

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 .



JUNE 2012

Web site: sswa.org

P.O. BOX 217 • BRIGHTWATERS, NY 11718

***The Passing of a Local Legend:
HANK DAM***

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of Hank Dam, on May 9, 2012, just one day short of his 90th birthday. Henry "Hank" Dam, was born on May 10, 1922 in Brooklyn, New York. His Parents were Danish Immigrants. While still a teenager, Hank started work at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, as a ship builder. He did this in support of the war effort. When W.W. II ended in 1945, Hank and his family moved from Brooklyn to Cold Spring Harbor. Hank had a lifetime love of the outdoors, and a remarkable understanding of the balance of things in nature. Even from his earliest days, Hank was a skilled trapper, and was always able to supplement his income by trapping. He often sold both the pelts and the meat from his harvest. It was a part of his life style, as Hank set his trap lines even into the 2010-2011 winter season. Hank was a true Conservationist, well before most of the world knew what a Conservationist was. During his lifetime, Hank championed the public's right to hunt, and to fish, and to trap. He was an active member of many local, regional, and State Sportsman's groups. He was the current NYS Trappers Association Region #1 Director, a position he had held for many years. Besides working through these organized Sportsman's groups, Hank worked independently . . . by writing letters and editorials, and by showing up at public meetings, often to "set the record straight!" Hank was extremely knowledgeable (mostly self-taught) and when Hank spoke, people listened.



As recently as June 30, 2010 Hank wrote an article for the Huntington paper *The Village Tattler*, and thanks to that knowledgeable article and his efforts, he single-handedly saved the artesian well under the Seafarers Boat Club Dock in Cold Spring Harbor. (That well was used by locals for over 40 years and was in danger of being shut down.)

Beyond his love of trapping, Hank was always interested in our sporting youth. He worked as a Naturalist in the Cold Spring Harbor School District's Outdoor Education Program for more than 30 years. His classroom was 6,500 acres of the Catskills, at the YMCA Camp in Frost Valley, New York. During that time, he helped educate thousands of Long Island students in the ways of the outdoors.

As a by-product of trapping, Hank learned the art of taxidermy. It soon became more than just a pastime, as Hank discovered that sportsmen would pay a fair price to have their trophies mounted. In keeping with his love of the outdoors, Hank also worked both the land and the sea. He was quite a fisherman in his own right, he made maple syrup, kept bees, and made wine. In 1999, the New York Times did a feature on Hank Dam. Here, in part, is how he was described in his home environment: *Nestled among the million-dollar homes of this old Victorian whaling village is Mr. Dam's suburban Appalachia, filled to the gunwales of its four acres with motors, mounted animals, whale oil lamps, wine casks, beehives, and berry bushes. On most afternoons during the raccoon season, this wiry bantam of a man can be found on his property dressed in rubber boots and a woolen cap, peeling the gray and white pelts from their carcasses and hanging them on boards to dry.*

It might surprise you to know that Hank served as a Game Warden (a "special" they called it in those days) back before the DEC had ECO's. He was also a Bay Constable for the Town of Huntington for some time. Over the years, Hank Dam really made a difference with everything he touched. He was a man of principles, and he was recognized by Sportsmen to be a local treasure. In May of 2011, Hank was the recipient of the Owen Johnson Sportsman of the Year Award, personally presented by Senator Owen Johnson at SAS's annual dinner.

A man like Hank Dam comes along once in a lifetime. We in the sporting community mourn his loss.

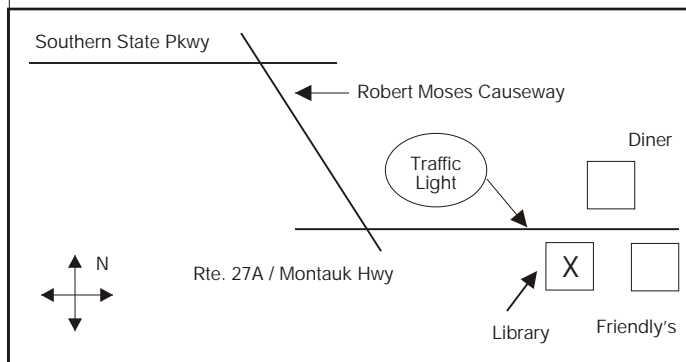
South Shore Waterfowlers

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.



