



Louisiana Waterfowl Alliance

www.louisianawaterfowl.org

Newsletter 2016

LWA's goal is to represent every water fowler in Louisiana



Season dates for Waterfowl season 16-17 Already in Place

Under new Federal guidelines the La. Wildlife and Fisheries Commission set the waterfowl seasons for the 2016-17 waterfowl season:

Coastal Zone- -Nov. 12-Dec 4 & Dec 17-Jan 22

Youth hunt: Nov 5-6

West Zone- -Nov 12-Dec 4 & Dec 17-Jan 22

Youth hunt: Nov 5 and Jan 29

East Zone- -Nov 19-Dec 4 & Dec 17-Jan 29

Youth hunt: Nov 12 and Feb 4

At the meeting, department wildlife biologist Steve Smith offered an amendment that would have taken a week off the west zone first split and added it to the end of the second split, but when commissioner Pat Manuel moved in favor of the amendment, he was unable to acquire a second, so it failed.

Last year the commission was bombarded by complaints from hunters when it opened the season a week earlier than its own biologists recommended.

The traditional time-table where season dates and limits are set after population estimates were finalized, has been changed since biologists feel that if restrictive changes must be made, making those changes before the upcoming season would have minimal affect on the resource.

Louisiana waterfowl hunters won't have to wait until September this year to make their plans.



Officers and members of the LWA lamented the passing of one of LWA's founding members last fall from congestive heart failure. David "Rock" Boudreaux of Crowley passed in August. All of the details of Rock's life were listed in his Obituary at the time of his passing. What no one talked about then, however, was how important his services to the LWA were during the formation of the organization. Without Rock, LWA would have died a slow and inglorious death long ago. He got people involved and he recognized individuals who shared his love of the ducks and geese we all hunted. He got those people involved in LWA and kept after them to make their best effort for the group. Yes, he even promised many things, and though he knew there was no way he could possibly make all the hunts he promised to the people he blackmailed, he just did his best to get good people involved. He was widely respected by the Sporting community, even though he could be contentious and argumentative, it usually turned out he was only after doing what was necessary to protect the resource. Stubbornness in the pursuit of what is right and fair is never condemned, and Rock was always on that side of the argument. He will be greatly missed by LWA as well as the youth baseball organizations in the Crowley area with whom he worked closely. If you, as an LWA member, didn't know him, more is the pity for you because you missed knowing a great individual and one of the true waterfowl heroes in our state.



The picture at left is of the cooking process for gallinule poppers. Cut gallinule breasts into strips, add jalapeno pepper slices, cream cheese and wrap in bacon. Grill 15 - 20 minutes or until bacon is brown and enjoy.

Please take note of our website address on the mast head above. You can also visit and friend our Face Book site: Louisiana Waterfowl Alliance

"Waterfowl Rest Area Improves Public Hunting" * says DU

The Halowell Reservoir project in Arkansas is a prime example of how waterfowl rest area can improve the quality of duck hunting on surrounding public land. This 600-acre reservoir has long been an open-water refuge (closed to waterfowl hunting) on the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's (AGFC) 34,000 acre Bayou Meto Wildlife Management Area (WMA), a vast tract of flooded bottomland hardwoods that is among the most popular public waterfowl hunting areas in the nation. In 1995, the AGFC approached DU about improving waterfowl habitat quality on the reservoir. The two partners subsequently worked together to develop three highly productive moist-soil management units. The area was further subdivided into five units in 2006, and it now provides much-improved habitat for waterfowl.

The AGFC's sole intent for enhancing waterfowl habitat on Halowell reservoir was to improve public hunting opportunities on Bayou Meto and surrounding areas. Although the reservoir itself is closed to hunting, it now provides vital habitat for tens of thousands of ducks that trade back and forth between the rest area and the WMA's flooded bottomland hardwoods. This has greatly improved the quality of duck hunting on up to 14,000 acres of public land visited by thousands of waterfowlers each season.

**DU Magazine Comment about Waterfowl Rest Areas March-April 2016*

**Article - Habitat for Hunters by Scott C. Yaich, Ph.D. - Side Bar Page 43.*

LWA Board Meeting Minutes 3 March 2016

Welcome / Roll - Beau Barbe, Barney Callahan, Marty Floyd, Jay Huner, Randy Lanctot, Flip Siragusa, and Charles Williams. Regrets: Fred Borel, John Delhommer, Doug Liles, and Sean Pilie. Since last meeting, Mike Benge, Bob Brotherton, and Ray Doughty have resigned from the board. There are currently 5 board vacancies.

