



Ducks, Etc...



*Connecticut Waterfowl Association
Fall 2020 Newsletter*

President's Message Happy Holidays!

It has been a trying year for all of us, but through all of that it seems like only yesterday that we were preparing for the waterfowl season that is now in full swing. Now is the time to continue your passion for waterfowling by getting out and making memories. Every season is different and not everyone is better than the next but those are the main reasons we all enjoy waterfowling in the first place.

Hunting for me is the anticipation, preparation, and the memories made afield more than the actual act of harvesting game. Successfully scouting and in turn trying to figure out if a certain tide, set, or blind will work is one of the finer principles in all of hunting. When all your work and preparation come together and produce a successful hunt, that's what's it's all about.

Now that most of us are in mid-season form with ducks and geese it's time to give back some to the resource that we so enjoy. One productive way to help out is by installing and maintaining a wood duck box or two. It looks like the annual CWA Wood Duck Box Day will be on hold for this year, so if interested in a wood duck box or two let me know and we may be able to arrange getting some boxes through the CT DEEP.

Another annual CWA event that will probably be on hold is the Annual Spring Banquet. Remember, all money raised at the dinner or any other CWA fundraiser is money going directly to wetland habitat enhancement, creation, and waterfowl studies here in Connecticut. If anyone

would like to volunteer for the Banquet committee or for any other CWA function, feel free to contact me or any other of our board members. Hope we can all have a great time at the at the annual CWA Spring Banquet (date pending).

Hopefully we will be able to get the CWA Sporting Clays going again this year. Look for info on that September Shoot in the coming months.

CWA would also like remind everyone of our Mentoring Program (details below) that was previously spear-headed by Greg Chasko and has now been taken over by CWA Board Member Christopher Zins (Christopher.zins@uconn.edu). This Program is an all ages mentoring program specific to waterfowling. CWA is actively seeking candidates for both mentors and mentees.

Remember, anyone can contribute by renewing your membership or encouraging someone else conservation minded to also join—all membership revenue is put back into our wetlands.

One last important CWA item is the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Competition. Get any kid you know involved. Entries must be postmarked by March 15th. The winner will be featured on the 2022 CT Duck Stamp. Email Tom Lewoc at lewoc09@gmail.com with any questions.

Let's hope 2021 allows us to get out and hold some fundraising events and get our lives back on track.

Chris Samor



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In Memorial

Sadly, on November 23, 2020, the Connecticut waterfowl conservation community lost a strong supporter with the unexpected and tragic death of Michael F. Enright.

Mike was a career Conservation Officer for the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, a job that fulfilled his life-long dream. Mike was an avid waterfowl hunter throughout his life and after his retirement, continued and amplified his efforts in training waterfowl hunting dogs. Many of his dogs and his client's dogs became highly titled and outstanding hunting dogs.

He had many other talents including photography, painting, decoy carving and writing. He was a frequent contributor to the Upland Hunting Journal blog site.

Mike was a relative "late comer" to CWA. I started training my young pup with him two years ago and made him aware of all the great things that CWA does for waterfowl conservation. The aspect that tipped the scales for Mike to become a member was CWA's Waterfowl Hunter Mentor Program. He clearly recognized that the future of waterfowl hunting depends on bringing in new hunters. He and his two highly trained dogs accompanied me on three Mentored hunts.

During the last fundraising gun raffle for CWA Mike sold nearly one third of the 200 tickets! Such was his influence on his many friends in the hunting community.

Mike was a generous, always jovial person who will be sorely missed by all his friends. May he rest in peace.

Friends of Connecticut Sportsmen

The Friends of Connecticut Sportsmen (FOCS) is a new organization with the mission to inspire and bring together Sportsmen to protect and enhance Connecticut's natural resources and our access to hunting, fishing, trapping, falconry and recreational shooting through a common commitment to education, advocacy and communication. Its primary goal is to provide a voice for Connecticut Sportsmen in the state legislature.

The organization came about through the efforts of the Connecticut Conservation Advisory Council (CCAC), an organization of 25 Sportsmen's groups that provide input to the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) on natural resource issues. The CCAC recognized that Sportsmen needed a stronger presence to counteract the intense lobbying of legislators by animal rights activists.

The FOCS hopes to accomplish this by hiring a full-time pro-Sportsmen lobbyist paid from donations from Sportsmen. Twenty-four Sportsmen's groups, including CWA, have already made donations and there have been many individual contributions also.

This effort is important to all Sportsmen, but critical to waterfowlers, especially coastal hunters. When I was working for the DEEP (DEP, at the time) several times we were able to



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stop legislative proposals that would have severely curtailed coastal hunting access. Currently, there are efforts afoot that could seriously impact waterfowl hunting in the Norwalk area. Unfortunately, these decisions are ultimately made by politicians, not by natural resource professionals.

