# Summary of Waterfow 1 Hunter Bag Checks at Shepody National Wildlife Area on October 1 and 2, 1976 

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Hunter bag checks were conducted for the second consecutive year on the Shepody National Wildlife Area on opening day of the waterfowl hunting season, Friday October 1, and on Saturday October 2, to determine waterfowl harvest statistics and related hunter performance activities. The results indicate an increase in number of hunters present and hours hunted when compared to a similar survey one year prior to this (Malone, 1975). Total number of waterfowl killed was, however, less than that of the previous year, most likely due to the fair weather conditions present during this two-day survey period. Hatching year birds accounted for 72 per cent and B7ue-winged Teal for 55 per cent of the total kill.

## Method

Checks were run from the gate at the east end of the National Wildlife Area as hunters left after both the morning and evening hunts. Standard questionnaire forms were compiled for each party and all waterfowl examined for species, sex, and age determination. During the interim between morning and evening checks hunters were surveyed at three

[^0]other access points in the National Wildlife Area, however, the limited data from this source was not incorporated into the tables contained herein.

## Results

## (a) Waterfow Kill

Relatively clear and windless weather conditions in addition to a bright moon throughout the night were probably the greatest contributing factors to this year's reduced waterfowl kill. As hunters moved onto the area before sunrise ducks were frightened off and remained distant throughout the day, presumably returning to feed again at night. Kill statistics are presented in Table 1. Blue-winged Teal made up more than half of the total kill (55 per cent), followed by American Green-winged Teal (16 per cent), and Black Duck ( 13 per cent). Immature birds accounted for 72 per cent of the total kill, while the ratio of male to female birds killed was fairly equal. Hunters reported a crippling loss of nine birds, however, the actual loss is likely much higher.

## (b) Hunter Statistics

The number of hunters present and particularly the number of hours hunted increased noticeably over those of the previous year (Table 2A). This could have been the result of this year's opening day coupled with a week-end. Both the kill per hunter and kill per hour figures are quite low. Except for two hunters from Hillsborough, all hunters surveyed originated from Moncton or Riverview.

Approximately 70 per cent, or 12 of 17 parties, employed a reasonable means of retrieval (Table 2B).
(c) Hunting throughout the National Wildlife Area

An estimated 80 per cent of hunting activity occurred within Impoundments Nos. 1 and 2 at the east end of the National Wildlife Area. One party was observed to walk along dikes into the interior of the area; another gained access to small natural ponds in the west end via the Mid-way road; several parties camped in the National Wildife Area, entering via the 0'Regan property off Highway 114, and hunted natural ponds on the central northwest side; and one party hunted the west end, gaining access by boat via the Shepody River.

## Discussion and Recommendations

Poor hunter success during this two-day period is apparently a result of good weather conditions. Hunting effort increased over a similar survey period last year. Blue-winged Teal were the most heavily killed species of waterfowl.

A policy regarding camping on the National Wildlife Area should be implemented. If gates are not erected at the various access points to deter vehicle access, then litter containers should be installed and serviced.

To ease hunting pressure on opening day the waterfowl hunting season should be initiated on a mid-week day.

Enforcement of migratory game bird laws should be stepped up on that National Wildlife Area during the first week of the hunting season.

Violations observed during the two-day period included shooting before and after legal hours, shooting at protected non-game species of birds, hunting while intoxicated, and a suspected case of killing more than the allowable limit. Excessive shooting and "sky-busting" were readily apparent.

As development of impoundments continues, and as the hunting public learns of the good potential waterfowl hunting on the National Wildlife Area, use by hunters will undoubtedly increase rapidly in the following years. It is essential that management practices aimed at establishing quality hunting on the National Wildlife Area be implemented before hunters have a chance to develop poor hunting habits. Not to learn from past mistakes encountered with similar problems at Tintamarre NWA in the past few years will only show our ineptitude at management of National Wildlife Areas. Specific regulations to ensure quality hunting in the fall of 1977 should be enacted as soon as possible.

Literature Cited

Malone, Michael F. 1975. Summary of waterfowl hunter bag checks at Shepody National Wildlife Area on October 1 and 4, 1975. Canadian Wildlife Service, Sackville, N.B. Internal Report.

Table 1. Species, sex, and age composition of waterfowl killed on October 1 and 2, 1976, at Shepody National Wildlife Area


Table 2A. Hunter Bag Check Statistics, Shepody National Wildlife Area, 1976

| Date | Number hunters <br> checked | Number of <br> parties | Hours <br> hunted | Total ducks <br> killed | Kil1 per <br> hunter | Kil1 per <br> hour |
| ---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| October 1 | 31 | 11 | 120 | 47 | 1.51 | 0.39 |
| October 2 | 14 | 6 | 58 | 14 | 1.0 | 0.24 |

Table 2B. Hunting method

| Technique | Number of parties |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Jump shooting (no means of retrieval) | October 1 | October 2 |
| Blind, decoys | 0 | 1 |
| Blind, decoys, boat | 2 | 1 |
| Blind, boat | 2 | 1 |
| Boat (or canoe) | 1 | 0 |
| Boat, decoys | 1 | 1 |
| Boat, dog | 1 | 0 |
| Boat, blind, decoys, dog(s) | 1 | 2 |


[^0]:    * In partial fulfilment of Canadian Wildlife Service Contract No. 76-77-A22, October, 1976

