



# ***Ducks, Etc...***

***Connecticut Waterfowl Association  
Fall 2022 Newsletter***



## **President's Message**

It is no secret amongst my family that Columbus Day may be my favorite “holiday” of the year. For this glorious weekend, Monday was a day off from work and we (typically) see the early waterfowl season coinciding with the re-opening of blackfish (tog) season; two of my absolute favorite experiences outdoors. More importantly, no one really ever throws a good “Columbus Day” party, so I know those days are not booked for anything else except getting outdoors!



Granted, all of the holidays during the year are all a wonderful chance to celebrate and spend time with friends and family and I enjoy the open hunting seasons around Thanksgiving and Christmas. But often, the enjoyment is lost trying to take advantage of days off from work/school all

jammed packed with coordinating travel, squeezing in every get-together, cooking meals, packing the truck, entertaining the kids, and no one ever gets to truly unwind and “relax”. Something of which I definitely did on one body of water or another this past weekend!

In the conversation(s) after I proposed to my wife years ago, I may have slipped a line or two somewhere where I mentioned that this is a sacred time of year for me and something I always look forward to and will always participate in, until my mind or body doesn't function any more. She already knows that kids and I will be nowhere to be found for their scheduled activities, parties, or athletic practice drop off for at least a couple of days (and for the next months' worth of Saturday mornings)! And as many times as we have invited her to join us, she usually elects to stay home (clean, dry, and warm).

Speaking of temperature, I swear the individuals at work during the recent brisk rain-soaked days must have thought that I was nuts. Every time the wind blew by our windows with cold soaking rain, I became more and more excited to get outside. Face pressed against glass, I was counting down the moments until the weekend, looking forward to the start of the season and colder days ahead! I'll take a cold rainy day in waders over any 100° weather with 100% humidity almost every single time. My co-workers, on the other hand, had more of a somber mood, having to postpone their apple picking plans, turn on the heat, and break out their cold weather jackets. Hopefully the cooler weather will last and it is not just a tease before warmer days come back again.

Don't get me wrong, I love the early goose season, late season beach trips, as well as fresh apple pie this time of year. But, come Saturday mornings for the next few weeks don't count on meeting me at the local farm with all of the crowds to pick out



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the perfect pumpkin. (Although I do promise there will be plenty of empty containers of apple cider donuts in my truck and the garage recycling bin). The kick off to the early waterfowl opener means getting back out to the marshes and wetland areas where my mind is put to peace. Even between the seasons, I'll be taking the boys out pheasant hunting or just a walk in the woods just to get outside. Something about watching the flights of wood ducks or some late teal and maybe even a mallard throughout the morning all while the sun rises and reflects off of the fall foliage, is something that cannot be put into words. I hope you all appreciate the same experiences and enjoy your time outdoors. Good Luck to all those of you heading out for the early opener. Hopefully you were able to enjoy the "holiday".

Getting back to our newsletter, the fall season gives us a chance to catch up on summer events as well as open the door for the new seasons. Below as always, you'll find a bunch of things going on with the CWA and ways to get involved. First and foremost is our annual CWA dinner - Our largest event/fundraiser of the year coming up at the end of October! We have to notify the Elks club of our final numbers soon, so don't delay getting your tickets. Dinner ticket sales will close on October 19th, 2022! We have a TON of raffle and auction items for the event, as well as great opportunities to meet other members. Hope you can all come to the dinner.

Previously this summer, the CWA also brought back and had a successful Waterfowl Training Day in conjunction with the DEEP Hunter Safety Program helping to support both new and interested waterfowl hunters in CT. Thanks goes to all of the people during the day and behind the scenes that made the day possible.

For those of you who are actively hunting this season, please consider supporting the waterfowl

project of Dr. Erika Ebbs and the collection of waterfowl entrails for her parasite research. Details are below on what she is looking for as well as her contact information for pick up and coordination of specimens.

In the months ahead, I hope you all have supportive families and spouses, as well as a "season" you look forward to. As of Monday night, the kids were exhausted, my truck was disgusting, and there is now some mixture of damp clothes and gear still hanging in the garage to dry. Everything was "blessed" with some type of marsh mud or bait remnants (which will require a good scrubbing at a later time). For now, I am going to still enjoy the moment and look forward to better times in the weeks and months ahead: enjoying the marshes and woods.

