

S O U T H   S H O R E  
**WATERFOWLERS**

A S S O C I A T I O N , I N C .



DECEMBER 2015

Web site: [sswa.org](http://sswa.org)

P.O. BOX 217

BRIGHTWATERS, NY 11718

*Penny Pond Dedication — November 6, 2015*



From Left to Right: Ron Sineo, President; Curt Matzinger, Past President and Treasurer; Frank Krotschinsky, Director - Suffolk County Office for People with Disabilities; Greg Dawson, Commissioner - Suffolk County Parks; Chris Lane, Labor Crew Leader - Suffolk County Parks. (See article on page 3.)

## **SSWA Moves into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

This newsletter makes history in our club. It is our first Electronic Newsletter. It is a much larger, full-color document filled with more good stuff not found in the paper newsletter. It also will help our treasury. The newsletters are one of our largest expenses. We are trying to NOT raise dues. This is a cost-effective measure helping to keep the membership costs down. We will have some paper copies for members with no computer.

We ask all members to email Ron at [ducktruck@gmail.com](mailto:ducktruck@gmail.com) to say "I'm Joe Smith and I got my newsletter." If you got a paper copy and have an email address, email Ron and give him your email address so you can receive the next one electronically. We will NEVER give out your email address. The SSWA needs to move forward and become more social media friendly. It reaches more people . . . for free. I'm so excited, I can't wait to see where this goes.

Curt

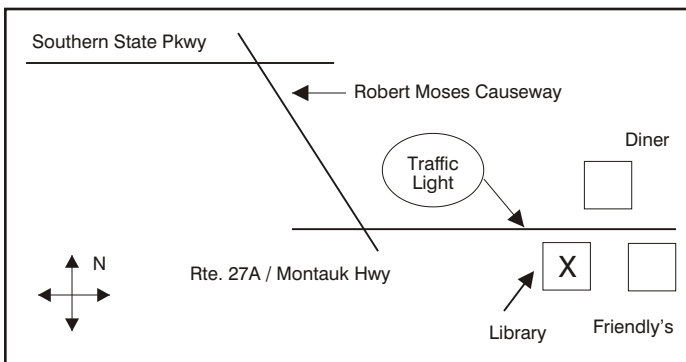
## South Shore Waterfowlers

### Voice of the Long Island Waterfowler

The South Shore Waterfowlers meet at 7:30 p.m. on the 1st Monday of each month from September through April. If the 1st Monday falls on a holiday, the meeting will take place on an alternate date (to be announced). (A library holiday is the same as a U.S. Postal holiday.)

Meetings are held on the first floor conference room of the Brightwaters/Bayshore Library located on Montauk Highway (Rte. 27A) in Brightwaters/Bayshore (see map below).

For additional information, please call John (631) 874-7459 or Ron (631) 862-8518.



## The President's Corner

### Waterfowl ID Course is Once Again a Big Success



For some time now, we have been offering a NYS Waterfowl ID course to our members just about every other year. This is a popular course which includes three hours of classroom instruction, followed by a written test. Those who pass the test are issued a NYS Waterfowl ID certificate. Besides implying a knowledge of waterfowl ID skills, this State Certification is required to hunt DEC areas such as the Bashakill, Oak Orchard, and Tonawanda Wildlife Management Areas, and the Iroquois and Montezuma National Wildlife Refuges, as well as some other NYS and Federal lands within NY State.

We are fortunate to have George Grivas, one of our members, who is a certified NYS waterfowl ID instructor, and who has readily volunteered his time for each of the course sessions that we have offered. This year there were some 30 students who sat for the 3-hour session and took the exam. All 30 students were issued NYS Certificates. Congratulations to all of those students. A special thank you to George Grivas, who continues to step up and make this offering possible.

