

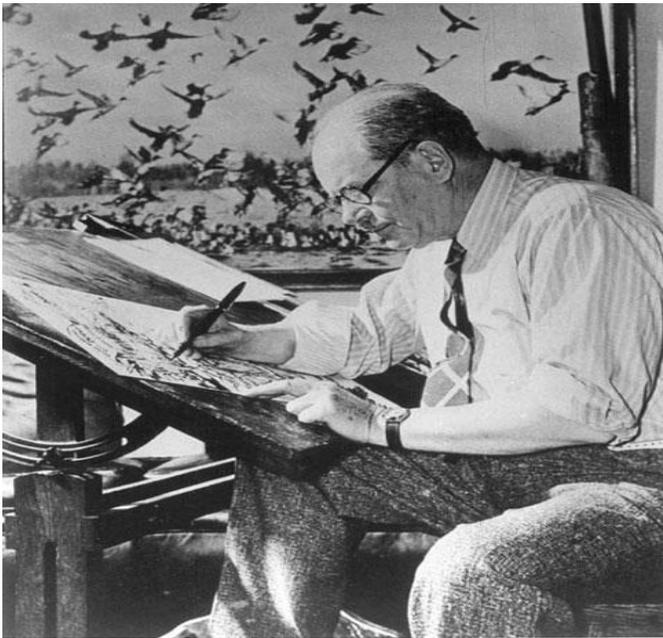
# The DUCK CALL



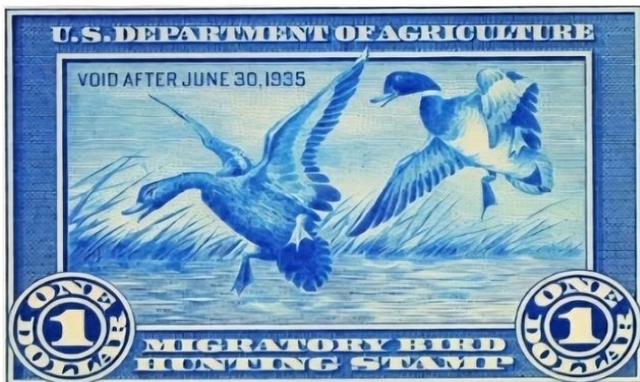
**A Newsletter from the Northwestern PA Duck Hunters Association**

**Conservation • Waterfowl Hunting • Habitat • Events**  
1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2026 – Issue 003

## Waterfowl Heritage – History of the Duck Stamp



*Designed by conservationist Jay “Ding” Darling, the first Federal Duck Stamp helped fund the protection of millions of acres of wetlands used by migrating waterfowl.*



*Image of the inaugural Federal Duck Stamp from 1934.*

CHRIS SILKE  
MARCH 2026

On August 22, 1934, the first Federal Duck Stamp was issued after Congress passed the **Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act**, signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on March 16, 1934. The law required waterfowl hunters to purchase a stamp annually, with the money used to protect wetlands and wildlife habitat. Its cost at that time \$1.00. My, how times have changed with the stamp now costing waterfowlers \$25.

The stamp was designed by Jay N. Darling, a political cartoonist and conservationist and also the very 1<sup>st</sup> purchaser of the 1<sup>st</sup> stamp ever sold. The artwork for the first stamp was reportedly drawn very quickly while Darling was in Washington working on conservation policy. The program was created to fund wetland conservation during the Dust Bowl and to support habitat protection efforts that helped prevent further environmental damage like that seen in the 1930s.

In its first year, 635,001 stamps were sold. The program is often called one of the most successful conservation efforts in American history, has generated over \$800 million to protect approximately 6 million acres of habitat. Nearly all of the revenue (about 98 cents of every dollar) goes directly toward purchasing wetlands for the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The Duck Stamp program has also become a tradition. Artists submit their work to a juried panel each year for the opportunity to have their artwork featured on the next stamp, becoming the face of waterfowl conservation for that year. Many hunters collect these stamps as tokens of waterfowl heritage and conservation.