Lastly, I am reaching out to all CWA members, friends, families, and hunting buddies for help with content moving into next year! This includes pictures and goings on for everything from your "new" hunter's (young or old) first trip out, new pup/dogs, successful harvests, carvings, collectible purchases as well as other activities that members are participating in. Along those lines, please pass along any events that we'd like to pass on to the membership. Far too often we hear of decoy shows, Memorabilia auctions, volunteer opportunities, or waterfowl events only through word of mouth or after the event is over. Along those lines, I would love to showcase the next generation of waterfowl hunters/carvers for all to see and be proud of. Please send in pictures or content to: [ctwaterfowlers@gmail.com](mailto:ctwaterfowlers@gmail.com)

Moving forward, I'd like to add this to a Highlights and Calendar section of the newsletter for events and opportunities for all of our members to see.

As always, stay safe, clean up your spent shells, and take a kid outdoors!

Tom (TJ) Lewoc JR.



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## **Annual CWA Fall Banquet**

**Don't wait till the last minute to purchase your tickets for the Annual fall banquet! We have to give the Elks club final dinner counts, sooner than later, so dinner ticket sales will close on October 19, 2022.**

**As in years past, we will have a family style arrangement of Beef Tenderloin, Chicken Marsala, and Stuffed Shrimp. Doors open at 5:30 and dinner will be served at 6:30 pm. Following the meal we will have auctions and great raffles for the evening. For anyone who would like to purchase a table of 8 we'll give the table captain \$100 in raffle tickets for the evening. Bring your friends, family, or old hunting buddies out for a great evening helping to raise funds for the conservation of waterfowl and wetlands in the State of Connecticut.**

**Dinner tickets are available [\*\*HERE\*\*](#).**

**We'll have a ton of gear, clothing, decoys, prints, collectibles, as well as firearms from sponsors such as Mossberg, YETI, Muller Chokes, Drake, Sitka and many more. Not to mention some amazing hand carved calls, decoys, and prints from Artists such as Keith Mueller, Chet Reneson, Rich Chimiel, Carl Weston and many more. This is a great chance to meet up with other waterfowl hunters, collectors, and conservationists in the State of Connecticut. With the limited seating to only 100 guests you'll have a great chance at the many items we'll have to win!**

## **Waterfowl Training Day**

**On August 20th we were able to bring back the annual Waterfowl Training Day hosted by the CWA and the Connecticut DEEP Conservation Education/Firearms Safety Program.**



**The day combined both "in class" and field training where attendees were able to see first-hand all aspects of waterfowl hunting from decoy setup through break-down of a harvested goose for cooking (and sampling of some great cooked waterfowl)!**





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I would like to first thank the Guilford Sportsmen's Association for allowing us the use of their great facility for the day. On top of that I'd like to also thank Tom Donlon (CE/FS Program Coordinator), and all of the CWA volunteers that made the day a great success. Attendees from start to finish were given phenomenal expertise, tips, advice, and had questions answered by all of our volunteers.



Thank you to everyone that donated their time to cook or haul gear, boats, and equipment from all corners of Connecticut to help pull off the day. Those individuals include Matt Babb, Dieter Bromkamp, Rick Boucher, Greg Chasko, Rich Chimiel, Tom & Jack Entwistle, and Mike Gregonis. After the great feedback and support, we are already looking to plan next year's event!



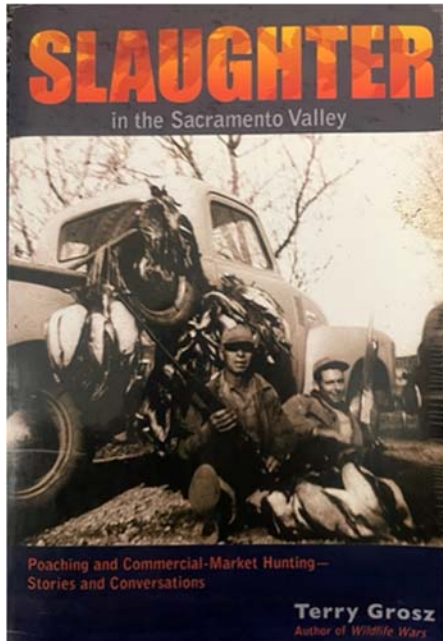


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## **Waterfowl Items to Check out**



It is not that often that you hear of a book written about waterfowl or waterfowl hunting. Not to mention, it is even less often that I have any time to even contemplate starting a long email, let alone sit down and be able to read a complete book! This past summer however, I found myself at many kid activities where there was a “parent” area to wait for the event to be over, rather than being present right with the kids. Still following some of the COVID protocols of years past the parents were not crammed into the same area or room as the kids which gave me a chance to sit down and kill some time, before having to cart everyone to the next event.

