



2404 E. Broadway, Alton, IL

62002

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Rosi Franke, Editor

Tel: 618-396-2509

e-mail: rgfranke@frontiernet.net

Third Annual MWHI Tim Watson Memorial Benefit Shoot

Saturday, May 5, 2012

at Otter Creek Hunting Club, Jerseyville, IL

75 birds for \$40.00

Prizes & Lunch



Call Craig Sondker at 618-593-8421 for reservations or more information!

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618-498-4724
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Shane DeSherlia
618-639-0855 (home)
618-946-4520 (cell)
deshleria3@hotmail.com

Mike Arnold
Refuge Chairman
618-786-2300

Bob Schneider
618-960-9906

Don Taul
618-978-8285

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, April 2, 2012

MWHI BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
at 2404 E. Broadway, Alton at 6:15 pm

Saturday, May 5, 2012

MWHI 3rd ANNUAL
TIM WATSON MEMORIAL SHOOT
at Otter Creek Hunting Club, Jerseyville, IL
for more information call Craig Sondker 618-593-8421

Monday, May 7, 2012

MWHI BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
at 2404 E. Broadway, Alton at 6:15 pm

Monday, June 4, 2012

MWHI BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
at 2404 E. Broadway, Alton at 6:15 pm

Wednesday, June 20, 2012

MWHI GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
at Alton-Wood River Sportsmen Club
in Godfrey, IL at 7:00 pm

September 28, 29, 30, 2012

MWHI HUNTER SAFETY COURSE
at K.C. Hall, Alton
for more information or to register, contact
Craig Sondker 618-593-8421
See upcoming Sentry issues for more details!

**Visit us at our website:
mwhi.org**

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Springtime and Summer

By Duane Hahnenkamp

It's spring again and the ducks are pretty well gone. I have put the duck calls away about two months ago and got the turkey calls out to get ready for gobbler fever.

When you read this, it should be about the first week of April. Before I forget, I want to remind all of you that the Annual NRA meeting will be in downtown St. Louis from April 12 to April 15. If you want to see the newest firearms and hunting extras for this year, then a trip to nearby St. Louis will be well worth your time and effort. Every gun maker in America will be there with the gun you have been dreaming of buying. So, start planning your trip for next week and plan on spending a day.

Snow goose season is probably long over for those few of you who went while the rest of us retired to the couch way back in January. In a few days turkey, crappie and mushroom season will begin in earnest. After that, how will most of you spend your time from then until the ducks come back in the fall? Besides work and family and things we normally do, many of you who have a blind will spend your free time planning for next duck season. Also, if we are lucky enough to have a spring and summer without floods, the work can begin to make any changes on the duck blinds or later on even the pot holes.

This summer, while you are getting ready for duck season, I hope you take the time to look at the world around us. Gasoline is already \$4.00 a gallon and a summer vacation doesn't seem to be in the cards this year. Trying to find a job is as hard as trying to find a banded spoonbill. Your state is broke, so the politicians from Chicago want to put taxes in your guns and ammo while, at the same time, they want to take all the tax dollars from across the state but spend most of it only around the Chicago area. Our schools and businesses are laying off or cutting back because nobody is spending any money. People on the radio and TV may tell you that things are getting better, but you sure can't tell it around here. The more you look and listen, the more it looks like everything around us is falling apart.

I hope you guys take the time this summer to look into the politicians you want to vote for come fall. How about trying to find someone who wants to bring jobs back to our country and to our area? Someone who believes in gun rights? The protection of one's own family is first and foremost of your rights. We need people in government who believe a strong family unit and a good moral life style is what has kept this country strong over the centuries. We need people in government who want to keep this country together and not to tear it apart to take over its power. Guys, there has got to be good people still out there who want to do what's right for our country and its people. For too long, politicians have done too many things, good or bad, just to get re-elected. I'm not trying to tell you how to vote this fall, but I hope you do vote for the person who will do what's right for you and the people around you. O, Please take the time this summer to study who is out there, and hopefully the people you vote for can get things turned around.

###

2012 Resident Deer Applications—Apply Now

IDNR News Release 3/14/2012

Resident Illinois deer hunters can apply online beginning March 13 through April 30 for the first lottery drawings for 2012 Illinois firearm and muzzleloader-only deer season permits through DNR Direct. Just click on the Online Services tab on the IDNR website home page at www.dnr.illinois.gov. Application forms in PDF format will be available online in late March. The first lottery drawings for firearm and muzzleloader-only deer permits are for Illinois residents only.