*Editors Note:* Great stuff done by SSWA in 2015:

- Thank you George for all the time you put into giving your course.
- Thanks to Kate Sohm for her fundraiser "Kate's Comedy Night." (See page 6)
- Thanks to Curt and Ron for helping make the Penny Pond Project a reality. (See page 3)
- An okay Duckboat Show. Weather beat us up. (See page 6)
- Ben Sohm's "Bring out a new duck hunter" program. (See page 6)

## South Shore Waterfowlers Association — Officers —

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(Editor wishes to thank Matthew for supporting the SSWA)

## ***Suffolk County Parks and the South Shore Waterfowlers Association Unveil New Wounded Warriors Accessible Duck Blind***

*by Ron Sineo*

### **Provides Expanded Recreational Opportunity for Disabled Hunters and Their Families**

Flanders, NY, Suffolk County Officials were joined by members of the South Shore Waterfowlers Association to unveil the new Wounded Warriors Duck Blind at Hubbard County Park.

Recognizing that wounded veterans and other disabled individuals were unable to enjoy the sport of hunting or to share this hobby with their children, the South Shore Waterfowlers approached the Suffolk County Parks Department with a proposal to provide an accessible hunting area for these individuals. In November 2010, the first accessible duck blind was unveiled at Southaven County Park in Brookhaven. After great reviews and success, the South Shore Waterfowlers proposed to continue this program at Hubbard County Park, another popular duck hunting location.

"Although there are always challenges to provide access for disabled individuals for activities that are designed to take place in remote areas, said Suffolk County Parks Commissioner Greg Dawson, "the South Shore Waterfowlers Association rose to the occasion by acquiring the necessary components needed to construct an accessible hunting blind through donations of both building materials and funding. We are grateful to have this opportunity to reconnect our wounded veterans and other disabled individuals with the outdoors. It is hoped that this noteworthy project can now provide recreational opportunities that these individuals and their families have long been denied."

"One of the goals of the South Shore Waterfowlers Association is to highlight our waterfowl hunting heritage through education, example, and advocacy for ALL waterfowl enthusiasts, and that includes our sportsmen and women with disabilities," explained Ron Sineo, President of the SSWA. "These days, accessibility is being made available wherever people gather. However, one of the last frontiers to be conquered in this regard is accessibility for recreation in the great outdoors."

The duck blind will be assigned through the regularly scheduled lottery drawings at Sears Bellows County Park on Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Disabled individuals will receive preference for this designated blind, but will be assigned to others at the lottery drawing if accessibility is not needed for any of the hunters who are present. For more information about waterfowl hunting opportunities, please call (631) 854-4949.

Hubbard County Park has a rich history of duck hunting that dates back to 1937 when E.F. Hutton bought the land as a hunting preserve and built duck blinds designing them for comfort by lining them with fur. Although Mr. Hutton's blinds no longer exist, this site still remains popular for duck as well as deer hunting.

The entrance to Hubbard County Park is located about 100 yards north on the west side of Red Creek Road off Route 24 (Riverhead/Hampton Bays Road).



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## *Why Do Ducks Flare?*

*by Ron Sineo*

Why do ducks flare? Whether you are hunting from a shore blind, or from a boat, it is important to remember that ducks (like most birds) have keen eyesight, and will be spooked easily, if something is amiss. To begin with, ducks can pick up the slightest motion, so the first rule is: *try not to move at all, when the birds are flying.* Of course, this is sometimes easier said than done, but I think that the single most common reason that ducks flare is because they see some “unnatural” movement. When you spot a duck flying, chances are he has already spotted you! That is, he has seen your set-up. If he shows an interest by bearing down on your position from afar, he is staring right at you. The slightest motion may tip him off. Your decoy rig has attracted him from hundreds of yards out. The closer he gets, the more critical it is not to move! (Remember, you are in your “hide.”) Most times, once the bird is “in range” you can tell if he is going to try and sit in the rig, or if he is going to circle before landing. If the bird circles, it may just be to head into the wind and land. It may also be that he wants a better look at the landing area, and he wants to make sure that all is clear. It takes a lot of discipline not to turn your head to follow the bird as he turns into the wind. Sometimes, it is better to keep your head down, and momentarily lose sight of the duck. *Look with your eyes, but not by moving your head.*

On a bright sunny day, you may not move a muscle, and you may still flare ducks. Any exposed areas of your skin (usually face and/or hands) can “shine” by reflecting sunlight that hits it. Even if you are not moving, the duck is, and his motion will cause your “shine” to flash. First your skin will appear bright and then dim and then bright and so on. Gloves work to cover the hands, and if you don’t want to “paint” your face with that camo stuff, you should cover it as best as you can. Dicks Sporting Goods and even Wal-Mart stock an inexpensive mesh-type face net, the kind used in turkey hunting. This works very well and generally eliminates the shine. If you are not moving and you are not “shining,” but the ducks are still flaring, then I think you have to look to your decoy spread as the likely culprit.