Link to FOCS on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/659059224897048>

Greg Chasko

Connecticut DEEP Waterfowl Update

No breeding waterfowl or woodcock surveys conducted. No goose banding occurred in 2020. A total of 301 ducks banded in August and September. Avian Influenza samples were taken and blood and feathers taken for a genetic study. Brant productivity surveys were conducted in late November. Production not good, with about 10% young in the fall flight for Atlantic brant. The 2021 Midwinter survey will not be conducted in the Atlantic Flyway.

Through a series of competitive grants, the Migratory Game Bird Program was awarded over \$1,600,000 for both inland and coastal wetland habitat acquisition and restoration. These monies will help to restore over 300 acres of tidal wetland and will help to secure another 600 inland acres of habitat. The DEEP Wildlife Division completed an inland wetland prioritization that will hopefully increase the efficiency and management impact of our inland wetlands.

Crews from the Habitat Program, Wetland Habitat and Mosquito Management (WHAMM) Program, and Migratory Game Bird Program conducted maintenance on 34 inland wetland impoundments including, mowing, grading, reseeding, clearing spillways, removing debris, installation of new inlet piping, and erosion control. Additionally, the WHAMM Program has begun emergency repairs to the tide gate at the Hammock River Wildlife Management Area.

The Migratory Game Bird Program conducted productivity checks at 409 wood duck boxes this season. Seventeen boxes were raised due to water level changes, six were newly installed, and 11 replaced.

New mallard nesting study will begin in April 2021. CT DEEP is looking for assistance in locating active mallard nests. Hens will be trapped and equipped with transmitters to look at nest success, brood rearing habitat use, and molt migration patterns.

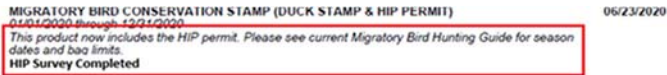
Changes to the HIP program were implemented for the 2021 season. Connecticut is part of a nationwide pilot program to address the problems associated with 3rd party vendor entry of HIP data. In Connecticut, approximately 20% of all HIP certifications are purchased from a third-party vendor. The changes that are being implemented only apply to these third-party vendor transactions, making sure that all HIP questions are answered by the hunter and not a sales clerk. If you already purchase HIP online through DEEP's Online Licensing System, you are answering the HIP questions yourself. This will not change. Your printed license for the HIP portion will look like:



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For all other purchases through third party vendors, these are the changes that are occurring:

1. The HIP certification that is required to legally hunt migratory birds will not be valid until you either call 1-877-337-4868 or go to <https://ct.aspirafocus.com/hunterreporting> to complete the HIP survey.

2. The clerk should inform you that the HIP certification is not valid until you answer the questions yourself through either one of the above methods.

3. The license printed out for you at the store/town clerk will look like this:



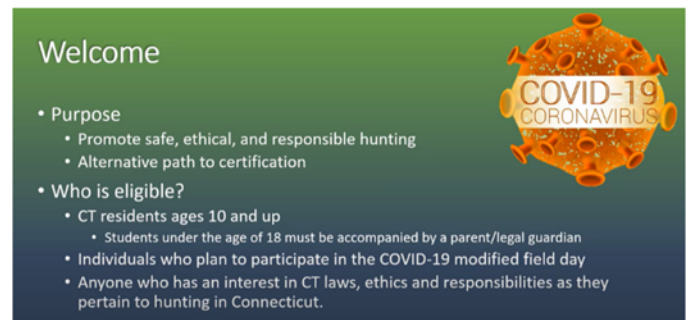
4. Upon completion of the HIP questions, you will be provided a confirmation number. You can either write that number onto your existing license, or go into the online system and reprint a new license. The reprinted license will look like the first example above and indicate “HIP Survey Completed”.

5. This new change of getting a confirmation number is the same process that one follows upon harvesting a turkey or deer.

Min Huang
CT DEEP

Hunter Education with the DEEP: Rising to the Challenge

COVID-19 was a challenge no one saw coming, including the hunting community. While some got extra time to chase turkeys in the spring, the CT Hunter Education Program faced a huge challenge due to state restrictions and the sheer lack of knowledge about the Corona virus. Classes were put on hold indefinitely and the opportunity for the public to learn about hunting was in jeopardy.



After several months of proper planning and hours of proposals, the CT CEFS instructors returned in force with online classes based off of the existing “self-study” courses offered by the state. The classes were offered from August onward with younger lower risk instructors stepping up to handle these classes. A huge effort went on behind the scenes with the Connecticut's Conservation Education/Firearms Safety Division of the DEEP in navigating the bureaucracy and gravity of the situation. A major thanks is owed to the volunteers and employees in this division!



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CWA Board Member Christopher Zins teaching during a firearms hunting class held this year.

The CT DEEP needs volunteer instructors to help teach the future generations and also needs those of all ages and backgrounds. Several CWA members already volunteer as CE/FS instructors and we would love to see more! Whether it is a few hours once a year or leading an entire weekend course, any member participation pays back dividends in the future. If you'd like to participate, please reach out to any board member or the DEEP directly at deep.franklinwildlife@ct.gov!