APPLICATION DEADLINE DATES

The deadline to apply for the first lottery drawings for 2012 firearm and muzzleloader-only deer permits is April 30. Resident hunters can apply in both the firearm and muzzleloader-only lotteries.

SEASON DATES

Firearm deer seasons are Nov. 16-18 (first season) and Nov. 29-Dec. 2 (second season). The 2012 muzzleloader-only permits may be used Dec. 7-9 (and in the second firearm season, Nov. 29-Dec. 2).

What has happened to the DNR Budget

Public Support matters more than ever

Story by Director Marc Miller, Outdoor Illinois March, 2012

The Illinois DNR has an important mission and a wide range of responsibilities that includes more obligations than many people realize. DNR is more than camping, fishing and hunting. This state agency encompasses a number of resource management, public safety, economic and education efforts statewide.

The readers of Outdoor Illinois will recognize many of these functions and appreciate the duties carried out by our dedicated natural resource professionals. Included in these duties are the administration of nature preserves, forestry, public safety and law enforcement, regulation of oil, coal, gas and aggregate extraction, drinking-water allocation, floodplain management, endangered species and natural areas consultation, capital projects, grants, safety education, education and state museums, among others.

The mandated responsibilities alone are large enough that the work of the agency has a \$32 billion annual economic impact on the state's economy— that's enough to support more than 90,000 jobs. This figure includes those core mission activities, such as state parks, hunting and fishing.

The status of the agency in 2009, when I became director, was dire. At the beginning of that fiscal year (June 30-July 1) then-Governor Blagojevich line-item vetoed \$19 million from the General Revenue portion of the DNR budget. Cuts to DNR that began in the Ryan administration have essentially halved the amount of General Revenue dollars appropriated to the agency. For this current fiscal year, General Revenue funds are only 21 percent of the agency's total.

DNR's response to these cuts over the past decade has been to utilize every possible fund at our legal disposal to maintain essential services. It's an unsustainable depletion of funds, akin to burning one's furniture to heat the house. Yet these drastic methods have been our only option as DNR continues to do, as required by law, all the mandated work of the agency. Lacking sufficient revenues to meet even basic needs, DNR has shifted the funding of operations and payroll to other dedicated funds such as the Boating Fund, Parks and Recreation Fund, State Parks Fund and Fish and Wildlife Fund. Simply put, we have utilized every fund we have, still within its lawful purpose, but the cost has been severe: We have used funds intended for grants, maintenance at state parks and land acquisition and rerouted these for operations to keep programs going. Just as burning the furniture is not sustainable, shifting funding from General Revenue to these other state funds is not a long-term, sustainable solution. DNR is spending more from these dedicated funds than we take in, and several funds are expected to go into the red within the next year. Because of other pressures on state-government finances, we cannot assume there will be a quick turnaround for DNR.

Although Governor Quinn introduced a DNR maintenance budget for the current fiscal year that would have allowed us some flexibility and protect dedicated funds, the General Assembly passed a budget last spring that was \$5.7 million below what we needed to sustain ourselves. Additionally, we can expect further cuts in General Revenue for the next fiscal year. We have unequivocally reached the point where we cannot continue to perform all the tasks and programs with the financial resources we have available to us.

Unless there is relief or a change in the agency's business model, the deferred maintenance at parks will continue, staff will not be replaced when they retire or otherwise leave the agency, and there will be limited or no replacement of old vehicles and equipment. Important programs that protect resources and natural areas will diminish, and wildlife, fisheries, forestry and law-enforcement programs will decline. Our ability to monitor and regulate floodplains and industry, as well as protect public health and safety, will be reduced.

Throughout three years as director, I have pursued a vision to make DNR and our outdoor heritage stronger. We have worked to engage new constituents— such as getting youth and women outdoors—and re-engage traditional partners. Although very difficult to accomplish without financial resources, we have made progress on improving recreational access and opportunities with programs such as the Illinois Recreational Access Program, creating a fourth waterfowl zone and piecing together land acquisition by leveraging resources and partnerships.

An essential piece of this vision is to establish reliable, sustainable funding for the agency. DNR must have the financial security that allows us to plan for the future. The citizen-advisory effort known as Conservation Congress focused on these issues in 2009, and we made progress by increasing fishing and hunting license fees that year. Permit fees and other revenue ideas were dropped for lack of support in the General Assembly. There is now support in the legislature to pursue a solution for DNR, and there are champions working on sustainable funding. What has always been out of reach may be attainable this spring, and a wide range of constituent groups are working toward this goal.

