*Human*Dimensions
Research Program

2023-2024 Illinois Waterfowl Hunter Report: Harvest, Youth Hunts, and Season Preferences

Illinois Natural History Survey
Prairie Research Institute
University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign

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2023-2024 ILLINOIS WATERFOWL HUNTER REPORT: Harvest, Youth Hunts, and Season Preferences

JOB COMPLETION REPORT

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HUMAN DIMENSIONS RESEARCH PROGRAM

STATE OF ILLINOIS

PROJECT NUMBER: W-112-R-33
STUDY 101
JOB NO. 101.3

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Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration
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Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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OBJECTIVE

To survey waterfowl (duck, goose, and coot) hunters annually to determine their activities, harvest, characteristics, attitudes, and opinions.

ABSTRACT

A total of 1,521 (31% response rate) Illinois waterfowl hunters returned usable questionnaires to the 2023-24 Illinois Waterfowl Hunter Survey. An estimated 33,592 adult waterfowl hunters spent ≥1 day afield during 2023-24, a decrease of 7.8% from 36,419 hunters during the 2022-23 seasons. Waterfowl hunters spent 715,627 days afield, a decrease of 8.1% from the 778,576 days devoted during the 2022-23 license year. Total estimated waterfowl harvest decreased 19.8%, from 489,094 during 2022-23 seasons to 392,232 during 2023-24. Duck harvest estimates for the regular duck season were as follows: 106,892 mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*), 29,698 wood ducks (*Aix sponsa*), and 117,449 other ducks. A total of 20,522 teal (*Spatula discors* and *Anas crecca*) were harvested during the September teal season. Goose hunters harvested 71,923 Canada geese (*Branta canadensis*) during the regular Canada goose season, a 23.6% decrease from the 94,139 Canada geese harvested during the 2022-23 regular goose season. Hunters harvested 13,201 Canada geese during the September Canada goose season, a 20.5% decrease from the previous year. During the Youth Waterfowl Hunting Season, 3,899 adults took 5,438 youths waterfowl hunting, a 13.8% decrease in adult participation and a 17.5% decrease in youth participation from the 2022-23 Youth Waterfowl Hunting Season. Hunter preferences for seasons and satisfaction with the waterfowl seasons are also discussed.

METHODS

Mailings

A random sample of 5,000 waterfowl hunters was drawn from the population of Illinois State Waterfowl Stamp purchasers from the 2022-23 license year. On 28 May 2024, hunters were mailed an 8-page questionnaire (Appendix A), cover letter (Appendix B), and a postage-paid return envelope. The effective sample was reduced from 5,000 questionnaires to 4,860 due to 140 being returned as undeliverable. A thank you/reminder postcard

(Appendix C) was sent to hunters on 21 June 2024. Non-respondents were mailed a second questionnaire and cover letter (Appendix D) on 17 July 2024, followed by a second postcard mailing on 12 August 2024. A third and final questionnaire and cover letter (Appendix E) were mailed to non-respondents on 11 September 2024. Coded data were entered and analyzed using SPSS 29.0 (SPSS Inc. 2022). Confidence intervals are presented where appropriate.

Statewide Estimates

Estimates of number of hunters, days afield, and waterfowl harvested were based on confirmed sales of 49,118 adult resident Illinois Migratory Waterfowl stamps (2023-24 series) and were computed following the procedures outlined below (Anderson et al. 1998), with slight modification. The correction factors for multiple stamp buyers ($A1$) and stamp exempt hunters ($A2$) were removed beginning with the estimates of 2016-17 (Williams et al. 2018). The original formulas are presented for understanding how previous year's estimates were created.

The total number of active waterfowl hunters was estimated using the number of Illinois Migratory Waterfowl Stamps sold. The number of teal, duck, and goose hunters (*Huntsp*), days afield (*Dayssp*), birds crippled but not retrieved (*Cripsp*) and harvest (*Harvsp*) were calculated as follows:

$$Hunt_{sp} = Hunt_r \frac{L_t}{n}$$

$$Days_{sp} = Days_r \frac{L_t}{n}$$

$$Crip_{sp} = Crip_r \frac{L_t}{n}$$

$$Harv_{sp} = Harv_r \frac{L_t A}{n}$$

Where:

$Hunt_r$ = number of respondents to the 2023-24 Illinois Waterfowl Hunter Survey who reported hunting for each species (adjustment for non-hunters is inherent),

L_t = total number of Illinois migratory Waterfowl Stamps sold in 2023-24,

n = number of respondents to 2023-24 Illinois Waterfowl Hunter Survey who purchased a stamp,

$Days_r$ = total number of days spent hunting reported by respondents,

$Crip_r$ = total number of birds crippled but not retrieved reported by respondents,

$Harv_r$ = total harvest of each species reported by respondents,

A_3 = fixed reduction factor for reporting bias [0.501 for teal, ducks, and coots (Anderson 1985); 0.478 for geese (Anderson et al. 1996, Miller et al. 2018)].

Confidence intervals for the estimated numbers of ducks, coots, and geese harvested were calculated by:

$$95\%\ CI\ [Harv_{sp}] = \pm 2L_t\left(\frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}\right)\left(\frac{L_t - n}{L_t}\right)$$

Where s = standard deviation of total species harvest reported by respondents.

SEASON LENGTHS AND BAG LIMITS

Illinois incorporated a fourth waterfowl zone in 2011-12 for the regular waterfowl seasons and 2012-13 for the September goose season. The four zones are the North, Central, South Central, and South Zones (Appendix G). The early (September) teal (*Spatula discors* and *Anas crecca*) season length was 16 days with a daily bag of 6 teal. Early (September) Canada goose (*Branta canadensis*) season length and start date (1 September) were the same for all four zones. Hunters could hunt 15 days statewide and could harvest 5 geese/day in the North and Central Zones and 2 birds per day in the South Central and South Zones. Length and daily bag limit of the regular duck season did not change (60-day season/6-bird daily bag limit) during 2023-24. Basic daily bag limits were 6 ducks, 5 mergansers, and 15 coots; individual species limits are provided in Appendix H. Regular Canada goose season length in the North and Central Zones was 90 days, and 82 days and

61 days in the South Central and South Zones, respectively. Daily bag limit was 3 for Canada geese, 2 for White-fronted geese (*Anser albifrons*), and 1 for Brant geese (*Branta bernicla*). All species listed above had a possession limit of 3 times the daily bag limit. Light geese (*Anser caerulescens* and *Anser rossii)* had a daily limit of 20 and no possession limit.