Wanting to turn off the phone and disconnect with technology for a bit, I was recommended the 2017 book “The Slaughter in Sacramento Valley” by Terry Grosz (a retired Californian Game Warden who later worked for the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service) to help occupy some time during the evenings and Saturday mornings. The

person who recommended the book inadvertently heard of the author having recently passed in 2019 and thought I’d be interested in his stories.

The book itself centers around Terry’s experiences in the later 60’s and early 70’s as a new game warden fighting against the market exploits of ducks and geese on many of the rice farms and waterfowl areas of which he was stationed in California. With the changes to waterfowl conservation at the federal level with the Waterfowl Treaty act of 1918, he continually had an uphill battle against poachers and farmers frustrated with the destruction of their crops and deep-rooted poor farming areas of California finding ways to earn money by supplying the black market restaurant trade. There are stories of being shot at, rescuing boating victims, and countless manhunts staking out and waiting for poachers to be caught in the act.

The book does a great job telling many of Terry’s experiences chasing down and trying to decrease the slaughter of thousands of waterfowl via nighttime drags and illegal out-of-season tactics for the harvest of the birds. There are even chapters where the former poachers and market gunners are interviewed years later by Terry and his wife on their side of the perspective and the lives as they grew up within the gunning community. This is one of many books written by Terry on the true reality of wildlife enforcement and the history of his career.





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## **Discount for CWA members**



The CWA board is always looking for additional incentives and perks for our membership. Beyond helping with our volunteer efforts, raising funding, and supporting the wetland and waterfowl conservation efforts in the State of Connecticut we want to also find ways to help support our members! We have reached out to a number of vendors seeking the opportunity to help give a discount or support for CWA member purchases and opportunities. Our latest discount is provided through Drake Waterfowl where CWA members can receive a 30% discount on a full priced item from their on-line store using the code while checking out:

**FE20CWA-20-FSFE20CWA**

**Drake online store**

## **CWA Merchandise**

Don't forget that we have now added Hooded Sweatshirts to our line of CWA merchandise for purchase both on-line and at all of our events. We now have a wide range of sizes available and hope to add in additional items down the road. Take a look at what we have on the site from CWA branded YETI tumblers, camo CWA hats, as well as our tried and true short and long-sleeved tee shirts.

**CWA Merchandise Page**





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## **Eider Request**



Following an unusual episode of mortality caused by avian influenza this spring, the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) anticipates a decline in the number of common eiders in the St. Lawrence Estuary in 2023 and beyond. Many of these birds migrate south to winter in southern New England. In order not to further jeopardize the situation of the species, CWS is calling on the cooperation of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island hunters to:

- Reduce, on a voluntary basis, their harvest of common eiders for the 2022-23 season
- Refrain from harvesting female common eiders or young. Females and young are brown in color while males are white and black

For about 20 years, the population of Common Eiders nesting in Québec's colonies in the St. Lawrence Estuary has been stable. One of the reasons the population is not increasing is that recruitment (percentage of young in the

population) is probably just sufficient to replace adult mortality (from natural causes and hunting). In the spring of 2022, an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) struck at some of the largest eider colonies in the estuary, and a non-exhaustive count of carcasses recovered allowed CWS to estimate that between 5 and 15% of nesting females died. Many nests were abandoned by the females, and very few crèches (groupings of adult females with their broods) were observed in the estuary. As a result, CWS biologists expect the number of young birds for 2022 to be particularly low and the population to be lower in the coming years. While daily bag for eiders in the Atlantic Flyway states is currently limited to no more than three of which only one can be a hen, we are also asking Connecticut hunters to also voluntarily refrain from shooting brown eiders.