South Shore Waterfowlers Association — Officers —

- President John Adams
631-618-5728
- 1st Vice President and
Membership Ron Sineo
631-862-8518
- 2nd Vice President. Richard Franks, Jr.
631-603-6295
- Secretary Ron Pliszak
(631) 902-2220
- Treasurer Erik Tallbe
516-799-6613
- Sergeant at Arms, Newsletter Editor,
Duckboat Show Chairman, and
Club Dinner Chairman Curt Matzinger
631-661-0379

Summer Atlantic Flyway Meeting

by Ron Sineo

This year's summer Atlantic Flyway meeting is currently underway. I will be attending the meeting to represent the SSWA and our fellow hunters' interests. Look for my report in our next newsletter, and for a summary presentation at the September meeting.

Membership Drive

by John Adams

If you didn't know it, the average age of waterfowlers in the United States is decreasing each year. This is due primarily to the lack of new young hunters. What we need to do is to make it EVERY SSWA member's job to recruit AT LEAST ONE NEW MEMBER (young or old). We all know of somebody who has stated they had an interest in duck hunting. Most deer and turkey hunters would jump at the chance to continue their hunting season well into March if they were given the chance. Or a young hunter who would like to go out into the marsh and harvest a bird.

This would be a win-win-win for the SSWA:

1. It would double our membership.
2. It would increase the information we could get to sportsmen on hunting-related legislative issues.
3. It would give the opportunity for a "new" sports-person to get out and witness what we all see every time we head out: e.g., wildlife, sunrises, nature, thrill of the harvest, good eating birds.

So, we hope every member makes the effort to recruit a new member. We all know someone. Sign them up today!!!

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DANA LARSON
Catering Manager

Attention All SSWA Members

Our organization remains strong thanks to the efforts of a few. Your officers and directors met recently and prepared our calendar of events for this coming season. One of the important things that we do these days is to attend sports-related shows. This accomplishes several things, but here are two things in particular that we would like to mention:

1. Exposure – By attending these shows, we are putting the SSWA on the map in the eyes of the sporting community. This is mainly how we attract new members, and how we advertise our club.
2. Supplemental Income – 20 years ago (1992) annual club dues were \$20. Think back to 20 years ago . . . how much was . . . gasoline? Your property taxes? . . . a deli sandwich? . . . a box of ammo? In all that time, we have only ever raised club dues by \$10. So far we have avoided more dues increases by making money at the shows we attend.

The one show that we host each year is the annual Duckboat Show. Gratefully, we always appreciate the participation. After all, this is a big fund raiser for us. And we hope that you will continue to help with the Duckboat Show. There is, however, a need for help that goes beyond the Duckboat Show. The Duckboat Show itself cannot cover our overhead. Spiraling costs to print and

mail our newsletter, pay for our club insurance, cover the rent for our meeting place, and our attendance at Flyway meetings, and a half dozen other club expenses have caused us to participate in other shows so that we can raise money instead of raising dues.

In order to meet our club's bills, we now also participate in National Hunting and Fishing Day (September 22 this year), the annual Long Island Decoy Show, and 2 full weekends of LI Gun Shows. This adds up to a total of 6 other weekend days that we need to man a table or a booth at a show. We need your help! We need you to step up, and to volunteer your time . . . even as little as 2 hours would be a great help. This is how you can give something back to the club. This is how you can show support for your club. We will be there with you, and we will show you just what to do. But we need you to step up.

The first of these shows is just around the corner. It is The National Hunting and Fishing Day Expo on Saturday, September 22, at the Hunter Check Station in Ridge. Also our 2-day Gun Show is September 22 & 23 in Hauppauge. We have a table at both shows, and we need some volunteers to help us out on those days. We can't wait until the September SSWA meeting to find the help, we need to know that we will have the help. Please . . . call Curt at 631-661-0379 and let him know what part of the day you can help out.

FOR ALL YOU CARVERS . . .

by Guy Soden

For those of you who need replacement heads try AUTUMNWINGS.COM, Phone: 612-735-4134, Fax: 763-428-1972. Unpainted goose heads \$8.00.