RESULTS

Waterfowl Harvest and Days Afield

We received 1,521 usable questionnaires (i.e., respondents completed at least a portion of the questionnaire), for an overall response rate of 31%. Ninety percent of respondents (90.3%) indicated they had purchased an Illinois State Waterfowl Stamp for the 2023-24 season (Figure 1) and 939 (68.4%) license purchasers reported hunting ≥1day during the 2023-24 waterfowl seasons (Figure 2). Forty-six percent of respondents (46.8%) reported they hunt waterfowl every year in Illinois and 17.2% hunt waterfowl most years (Figure 3). Forty percent of respondents (40.4%) hunted fewer days during the 2023-24 waterfowl seasons compared to the last 5 years (Figure 4).

The number of active waterfowl hunters (hunted ≥1 day(s) during waterfowl season) decreased from 36,419 during the 2022-23 season to 33,592 during the 2023-24 season, a 7.8% decrease in the number of hunters (Figure 5, Table 1). Hunters reported spending 715,627 days afield, a decrease of 8.1% from the 778,576 days devoted during the 2022-23 license year. Total waterfowl harvest decreased 19.8%, from 489,094 during 2022-23 to 392,232 during the 2023-24 season (Table 1). Thirty-five percent (35.3%) of hunters targeted ducks only, 8.8% targeted geese only, and 55.9% targeted both ducks and geese (Figure 6, Table 2).

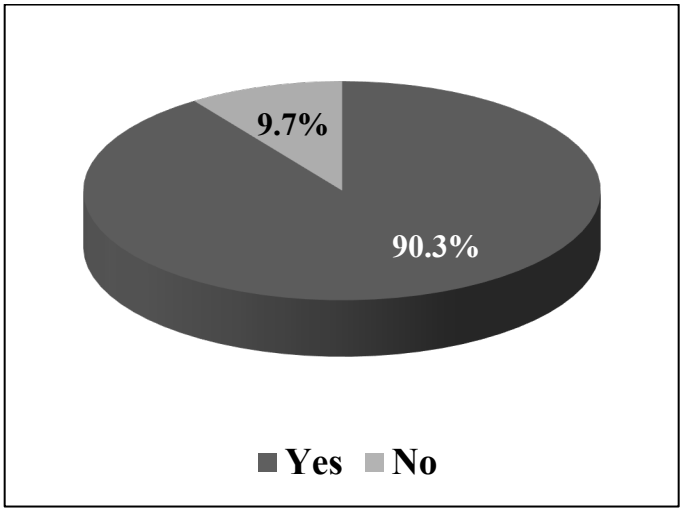

Figure 1. Respondents who purchased an Illinois State Waterfowl Stamp for the 2023-24 seasons (n = 1,521).

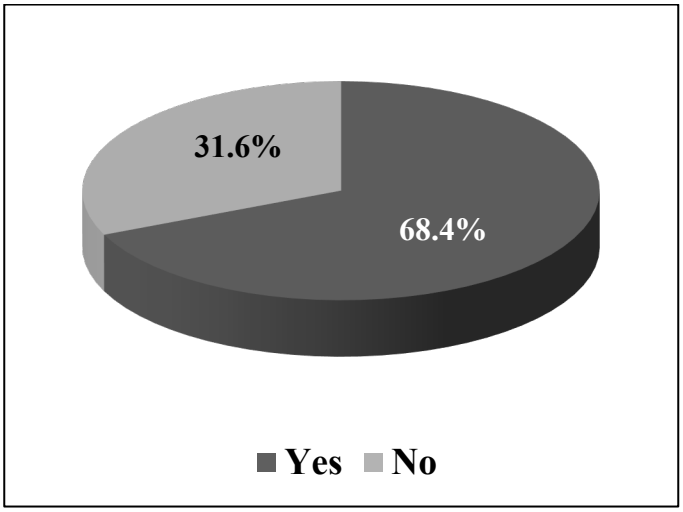

Figure 2. License purchasers who hunted waterfowl (ducks, geese, or coots) in Illinois during 2023-24 season (n = 1,373).
* Cases selected for those who indicated they purchased an Illinois State Waterfowl Stamp for the 2023-24 seasons.

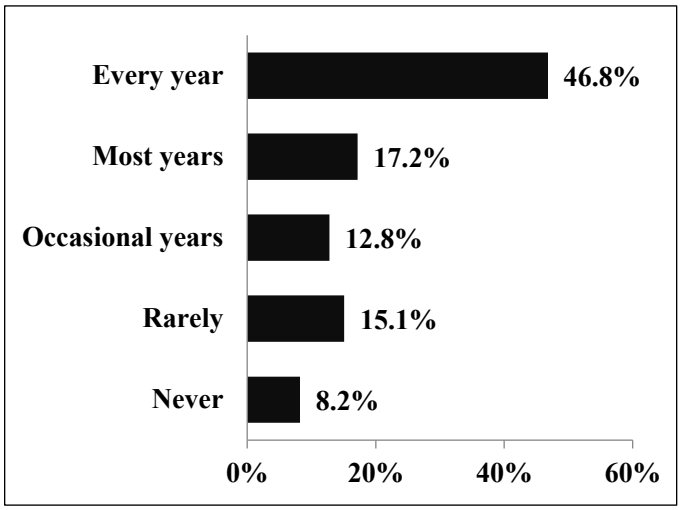

Figure 3. How often respondents hunt waterfowl in Illinois (n = 1,521).

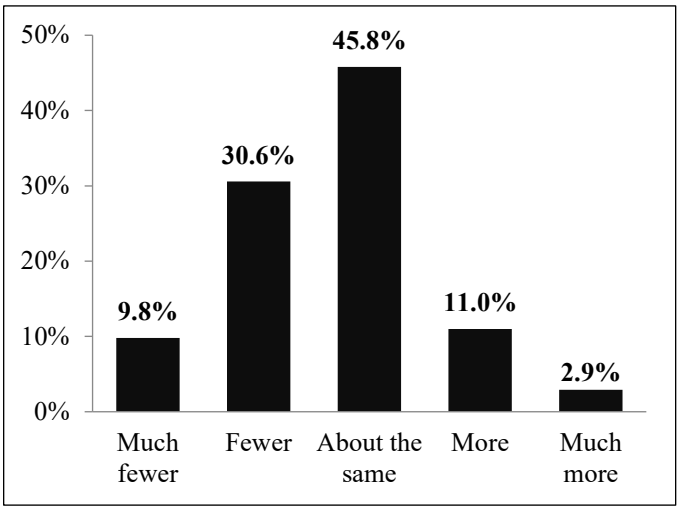

Figure 4. Number of days hunted during the 2023-24 waterfowl season compared to prior 5 years (n = 939).

