

S O U T H S H O R E
WATERFOWLERS

A S S O C I A T I O N , I N C .



DECEMBER 2016

Web site: sswa.org

P.O. BOX 217

BRIGHTWATERS, NY 11718

NOTICE
January Meeting Will Be
Tuesday, January 3
Because of New Year's

*A Very Happy
Holiday
to All Our
Friends and
Families*

*Vote to Change the Cap
on the "Feed" Fund Approved*

by Ron Sineo

At our November 7th meeting, the proposed amendment announced in the September Newsletter was voted on and was unanimously approved. As a result, this amendment (amendment #3) has effectively changed the potential cap on the Emergency Waterfowl Fund and Assistance Program from a maximum of \$7,000 to a new maximum of \$20,000. The Board had decided that this amendment was necessary because, through fund raising and donations, we were already at the \$7,000 threshold. If we had received any future donations to this fund, we would not have been able to accept them. Thanks to the quick action of our members, this amendment will allow us to continue to accept donations in the name of the fund.

Our Constitution has been amended to reflect this most recent change. You can pick up a copy of the amended Constitution at the next general meeting.



*The SSWA Board of Directors
wishes to Amend the Constitution*

At the December meeting there was a motion made to Amend the Constitution under Article 3, section 2 which has to do with Junior members. It currently reads: "There shall be a Junior membership open to gunners Fourteen (14) years of age, subject to a minimum annual dues of \$1.00, and they shall have no vote."



Several years ago, the State of NY lowered the age for a small game license to 12. Many of our youth waterfowl hunters are in the 12- and 13-year-old category. The motion was made to change the language to read: "There shall be a Junior membership open to gunners who possess a valid NYS Junior hunting license, subject to a minimum annual dues of \$1.00, and they shall have no vote." This language change will allow for 12- and 13-year-old hunters to become Junior members of SSWA.

In keeping with our constitutional requirements, this notice will serve as 1st official announcement of our intent to amend the SSWA Constitution. Discussion will take place at the January 3rd meeting, and then voting will take place at the FEBRUARY meeting.

South Shore Waterfowlers

Voice of the Long Island Waterfowler

The South Shore Waterfowlers meet at 7:00 p.m. on the 1st Monday of each month from September through April. If the 1st Monday falls on a holiday, the meeting will take place on an alternate date (to be announced). (A library holiday is the same as a U.S. Postal holiday.)

Meetings are held on the first floor conference room of the Brightwaters/Bayshore Library located on Montauk Highway (Rte. 27A) in Brightwaters/Bayshore (see map below).

For additional information, please call John (631) 874-7459 or Ron (631) 862-8518.

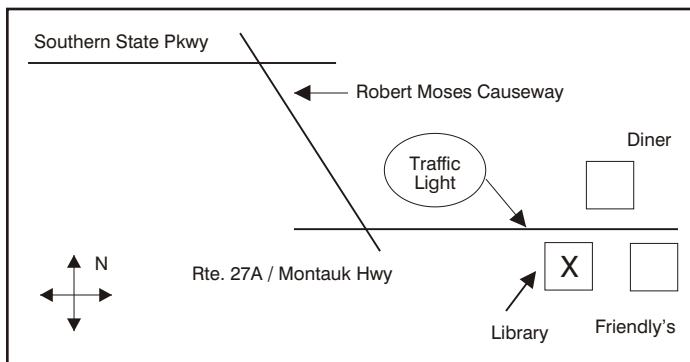
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2016 Atlantic Flyway Report

by Ron Sineo

I attended the Atlantic Flyway Council October meetings in Jacksonville, Florida this year. This meeting schedule is new, and reflects a shift in focus from a former “hurry -up” offense to a more sensible “let’s not be too hasty” approach to meetings about waterfowl management in the Atlantic Flyway. A major benefit of this new schedule is that we will now know the season length and bag limits on most duck species several months in advance of the opening day of the new season. A secondary benefit is the fact that the States now have sufficient time to publish the information in their Hunting Guides and Brochures.