Also Church Decoys, Great Mills, MD 301-994-1512. Cork decoys and replacement heads for Herter's decoys and others. Painted Herter heads 14.50 per pair.

For carvers who are just starting out, go to WOODFINDER.com. If you type in the type of wood you are looking for, say basswood, tupelo, white cedar, cottonwood, etc. and your zip code, you will get a list of the closest dealers/lumberyards to you. Very informative.

FYI – For all you left handeders, the Campsite Sport Shop in Huntington carries the Legacy Sport Escort Extreme 12-gauge magnum in both left and right hand models. Price plus tax is \$814.67.

This info should be able to get you started with what you need. Come to a meeting and talk with the guys who have been carving for a long time to get tips and techniques.

The Art of Identifying Ducks

by Ron Sineo

Have you ever met someone who can identify a duck in the distance with uncanny accuracy? Say it is just first light, and you are still trying to spot your first duck of the morning. Your partner is already announcing "look at those wood ducks across the river!" or "two mallards just landed beyond the far meadow!" or something like that. This can be very frustrating!

Well there is no substitute for experience when it comes to duck I.D., and for most of us, it takes a lifetime of experiences before we are right most of the time. I believe even the best of the best make errors at duck I.D. a lot more often than they are prepared to admit. One thing is certain, and that is that you should never have doubts about what kind of duck it is once it is in your hand. This is the main reason to carry a good field I.D. book in your blind bag. If you have any doubt once you have retrieved it, look it up immediately to be sure.

Most beginners to duck I.D. believe it is important to memorize the color differences between ducks of different species. The truth is that color is not a very valuable assist. On flying birds, color can best be seen when the sun is high, with very few clouds in the sky. These are not the times when ducks are difficult to identify. Rather, it is at dusk and dawn, and very grey days, when you don't see color on ducks at all while they are in flight. Instead you see contrasts of light and dark.

When learning to I.D. ducks in flight, it helps to divide the ducks into three categories. They are: the dabblers (puddle ducks), the diving ducks, and the sea ducks (sea ducks are also divers, but are more predictably found in certain locations). Generally speaking, if the birds are not in a migration pattern, but instead have arrived at a particular area to stay for a while, then they can be seen daily in some kind of "local flight pattern" where they are trading back and forth from where they roost to where they feed. All other things being equal, puddle ducks gain the highest altitudes during this local trading back and forth. Diving ducks tend to fly much lower, staying closer to the water surface or closer to the ground while moving to feed or to roost. Sea ducks are usually only found in marine environments, and tend to fly closest to the water surface. They

also seem to be reluctant to fly over large tracts of land, preferring to fly a water route. Also, with the exception of some of the largest fresh water lakes, such as the great lakes, and some of the very large rivers connecting to the Great Lakes or to the sea, sea ducks are seldom seen around fresh water.

When you see a duck in flight, if you can quickly sort it into one of these 3 groups, then you have narrowed down what type of duck it is by eliminating the other 2 groups. Now, instead of trying to identify it from 2 dozen different types, you are thinking it is one of only 4 or 5. Other things like size, silhouette, wing beat, profile, speed, and body proportions can all be clues to I.D. the bird.

One of the best duck I.D. books for my money is *The LeMaster Method*, and is usually available at book stores and sportsman's mail order places for \$10 or less. All of the common species of ducks are pictured, males on one page, females on the opposing page, in color, and in flight. Also pictured are the close-ups of their heads and necks. If juveniles look different from adults, then both are pictured and labeled. If their plumage changes seasonally, then each change is pictured and displayed. *LeMasters* also has a section to compare the bills of different ducks and even those differences between the male and female bills of the same species. Yet another section compares legs and feet. This is why it is such a valuable I.D. book. If you are unsure after checking its general appearance, you can check the bills and the feet. This will remove any doubt.