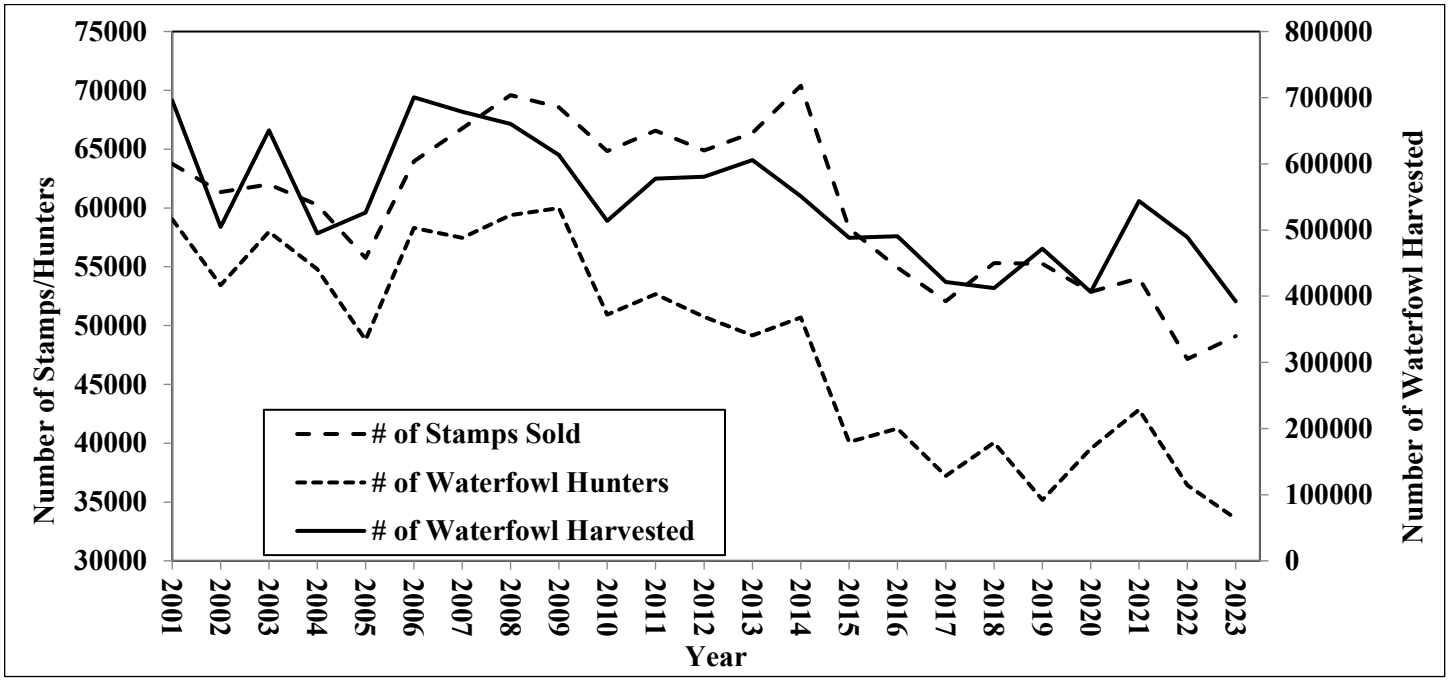

Figure 5. Number of stamps sold, waterfowl hunters, and waterfowl harvested in Illinois, 2004-2023.

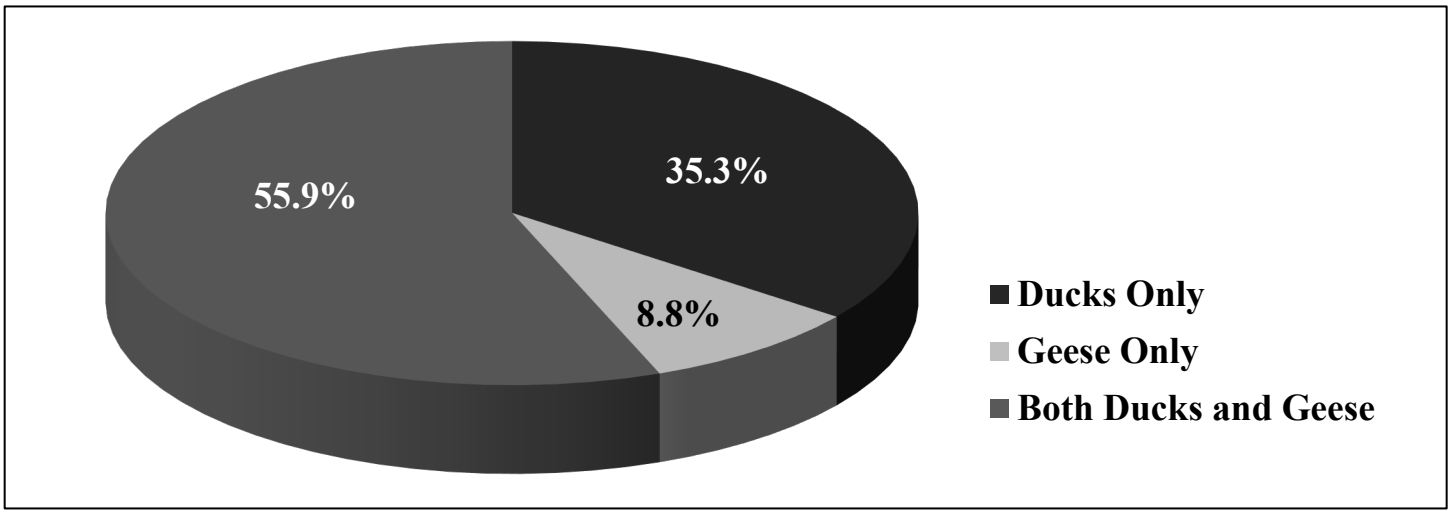

Figure 6. Respondents who hunted ducks, geese, or both during the 2023-24 Illinois waterfowl season.

September Teal Season

The number of early (September) teal season hunters decreased 6.8% from 8,602 during 2022 to 8,013 during 2023 (Figure 7, Table 3). Days afield decreased 7.6% from 33,970 during 2022 to 31,374 during 2023. Teal harvest (20,522) decreased 11.2% from the 2022 harvest (23,122). The Central Zone accounted for over one-half (54.5%) of teal hunters, teal harvested (58.9%), and teal hunter days afield (56.3%; Table 4). The North Zone reported the second-most days afield, hunters, and total teal harvested. Statewide, September season teal hunters averaged 3.92 days afield, and harvested an average of 0.65 teal per hunter per day and 2.56 teal per hunter for the season (Figure 8, Table 5).