The meeting officially opened with an address by Paul Padding, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Representative for the Atlantic Flyway Council. He spoke about a variety of issues, but what stuck out in my mind was the many cuts in staffing, programs, and funding that has occurred in the past several years. He mentioned that within the USFWS there were “many vacancies” in the Migratory Bird Division, including three vacancies out of the Four Branch Chiefs! Congressional appropriations and thus funding for migratory birds is now 20% less than 2010 levels.

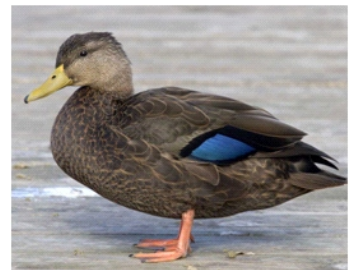
The Annual Migratory Bird Hunter Activity and Harvest Report this year has been delayed because of staffing needs. Trends in Duck BPOP Reports are no longer produced, the Annual Waterfowl Status Video is also no longer produced, The U.S. duck harvest was down 17% compared to the year before. Also, the number of active duck hunters was down 10%, and days afield were down by 8%. In the Atlantic Flyway last year, estimates of ducks bagged per hunter in 8 of 17 states were lowest, and in 3 states, second lowest, since the start of the HIP program in 1999.

On a brighter note, Paul gave us an update on the Federal Duck Stamp Print. You may remember in the last newsletter, we included a picture of this year’s Trumpeter Swans duck stamp, and we talked about the annual contest complete with a proposal to include non-migratory birds in the rules requirements. Well, the new contest is over, and next year’s duck stamp will have Canada Geese as the subject. Furthermore, the good news is that the USFWS has cancelled the proposed rule that non-game birds be included in the artwork submissions!!



The 2017-2018 Waterfowl season will be very similar in season length and bag limit as compared to the current one. There are a few notable differences, however. The biggest change (in the plus column) and one that some duck hunters have waited decades for, is concerned with the bird pictured here. That’s right! The Black Duck.

For the 2017–2018 hunting season, and for the first time in 34 years, the bag limit on black ducks will be 2 birds per day!



PINTAIL

For this past breeding season, the further North you go, the poorer the breeding production was for the pintail. Even so, for the 2017–2018 hunting season the harvest management strategy calls for a full 60-day season, but just 1 bird per day.



BRANT



This is the exception to the rule. The regs. for Brant are determined at the last minute so to speak. They rely almost exclusively on the mid-winter survey for Brant. Even though the Feds. indicated this past February that the season for Brant would be 60 days/2 birds per day, our state wished to further restrict the season/bag limit. At the spring task force meeting we were able to successfully argue against more restrictions.

Even so, the 2017-2018 regs. for Brant have not yet been set. We must wait for next February and the new mid-winter count to find out.

Keep Your Retriever Safe

by Ron Sineo

In the most recent edition of the Delta Waterfowl Magazine, there is an interesting article titled *It's Not Too Late*. This article deals mostly with hunting in Canada in the days and weeks after Canadians celebrate their Thanksgiving, which occurs on the second Monday in October. It talks about late season hunting, and how it is different than the early season hunting. Of course, one would expect that the conditions turn to wintery weather quickly for our neighbor to the North.

As I read my way through the article, I saw many parallels with the conditions that we often find here on Long Island. Our season starts around our own Thanksgiving, and extends well into the winter, with duck season ending the last Sunday in January, and Goose season often extending into February and beyond.

Hunting late into the season here on Long Island often includes some difficult conditions. Ken Bailey, the author of the article I am referring to, has an insert in the article which he titled *Keep Your Retriever Safe*. I am reprinting it here because I think it is worth the read, for anyone who has a working dog. So here it is.



"It is imperative to give your four-legged pal extra attention in cold weather. Even if your retriever is accustomed to eating in the evenings only, feed him a tiny amount before a morning hunt. Retrievers perform better with some fuel in the furnace. I learned about the effects of low blood sugar levels in my dog in a frightening way on a December hunt a few years ago, and I don't want to repeat the experience.