LeMasters divides the air space above the hunting zone into 4 levels. The level closest to the surface is level one, and the highest level above the ground is level 4. When using this level of flight method to help I.D. a duck, it is important to know which ducks are divers, which are puddle ducks, and which are sea ducks. Generally, sea ducks only "trade" (fly between roost and feed) at level 1, as do the mergansers. Most of the diving ducks trade at level 2, (whistlers, broadbill, red-heads, cans, and ring-necks) . Only buffleheads and ruddys (and coots) trade at level 1 with the sea ducks. Divers and sea ducks rarely are seen in "trade" at level 3 or 4. These levels surely point to puddle ducks. Those puddle ducks that fly

the highest while trading are the bigger, stronger puddle ducks such as the black, the mallard, the gadwall, the widgeon, and the pintail (all can reach level 4, quickly, even on short flights). The smaller puddle ducks (woodies, shovelers, and the three types of teal) fly lower when trading, usually at level 3.

Have you ever been embarrassed because what you thought was a duck was really a sea gull or a crow? Well don't be embarrassed anymore. It happens to the pros too. Here is a tip which may help. Ducks flap their wings continuously while in flight. They only stop flapping when they are close to landing and are getting ready to "back flap" so as to put on the brakes while trying to land. Most other birds like sea gulls and crows will flap or beat their wings for a while, and then they will stop and coast for a short few seconds before beginning to beat their wings again. Even at great distances, this coasting is a tell-tale sign that the bird is not a duck.

As mentioned earlier, contrasts between light and dark often help in identifying a duck in flight. For example, the black duck has a uniformly darker body than its head. It also shows a lot of white on its underwing as it flies. The contrast between the dark body and the light underwing is very striking, even at a distance. This contrast is not nearly as striking for the hen mallard which it is often confused with.

Identifying ducks on the water is another matter entirely. This is usually much harder, and requires a bigger skill set. For one thing, some part of a floating duck is always underwater to begin with. This makes most ducks seem more compact and appear smaller on the water than in flight. You can still tell if a duck on the water is a puddle duck or a diver. Obviously, if the duck you are looking at

suddenly dives its body totally under water, it is a diver (or perhaps a sea duck, depending on where you are). Puddle ducks almost never dive completely out of sight. The most common reason for a duck to dive is when it is feeding. Puddle ducks feed by "tipping up" instead of diving. They feed in shallow enough water that they only have to "tip up." They stick their head and neck into the water and point it straight down with such force that their hind end sticks straight out of the water. And then they right themselves, without their back half ever disappearing from view or going under water.

Often you can tell a puddle duck from a diver by its silhouette on the water. A puddle duck's hind end rides high in the water, while a diver's slopes so its tail is lower than its middle. Also, puddle ducks explode into flight, seeming to jump straight up out of the water when they decide to fly. Diving ducks have feet that are set farther back on their bodies (than the puddle ducks) so they tend to need a "runway" to take off. They will start flapping their wings as they seem to "run" on the water until they get enough lift for take off. This run can be as little as a foot or two, or several yards depending upon the species of diver or sea duck.

While all the above is a good start to help in identifying ducks in flight or on the water, there is no substitute for practice and experience. I remember the first time I ever heard a flight of goldeneyes pass overhead. It was pre-dawn, and I was in a 2-man layout boat with my buddy. When they passed, I asked what was that? And he said "now you know why they call them *Whistlers!*" So go where the ducks are, and go early in the morning or at dusk, and go on grey days too, and go often. Put these tips into practice, and before long, you will see some improvement in your I.D. skills

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Waterfowl Taskforce, 2012- Next Year's Season Dates

by Ron Sineo

The waterfowl task force met on April 14, 2012 and recommendations for season dates were submitted to the DEC. This year, because of the way the calendar falls, the regular duck season will be unique. As you know, it can only be 60 days long, and there can be at most only 1 split in the season. This usually only allows for 8 weekends of hunting, with opening days happening during mid-week.

This year, the season will open on FRIDAY, Nov. 23 (day after Thanksgiving) and run through Sunday Nov. 25th. It will stay closed for 6 days before it reopens on Sunday, Dec. 2nd. The season stays open straight through Sunday Jan. 27th. (The Feds require that duck season close after the last Sunday in January.) This provides an unprecedented 10 weekends of hunting opportunity in the 60 day season.

This may not happen again for a long time. So the recommended duck season is Nov. 23-25, and Dec. 2-Jan. 27. Youth Waterfowl weekend was recommended to take place on Nov. 10-11, 2012.