Let’s cover some basics. Whenever possible, scout a place before you hunt it. Let’s say you see some black ducks there but only in small groups (ones and twos). Putting out a spread of 2 dozen black duck decoys together is not going to look normal to an incoming black duck. Unless you see lots of birds travel in groups of 10 or more, don’t decoy with 10 or more of the same kind of bird in the same place. The exception to this is if you are hunting divers in deep water. Divers will raft up out in open water, and are more prone to tolerate a big spread.

If you are hunting tidal waters, especially on an outgoing tide, there are a couple of things to watch out for. If you placed some decoys in shallow water, eventually the tide will run out, leaving them high and dry. This is not automatically a bad thing, but if your birds have keels on them, they may list to one side in an un-natural position. Also, if the wind and tide are fighting each other, your decoys may be facing the “wrong” way. If you watch ducks long enough, I think you will agree that while some ducks go against the direction of the group, most swimming/floating/resting on the water, are facing into the wind. I think this is so their feathers stay relatively flat against their body. When their butt is pointed into the wind, the wind lifts their feathers. In the winter, I think they hate this because it makes them colder. Their down and other feathers need to stay layered in order to provide warmth. If you have 15 decoys in the water, and the tide has all their butts into the wind, a flying duck is going to know that something is wrong.

Another thing that will flare ducks when hunting tidal waters is the way your rig looks from the air. When we hunt from the shore or from a boat, we have a low profile view of our decoys when they are set in the water. This view may be more what diving ducks will see, because they often fly low to the water. Puddle ducks and geese, however, usually approach from higher up. So you have to have a mental picture of what your rig looks like from high up. If you are using 12 foot cords on your decoys but it is shallow water, 10 feet of extra cord may be “floating” next to each decoy. Don’t forget, if you are in 2 feet of water, you look down and you can see the bottom. A duck that is 100 feet up looks down and cannot only see your decoy cord, he can probably also read the label on that submerged Campbell’s soup can! If each decoy has all this surplus line, well it just doesn’t look natural. Also, if you set your decoys before high tide, once the tide peaks, the receding tide will carry with it a lot of debris from the shore. This stuff can get caught on your decoy line. If 2 or 3 of your decoys have clumps of seaweed or lettuce stuck to their cords, it will flare birds.

Of course, there will be times when you do everything perfectly, and ducks will still flare. It happens to everyone at one time or another. I’d like to think though, that we will have fewer of those kinds of days, and more opportunities for fair shots at ducks because we try to pay attention to those little details. I think they really do make a difference. Don’t you?

## *Talking About Dogs*

by George Grivas

Have a dog and you will be hunting him? There is a lot to learn that isn't in books. I put together some bits and pieces to help fill in the blanks. The list is in no particular order.

Food I usually increase the food a little before and during hunting season for extra energy and extra fat for insulation.

Poisons Be aware that grapes, raisins, and antifreeze are poisons and will lead to kidney failure which will quickly kill your dog.

Carrots I give my dogs carrots. The added fiber helps keep the anal glands from clogging plus they help the dog to go potty quicker.

Hunting Partners Make sure your hunting partners are safe gun handlers. Also, no shooting while the dog is in the water working unless I say so.

Steadiness "No such thing as a dog who hasn't broken. If you think yours is steady he just hasn't broken yet." Keep the dog tethered until ready to get a duck is one way to deal with this. You don't want him flaring ducks and you don't want him to get shot.

