



NATIONAL Duck Hunter SURVEY 2005 ducksurvey.com

National Duck Hunter Survey 2005 reveals opinions about ducks, duck hunting and waterfowl management

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Las Vegas, NV—The National Flyway Council (NFC) and the Wildlife Management Institute released the results of the National Duck Hunter Survey 2005 today at a news conference held in conjunction with the SHOT SHOW in Las Vegas.

“This survey is the first to ask a representative sample of duck hunters in every state their opinions on ducks, duck hunting and waterfowl management,” said Don Childress, NFC chair. Over 10,000 duck hunters responded to the survey.

Some of the national findings include:

- Seventy-two percent of respondents said duck hunting was one of their most important (58 percent) or most important (14 percent) recreational activities.
- Fifty-nine percent said that the duck season length (number of days in the season) in the state they hunted most over the last 5 years was “about right,” although one-third (35 percent) said the season was “too short,” and 3 percent, “too long.”
- Almost three-quarters (72 percent) of duck hunters said that the total daily bag limit in the state they hunted most over the last 5 years was “about right.” Thirteen percent said it was “too low,” and 8 percent, “too high.”
- Almost two-thirds (65 percent) of duck hunters said they spend over \$250 each year on duck hunting and one-fifth (20 percent) said they spend over \$1,000 each year.
- Six percent of duck hunters now age 45-64 indicated that they began duck hunting in the relatively recent past (1997-2004).
- Twenty percent of duck hunters said they “frequently” access the internet for duck hunting information; 49 percent said “once in a while,” and 31 percent, “not at all.”

Survey results are reported nationally, by the four flyways, and by upper, middle, and lower groupings of states in each flyway. This allows for comparisons among regions of the country. For example, 30 percent of duck hunters in the upper portion of the Central Flyway (North Dakota, South Dakota, and

eastern Montana) said that the overall quality of duck hunting over the last five years had “gotten much better” (10 percent) or “gotten a little better” (20 percent), while 29 percent said it had “gotten a little worse” (23 percent) or “much worse” (6 percent). By contrast, 5 percent of the duck hunters in the lower portion of the Mississippi Flyway (Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee) said that the overall quality of duck hunting over the last five years had “gotten much better” (1 percent) or “gotten a little better” (4 percent), while 82 percent said it had “gotten a little worse” (31 percent) or “much worse” (51 percent).

Fifteen states chose to increase the number of hunters surveyed in their states to allow for statistically meaningful state-level results (South Dakota, Montana, North Dakota, Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico, Kansas, Nebraska, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Iowa, Maryland, Tennessee, and Wisconsin). These state results will be released on February 16.

The mailing addresses for the survey were randomly drawn from the Harvest Information Program (HIP) database and included hunters who reported having harvested at least one duck during the 2003-04 duck hunting season. Only resident hunters were surveyed.

“This survey just wouldn’t have been possible without the HIP program,” said Childress. “This collaborative HIP effort between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the state fish and wildlife agencies is critical to waterfowl management.”

The survey report includes over one hundred pages of responses to 32 questions from hunters in 49 states. “These results are just the beginning,” said Steve Williams, President of the Wildlife Management Institute. “The purpose of the survey was to provide objective information about hunter attitudes and now it is time to put the results to use.”

The next step is for duck hunters, Flyway Councils, state fish and wildlife agencies, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, conservation organizations, duck clubs, and the outdoor media to begin reviewing and discussing what the results mean and how the results might be used to inform future decisions regarding waterfowl hunting and management.

“These results will be invaluable in our deliberations and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will do everything we can to communicate these results to those who can use them to improve our hunting regulations and hunter satisfaction in the future,” said Paul Schmidt, Assistant Director for Migratory Birds, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Funding for the National Duck Hunter Survey 2005 was provided by state fish and wildlife agencies through the four Flyway Councils, the NFC and the Wildlife Management Institute. A committee composed of Flyway technical representatives and human dimensions specialists was formed by the NFC and guided conduct of the survey. The NFC hired D.J. Case & Associates to coordinate development, implementation and analysis of the survey.

The National Duck Hunter Survey 2005 is the first of several communications strategies under the banner of “A Systematic and Sustained Conversation with Waterfowl Hunters.” A “Strategy Team” formed by the NFC and Wildlife Management Institute in collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is guiding the effort.

Additional information on the National Duck Hunter Survey 2005 and a downloadable copy of this news release is available at www.ducksurvey.com.

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