While this is encouraging, there are many voices in Springfield with competing interests. What is important for DNR and the future of the nature of Illinois is that people actively engage in the debate and advocate for sustainable funding for our future. As a student of the conservation movement, it is reassuring to look back upon the great moments in conservation and examine how progress was made—it was involvement of citizens that made these great strides possible.

Thank you for your support and dedication to the outdoors.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS



EMANUAL/OBAMA Machine Plans Sneak Attack on Your Gun Rights

ISRA URGENT ALERT, 3/1/2012

As many of you know, the Illinois House Executive Committee sent two extremely anti-gun bills to the floor yesterday:

HB5831 – this bill would tack a \$65.00 tax on every hand gun you own and require you to register like a sex offender.

HB5167 – this bill would tack a 2% “Sin Tax” on all ammunition sales in the state with the proceeds from the tax going to a fund to help pay for a healthcare program for gang bangers and drug lords.

EACH OF THESE TWO BILLS HAVE ONE PURPOSE AND ONE PURPOSE ONLY – TO PUNISH LAW-ABIDING FIREARM OWNERS

The Emanuel/Obama gun haters aren’t being the least bit bashful about their intent, they have made it clear that they will “screw-over” gun owners by any means possible.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP PRESERVE AND PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS

Contact your State Representative and politely inform him/her that you are a law-abiding firearm owner and that you do not support taxing ammunition and you do not support registering firearm owners like sex offenders. Tell him/her that you expect to see them vote AGAINST HB5831 and AGAINST HB5167 when these antigun bills come to the floor. If you do not know who your State Representative is, click this link to go to the Illinois Board of Elections: <http://www.elections.state.il.us/DistrictLocator/DistrictOfficialSearchByAddress.aspx>

**Support Your Club!
Sign Up a New Member!**

NRA Update on Gun Bills **1-800-392-8683**

Federal Senate Office **1-202-224-3121**

Federal House Offices **1-202-225-3121**

Illinois State Rifle Association **1-815-635-3198** www.isra.org

Illinois Senate Information **1-217-782-4517**

Illinois House Information **1-217-782-8223**

Sen. Wm. Sam McCann – 49th District
Tel: 217-782-8206

Sen. Kyle McCarter– 51st District
Tel: (217) 428-4068

Sen. John O. Jones – 54th District
Tel: 618-242-9511 E-mail: jojones@mvn.net

Sen. William R. Haine – 56th District
Tel:618-465-4764 E-mail: haine@senatedem.state.il.us

Sen. James F. Clayborne – 57th District
Tel: 618-875-1212 E-mail: clayborne@senatedem.il.us

Sen. David Luechtefeld – 58th District
Tel: 618-243-9014 E-mail: sendavel@midwest.com

Rep. Jim Watson – 97th District
Tel: 217-243-6221 E-mail: jimwatson@localnetco.com

Rep. Dan Beiser – 111th District
Tel: 217-782-5996 E-Mail: dvbeiser@sbcglobal.net

Rep. Wayne Rosenthal – 98th District
Tel: 217-324-5200

Rep. Ron Stephens – 102nd District
Tel: 618-667-8669 E-mail: stephens@apci.net

Rep. John D. Cavaletto – 107th District
Tel:618-548-9080

Rep. Dwight Kay – 112 District
Tel: 618-307-9200

Rep. Thomas Holbrook – 113th District
Tel: 618-394-2211 tholbrook@housedems.state.il.us

Rep. Eddie Lee Jackson, Jr. – 114th District
Tel: 618-875-9950

Rep. Mike Bost – 115th District
Tel: 618-457-5787 mikebost@midwestmail.com

Rep. Dan Reitz – 116th District
Tel: 618-443-5757 E-mail: [dreitzt@egyptian.net](mailto:dreizt@egyptian.net)

.....
Rep. Jerry F. Costello - 12th District
Tel: 618-233-8026 E-mail: jfc.il12@mail.house.gov

Rep. John Shimkus - 19th District
Tel: **618-344-3065** E-mail: house.gov/shimkus

Sen. Richard J. Durbin
Tel: 312-353-4952 E-mail: dick@durbin.senate.gov

Sen. Mark Kirk
.....