Decoys I hope your dog has been introduced to decoys. Place the decoys on the ground and walk the dog through them giving him a leave it command when he goes to fetch one. A decoy bouncing on the water does get awfully enticing. You don't want him to fetch one. Also, if you want to prevent a problem, you will not use him to fetch decoys.

Boat A dog should be taught how to get in and out of a boat and how to ride in a boat. I teach a "kennel" command which means "Get in." On the way back from a retrieve I like to take the bird from the dog as the dog gets to the boat then grab the scruff of the neck as the dog gets his paws on board, over the gunnel or on deck. This helps get him in.

Dog Placement If you want your dog outside your blind you have to train him to work that way. You need to teach a "Place" command and teach a remote send. Also, do not place him where he can get muzzle blast.

Maintenance Even though your dog is trained he probably needs a brush up on obedience and some retrieving concepts before the season starts.

Lining Drills Even if your dog does not handle in the field teaching a dog to line a dead bird is very useful. If there is a dead duck on the water that your dog did not see fall you can send the dog with "Dead bird, good, back" if you have trained it.

Conditioning and Exercise Your dog should be in shape. I train my dogs 3-5 days a week which helps. I also walk them four times a day for a total of two miles and this is on concrete and asphalt. This toughens the pads. Also healthy for you the handler. Added benefit—you will be able to fit into last years clothes.

Veterinarian Pre-season trip to the vet is always advisable. Also you should know where you can find vets away from home.

First Aid Kit My dog first aid kit includes bandages, eye drops, cortisone, and Benadryl. I also keep saline solution.

Limitations Do not ask your dog to do something beyond his limitations. If it is too big a swim or a strong current, don't send him on the retrieve. Did you hear about the dog that went after a swimming crippled goose on a falling tide on the Nissequoge? Guess what happened?

Post Hunt Check over your dog. Check his ears, his coat, his eyes, his feet, his nails. Check for ticks. Check his pads for cuts.

Upland Hunting Some special considerations are in order. You can use a vest to prevent scratched belly. Condition the pads with Tuff Foot. I also used to use brine (old school). You might want to look into dog boots. Warn your hunting partners, don't shoot birds on the ground. You may want to train your dog to quarter and sit to flush.

Young Dogs A young dog needs to be introduced to birds, duck calls, and guns long before he goes duck hunting. Also, if you have a vocal dog, fix it before you hunt him. Again, you must teach a "Here" (Come) command.

Hopefully this information will help make your hunt more enjoyable.

### **February Meeting — Recipe Night**

Learn how to cook the things you catch. Fowl, fish, and game will be on the menu (hopefully). Members are asked to bring in dishes and recipes of their harvested game. Each member will go over their recipe and everyone attending will have a chance to sample it. A great learning experience on how to cook what you catch. Come on down and bring a dish and printed recipe.

### *Feed Committee*

Here is an update. As chairman of the committee, I called a meeting. Erik Sr., Erik Jr., Tom, Ben, and I set an outline of how to proceed (Red and Bill could not attend.) We will have another meeting to firm up how the program will work. I will keep you informed on the progress.

## *Be Careful Out There!*

by Ron Sineo

I have collected a personal library of waterfowl books over the years, which is quite extensive. I especially enjoy reading about hunting adventures from days gone by. While reading *When Ducks Were Plenty* by Ed Muderlak, I came across a brief article he reprinted entitled "One of the Luckiest Waterfowlers" which first appeared in the December 21, 1905 issue of *Shooting and Fishing*. This article is about one Harold Latham, and it could just as easily have been a recent news item in a current hunting season. It begins:

At the season when bays are packed with ice and strong currents and heavy winds prevail, the engagement of duck shooting is attended with many hardships and perils. This fact is attested by Harold Latham, an enthusiastic duck hunter, who narrowly escaped losing his life in Gardiner's Bay recently while hunting ducks. Through his enthusiasm in pursuing a flock of ducks he ventured farther from shore than the force of wind and his frail gunning sharpie would justify. When he attempted to return, the tide had changed, which, combined with the wind, effectively prevented his progress. After rowing frantically yet futilely for several minutes, he sprang overboard into the icy waters and swam ashore. Just as he reached the land he was overcome from his efforts and his exposure, and fell unconscious. He was found later by his father who carried him home. After the administration of restoratives, he recovered completely from his *adventure*. [editor's emphasis]. His abandoned boat containing the clothing that he had removed before springing overboard was later found by the steamer *Manhasset* far offshore.