What do you do with yours?

## Waterfowl Warm Up



## Test Your Skills at the 2026 Summer Clay Shoot

COREY WOLBERT  
MARCH 2026

Grab your shotgun and join the **Northwestern PA Duck Hunters Association** at our **non-competitive** Spring Clay Shoot! This easygoing, all-skill-levels event is happening **Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026** at **Critter's Path Sporting Clays** in Waterford, PA, which is the same place as our last 3 events.

Whether you're a seasoned shooter or just looking for an excuse to get outdoors and pull the trigger, this is the perfect way to enjoy a summer Sunday with friends, food, and fellow waterfowlers.

### Event Details:

**Location:** Critter's Path Sporting Clays – 3191 Wheelertown Rd, Waterford, PA

**Entry Fee:** \$50 – includes a hot lunch

**Format:** 100-round sporting clays course, bring your own ammo!

**Extras:** Raffles, fun games, and food, just a great day out with the crew

Open to the public so grab your friends and come support the club!

### **Why You Should Come:**

This is not a competition and it's just a fun way to shake the dust off your shotgun, meet new members, and support the club's conservation and other projects. All skill levels are welcome!

## Wood Duck Boxes Help Support Local Waterfowl At Presque Isle State Park

COREY WOLBERT  
MARCH 2026

Wood duck nesting boxes play an important role in supporting healthy populations of Wood Duck across our region. Unlike many other ducks, wood ducks are cavity nesters, meaning they naturally nest in holes found in large trees near wetlands, creeks, and marshes. As mature trees and natural cavities have declined over time, properly placed nesting boxes have become an important conservation tool to help ensure these beautiful birds continue to thrive.

During 2025, members of the NWPA Duck Hunters Association installed several new wood duck nesting boxes on Presque Isle State Park as part of our ongoing conservation efforts. These boxes provide safe nesting locations for hens to lay eggs and raise their broods in suitable habitat.

This winter, our volunteers returned to **clean, inspect, and maintain the boxes in preparation for the 2026 nesting season**. Annual maintenance is critical because wood ducks will not reuse boxes filled with old nesting material or debris. By cleaning and refreshing them each year, we help ensure they remain attractive and safe for nesting hens.

We are pleased to report that **many of the boxes showed strong activity during inspection**, including nesting material and other signs that wood ducks successfully used them last season. After maintenance, the boxes are now **ready for another nesting season**, and we look forward to seeing more broods of wood ducks on the water this spring. Projects like this highlight how local volunteers can make a real difference for waterfowl and wetland conservation.

### **Did You Know?** 🦆

- Wood Duck hens often lay **10–15 eggs per nest**.
- Newly hatched ducklings **jump from the nesting box or tree cavity within 24 hours** of hatching even when the nest is 20–40 feet above the ground.
- The mother calls from below and the ducklings bounce safely to the ground before following her to water.

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- Wood ducks were once in serious decline in the early 1900s but recovered thanks to conservation efforts like **nest boxes and habitat protection**.

### Why Nest Box Maintenance Matters

Wood duck boxes need **annual maintenance** to remain effective.

Each winter, volunteers:

- Open the boxes and remove old nesting material
- Inspect and repair damaged boxes
- Add fresh wood shavings for nesting
- Check predator guards and mounting poles

Without this yearly care, boxes can become filled with debris or attract unwanted predators. Proper maintenance helps give wood duck hens a **safe, clean place to nest each spring**.

### Local Conservation in Action

Thanks to the efforts of volunteers from the NWA Duck Hunters Association, new nesting boxes installed in **2025** are already showing encouraging signs of use. During winter maintenance this year, several boxes showed **good nesting activity**, a strong indication that wood ducks are taking advantage of the habitat improvements.

With the boxes now cleaned and refreshed, they are **ready for the upcoming nesting season**, and we look forward to seeing even more broods on the water this spring.



