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Summary of Hunter Observations
Opening Day on the Tintamarre and
Missaquash National Wildlife Areas
October 1, 1975

Observation of hunter activity was carried out opening day of the waterfowl hunting season on the Tintamarre National Wildlife Area and Missaquash Marsh. The Tintamarre NWA includes nine impoundments enclosing a total area of 260 acres. There are three access roads, one entering through Jolicure, N.B. giving access to Large Lake, Long Lake, and Front Lake. A second, the Valley Throop road, leads to Impoundments 1 - 5, 10, and 11, with the third leading to Beach Pond (Impoundment 6). Observations were carried out on the road leading to the majority of Tintamarre, Impoundment 1 - 5, 10, and 11. The Missaquash Marsh includes three impoundments including a large natural marsh, all totalling an area of 940 acres. There are two access roads to this marsh, however, one is privately owned and, due to its condition, is of very limited use. All hunters observed entered via the main access road adjacent to Carter's garage.

Observations were carried out on both areas for a period of time not exceeding two hours. Detailed hunter bag checks were impossible due to lack of manpower, multiple access roads, as well as the number of man hours of observation needed.

Weather conditions were more than fair, with light to moderate winds from the southwest, cloud cover approximately 20 per cent, and air temperature of 15⁰ C. Observations were carried out on the Missaquash Marsh starting at 9:15 a.m., whereas prime hunting hours are around sunrise and shortly thereafter. In spite of this, seven vehicles were

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parked at the base of the dikes at the marsh entrance and nine more were parked up on the dikes at the entrance to Impoundment 7. Two trailers were also parked in the area, one of which remained for three days. Ten hunting parties were observed, three of which hunted from blinds visible from the road. Only one of those blinds was constructed, the other two consisting of natural stands of cat-tail (*Typha latifolia*). Of the remaining seven parties, two had returned from boats and five were jump shooting from dikes. Due to the size of Impoundment 7 (800 acres) it was impossible to determine the total hunting pressure although shots were frequent throughout the area. Of the ten parties encountered, one party of two had a Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*) and two had Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*); a second party of four, although hunting apart, had collectively bagged one Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*), two American Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca carolinensis*), and one American wigeon (*Anas americana*). A third party of four had five Black Ducks. Four parties, all of whom hunted from the dikes, had nothing. The three remaining parties continued to hunt from their blinds, two of the three blinds contained at least three people per blind, while the third contained two individuals.

In the whole area observed for two hours, only one dog was seen, but the hunters felt most of the people who went in early that morning had not come out up to that time. All hunters encountered had been in since before sunrise.

Arrival on the Tintamarre NWA at 11:15 a.m. revealed two vehicles parked at the control structure for Impoundment 11, however, two boats observed the previous day were gone. Down at the entrance to

Impoundment 1, two vehicles were observed. One was occupied by a party of three, with one Blue-winged Teal as total bag since sunrise, over four hours hunting. A second party of two walking dikes returned to the second vehicle with nothing and reported two more parties of two were still out and had nothing. Hunters were known to still be hunting from three well constructed blinds on the back dike of Impoundment 2. Hunter activity increased in the afternoon with the arrival of four more parties, only one of which had a visible means of retrieval.

During the evening, hunter observations were carried out on Beach Pond. During the hours of 6:00 p.m and 9:00 p.m. four parties of two hunters each were observed walking dikes. In addition there were two hunters in a constructed blind and two in a natural stand of bur-reed (*Sparganium* spp.). The two hunting from the natural cover shot one American Green-winged Teal. The two hunters in the constructed blind were seen to shoot two Ring-necked Ducks (*Aythya collaris*) and a Wood Duck, however, a final bag check was impossible. The four parties hunting from the dikes had no birds.

Discussion

During the evening hunt on the Tintamarre NWA, the number of hunters observed and the number of shots heard indicated very heavy hunting pressure but the number of kills was very low. This was partially due to the fact that the density of hunters per unit area was very high, creating a tendency for the hunters to fire while ducks were well out of range. This also kept the ducks high and away from more cautious hunters. These long range shooting habits may also contribute to a high

per cent of crippling loss observed in previous years (Barkhouse, 1973). Hunters also indicated a very low per cent recovery of killed birds, since the most popular form of hunting seemed to be jump shooting from dikes with no means of retrieval. In a relatively short period of observation, few violations were observed, although there was one case of shooting without a plug. Careless hunter activity was very predominant. Close proximity of hunters required cautious shooting, however, hunters constantly found each other in crossfire at close range and made little or no effort to avoid such situations.

Alcoholic beverage, largely in the form of beer, was very prevalent. It is felt that controls should be strictly enforced on this aspect of hunter activity. In addition, I feel that hunter capacity far exceeds safe and practical, as well as environmental limits, on opening day, and controls should be instigated on access roads to limit the number of hunters per unit area, as well as the numbers and spacing of blinds. It is also strongly recommended hunters be forced to have some means of retrieval other than rubber boots, preferably a boat or suitably trained dog. I feel it would be beneficial for wildlife personnel to have some sort of enforcement authority or at least easy quick access to enforcement personnel, possibly by radio. The fact remains that it is difficult to "ask" someone if he or she has a plugged gun.

I would also like to recommend hunter bag check stations be set up each opening day, and for at least the two following days for the dual purpose of collecting statistics on which to base future hunting regulations and a means by which to regulate hunters and enforce these regulations. I feel some controls are required as present ones seem inadequate.

Stephen Beauchamp
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Table 1. Summary of hunter observations on the Tintamarre and Missaquash National Wildlife Areas, October 1, 1975

Area	No. parties observed	No. hunters in party	Means of retrieval	Birds shot	Birds per hunter
Missaquash	10	2	boat	3	1.5
		4	boat	4	1.0
		4	boat and dog	5	1.2
		2	none	-	-
		2	none	-	-
		2	none	-	-
		2	none	-	-
		3	?	?	?
		2	?	?	?
		?	?	?	?
Tintamarre	2	3	none	1	.33
		2	none	-	-
	7	2	none	-	-
		2	none	-	-
		2	dog	-	-
		2	none	-	-
		2(blind)	none	3 or more	1.5
		2(blind)	boat	1	.5
		4(boat)	boat	?	.

Literature Cited

Barkhouse, H. P. 1973. Hunter Bag Check Survey and Hunter Performance Observations at Tintamarre NWA October 1 - 13, 1973. CWS Sackville, N. B. Internal Report.

Malone, M. F. 1975. Waterfowl Hunter Bag Checks at Shepody NWA October 1 and 4, 1975. CWS Sackville, N.B. Internal Report.

Waterfowl Hunting Activity at Paunchy Lake Extension*,
Tintamarre National Wildlife Area, October 1 to 13, 1975

Date	No. of hunters	Hours hunted	Harvest	Hours Effort per bird	Crippling** loss
October 1	108	461	159	3	25%
October 2 - 13	Average 15.5/day	283	36	8	32%

Hunter performance observations indicated:

- (1) 4,000 rounds fired on October 1, equivalent to 330 pounds of lead shot.
- (2) 42 per cent crippling loss on October 1

Number of hunting parties on Tintamarre National Wildlife Area on October 1 were 64, 7 had dogs, 14 had boats, including one with both. The remaining 45 parties used neither.

* Approximately 200 acres of impounded marsh and 200 acres of natural marsh

** Per cent of total birds knocked down