- Review of previous board minutes - Accepted - moved by Beau Barbe and seconded by Marty Floyd. Accepted.
- Secretary's Report - Two renewal notices have been sent from the web site - December 2015 and February 2016. Approximately 20 members have renewed their dues.
- Treasurer's Report - According to Treasurer Sean Pilie, LWA has \$3,376.17 - Capitol One Account - \$2,680.00; Pay Pal - \$317.16, and to be deposited \$200.00.
- Old Business

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LWA Board Meeting Minutes 3 March 2016 (cont)

- Membership Drive//Brochure - Barney Callahan provided board members with the new membership brochure. Jay Huner provided LWA letterhead envelopes. Board members are requested to send these to individuals with intense interest in waterfowl hunting and conservation in Louisiana to recruit members. Jay Huner will send invitations to renew memberships to lapsed member.
- Website and Facebook - Ray Doughty is continuing to support the website. All board members were encouraged to post to the website. In addition, everyone was encouraged to use and promote the Facebook page.
- WRAP Donation Status - Jay Huner received a message from Andrew Dolan, USFWS, to the effect that the program was still in existence and would use any donation made by LWA. Mr. Dolan said that the late David Boudreaux was the principal fund raiser and recruiter so the program administrators were seeking funding sources. Marty Floyd pointed out that NRCS was hosting a teleconference/conference entitled "Working Lands for Wildlife" in Alexandria, LA 7 March 2016 where funds for WRAP could be discussed. Jay Huner will send details to board members. Huner will also contact the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation to arrange for the LWA donation.
- Outdoor Expos - Flip Siragusa reported that the Lafayette expo would not be held this year and it was too late to get involved with Baton Rouge area outdoor expos.
- Rest Area Resolution - Although LDWF has stated there is no apparent need for a rest area on the Beouf WMA, LWA is still concerned about that location in particular and all WMAs in general. Charles Williams and Jay Huner addressed LWA's concern about rest areas at LDWF public meetings in Monroe and Alexandria, February 2016. Furthermore, Jay Huner made public comment on the topic at the LWFC meeting in Alexandria 3 March 2016.
- Membership Meetings - LWA has historically had two membership meetings per year - one in April as a previous season wrap up and in August as new season projection. The board has been most appreciative of LDWF's Waterfowl Study Leader Larry Reynolds participation in those meetings. Considering logistics and so forth and the by-law requirement that there be at least one general membership meeting, decided to have one meeting in August - Saturday August 27, 2016. Tentative location will be the reception center at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's Experimental Farm at Cade, LA. It may be feasible to get the farm's manager, Mark Simon, to cook a jambalaya meal for the meeting.
 - Newsletter - Need to interact with John Serigny to get a newsletter prepared and distributed via the LWA website.
 - LDWF Management of Waterfowl Hunting on Public Lakes - Jay Huner and Marty Floyd were present at the LWFC meeting when LDWF administrator Kenny Ribbeck presented a report on the topic. Approximately half of the lakes had established management commissions and the other half were establishing commissions. There are no commissions yet for three lakes and the one for Iberia Parish's Spanish Lake has, for now, backed out of a commitment to develop management plans.
- New Business
- Elections - Officers for 2016-2017 are: President, Barney Callahan, Vice President, Charles Williams, Secretary, Jay Huner, and Treasurer, Sean Pilie.
- Memorials for David Boudreaux - Flip Siragusa has been working on this. There will be a memorial at the USFWS Wall of Honor at the National Conservation Center at Shepherdstown, WV. Flip is working on a memorial plaque for David at Lacassine NWR.
- Discussion of Surface Drive Units on Public Lands - Problems associated with wetlands destruction were discussed.
- Next Board Meeting - October 27, 2016.
- Meeting Adjourned about 7:50 PM.

LWA Review of 2015 to 2016 Louisiana Waterfowl Season

According to Dr. Larry Reynolds, Waterfowl Study Leader for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the per hunter kill on the four Wildlife Management Areas in Southeast Louisiana that do regular bag-checks was down about 25-30% but in Southwest Louisiana at the White Lake Wetland Conservation Area bag was the same or better than in the past. The private Coastal Club in the same area was similar to last year but the Cherry Ridge club was down about 30% according to one of the land managers.