*Shawn Feiock (left) and Catlin Lowes (right) work in the marsh maintaining wood duck nesting boxes to prepare for the upcoming nesting season.*

## Wing Ding Recap – Thank You

COREY WOLBERT  
MARCH 2026

Thank you to everyone who came out to support the **2025 Wing Ding fundraiser**. The event was a great success and it was wonderful to see such a strong turnout of members, supporters, and friends of the club.

This year's Wing Ding marked our **first year at the ZEM ZEM Shriners Club in Erie**, and the new location proved to be a great fit. Guests enjoyed a relaxed atmosphere with **plenty of great food and a full evening of raffles, prizes, and conversation with fellow waterfowlers**.

The raffle portion of the event was especially exciting, with **many great prizes awarded throughout the night**. We were also thrilled to see that **all raffle ticket packages sold out**, including the very popular **Canvasback package**.

Events like the Wing Ding play an important role in supporting the club's conservation efforts and activities throughout the year. **Thank you for helping make the 2025 Wing Ding a fantastic night. We look forward to seeing everyone again next year (again in September)!**

## Another Successful Blind Removal

SHAWN FEIOCK  
MARCH 2026

The NWA Duck Hunters Association would like to thank everyone who **pulled their blinds on time** following the end of the season. Your cooperation helps keep Presque Isle State Park clean and ensures we continue to maintain a strong working relationship with park officials.

A few blinds had **posts frozen in the ground**, but those owners have already made arrangements to remove them as soon as we get the first thaw and ground conditions allow.

Maintaining our blinds and removing them properly at the end of the season is an important part of the program and helps preserve the opportunity for hunters to participate in the Presque Isle waterfowl blind drawing each year.

Be sure to **watch our social media for events**, including the annual **Presque Isle Park cleanup**. Thanks again to everyone who helped make this year's blind removal a success.

## Host-A-Hero Recap

MATT KILLIAN  
MARCH 2026

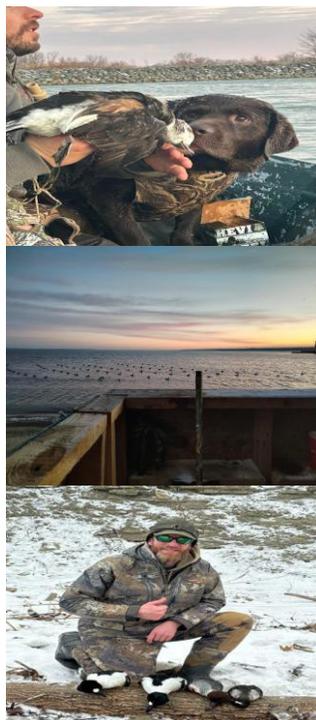
This year found 20 deserving Heroes joined the NWPA Duck club on December 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> for what may have been the most challenging event thus far due to the weather, frigid temperatures, and ice.

The club, volunteers, and Veterans dug deep, hunted hard, and had a great Friday hunt and then enjoyed a delicious lunch thanks to one of our volunteers who prepared and brought the food to everyone out at the Misery Bay pavilion.

The meet and greet dinner at the Ambassador Event Center brought many laughs and smiles amongst everyone and went off without any complications. The Veterans, Volunteers and everyone in attendance were in high spirits all night. Everyone applauded while the Veterans were recognized after being called up one by one to receive their donated items and pick out a door prize item.

Saturday's hunt came in with more ice but with Veterans having luck in the blinds and the layouts. Ducks dropped, stories were shared, and laughter was had by all. Another great luncheon by our volunteers at the Rotary Pavilion helped everyone recharge and reset for the afternoon hunt and finish out strong.

We want to thank all our sponsors/donors, volunteers and club members who worked tirelessly to make this event happen. Without you, this event is not possible. Lastly, thank you to our Veterans and Service Members this event is just a small token of our appreciation.