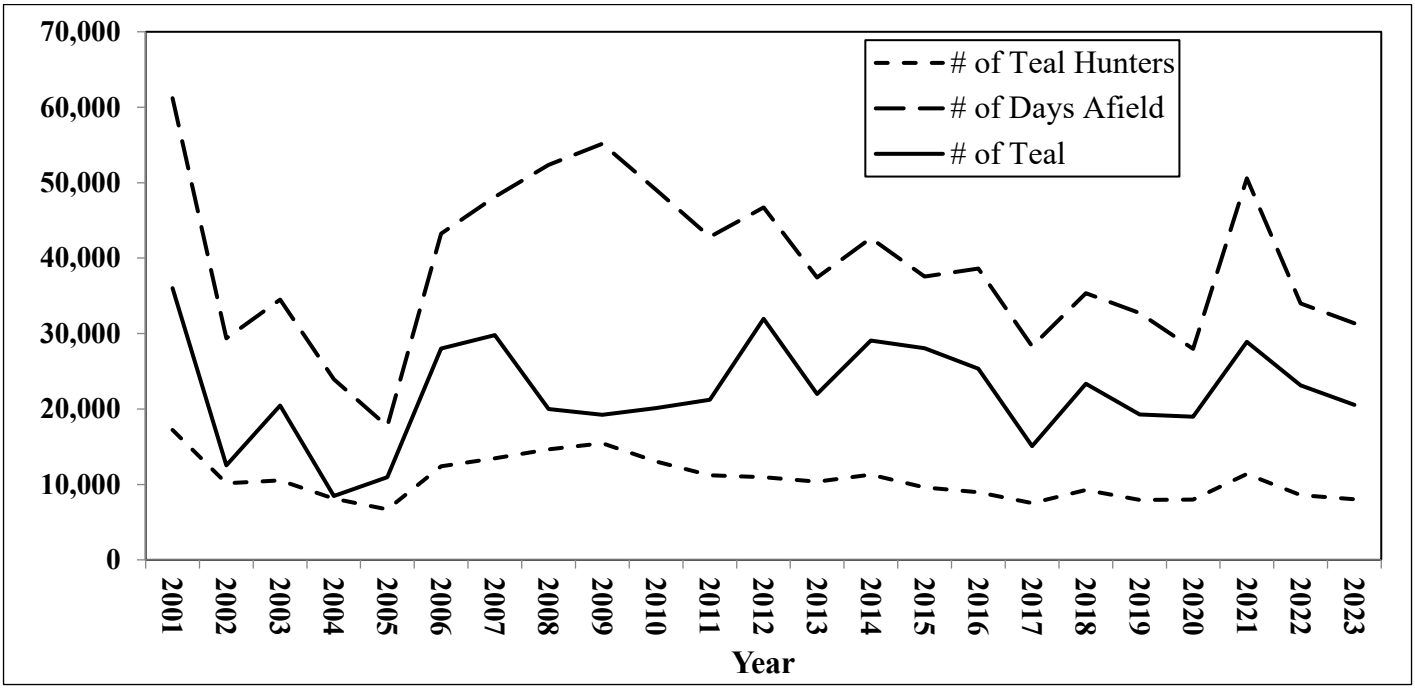

Figure 7. Number of teal harvested and hunter activity during the Illinois September teal season, 2004-2023.

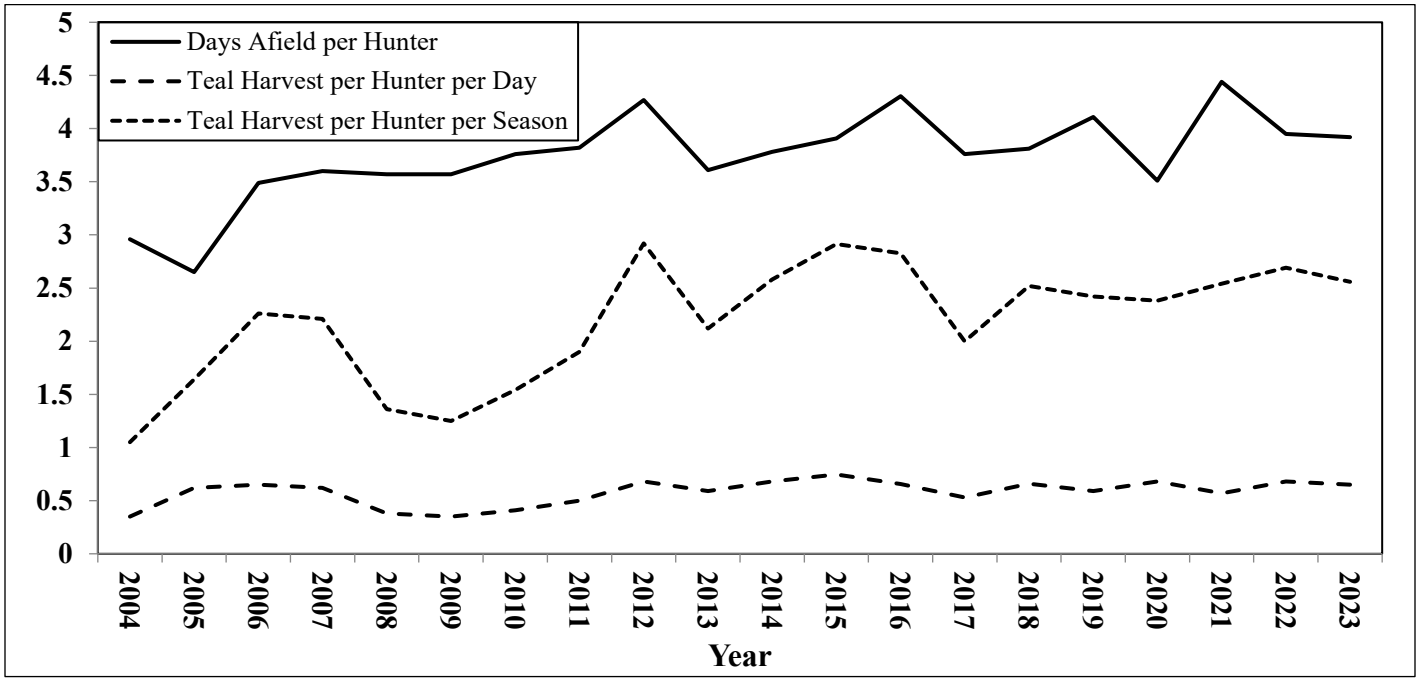

Figure 8. Rates of teal harvest and hunter activity during the Illinois September teal season, 2004-2023.