Recommended Canada Goose Seasons:

- Western L.I. Zone: Nov. 23 – March 9
- Central L.I. Zone : Nov. 23-25, Dec. 2-Feb. 6, Late Canada Goose on North Shore: Feb. 7-14
- Eastern L.I. Zone: Dec. 2 – Jan. 30

Brant Season: If Brant is again restricted to 50 days, it will be Nov. 23-25, and Dec. 12 –Jan. 27

Snow Goose: Nov. 23 – March 9

Sea Duck: Oct. 13 – Jan. 27

Justin Bakewicz 631.965.9251

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Membership Enrollment / Renewal Card (please print legibly)

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Quack's Tips

There are those in the hunting community who believe that the only reason that duck and goose banding programs exist is so that whatever information is collected can be used to further restrict season lengths or bag limits. Most of us have heard remarks like, "I never report banded birds . . . they'll just use the information to make it worse for us!" I'm sure that we all have our own opinion on that score.

It seems to me that one thing is sure: if we ever want to see changes in season length or bag limits on Canada geese, especially in the Eastern L.I. Zone, we are going to have to help the case. The data being used is 20+ years old. The current reason we have a 2-bird bag and a 60-day season is that old banding data points to a sizeable migration of AP (Atlantic Population Geese) arriving on the east end to winter with us each year. This population is considered to be in decline and they don't want it over-hunted.

Many locals believe that we are harvesting mostly resident geese in the eastern zone, and that the season length should be increased, and the bag limit expanded. The only way to prove this to the Feds is to REPORT THE BANDED GEESE THAT ARE SHOT. Unless they collect new data which contradicts the old data, nothing will change. Every passing year that bands are under-reported supports the argument that their data is still holding up. There has never been a better time to turn this around. Local DEC has been making serious efforts in the last few years to band local resident birds (this is done every June when the geese are in their molt). The word went out recently that Kelly is looking for large groups of Canada geese to band. ESPECIALLY IN THE EASTERN L.I. ZONE. Couple this with the fact that the Canadian Fish & Wildlife service has only been successful in banding a few hundred AP geese in the last several years due to budget cuts, bad weather, equipment problems, and a lack of personnel, and a picture starts to emerge.

If we are banding more and more resident geese, and the Canadians are banding fewer and fewer of their birds, then the scales have to tip in our favor. Imagine if we were able to report next year that out of 100 banded birds shot on the east end, 95 were residents and only 5 were AP geese! This is the kind of information we need to make some change happen. So next time you shoot a banded Canada goose, report the band. The odds are in our favor it will be a local bird.

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Remember This Date:

Sunday, October 28, 2012

32nd Annual Duckboat Show
and Waterfowl Festival

Mark your calendars, prepare your rigs, call your friends, and find stuff to sell at a table. It's a great way to show your goodies to fellow waterfowlers who would love to buy your stuff.

Go to SSWA.org and download the vendor application. The show is right around the corner.

Call Curt at (631) 661-0379 with any questions or for more details see flyer. Please make copies and post the flyers at your favorite shops. Anyone who has a food service business and would like to do the food for the upcoming show, call Curt.

Thank you

SPORTING CLAYS SHOOTS at Peconic River Sportsman's Club

July 22 and August 12

Call Curt to Reserve Your Spot
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— *South Shore Waterfowlers Association* —

CALENDAR OF UP-COMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- July 22** — Peconic River Sporting Clays Shoot
August 12 — Peconic River Sporting Clays Shoot
September 10 — First SSWA Meeting, Brightwaters Library
September 22 — National Hunting and Fishing Day Expo, Hunter Check Station, Ridge
Sept. 22 & 23 — L.I. Gun Show, Hauppauge
Sept. 29, 30 — Ocean County Decoy Show, Tuckerton, New Jersey
October 1 — SSWA Meeting, Brightwaters Library
October 13-14 — Oyster Festival, Oyster Bay
October 28 — Duckboat Show and Waterfowl Festival, Cedar Beach Marina
November 4 — Raindate for Duckboat Show
November 5 — SSWA Meeting, Brightwaters Library
December 3 — SSWA Meeting, Brightwaters Library

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