



Ducks, Etc...



Connecticut Waterfowl Association Spring 2020 Newsletter

President's Message

This is my final President's Message, as I will be stepping down come June 30, 2020 after six years at the helm.

My involvement with CWA began in the early 1980's when I was the State's Waterfowl Biologist. It continued through the 1990's and 2000's when I served as Assistant Director of the Wildlife Division. The CWA was always a great partner to the Wildlife Division providing volunteers for goose banding, wood duck box checks and a variety of research projects. I will always be appreciative of this great organization's efforts which have greatly benefitted conservation in Connecticut!

Shortly after I retired in 2009, I approached CWA with the idea of a Waterfowl Hunter Mentor Program. The concept was well received by the CWA Board of Directors. So, I set out on what turned out to be an incredibly arduous task. Developing waiver forms, getting the proper insurance and so on. But, we got 'er done! It is the only Program of its type in Connecticut and has been a great success! Over 80% of Mentees who had not previously pursued waterfowl and participated in a Mentored Hunt, purchased hunting licenses the following year!

Over the last six years, the CWA has made great progress due to the efforts of the Officers and Board of Directors. Membership has increased and our unique Banquet continues to be a fun event that generates significant funds for conservation. We developed a Hunter Training Day that has become very popular and we re-established our annual Sporting Clay shoot that

has evolved into another fund-raising event. We also vastly improved our Website which is now very professional and informative. None of this would have been possible without the great support of CWA members!

As I depart as President, I have made efforts to ensure that the great legacy of CWA continues. One aspect of that is the make-up of our Board of Directors. Young folks are the future of waterfowl hunting and geezers have the needed historical knowledge and experience. The Board, that I fully expect will be elected at the end of June, will include members from every decade from 20-year olds to sixty-year olds!

I am confident that the CWA will continue to be a major force for wetland and waterfowl conservation in Connecticut well into the future!
Best to all!

Greg Chasko

CWA Annual Election of Officers and Board Members

As per the by-laws of the CWA, annual elections occur on July 1. This year's slate of candidates follows:

OFFICERS

President: Chris Samor
Vice-President: Tom Lewoc, Jr.
Secretary: Mike Gregonis
Treasurer: Chris Samor



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Deiter Broukamp
Rich Chmiel
Tom Entwistle
Pete Johnson
Pete Revicki
Christopher Zins

HONORARY DIRECTOR

Greg Chasko

You can vote “yea” or “nay” for the entire slate or for any individual nominee on the CWA Website “Contact US” tab.

Conservation News

May, 2020

2019 Summary and 2020 Update



In 2019, CWA advanced conservation across the state through partnerships and purchases. To

enhance wetlands, CWA partnered with the DEEPs Wildlife Division to replace water control structures at Nehantic and Natchaug State Forests. To assist with maintaining the dikes that house the control structures for these and many other state-owned impoundments, CWA purchased and donated a mower to the Wildlife Division. The mowing of vegetation helps maintain the integrity of dikes and improves access to impoundment control structures so that water levels can be managed. Throughout 2019, the Waterfowl Program made great strides towards maintaining and improving the 93 state-owned wetland impoundments.



CWA members and other volunteers assisted the Waterfowl Program with Canada Goose banding efforts at 31 sites across the state. A few CWA members assisted the Waterfowl Program with Wood Duck nest box monitoring to assess annual productivity. And, CWA conducted its annual wood duck box building day using materials provided by the Wildlife Division. This effort provides additional nesting structures to establish new wood duck nesting opportunities and replace boxes that have fallen in disrepair.



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In 2020, despite the difficulties presented by COVID-19, the Waterfowl Program continues to be productive working on several wetland projects including a Wyndham Land Trust marsh in Pomfret and a restoration of Bride Brook estuary at Rocky Neck State Park in East Lyme. The Pomfret project will enhance approximately 65 acres resulting in a functioning wetland which will support breeding waterfowl, bitterns, sora and Virginia rails and a resting and feeding area for migrating ducks and geese. The 82-acre Bride Brook project (which is dependent on receiving Federal grant funds) will restore tidal flow to the marsh. This will enhance the health and integrity of the ecosystem, which furnishes habitat for breeding black ducks, mallards, and gadwalls as well as providing stopover habitat for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds. Bride's Brook also hosts the largest run of alewives in the state. CWA is a partner on these projects.