Youth Waterfowl Hunting

The Youth Waterfowl Season dates changed in all 4 zones compared with the 2022 seasons; number of season days remained unchanged between the 2022 and 2023 seasons. Youth aged ≤17 were able to hunt ducks, geese, and coots for 2 days 1 week prior to opening of the regular duck season in the North, Central, and South

Central Zones, but two weeks earlier in the South Zone. Eight percent (8.4%) of those who purchased an Illinois waterfowl stamp took a youth hunting during the Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days (Figure 9). Number of adults who participated in the 2023 youth hunt decreased 13.7% from 4,521 to 3,899 participants and number of youth participants decreased 17.5% from 6,593 during 2022 to 5,438 youths during the 2023 youth hunt (Table 6). Forty-four percent (44.0%) of hunting groups who participated in the 2023 youth waterfowl season had ≥1youth who had not previously hunted ducks or geese (Figure 10), and 9.2% of hunters indicated this was their first time accompanying a youth during the hunt (Figure 11). Fifty-four percent of respondents (54.5%) take a youth hunting each year during the youth waterfowl season, 22.2% take a youth hunting most but not every year, and 23.2% occasionally take a youth hunting. Harvest of ducks during the youth season decreased 24.9, from 11,026 during 2022 to 8,280 during 2023, and geese decreased 49.6% from 1,426 to 718 from the 2022 to 2023 seasons.

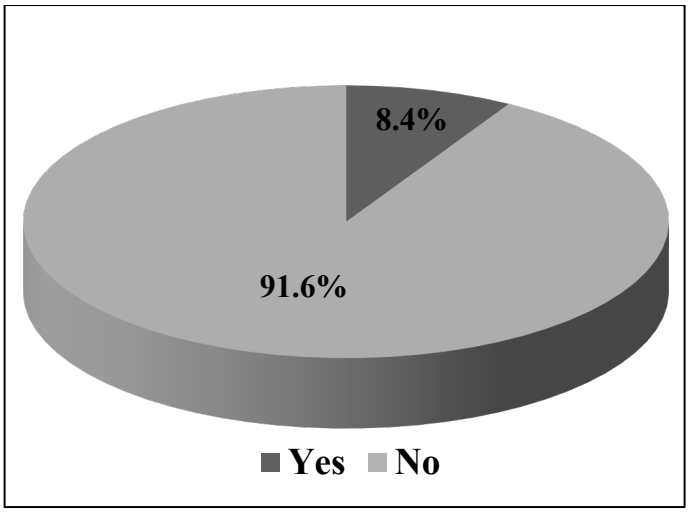

Figure 9. Hunters* who took a youth (≤17 years old) hunting during the 2023 Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days (*n* = 1,299).
*Cases selected for those who indicated they purchased a stamp for the 2023-24 waterfowl seasons.

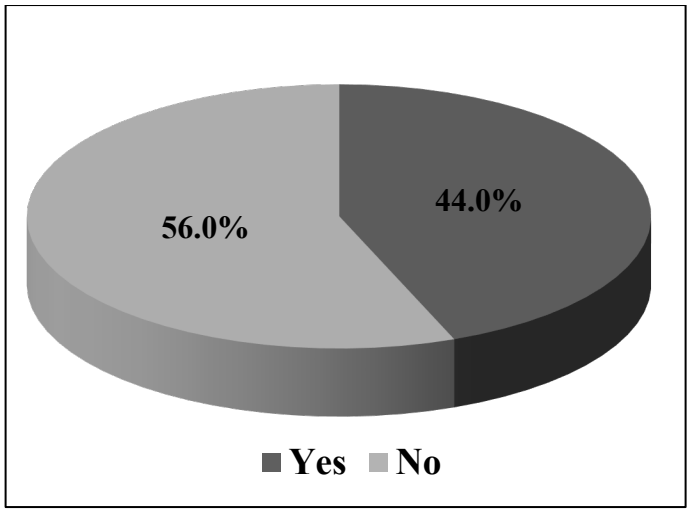

Figure 10. Hunters* who took at least one youth (≤17 years old) hunting for the first time (*n* = 109).
*Cases selected for those who indicated they took a youth hunting during the 2023 Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days.

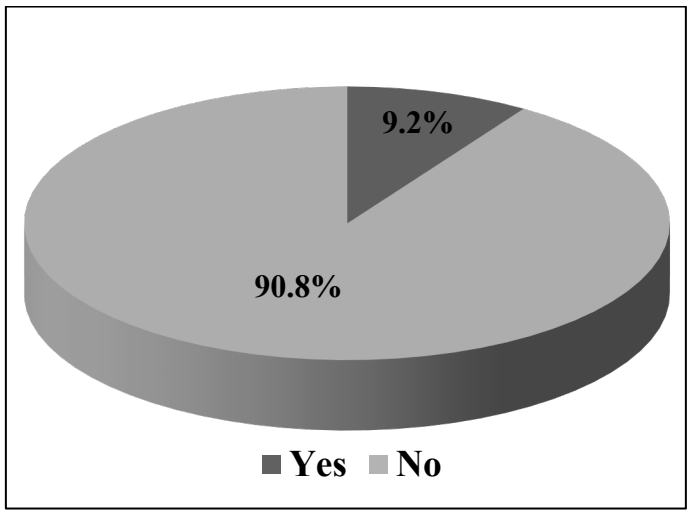

Figure 11. Hunters* for whom it was their first time taking a youth (≤17 years old) hunting (n = 109).
*Cases selected for those who indicated they took a youth hunting during the 2023 Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days.

Regular Duck Season

Number of duck hunters decreased by 1,754 (5.5%) from 31,804 during the 2022-23 season to 30,050 in the 2023-24 season (Table 7). Duck hunters spent 397,952 days afield ($\overline{X}$= 13.24) during the 2023-24 season, a decrease of 6.7% from the 426,633 days reported during the 2022-23 season. The largest proportion of respondents (52.4%) hunted waterfowl in the Central Zone most often, followed by the North (28.6%), South Central (18.0%), and South (12.7%) Zones (Figure 12).

Total duck harvest during 2023-24 was 254,039, a decrease of 19.5% from the duck harvest reported for 2022-23 (315,558; Table 7). Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) comprised 42.1% of the total regular season duck harvest, whereas wood ducks (*Aix sponsa*) and other ducks accounted for 11.7% and 46.2%, respectively (Figure 13). Statewide mallard harvest in Illinois decreased by 45,806 birds (30.0%) from 152,698 during the 2022-23 season to 106,892 during the 2023-24 season (Figure 14, Table 7). Wood duck harvest decreased 6,117 (17.1%) from 35,815 ducks during 2022-23 to 29,698 during 2023-24. The harvest of other ducks decreased 7,768 (6.4%) from 125,330 during 2022-23 to 114,133 during 2023-24, and statewide coot (*Fulica americana*) harvest increased from 3,429 during 2022-23 to 2,993 coots during 2023-24.