Whenever hunting over water, consider a neoprene vest for your dog. The insulating value helps your retriever retain body heat, while the extra buoyancy makes swimming less strenuous.

Assess the situation before letting your dog out of the truck. If there's ice, what is the risk of your dog breaking through? And how will you respond if the worst happens? Always go through the "what-if?" scenarios before committing your retriever to a late season hunt.

I once had to walk out chest deep, sans waders, to rescue a friend's dog that broke through thin marsh ice and couldn't climb out. In hind sight the fault was clearly ours, and the lesson learned has resonated since."——Ken Bailey

I think you will agree, some of these are common sense points that are all too often overlooked.



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About Harlequin Ducks

by Ron Sineo

The Harlequin duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*) is a small sea duck. The Harlequin duck concentrates during the breeding season in just a few regions within its range, and only in remote areas inaccessible to most people. Its breeding habitat is cold fast-moving streams in north-western and north-eastern North America, Greenland, Iceland, and eastern Russia. The nest is usually located in a well-concealed location on the ground near a stream. They are usually found near pounding surf and white water. They are short distance migrants and their migration patterns are unique. They often migrate laterally from interior regions. Pacific Harlequins spend the winter in coastal areas from the Aleutian and Pribolof islands south to central California. The Atlantic population winters in coastal areas from Greenland and Iceland south through Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and down to Maryland.



Have you ever wondered why the NYS WATERFOWL REGULATIONS include the statement that your regular bag “may not include Harlequin ducks?”

While recent population estimates place the Pacific population at 1 million individuals, the Atlantic population is only estimated at 11,000 breeding pairs. Most likely, the eastern North American population had been in steady decline for many years before it was finally considered endangered. (Possible causes include loss of habitat due to hydroelectric projects and loss of life due to oil spills near coastal areas.)

It is clear from its pictures that the male Harlequin duck would not be confused with any other duck. However, the same may not be true for the female. For those “trophy” hunters who would like to have a Harlequin in their collection, the West coast is the place to go. In Alaska, resident hunters are allowed 6 Harlequins in their daily bag, and a non-resident hunter may have 4 Harlequins in possession!

Youth Day

Once again I want to send a shout out to Kelly, Danielle, and DEC officers, DU’s Craig and his volunteers, SSWA’s Erik Sr., Eric Jr., and the SSWA mentors, for another great Youth Day duck hunting program. So much work is involved in organizing the 3-day event. Instructional day teaches the youngsters the fundamentals of duck hunting, while hunting days gets them out in the marsh/river to experience the thrill of the hunt. I know that 5 ducks were taken at Southaven park (wood duck, merganser, 2 mallards, and a black duck). Craig reports 13 ducks at Flanders (4 black, 2 hoodies, and 7 buffleheads).

Thank you to all who helped make the event a possibility. The memories that are created will stay with these children for life. It gets them outdoors and recruits them into our dewindling

ranks, which helps to keep duck hunting alive. Great job everyone.

This is the DEC link if you want to see all the pictures taken at instructional and hunt day. Copy to your browser.

https://www.snapfish.com/library/share?w=snapfish_us&c=snapfish&l=en_US#9LnG4-iYULqy7dlHq_QIQg/AUS/27940871006070/SNAPFISH

SSWA Website Login

Name: **Member**

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Login

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Super Successful Duckboat Show

by Curt Matzinger

I have some terrific news. This year's Waterfowl Festival was one of the best to date. There were many records broken at the event. We had the largest gate, sporting clays shooters, and paintball shooters. We also had one of the most diverse group of vendors attending this show. A lot of great stuff for men **AND** women were present for sale. The raffle ticket holder was also stuffed to the rim. Wonderful.