Tips for Storing Guns & Gear in the Off Season

There are a few important steps every hunter should take now to ensure next season gets off to a good start.

American Hunter, by Doug Howlett, 3/13/2012

Clean and Store Firearms

I am notoriously bad about placing a shotgun or rifle in my gun locker at the end of season with the intent to clean it the following weekend when I'm not as busy, only to forget about it for several months. That is not a good way to be, and I'm seriously working on getting better. Even if you have cleaned all of your firearms or other shooting equipment after you used them last, to be safe, this is a good time to go over everything once again. Break down and clean all working parts, as well as barrels.

Remember to use a light amount of bore solvent in the bore of the rifle or shotgun to remove any fouling or residue, preferably running the brush and subsequent patches from breach to muzzle. Limit hitting the rifling or muzzle with the cleaning rod. Another good tip is if the barrel suffers from excessive fouling, take the gun out and shoot it a few times before cleaning. This warms the fouling up and expands the pores of the barrel, making it easier to clean. Apply an extremely light coat of oil on all surfaces once grit and dirt have been cleaned from the firearm, as excessive oil simply attracts more dust and can gum up later when the firearm is used in cold weather. Remember to remove slings and clean the swivels and attachments, as these areas are notorious for rusting from use or extended storage. Birchwood Casey makes a great set of full-service cleaning kits, while OTIS Technology makes a variety of easy-to-carry, compact field kits designed specifically for various types of shooting and hunting.

Ideally, you want to store firearms in a humidity- and temperature-controlled environment, but if you can't, at the very least, place a bucket of DampRid or some other desiccant with guns to draw moisture from the air of your gun locker or safe. Never store guns barrel-down for extended periods, as the weight of the gun over time can potentially cause some warping of the metal. If while cleaning you notice cracks or pits in the muzzle or other potential problems, as well as if you suffered any misfires or jamming during the season, take your firearm to the gunsmith now to get looked at. Don't wait until you need to use it again to remember that it needs some work. ###

FWS to Target Funds to U.S. Prairie Pothole Region

Submitted by IDNR, Ray Marshalla, State Waterfowl Biologist

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and Ducks Unlimited announced in early March they will work with the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission to increase habitat protection resources in the Prairie Pothole Region of the northern plains, reports the Wildlife Management Institute. The northern prairies are known to produce between 50 and 70 percent of the continent's waterfowl but are threatened by conversion of native grasslands and isolated wetlands to expanding agriculture.

"The Prairie Pothole Region is vital to waterfowl and other migratory birds in North America. At the same time, it is home to thousands of people who have stewarded and worked the land for generations," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe. "This effort will help us work with willing landowners to put conservation easements in place on tens of thousands of additional acres, helping to stem the loss of these breeding grounds."

Currently, the Prairie Pothole Region receives 50 percent of the annual revenue from the sale of federal duck stamps through the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund. The initiative will increase this commitment directing more than 70 percent -approximately \$30 million - of the Fund to conserve prairie habitat. Further, in their fiscal year 2013 budget request the FWS is seeking \$3.5 million in funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for the effort. The federal funding will be met by Ducks Unlimited's Grasslands for Tomorrow program that has pledged to protect 2 million acres of native prairie through perpetual easements on grasslands and wetlands.

"The Prairie Pothole Region plays a central role in sustaining healthy duck populations, and we are pleased with the direction of more funding toward habitat conservation and restoration in this critical area that is seeing increased threats," said Paul Schmidt, chief conservation officer for Ducks Unlimited. "We look forward to working with the Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that these additional dollars are effectively leveraged so waterfowl from the 'Duck Factory' continue to fill the skies along America's flyways."

In related news, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission approved grants on March 7 under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund. The commission approved more than \$24.5 million from NAWCA to protect, restore and enhance more than 146,000 acres of wetlands and associated habitats across the United States and Mexico. The commission also expressed support for the FWS plan to focus land protection dollars towards the Prairie Pothole Region. ###

ILLINOIS' WATERFOWL, HABITAT AND HUNTING SEASON REPORT 2011-12

Prepared by Ray Marshalla, Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources
February 17, 2012

SEASON DATES AND REGULATIONS

CANADA GEESE – Sept. 1-Sept. 15 (statewide, daily bag was 5 except 2 in South Zone)