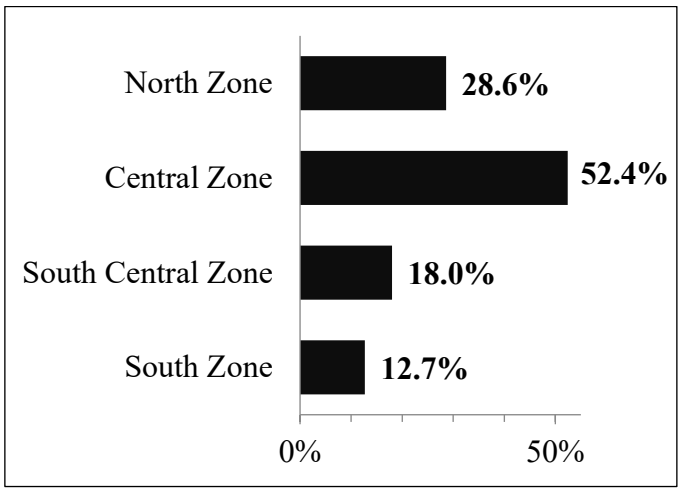

Figure 12. Zones hunters* hunted in most often during the 2023-24 waterfowl seasons (n = 840).
*Cases selected for those who indicated they hunted at least one day during the 2023-24 waterfowl seasons.

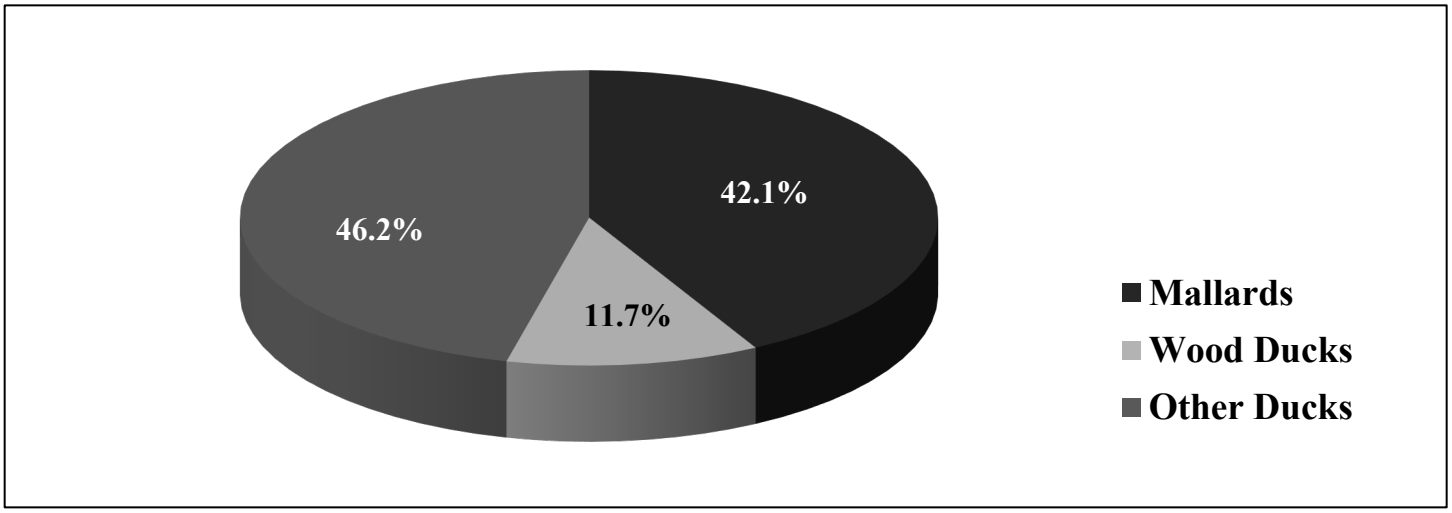

Figure 13. Proportion of mallards, wood ducks, & other ducks harvested during the 2023-24 regular duck season. Proportions are by mallard, wood duck, and other ducks due to how hunters are asked to report their harvest. This order (mallard, wood duck, and other ducks) is not necessarily the order of the most-often harvested ducks in Illinois.

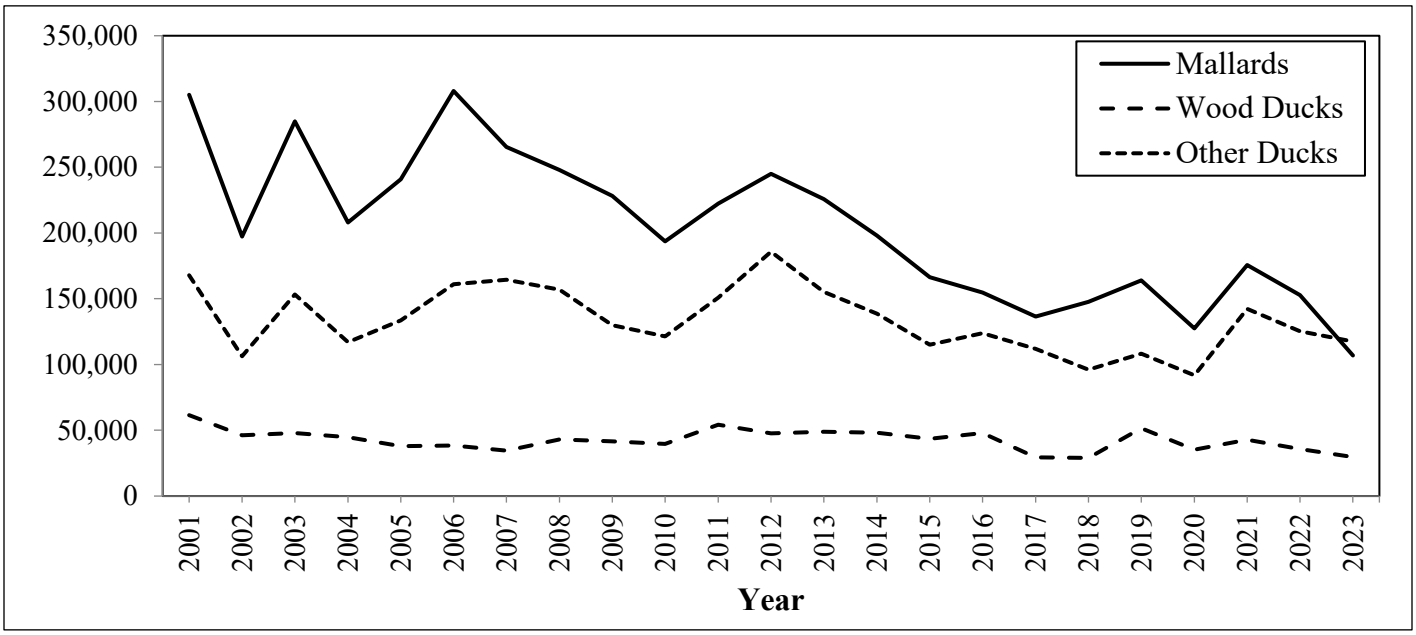

Figure 14. Illinois regular duck season harvest, 2004-2023.