Shotgun Raffle



Browning Cynergy Field

Tickets \$20 - Only 200 Tickets
Winner chooses gauge (12 or 20) and barrel length (26" or 28"). Drawing September 13, 2020 at CWA's Sporting Clay shoot at the Guilford Sportsmen's Association. Winner need not be present. Tickets:

<http://www.ctwaterfowlers.org/browning-raffle.html>

Gun provided by
Sportsmen's Outpost, Wolcott, CT

Annual Fundraising Banquet



The CWA's Annual Fundraising Banquet is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, August 9, 2020 at the Westbrook Elks Lodge in Westbrook. The Covid situation is still a concern. When we have confirmation or further information, we will let all members know via email.

CWA Annual Sporting Clays Event



September 13th
Guilford Sportsmen's Association
Hart Road, Guilford, CT
More details in the coming weeks.



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THE OSAGE ORANGE INCIDENT

It was 1974. Before the internet, cell phones and social media and computers were in their infancy and the size of Volkswagens. The good old real world!

My college roommate, Rick and I were hunting in Western Maryland where he lived. This is not the famed Eastern Shore or southern Maryland (on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay where I grew up). But, the cool thing about Western Maryland is that it sits at the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains and is mostly undeveloped and agricultural. At the time, it hosted wild quail, naturalized pheasants and an abundance of rabbits. Ducks were rare.

We were students at the University of Maryland which is located just outside of Washington D.C. and close to Baltimore. As a result, the majority of the student body are urbanites. When I met Rick in my sophomore year, I was pleased that I had met someone like me who enjoyed all things outdoors. We became fast friends and hunted, fished and camped together every chance we could.

The day this “incident” took place was during the Thanksgiving Day break. We had been hunting and had bagged some pheasants, several quail and a few rabbits. It had been a fine morning! We both were paying our own way through college, so in addition to having a lot of fun, we had much needed, money saving protein.

We were on our way back home rattling down the road in Rick’s rusted and mostly busted late 1950’s Ford pick-up truck when we witnessed a nearly unbelievable sight. We passed a stock tank that was loaded with mallards! Rick had permission to hunt this farm and we excitedly devised a plan. Now, in case you don’t know, a stock tank is an artificial depression created by excavating a spot, usually spring fed, to provide water for livestock. The spoil is deposited on one side which creates a hill about 20 feet high. So, it presented us with a perfect opportunity to set up a sneak and jump these birds!

We crawled up the side of the hill, peeked over the top and saw at least 50 ducks feeding contently right below us. On the count of three we jumped up and flushed the birds. When the smoke had cleared, we had five ducks down.

We were ecstatic! Pretty soon though, reality set in. We had five plump mallards, four drakes and one hen floating on the pond, but no way to retrieve them! There was no wind, so they were not going to blow ashore. We had no dog, no waders (which wouldn’t have helped anyway as stock ponds are steep sided and deep), so we had a conundrum.

We saw a hedgerow above the pond and being the smart (?) college boys that we were, we thought that it could provide a solution. Maybe we could find a downed limb to scoop them up with. When we got to the hedgerow, we found no such limb, but we did find that most of the trees were Osage oranges. These trees produce large fruits, a little bigger than a soft ball, called “hedge apples.” They are heavy, and look like big yellow round brains. The ground was cluttered with them We



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concluded that we could “splash” the ducks to shore if we threw the fruits on the opposite side of the birds! So, we rolled about a hundred of the fruits down to the pond’s edge and sure enough, we were able to splash our prizes in. It took quite a while and our arms were sore, but it surely was worth it!

I still wonder what the farmer thought the next time he saw the stock tank, filled with a flotilla of hedge apples and a scattering of feathers!

Greg Chasko