Chris Zins

Connecticut Waterfowl Association Mentorship Program: Commentary on the Future

For those who don't know me, my name is Christopher and I now serve on the CWA board, specifically helping to run the CWA mentoring program under the guidance of the former and active president. I've spent the past few years

taking out any new hunter that will ask and adding my friends of all background to quack.



Nathan, a 2018 mentee, took his first goose in second hand gear during a mentored hunt.

As we all know, waterfowl hunting tends to become a massive endeavor. There are decoys, calls boats, marksmanship, even more decoys, and treacherous conditions to manage if you want to get out after birds. If you're coming from a background of inland hunting or from a family without a tradition of hunting, those hurdles instantly grow a lot bigger. Looking at it from the inside, it's easy to forget about the times we before we hunted or when we were just learning. Not many people kayak across a pond at 3am prior to deciding to duck hunt...



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The Connecticut Waterfowl Association is truly special in offering a mentoring program for those interested in learning to duck hunt and interest in the program is growing! The Waterfowl Training Days done with the DEEP fill up weeks out and there are many emails behind the scenes answering questions of those who are interested. The way I've described it, duck hunting combines the strategy and obsession of deer hunting with the calling of turkey hunting and the shooting of pheasant hunting. Social media and YouTube showcase the fun in the blind even better now, bringing in more interest from young and older folks alike.

Going into 2021, the CWA board and I are hoping to add some life to the program. There are always mentees in search of guidance but pairing mentors and organizing opportunities that do not burn our sought-after spots is the tough part. It's a tough balancing act we are aware of and no one wants their generosity to come back to bite them, neither do we!

We want to be flexible in the program and encourage more participation! If you're a sea duck hunter who wants to crack out a layout boat, someone who will show someone how to duck call but not burn their "honey hole" spot, or you have a family friend who wants to get into hunting but you're worried about personal liability in showing them, the mentoring program should have a place for you.

This is not just the board's mentoring program but our way as an organization of creating the waterfowling community we want. It creates conservationists who will pay attention to land development, donate money, build wood duck

boxes and hen houses, or simply be a human face someone can think of when a bill to restrict hunting in Connecticut comes up.

If you're interested in building this community, reach out to the board or myself! There is form online for those interested in being a mentor and there are liability waivers as well as policies stating mentees cannot return to a spot you show them without your permission. This is our chance to protect hunting and promote conservation in the present as well as into the future!



Chris Zins



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2021 Connecticut Duck Stamp

[www.https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Wildlife/CT-Duck-Stamp](https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Wildlife/CT-Duck-Stamp)



A great way to start 2021!

Rick Boucher

Congratulations to Julia Phillips, Connecticut DEEP, Connecticut Migratory Bird Committee and Connecticut Waterfowlers Association!

Connecticut is the first state to require art for its Migratory Bird Stamp to be from Connecticut residents - grades K-12! In the past, professional artists nation-wide were eligible to have their art published as the Connecticut "Duck Stamp". This was very desirable for commercial artists as it held great financial promise.

Since its inception in 1987, the "Duck Stamp Program" has been administered by Connecticut Waterfowlers Association, a not for profit Connecticut conservation group.

Monies raised from the sale of Connecticut Duck Stamps are directed to specific wetland conservation efforts - all within Connecticut. Stamps can be purchased by anyone interested in protection and promoting Connecticut wetland conservation.



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Decoys for Sale

LL Bean:

- Cork Black Ducks Coastal (huge) 4
- Cork Black Ducks (large) 4
- Cork Drake Pintails 2

Herter's:

- Model 84 Black Ducks, corked and keeled with hand carved wooden heads 6
- Model 62 GW teal 12
- Model 62 scaup 11
- Model 73 Scaup, corked and keeled 21

Restle:

- Burlapped or corked mallards with weighted keels 24
- Canvasback 2

Unknown maker:

- Cork Scaup 2
- Huge cork canvasback, keeled 2

Assorted other decoys, including a few plastics. Most decoys have good cord, ss/brass swivels, and good weights and are in very good condition. I would ask folks to inquire via e-mail of their interest and I would supply my telephone # and/or pictures.

kings04@earthlink.net

Bag and Decoys



Complete rig includes two dozen Brant decoys (Carry-lite aqua keels) and nice decoy bag. Decoys are rigged with weighted lines in strings of from two to six decoys. Rig is like new, only used twice. A bonus \$65.00 Bill Saunders Brant call included. \$200.00.

Call Greg @ 860-388-7038 or email at mallard1954@gmail.com.



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Canada Floaters



**10 Greenhead Gear lesser Canada floaters.
Flocked heads with slot bags. Used only three or
four times. \$200.**

richchmiel@sbcglobal.net

860-739-5586