The 2023-24 duck harvest is presented by waterfowl zones in Table 8. The Central Zone accounted for one-half (52.4%) of duck hunters, days afield (49.4%), and ducks harvested (54.1%) during the regular duck season. The Central Zone had the greatest season success rate (harvest/hunter/season) at 8.73 ducks per season, and the South and Central Zones had similar daily success rates (harvest/hunter/day) at 0.71 ducks per day and 0.70 ducks per day, respectively. Duck hunter daily success statewide decreased from 0.74 ducks/day for the 2022-23 season to 0.64 ducks/day during the 2023-24 season; hunter season success decreased from 9.92 ducks/hunter/season for the 2022-23 season to 8.45 during the 2023-24 season (Figure 15, Table 9). Of duck hunters who reported hunting ≥ 1 day (n = 939), 38.3% hunted ≤ 5 days; 19.9% of duck hunters reported not harvesting any ducks, whereas 6.1% harvested greater than 30 ducks (Figure 16, Table 10).

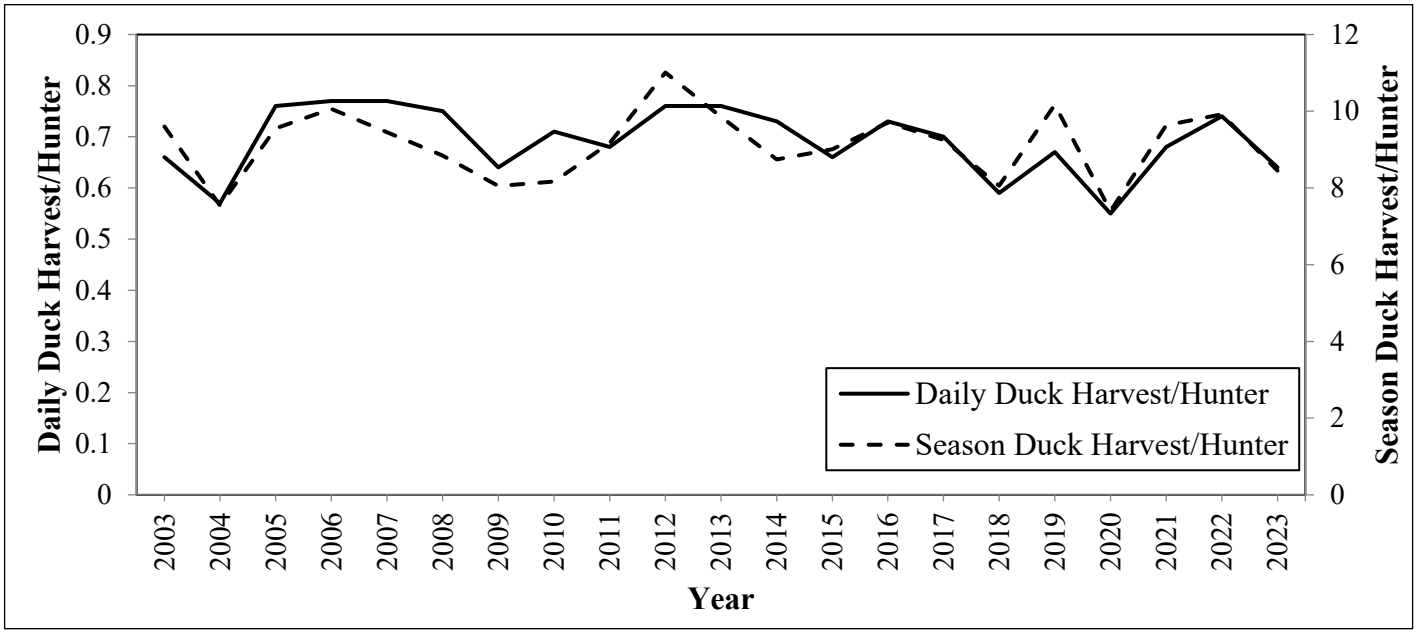

Figure 15. Illinois regular duck harvest by hunters per day and season, 2004-2023.

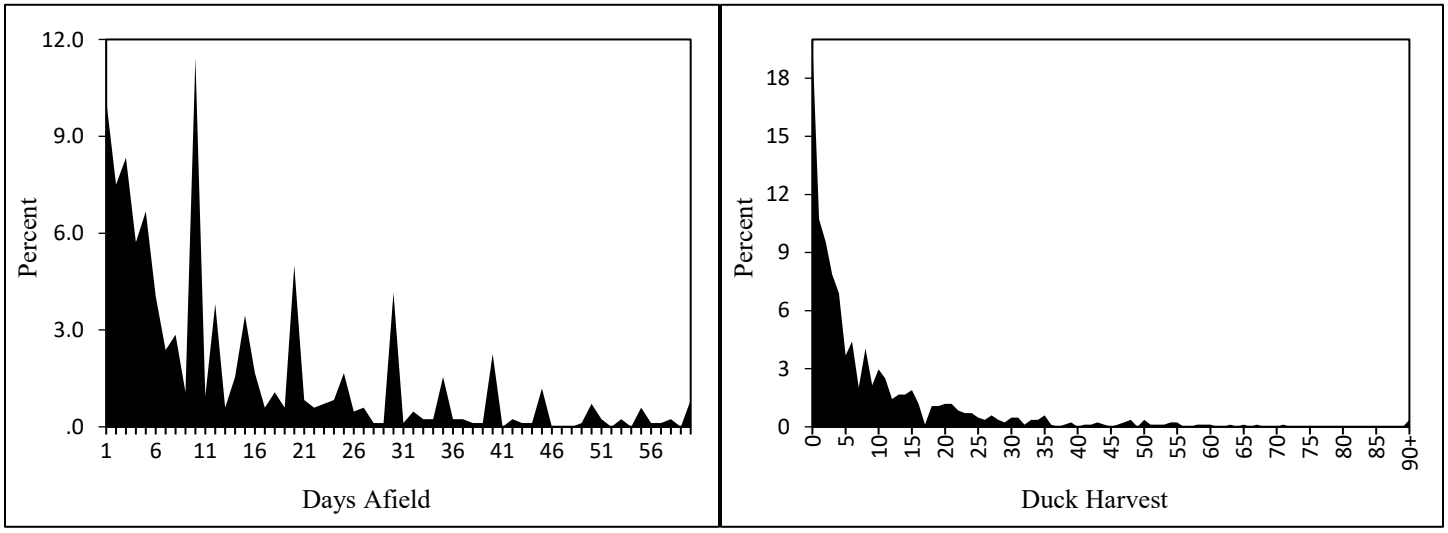

Figure 16. Distribution of days afield per hunter and ducks harvested per hunter in Illinois during the 2023-24 regular duck season.