TEAL - Sept. 3 - Sept. 18 (statewide)

| ZONE | DUCKS | CANADA GEESE** | WF GEESE** | SNOW GEESE** |
|-------------|-------------------|---|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| North* | Oct. 15 - Dec. 13 | Oct.15 - Jan. 7 | Oct. 26 - Jan. 7 | Oct. 15 - Jan. 7 |
| Central* | Oct. 22 - Dec. 20 | Oct. 22 - Nov. 6 & Nov. 24 - Jan. 31 | Nov. 19- Jan. 31 | Oct. 22 - Jan. 31 |
| South | | | | |
| Central * | Nov. 12 – Jan. 10 | Nov. 12 - 27 & Dec. 13 – Jan. 31 | Nov. 12 – 27 & Dec. 5 – Jan. 31 | Nov. 12 – Jan. 31 |
| South* | Nov. 24 - Jan. 22 | Nov. 24 - 27 & Dec. 1 – Jan. 31 | Nov. 24–Jan. 31 | Nov. 24 - Jan. 31 |

*Youth Waterfowl Hunt Dates: North - Oct. 8-9, Central - Oct. 15-16, South Central – Nov. 5-6, South - Nov. 12-13

** Daily bag limits were 2 Canada geese, 2 white-fronted geese and 20 snow geese statewide during regular season

Weather, Habitat and Waterfowl Populations

Breeding Habitat and Waterfowl Populations

Illinois experienced average temperatures and above average rainfall throughout the spring months of 2011. The statewide average precipitation for spring was 15.25 inches, 3.35 inches above normal, but similar to the amount that fell in spring of 2008 (14.21 inches) and 2009 (15.83 inches). Heavy rains fell across southern portions of the state in April and May, resulting in flooding along some river systems. Statewide precipitation for the first six months of 2011 was 27.2 inches, 7.7 inches above the 1971-2000 average, making 2011 the fourth wettest January-June on record for Illinois.

The 2011 spring giant Canada goose population estimate was 104,900 (compared to 107,850 in 2010). The 2011 estimate was slightly below the most recent 5-year average (118,820) and the recent 5-year range (105,000 to 138,300). A total of 2,981 wood ducks and 3,282 Canada geese were banded in Illinois this year.

Fall and Winter Habitat and Weather

The year 2011 will go down as being wetter and warmer than normal for Illinois. It was also a year of extreme monthly temperatures and precipitation. The statewide average precipitation for 2011 in Illinois was 45.62 inches; 5.43 inches above the 1981-2010 average of 40.20 inches. It was the 10th wettest year in Illinois. It was also the wettest April, 8th wettest June, and 6th wettest November on record. On the other hand, it was the 6th driest August and 21st driest October on record. The statewide average temperature for 2011 in Illinois was 53.0 °F; 0.8 °F above the 1981-2010 average of 52.2 °F. It was the 23rd warmest year on record. It was also the 4th warmest July, 7th warmest November, and 11th warmest December on record. On the other hand, it was the 10th coldest September on record. The warm December and January is somewhat unusual. The average temperature for December/January was 33.4 degrees, making it at the 6th warmest December/January period on record.

For January 2012, the statewide average temperature for Illinois was 31.4 degrees, which is 6.6 degrees above normal and the 13th warmest January on record. The statewide average precipitation for January was 1.87 inches, which is 97 percent of normal. The wettest areas were in eastern Illinois. The heaviest rains were in southern Illinois (again).

Total accumulated snowfall during November through January was mostly 25-75% of normal in Illinois. The northern third of the state received 50-75% of normal snowfall except for a few counties south of Lake Michigan that received 125-150% of normal snowfall. Most of the southern two thirds of the state received only 25-50% of normal snowfall with southeastern Illinois receiving only 10-25% of normal snowfall. The snowfall for January in Illinois was generally below normal south of Interstate 74 and above normal north of Interstate 74.

Waterfowl foraging habitat in the Illinois River valley (IRV) was ranked average during fall 2011; however, wetland conditions for waterfowl were the best observed since fall 2005 when excellent food resources were noted. Illinois

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River water levels fell below 8 ft. (14 ft. flood stage) in Havana on 7 August and remained low for the remaining growing season. This drawdown was considered late season in terms of moist-soil management. Above normal temperatures ensued during August, September, and October allowing for the maturation of moist-soil plant seeds. Despite the average rank and late-season drawdown, some IRV wetlands had abundant waterfowl food resources including: Hennepin and Hopper lakes, Swan Lake (Putnam County), Emiquon Preserve/Spoon River Bottoms, Cuba Island, and Big Lake (Brown County).

