

The Past, Present & Future of Waterfowling

Waterfowl hunting ain't what it used to be. Duck and goose populations have been the focus of growing conservation efforts since the mid 1930s. Throughout much of the 20th century, astute sportsmen and resource managers realized that if we were to preserve and enhance our waterfowl populations, intervention was imperative. Now as we enter a new era, waterfowl management and hunting opportunity is shrouded in corporate intent. Conservation groups like Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl and North American Waterfowl Management Plan deserve our gratitude. Today, thanks to these and countless provincial and club-level organizations, our ducks and geese are thriving. At risk in the foreseeable future, however — is the waterfowl hunter.

A Look Back

Waterfowl hunting is steeped in tradition. Less than a century ago, for many, it was a subsistence activity. By the late 1930s, along with industrial development, came an increase in the number of duck hunters both for market and sport. That was a simpler time. Hip boots, drab clothing, lead shot ammunition, a single-shot or at best a pump shotgun, a few basic wooden decoys, perhaps a wooden boat and for those truly advanced hunters, a retriever; these were the tools of yesteryear's waterfowl hunter.

By Kevin Wilson

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