A few things are certain. Warm temperatures and extensive flooding shifted the mid-winter population estimates to the north. Louisiana and Arkansas were below average; Mississippi was right at average; Missouri was over twice their long-term average; and Illinois, Tennessee and Kentucky were above average.

Dr. Reynolds is fairly certain that hunting was below average, but he has received few direct complaints. He suspects that below average hunting has to do with the combination of extensive flooding and 80-degree temperature at Christmas.

Goose hunting is greatly reduced in Louisiana. The January Snow Goose census in Louisiana was 287,000 compared to the flyway count of 2,235,000. The Louisiana total was approximately half the 2011-2015 average.

More information about the 2015-2016 season will be available in coming months as Dr. Reynolds and his team collect data from their annual waterfowl hunter surveys.

LWA General Member Meeting Coming up:

Location: (tentative) University of Louisiana at Lafayette Cade Farm Welcome Center
1178 W. J. Bernard Road
St. Martinville, Louisiana 70582

Date and Time: Saturday 27 August 2016 // 4:00 PM // Meal will be provided.

LWA's Recent Actions on Refuges/Rest Areas for Waterfowl—April, 2016

The Louisiana Waterfowl Alliance has continued in recent months to advocate establishment (or reestablishment) of rest areas within WMAs, as a means of improving duck numbers and duck hunting in our state. In particular, LWA has focused on Boeuf WMA, a 51,000 acre WMA in northeast Louisiana. At Boeuf WMA, until about 10 years ago, there was a refuge of less than 800 acres that held large numbers of ducks in the vicinity and contributed positively to duck hunting in the WMA and in surrounding areas. However, LDWF terminated the refuge under pressure from private blind owners at nearby (five miles east) Turkey Creek Lake, and many long-time Boeuf hunters subsequently noticed that their duck hunting at Boeuf deteriorated. Two years ago, a group of 50 regular Boeuf duck hunters petitioned LDWF to restore a refuge but this petition was ignored by LDWF. More recently, both LWA and the Louisiana Wildlife Federation have taken up the cause of attempting to show hunter support for use of refuges as a technique that improves duck hunting in an area.

We have met with LDWF staff and made comments at hearings on WMA management and at LWFC meetings on several occasions, most recently at the April meeting of LWFC. What is the substance of LWA's opinion? It starts with a factual observation that the three best duck hunting locales in the state all have refuges within them or in close proximity. The mouth of the Mississippi River area has Delta National Wildlife Refuge. Cameron Parish has Sabine NWR. Catahoula Lake has the mid-lake refuge and also Catahoula NWR on the northeast edge of the lake. The role of these refuges is to keep substantial numbers of waterfowl in the areas, thereby creating opportunities for hunters to attract and kill ducks as the ducks move around the area.

LWA's position is also based on information about how our neighboring state to the north, Arkansas, manages its public hunting lands for duck hunting. In eastern Arkansas, every major WMA has at least one rest area where hunting is not allowed. To take an example that was recently written up with positive reviews in the March-April issue of DU Magazine, Bayou Meto WMA (34,000 acres and similar in many respects to Boeuf WMA) has not one but two refuges that help keep ducks in that vicinity. The refuges there total about 1400 acres, about 4% of the total WMA acreage, and are managed for vegetation and water levels to attract puddle ducks, especially mallards. The refuges there have very strong support from Arkansas hunters and from staff of the Arkansas Fish and Game.

The state of Mississippi has a somewhat different approach. For maintaining quality of the hunting experience it relies on the ten NWRs that exist in the northwest part of the state (from Vicksburg to Memphis) and on limiting hunting to four days per week on WMAs within that area. *Continued next page.*

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At LDWF, there is a different set of attitudes. Their official position is that hunting WMAs over 100% of the acreage is acceptable since hunting must stop by 2 p.m.—therefore, no refuges are needed. The LWA disagrees and advocates restoration of one or more refuges within Boeuf and similar action at other WMAs in broader areas where there is no NWR or private land that serves the refuge function. Fundamentally, LWA's position is based on the common-sense position (observed by most corporate landowners and many hunting clubs) that we cannot hunt 100% of our duck habitat and expect to have ducks stick around to be hunted! We are getting fewer ducks, later ducks, and increasingly it appears, ducks that respond to hunting pressure by returning to more hospitable areas such as eastern Arkansas. We invite LWA members and other duck hunters to join us in continuing to speak out on this important issue of public lands' hunting management. The future of our duck hunting is being compromised!

For more information or to comment, contact Charles Williams at chazbizz@cox.net or 225-250-8623.