Total duck abundance peaked in the IRV on 15 November 2011. Unseasonably mild weather persisted well into December and many IRV wetlands remained ice-free through the close of the Illinois duck season in the northern and central zones. Significant freezing was not witnessed in the IRV until the last scheduled flight on January 4, 2012.

Waterfowl foraging habitat in the central Mississippi River valley (CMRV) was considered below average during fall 2011 and similar to fall 2010. Extensive flooding on the lower Mississippi River during summer 2011 prevented some census locations from dewatering to promote moist-soil vegetation. Notably, Swan (Calhoun County), Gilbert, and Long lakes near the confluence of the Illinois and Mississippi rivers had poor to below average forage. Flooding may also have been detrimental to the submersed aquatic vegetation in Pool 19 as few beds of aquatic vegetation were observed in the Pool during September. Some notable exceptions in the CMRV with better than average duck food were Louisa Refuge, Keithsburg Refuge, Dardenne Club, and Batchtown Refuge.

Duck abundance peaked on 30 November in the CMRV. Large numbers of canvasbacks (>66,000) were present on Pool 19 until the last flight on 4 January 2012. Isolated areas and side channels of the river were partially frozen from late November to early January; however, the main channel of Pool 19 remained open during fall 2011. Consequently, peak numbers of canvasbacks did not occur on Pool 19 until 12 December approximately 2 weeks later than normal.

Migration

The Illinois Natural History Survey conducted 16 weekly aerial inventories of waterfowl during fall 2011 in the IRV and CMRV. Peak abundance of total ducks was higher in both the IRV and CMRV in 2011 than 2010. In the IRV, peak abundance of total ducks for 2011 occurred on 15 November (286,920); this estimate was 5% higher than the 2010 peak (274,180) and 22% above the most recent 5-year average of 234,938 (2006–2010; hereafter, 5-yr average). Total duck abundance peaked on 30 November in the CMRV at 380,025 (58% higher than 2010 [241,010]; 3% above the 5-yr average [367,944]). The peak abundance estimate of total ducks for the two river systems combined (611,005) occurred on 21 November and was 25% higher than in 2010 (490,480) and 3% above the 5-yr average (592,863).

In the IRV, peak abundance estimates for American black ducks (-33%), blue-winged teal (-29%), and gadwalls (-18%) were lower in 2011 than 2010, whereas estimates for mallards (+65%), northern pintail (+53%), American green-winged teal (+36%), American wigeon (+30%), and northern shovelers (+111%) were higher in 2011 than 2010. The peak estimate of total dabbling ducks (261,835) was 11% higher than the 2010 estimate (236,105) and 23% above the 5-yr average (213,703).

In the CMRV, 2011 peak abundance estimates for American black ducks (-82%), blue-winged teal (-14%), and American wigeon (-46%) were lower than in 2010. Peak estimates for all other dabbling duck species inventoried in the CMRV were higher in 2011 than 2010 (mallards [+29%], northern pintails [+99%], American green-winged teal [+97%], and gadwalls [+27%]). Peak abundance of all dabbling duck species in the CMRV was 48% higher in 2011 (303,445) than 2010 (204,685) and 10% above the 5-yr average (275,534).

Diving duck abundance in the IRV peaked on 15 November in 2011 at 24,985 (34% lower than 2010 [38,035]; 2% above the 5-yr average [24,436]). Peak abundance estimates for lesser scaup (-74%), redheads (-8%), ruddy ducks (-36%), common goldeneyes (-81%), and buffleheads (-73%) were lower in 2011 than 2010, whereas estimates for ring-necked ducks (+80%) and canvasbacks (+15%) were higher in 2011 than 2010.

In the CMRV, diving duck abundance peaked on 12 December in 2011 at 106,375 (96% higher than 2010 [54,245]; 8% higher than the 5-yr average [98,080]). Excepting ring-necked ducks (-19%), peak estimates for all diving duck species inventoried in the CMRV were higher in 2011 than 2010 (lesser scaup [+294%], canvasbacks [+187%], redheads [+120%], ruddy ducks [+267%], common goldeneyes [+280%], and buffleheads [+104%]).

