million and were 26% below the long-term average. The 2026 estimate was the 9th lowest on record and the lowest since 1993.

May pond estimates increased 14% from 2025 to 4.8 million but remained 9% below the long-term average. Prairie Canada drove the increase, with pond numbers up 29%. Drier conditions led to a 10% decrease in the U.S. prairies, highlighting regional habitat variability.

Pintails declined 11% from 2025 to 1.9 million and were 48% below the long-term average. Under the USFWS interim pintail harvest strategy, hunters are expected to have a three-pintail daily bag limit for 2027–2028.

Blue-winged teal were estimated at 3.9 million, down 11% from 2025 and 22% below the long-term average. Based on current USFWS special early teal season guidelines, the Service is expected to recommend a 9-day early teal season for 2027.

According to the companion Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) report, the USFWS is expected to recommend liberal frameworks in all four flyways for the 2027–2028 duck season.

Diving duck populations remained strong in the traditional survey area. Redheads were 26% above the long-term average, and canvasbacks were 32% above the long-term average.

Alaska duck estimates declined 11% from 2025 to 2.3 million and were 37% below the long-term average.

Eastern survey area duck populations remained stable, although Atlantic flyway hunters will move to a 3-mallard bag limit, with no sex restriction, for the 2027–2028 season thanks to a newly adopted eastern mallard harvest strategy.

Pond Numbers

Reported pond counts have been near or below average since 2018, leading to a multi-year decline in duck populations over that same timeframe. This year, May ponds increased by 14%, helping stabilize dry conditions in the prairies and prevent them from getting worse. This year's increase was driven primarily by improved conditions in

prairie Canada, which saw a 29% jump in estimated ponds due to above-average spring precipitation. However, conditions were drier in the U.S. prairies, with pond counts declining 10%.

Because we cannot predict where precipitation will occur from year to year, it is important to have a base of wetlands across the prairies that can produce ducks when they have water. Much of the resilience we are seeing in duck populations is due to landscape-level conservation that allows ducks to respond to annual variations in water conditions.

Although wetland conditions improved from 2025, pond counts at the time of the survey were 9% below the long-term average. Above-average precipitation persisted across much of the prairies throughout spring and summer. Field reports suggest good to excellent wetland conditions for brood-rearing and late-nesting species in some portions of the prairies, raising expectations for somewhat improved duck production in 2026.

"Despite below-average breeding populations for most duck species, habitat conditions across the major breeding regions were improved over 2025. This bodes well for a moderate increase in the number of young birds flying south this fall. More importantly, we are hopeful that these wetland conditions will carry over to benefit nesting ducks in 2027."

- Dr. Steve Adair, Ducks Unlimited Chief Scientist

For the full report go to:

https://www.ducks.org/waterfowl-surveys

SEASONS

Dove

Season: Sept. 1 thru Nov. 29

Limits: 15 daily and 45 in possession combined total for all three species

Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

2026-2027 WATERFOWL

Ducks

North Zone: Oct. 31 thru Dec. 29

Middle Zone: Nov. 7 - Dec. 13 and Dec. 19 through Jan. 10, 2027

South Zone: Nov. 26 – 29 and Dec. 7 through Jan. 31, 2027

Bag Limit: 6 ducks daily with species restrictions of:

4 mallards (no more than 2 females), 3 wood ducks, 2 redheads

2 canvasbacks, 2 black ducks

3 pintail, 2 scaup for first 45 days and 1 scaup for last 15 days

1 mottled duck

Possession Limit: Three times the daily bag or 18 total, varies by species

Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

Snow Geese (White and Blue Phases) and Ross's Geese

Season: Nov. 11 thru Feb. 6, 2027

Limits: 20 blue, snow, or Ross's geese daily with no possession limit

Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

White-Fronted Geese

Season: Nov. 11 thru Feb. 6, 2027

Limits: 2 daily and 6 in possession

Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

Canada Geese and Brant

Season: Nov. 11 – Feb. 6, 2027

Limits: 3 Canada geese and Brant in aggregate daily, 9 in possession

Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

Light Goose Conservation Order

Season: Feb. 7 through April 30, 2027

Limits: No daily or possession limits

Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset

Methods: For the taking of blue, snow and Ross's geese, hunters may use shotguns capable of holding more than three shells and recorded or electronically amplified bird calls or sounds or imitations of bird calls or sounds.

YOUTH HUNTING DAYS

South Zone: Nov. 21 and 22

Limits: Same as during regular waterfowl season

Hours: Same as during regular waterfowl season

Up Coming Events

11 Nov: No Meeting

9 Dec: Holliday 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 also held at Borgettis Bar & Grill 1667 South Old Hwy 141 Fenton MO. 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 23, 2026

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



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