This record could not have been possible without all the SSWA members who came down and helped out. You have heard me say "Many hands make light work" so many times. The large number of members made my job so much easier this time. I didn't have to run around like a chicken with my head cut off. All of the "crew chiefs" organized their respective groups to take on the job at hand. It ran very smooth. Whether it was the gate, shooting, vendors, boat judging, dog jumping, dog demonstrations, food, and the main table. It was like a well-oiled machine. I guess after all these years, everyone knows what to do and just did it. This is how it should be every year. All I can say is THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU.

Funds raised will be used to continue our good work for youth programs, projects, and club improvements. Thank you once again to everyone who helped out making this year's show ONE FOR THE BOOKS.

Comedy Night

We held our second comedy night at Governors Comedy Club. Even though there was a light turn out of members, those that attended had a ball. Good comedians, jokes, and cocktails had everyone laughing it up. We had a raffle to make the night a little more interesting, and my ticket was picked. That made my night. Thanks to Kate Sohm for putting together the event to help raise some funds for the Emergency Fund.

Great Job Kate!!!

Holiday Party Recap

December 5th was our annual holiday party at the library. What a feast we had. Over 13 hot dishes were on hand. Something for everyone. Different dishes consisting of venison, pheasant, chicken, goose, ferrel pig, even pizza were present. Don't let me leave out the desserts. A whole table of delicious homemade and store bought goodies were there to take care of your sweet tooth. Thank God I wore my stretchy pants because I would have blown out of regular pants. (I guess a little too much info, Eh?) Anyway, thanks to all who brought food to make the party a celebration to remember.

Kate Sohm drew the ticket for the Bayhouse Raffle Hunt at their bayhouse. Joe Belardi was the winner. But wait. Joe came up to Kate and announced that he bought a ticket to help support the club, and that she should draw another ticket. What a guy. Kate drew another and Ronny Pliszak was the winner. Ben and Kate, being the wonderful people they are, told Joe that they would take him out striped bass fishing in the spring. He was thrilled. Congratulations to both of the winners.

I cannot thank Ben and Katie enough for all they do for our club to help out our fundraising. They are so generous in donating their time, raffle items, ideas, buddy program, and their home to help out our club. We are so lucky to have both of them as members of the SSWA, but not as lucky as me as I get to have them as terrific friends. Thanks again you two.



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Annual Waterfowl Festival and Curt Matzinger Dinner

Quack's Tips

In the TIDAL marsh, the length of your decoy cord can be critical to hunting success. Too short and, as the tide rises, your decoys will begin to cluster in a tighter pattern, some even banging into each other. Eventually, you may be chasing decoys as the tide rises. Too long, and you risk flaring ducks, especially when hunting over a sandy bottom. Incoming ducks are sure to notice the unnatural look of the surplus cord outlined against the sandy bottom. On the North Shore of Long Island, tidal highs and lows can span a difference of up to 8 feet. This change can happen over a 6-hour period on a "moon" tide. It is somewhat less noticeable on the South Shore, as the tidal change is often a good bit less. Even so, know the depth of water where you are going to hunt, and adjust the cords on your decoys accordingly. Most hunters attach their cords to their decoys by a snap swivel. This allows for a quick change of cord when needed. It is not that costly to have an extra set of cords or two, of different lengths. Changing your decoys to the right length cord for where you will be hunting can help improve your hunting success.



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— *South Shore Waterfowlers Association* —

CALENDAR OF UP-COMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- January 3** — Tuesday, SSWA Meeting, Bay Shore/Brightwaters Library, 7 pm
February 6 — SSWA Meeting, Bay Shore/Brightwaters Library, 7 pm
March 4 — Antique Decoy Collectors Show, IBEW Hall, Hauppauge
March 6 — SSWA Meeting, Bay Shore/Brightwaters Library, 7 pm
April 3 — SSWA Meeting (last meeting), Bay Shore/Brightwaters Library, 7 pm
April ??? — 13th Annual Curt Matzinger Dinner (to be announced)
June ??? — Bocce Beach Sportsman's Dinner (more info to follow)



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