Southern New England is the wintering terminus for many eiders breeding in Canada. It is irresponsible to ask Canadian hunters to forgo harvesting hens and young birds only to have them shot when they arrive here. In order to allow time for eiders to recover from the recent A.I. outbreak (the same one that decimated the Northeast poultry industry and caused egg prices to skyrocket) we are asking our responsible waterfowl hunters to also pass on the hens and young eiders that cross in front of their barrels this year.

From the DEEP side of things, Min Huang also sent out a request for all sea duck hunters to consider, after seeing a decrease in the eider numbers due to the outbreak of avian influenza.



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## **National Science Foundation Parasite Study - Help Needed**



**National Science Foundation**

With the early season open and the next season right around the corner, we wanted to remind everyone that Dr. Erica Ebbs is looking for duck/goose internal organs for their parasite study. Ultimately, they are looking for the whole bird, (breasted out is fine) - but would also be okay with removing the internal viscera which can be frozen. They can travel locally to pick up birds, or can pay to have birds shipped. Their new project is targeting specific species of birds (listed below) to get a good sampling of waterfowl on the Atlantic flyway. But they are happy to receive any waterfowl species, including sea ducks.

### **Species of interest:**

**Spatula clypeata - Northern Shoveler**  
**Anas crecca - Eurasian Teal**  
**A. platyrhynchos - Mallard**  
**Mareca americana - American Wigeon**  
**Aythya affinis - Lesser Scaup**  
**A. americana - Red Head**  
**A. collaris - Ring Necked Duck**  
**Bucephala albeola - Bufflehead**  
**Branta canadensis - Canada Goose**

Your harvested waterfowl can support a National Science Foundation project to understand the parasite communities and ecology of waterfowl in the Atlantic Flyway. We are seeking hunted ducks (dabblers, divers and sea ducks) and geese from the New England area to be included in a three-year study (project summary below).

**If you are interested in donating birds (whole or viscera) please contact:**

**Dr. Erika Taylor Ebbs, Ph.D.**  
**Assistant Professor of Biology**  
**Purchase College, SUNY**  
**[erika.ebbs@purchase.edu](mailto:erika.ebbs@purchase.edu)**  
**203-665-8267**





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(From the NSF Website): How Host-parasite interactions are maintained over ecological time and evolutionary time (i.e., many generations) is a significant biological question, with real-world applications in medicine, public health, and conservation. It is often overlooked, though, that a single host can contain a diverse community (i.e., intracommunity) of parasites. The proposed research focuses on duck hosts and seeks to understand their parasite intracommunity structure and predictability. Ducks transmit several diseases of human importance, including Avian Influenza Virus (AIV) and Human Cercarial Dermatitis (HCD). As a group, ducks can be divided based on ecological traits (habitat selection, feeding behaviors) into two groupings, dabbling and diving ducks. Prior studies have suggested that dabbling ducks may support a higher rate of transmission of AIV and HCD. This work will characterize infra communities of four dabbling and four diving duck species within the Eastern USA, to determine if intracommunity are specific to host species and/or ecological group. We will look deeply into the genetics of recovered parasite populations to determine if host species and/or ecological groups help explain critical public health parameters, such as higher rates of transmission. Human-induced environmental change has resulted in significant changes to duck populations, such that some species are thriving in altered habitats, and others are in decline. There is thus an urgency to understand the ecology and evolution of duck parasite intracommunity to better model diseases such as AIV and HCD in a changing world.



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**Connecticut**



*Waterfowl Association*

Raffles and Auction items from:



## **Connecticut Waterfowl Association Fall Banquet 2022**

**Friday October 28<sup>th</sup>**

**Elks Lodge - Westbrook, CT**

**Time: 6:30 pm– 9:30pm Limited Seating set at 100!**

**Beef Tenderloin, Chicken Marsala, Baked Stuffed**

**Shrimp – Served Family Style – Cash Bar**



Buy your tickets online at

[ctwaterfowlers.org](http://ctwaterfowlers.org)

( scan here for tickets!)

**Get your tickets by October 19 (last deadline)**

8 people per table

\$100 Worth of Raffle Tickets will be given to any

“table captain” who purchases a full table of 8

**Featured Artists:** Chet Reneson, Keith

Mueller, James Prosek

**Featured Sponsors:** Muller Chokes, Yeti,

Sitka, Tanglefree, Drake, Mossberg, and

Divebomb

**Featured Carvers:** Rich Chmiel, Peter

Revicki, Bill Embacher, Chet Reneson and

more!