Almost every season we hear about, or read about, or watch a news report about a duck hunting mis-adventure in the Bay. Although the above story happened 110 years ago, things like this continue to happen with some regularity in the waters around Long Island. It's important to do whatever you can to . . . Be Careful Out There!

### *Kate's Comedy Night Fundraiser*

On Sunday, November 8, the SSWA members met at Governors Comedy Club in Levittown. Thirty-four people attended the fundraiser. We had a 50/50 raffle. Kate Sohm won the 50/50 and donated the money back into the fundraiser. All in all, after expenses, \$780 was added into the Emergency Fund to help replace the money spent on last winter's feeding program. Many thanks to Kate for all her hard work organizing the event. All 34 people had a great time. Food, cocktails, and great comedians made this fundraiser a winner.

Thanks again to Kate . . . Great Job Lady!!!  
(Photos included in e-newsletter)

### *Ben's Buddy Program*

This year Ben Sohm organized the Buddy Program. This program matches duckboat owners with new or boatless hunters. It's a way of getting hunters out in a duckboat in the bays or ocean. I am proud to get a couple of hunters out to get them into their first birds. It's a wonderful experience and a great way to get hunters "Hooked on Hunting." Thanks Ben.

(Photos included in e-newsletter)

### *2015 Duckboat Show*

October 25, 2015 was our 35th Annual Duckboat Show and Waterfowl Festival. The drizzle on the first half of the show made the turnout a disaster. A couple of vendors packed it in early due to wet inventory. The Benelli representatives were also a no-show again, much to the dismay of hunters wanting to check out the new inventory.

The sun came out for the second half and it picked up a little. All-in-all we made some money, but nothing like past years with good weather. As chairman, it is so hard to make the call to have or cancel a show with sketchy weather forecasts.

One thing I would like to say is "**Thank You to All Members Who Helped Out.**" We had a good number of helpers braving the bad weather. I don't understand why more members don't come out. **It's Your Club. Help Out.** Don't expect others to do ALL THE WORK. It burns out members who always help, driving them out of the club. But I digress.

Once again — Thank you to ALL my SSWA Helpers. (Photos included in e-newsletter)

### Quack's Tips

Every hunter can encounter unusual circumstances or conditions at any time while going on a hunting trip (especially duck hunting). Besides the obvious survival things you should take with you, here are 5 potentially useful items to keep in your blind bag:

- 1. *A 6" candle.* Almost every hunter carries some kind of matches (or a lighter) with him, but a candle can provide a few hours of light (and heat), and once lit, can be used as a long-burning match.
- 2. *Toilet Tissue.* When a roll of "t.p." has only about 20% of its paper left, change rolls, and keep the 20% for your blind bag. Compress the roll flat, and put it into a ziplock bag. Besides the obvious use, a few wadded up sheets of t.p. can be used for tinder when trying to start a fire.
- 3. *A small roll of duct tape.* The uses for this are exponential. Duct tape has been known to patch everything from a hole in a decoy to a hole in the bottom of your boat!
- 4. *A leatherman or similar multi-tool.* The uses for this item should be obvious.
- 5. *A signal air horn.* Believe it or not, Orion makes a miniature signal air horn, which holds 1.5 oz. of compressed air. It is good for several long air horn blasts, and is no bigger than a travel size shaving cream can.