[Canada goose migration to southern Illinois and western Kentucky was well below historical levels. Aerial survey results indicated that populations remained below the most recent 5-year average, 17 October through 1 February. On November 30, 2011 only 2,450 Canada geese were estimated on the surveyed area. No noticeable influx of geese](#)

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occurred during December; only 2,375 Canada geese were observed on December 27, 2011 (compared to the most recent 5-year average of 37,670). Very small numbers of Canada geese arrived throughout January and 3,475 were estimated on January 18th (compared to the most recent 5-year average of 58,325). Numbers continued to increase during the last week of January and peaked at 5,050 on February 2, nearly 90 percent below the most recent 5-year average estimate for late-January (46,906). Notably, the 2011-12 peak population was the lowest on record. The prior three lowest peak counts (55,025, 36,350, and 46,625) occurred in 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2007-08, respectively. The most recent 5-year average peak count was 79,438. The 5-year average peak count for 1988-1992 was 712,630 and the 5-year average peak count for 1995-1999 was 334,190.

A total of 89,065 Canada geese were observed in Illinois during the 2012 Midwinter waterfowl survey (compared to the previous 5-year average of 112,954; range = 98,854 to 138,215). The duck population estimate during this survey was 451,645 (compared to the previous 5-year average of 160,489; range = 127,225 to 198,357).

Aerial surveys indicated that duck numbers on the southern Illinois survey route remained below recent 5-year average population levels from mid-October through December. Duck numbers increased from 11,300 on 31 October (compared to 5-year average of 30,675) to a seasonal peak of 80,600 on 7 December (compared to a 5-year average of 101,175). The peak population estimate was approximately 35% less than the most recent 5-year average peak (123,967). No influx of ducks was noted in mid- or late-December; the population decreased to 52,400 on 12 December and to 42,900 on 27 December. A small increase occurred in early-January and the population climbed to 60,300 (3 January), approximately 8 percent above the 5-year average (56,025). Population levels declined to 47,100 on 9 January (compared to a 5-year average of (40,450) and to 41,400 on 24 January (compared to a 5-year average of 66,538).

The peak white-fronted goose count in southern Illinois to date was 22,675 which occurred on 18 January. This year's peak count was 8% above the 5-year average. Aerial surveys indicated that small numbers of snow geese began arriving in southern Illinois during late November. Snow goose counts increased to 51,550 in late December and ranged between 33,100 and 147,400 during January. This year's peak count to date of 154,550 was achieved on 6 February. This peak count was approximately 35% above the previous 5-year average of 114,793 which occurred during the period of 8-14 January.

Duck Harvest

Preliminary estimates of duck hunter activity on 26 public hunting areas that typically account for about 80% of hunter use days on monitored public areas in the state indicated that 64,435 hunter days accounted for a harvest of 73,174 ducks (32% higher than the 5-year average; 48% higher than 2010). The daily success rate of 1.14 ducks per hunter was 8% higher than the 5-year average and similar to 2010.

Disease Events - No significant disease events were reported in waterfowl during the 2011-12 hunting season. Due to the cessation of Federal funding, no samples were taken for avian influenza testing by IDNR this past year.

Hunting Season Overview -

Duck harvest improved by 48% over last year and was 32% above average due to good migrations of ducks and lack of freeze up conditions in many areas. Duck numbers on aerial surveys in the Illinois and Mississippi River valleys were above average especially for mallards and green-winged teal which are the primary ducks harvested in Illinois. There were also reportedly good numbers of wood ducks harvested on many state sites compared to the past several years. Most public hunting areas remained ice free during most of the mild season which is unusual and resulted in a lot more hunting opportunity than most years. Duck numbers in southern Illinois were mostly below average but again, lack of ice during the season at many sites resulted in fewer than normal days of hunting lost due to freeze up. Canada goose hunting was likely below normal statewide with good numbers of geese available in the North Zone and low numbers elsewhere throughout the season. Lack of snow in Wisconsin and northern Illinois resulted in above average numbers of geese staying north of the other 3 zones in Illinois for most of the season. The peak Canada goose count in southern Illinois occurred 2 days after the season ended and was only 5,050 compared to the previous record low peak of 36,350 and the most recent 5-year average peak of 46,906. Overall, Canada goose harvest was likely well below the recent 5-year average in Illinois.

Holder in 1995: ‘Really brainwash people’ to be anti gun

Matthew Boyle, The Daily Caller, March 19, 2012

Attorney General Eric Holder supported using Hollywood, the media and government officials in order to “really brainwash people” into opposing firearm ownership, according to a 1995 C-SPAN video that emerged Sunday online.