## New Partnership to Launch Pennwest Cal – Delta University Hunting Program

SHAWN FEIOCK  
MARCH 2026

The NWPA Duck Hunters Association is excited to announce a **new partnership with Delta Waterfowl to help launch a PennWest California University chapter** as part of Delta's **University Hunting Program**.

This program is designed to introduce **tomorrow's wildlife and waterfowl management leaders to their first hunting experiences**. Many students studying wildlife management today have little or no personal connection to hunting, even though hunting plays a major role in conservation and wildlife management across North America.

Through Delta's program, students receive instruction on **hunter safety, shooting skills, and waterfowl hunting traditions, followed by mentored hunts** that allow them to experience firsthand how hunting fits into the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

The program launched by Delta Waterfowl in 2017 has expanded across universities throughout the United States and Canada and continues to grow as more wildlife programs recognize the value of connecting future biologists with the hunting community.

By working with Delta Waterfowl and PennWest California, our club hopes to **help mentor students, provide hands-on hunting opportunities, and build the next generation of waterfowl managers and conservation leaders**.

We're excited to support this effort and look forward to seeing the **PennWest-Cal Delta Waterfowl chapter grow and introduce students to the traditions and conservation values that waterfowl hunting represents**.

## Reminder: Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings bring together the Executive Board, Directors, and members to discuss important club business, including fundraising events, hunting season updates, recent activities, and maintenance of Presque Isle duck blinds. Meetings also provide an opportunity to discuss waterfowl hunting and conservation issues that affect our region.

Meetings are held **the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM** at **Colony Pub & Grille**, 2670 West 8th Street in Erie, just outside Presque Isle State Park.

Attending a meeting is one of the best ways to get involved with the Northwestern PA Duck Hunters Association. It's a great opportunity to meet fellow waterfowlers, connect with club leadership, and help support waterfowl hunting and conservation in our area. 🦆

## Last Chance for Input on Sunday Hunting & Season Dates

[See latest post from the PA Game Commission – Taken directly from their Facebook Page:](#)

Waterfowl hunters, this is where decisions take flight! Season dates, bag limits, and Sunday hunting? It's all on the table for discussion with the proposed changes for the 2026-27 waterfowl hunting seasons.

Proposed changes include:

- ◆ Atlantic Population Canada goose regular season will increase to 45 days with a daily bag limit of 3 (up from 1 daily previously).
- ◆ Regular snow goose season will run from November through March 10, with a light goose conservation season not included unless 2026 spring snow goose surveys indicate it's necessary.

The final proposal includes the decision whether or not to include Sundays in migratory bird seasons. If Sundays are included in the 2026-27 seasons, they cannot be closed in the future. The decision will be made following the public comment period.

Important dates to remember

- **March 11, 2026 – PGC Waterfowl Season Livestream on PGC YouTube channel at 6:30 PM.**
- **Public Comment Period – Now through March 22, 2026 via email [waterfowlcomments@pa.gov](mailto:waterfowlcomments@pa.gov).**
- **March 14, 2026 – Waterfowl Open House Prefer to discuss things in person? The annual Waterfowl Open House will be held Saturday, March 14 from 12:00–4:00 PM at the PGC Northeast Region Headquarters in Dallas, PA. Attendees can meet with Game Commission staff and review the proposed seasons and bag limits.**

## New Merchandise Store – Officially Launched

The Northwestern PA Duck Hunters Association has officially launched its **online merchandise store**, making it easier than ever to get club gear year-round. The store allows members and supporters to order apparel and other items anytime, with faster delivery and a hands-off approach for the club. Be sure to check back often, as **new items will be added periodically**. We will also continue offering **special one-time merchandise releases** from time to time.

Visit: [paduck.org/store](http://paduck.org/store) 



*Illustration showing some of the items we now offer.*

### Thank You Again to Our Wing Ding Canvasback Sponsors:



Special Thanks to non-business donors: Jarod Scott, David & Brian Shapter, Arthur Kranz, & Tom Cook