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— *South Shore Waterfowlers Association* —

**CALENDAR OF UP-COMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

- January 4** — SSWA Meeting, Brightwaters Library — “Waterfowlers Round Table”
- February 1** — SSWA Meeting, Brightwaters Library— Recipe Night (see page 5)
- February 25** — South Bays Dinner, Rock Hill Country Club. Call Carl Lucas 631-878-1146 or Jim Jankowski 631-721-6914
- March 4** — Riverhead Dinner, The Vineyard. Call George Coalson 631-365-7225 or Margaret Feinberg 631-722-4479
- March 6** — DU Shoot at Spring Farm. Call David Schellinger 631-725-0038
- March 7** — SSWA Meeting, Brightwaters Library
- March 11** — NY DU State Convention, Hyatt East End, Riverhead.  
Call Wayne Roberts 484-553-7088
- April 4** — Last SSWA Meeting for the season, Brightwaters Library — Elections
- April 8** — Western Suffolk Dinner, Captain Bills, Bayshore. Call Bill Sciuti 631-774-7467 or Ron Kee 917-753-4054
- April 22** — North Shore Dinner, TBA. Call Stephen Melbinger 516-429-9951

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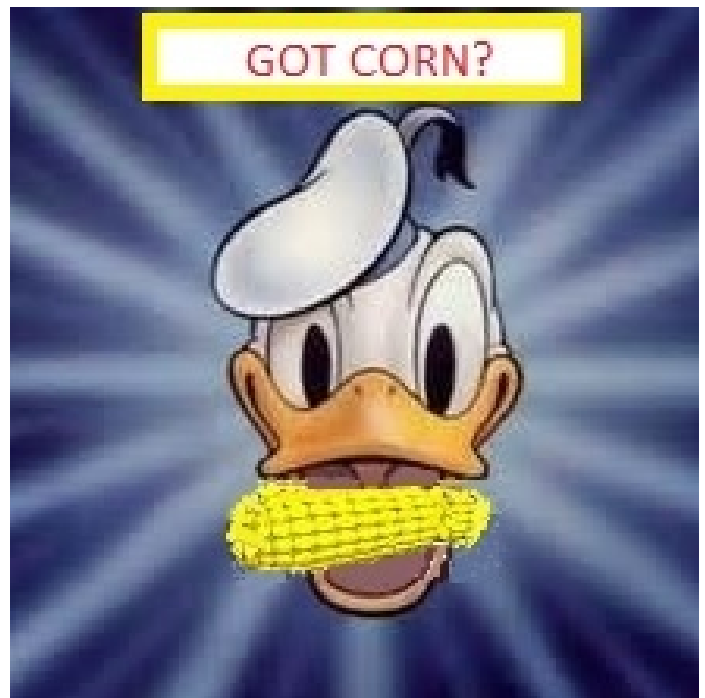
### *“Kate’s Comedy Night” Fundraiser*



Fundraiser organizer Kate Sohm with husband Ben. Kate was the winner of the 50/50 which she donated back to the club. Great Job, Kate.



One of the comedians making all of us laugh.



“Unofficial” Feed Fund mascot.



# Penny Pond Dedication



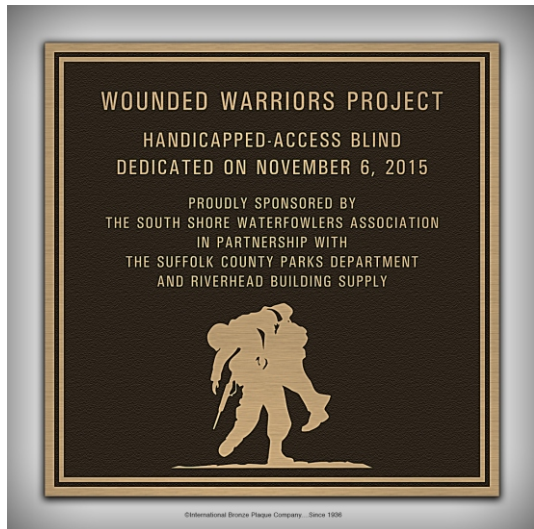
View of the blind from the pond.



Entrance to the blind.



SSWA President Ron Sineo showing off the buffet supplied by Mangia Pizza.



Bronze to be placed in the park.



Proclamation given to SSWA by Suffolk County.



# 35th Annual Duckboat Show and Waterfowl Festival 2015



Curt and Ron awarding the prizes.



Some of the many items for sale.



Curt awarding Ryan Ludwig Best in Show and also 1st place in raffle.



A couple of the stars of the show.



Ben and Kate braving the elements to help out.



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