Holder, who was then the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, was addressing the Women’s National Democratic Club on Jan. 30, 1995. In his speech, he held up anti-smoking campaigns as a model for an anti-gun campaign.

“What we need to do is change the way in which people think about guns, especially young people, and make it something that’s not cool, that it’s not acceptable, it’s not hip to carry a gun anymore, in the way in which we’ve changed our attitudes about cigarettes,” Holder said.

Video of the speech was discovered by Breitbart.com.

Holder explained that he wanted to use influential figures like then-Washington, D.C. Marion Barry and the Rev. Jesse Jackson, as well as widely watched TV shows like “The Fresh Prince of Bel Air” and “Martin,” to forward his anti-gun campaign. He sought to push that same agenda through public schools as well, “every day, every school, at every level.”

Holder said these resources would be the driving force behind a campaign to “really brainwash people into thinking about guns in a vastly different way.”

It’s unclear whether Holder still seeks to “brainwash” Americans into opposing gun ownership. Department of Justice spokeswoman Tracy Schmalzer did not return The Daily Caller’s request for comment on the matter.

The White House also did not return TheDC’s request for comment about whether President Obama agrees with Holder’s 1995 remarks.

The revelation that Holder wanted to “brainwash” people into being “anti-gun” appears to be supported by what Congress and the American people have learned about Operation Fast and Furious.

In Fast and Furious, the Obama administration’s Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives – in a program overseen by Holder’s Department of Justice – sent about 2,000 guns south to Mexican drug cartels. The Obama administration did this via “straw purchasers” who bought guns in the United States with the intention of illegally trafficking them somewhere else.

Some have charged that Obama administration officials, including Holder, implemented Fast and Furious as part of a strategy to generate anti-gun outrage among the U.S. population.

In a July 2010 email that surfaced in a congressional investigation, ATF Assistant Director Mark Chait asked Bill Newell, his agency’s lead agent in Phoenix to “see if these guns were all purchased from the same [dealer] and at one time. We are looking at anecdotal cases to support a demand letter on long gun multiple sales.”

Statistics collected from the program eventually formed the backbone of that new long-gun reporting rule, which the administration implemented after Fast and Furious became a national scandal.

The rule was upheld in a January ruling from the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

Also supporting allegations that Fast and Furious was a gun-control stalking horse are comments made by California Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein during a November 2011 hearing.

“My concern, Mr. Chairman, is there’s been a lot said about Fast and Furious, and perhaps mistakes were made, but I think this hunt for blame doesn’t really speak about the problem,” Feinstein said.

“And the problem is, anybody can walk in and buy anything, .50-caliber weapons, sniper weapons, buy them in large amounts, and send them down to Mexico. So, the question really becomes, what do we do about this?”

In his own written testimony in November, Holder complained that Congress “voted to keep law enforcement in the dark when individuals purchase multiple semi-automatic rifles and shotguns in Southwest border gun shops.”

And on Sunday another sign of Holder’s anti-gun advocacy surfaced when the blog The Right Scoop published excerpts from a Washington Post op-ed Holder wrote shortly after 9/11, in which he used the terrorist attacks as a rationale to push for more gun control laws.

South Carolina Republican Rep. Trey Gowdy told TheDC in February that he was prepared, but had no opportunity, “to prove to the Attorney General — which he already knows — that there are plenty of gun laws on the books right now ... The notion that the fix is: ‘We just got to get Congress to pass more gun laws’ is just sheer sophistry. And I could have proven that.”

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IDNR Conservation Police seek public's help in shootings of bald eagles

IDNR News Release, 3.15.12

Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Conservation Police are asking for information from the public about two recent incidents in southeast Illinois in which Conservation Police officers (CPOs) were notified of bald eagles that had been shot.

The first incident was discovered on February 5 when a mature bald eagle was found injured in Louisville, Illinois near the Little Wabash River. An x-ray determined the eagle had been shot. The bird is being treated at a wildlife rehabilitation center.

The second incident was reported on February 24 in southern Richland County when a dead bald eagle was recovered. An x-ray revealed that the mature eagle had also been shot.

Bald eagles are protected by federal law with violators facing up to one year in prison and fines up to \$100,000.

In cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a reward of up to \$1,000 is being offered for information leading to the arrest and/or conviction of an individual or individuals involved in either of these cases. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Illinois Target Poacher Hotline at 1-877-236-7529 or any local IDNR Conservation Police officer, county sheriff's office, or the Illinois State Police. Callers can remain anonymous.