Early September Goose Season

An estimated 7,978 hunters participated in the early (September) Canada goose season in Illinois during the 2023 season, a decrease of 15.0% from the 9,387 who participated during 2022 (Figure 17, Table 11). Statewide, early goose season hunters spent 31,911 days afield in 2023, 5.2% fewer days than 2022 (33,656), and harvested approximately 13,201 Canada geese, a 20.5% decrease from the 2022 harvest (16,598). The Central Zone accounted for the most hunters (51.6%), days afield (49.1%), and geese harvested (48.6%; Figure 18, Table 11).

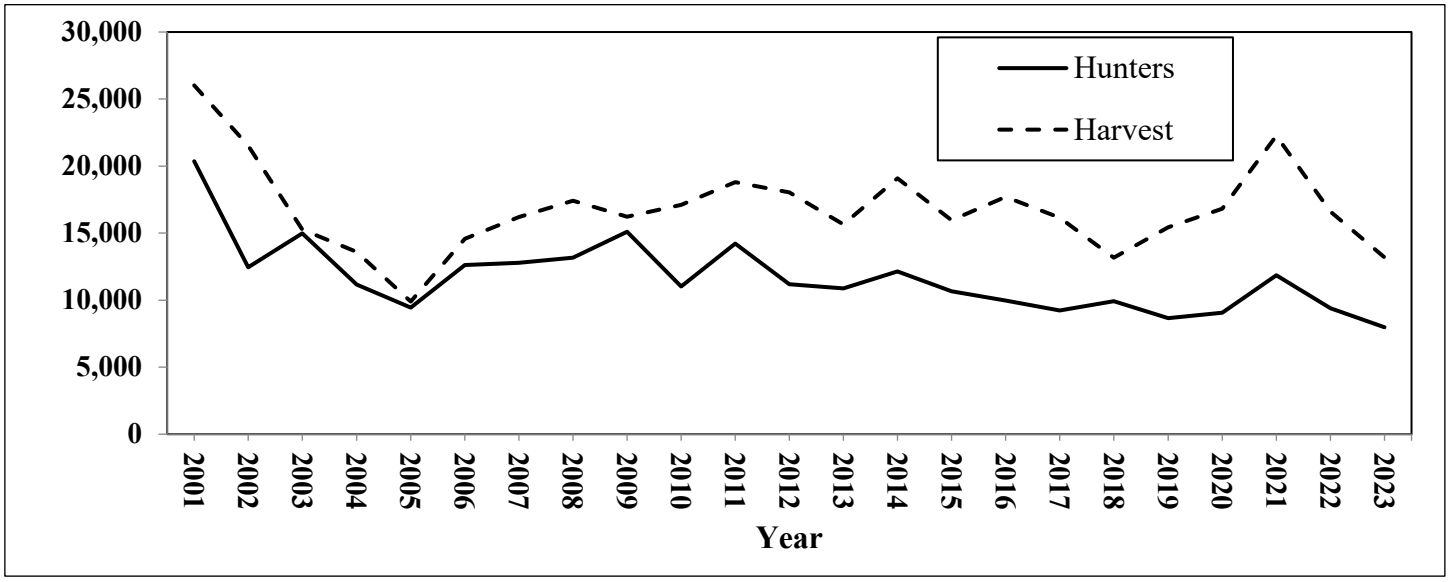

Figure 17. Early September Canada goose harvest and hunter activity, 2004-2023.

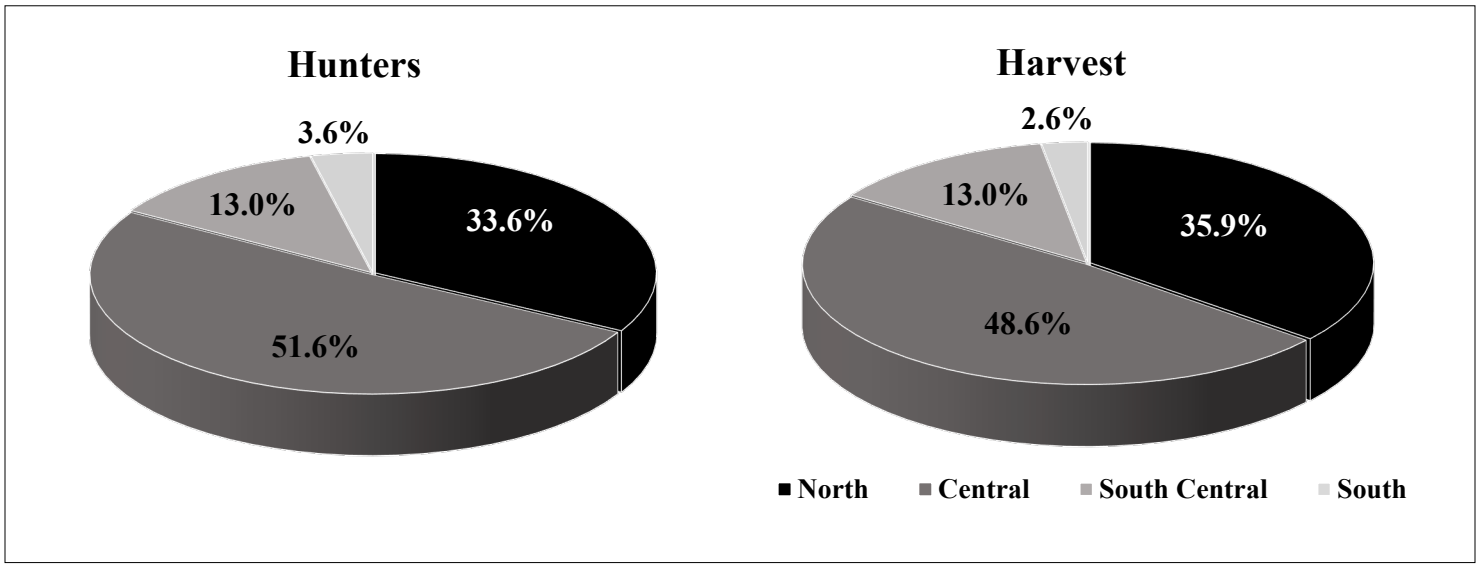

Figure 18. Early September Canada goose harvest and hunter activity by zone in Illinois during 2023.

Regular Goose Season

Canada goose harvest during the 2023-24 regular goose season decreased 23.6% from 2022-23 (Table 12, Figure 19). An estimated 21,321 hunters spent 254,390 days afield and harvested 71,923 Canada geese during 2023-24. Number of goose hunters in Illinois decreased 16.2% during 2023-24 compared to 2022-23, and number of days afield decreased 11.1%. Hunters also harvested 20,520 other geese, of which 15,732 were light geese (snow, blue or Ross' geese) (*Anser caerulescens* and *Anser rossii*) and 4,788 were White-fronted (speckle-bellied) geese (*Anser albifrons*), for a total combined harvest of 92,443 geese (Table 12, Figure 20).

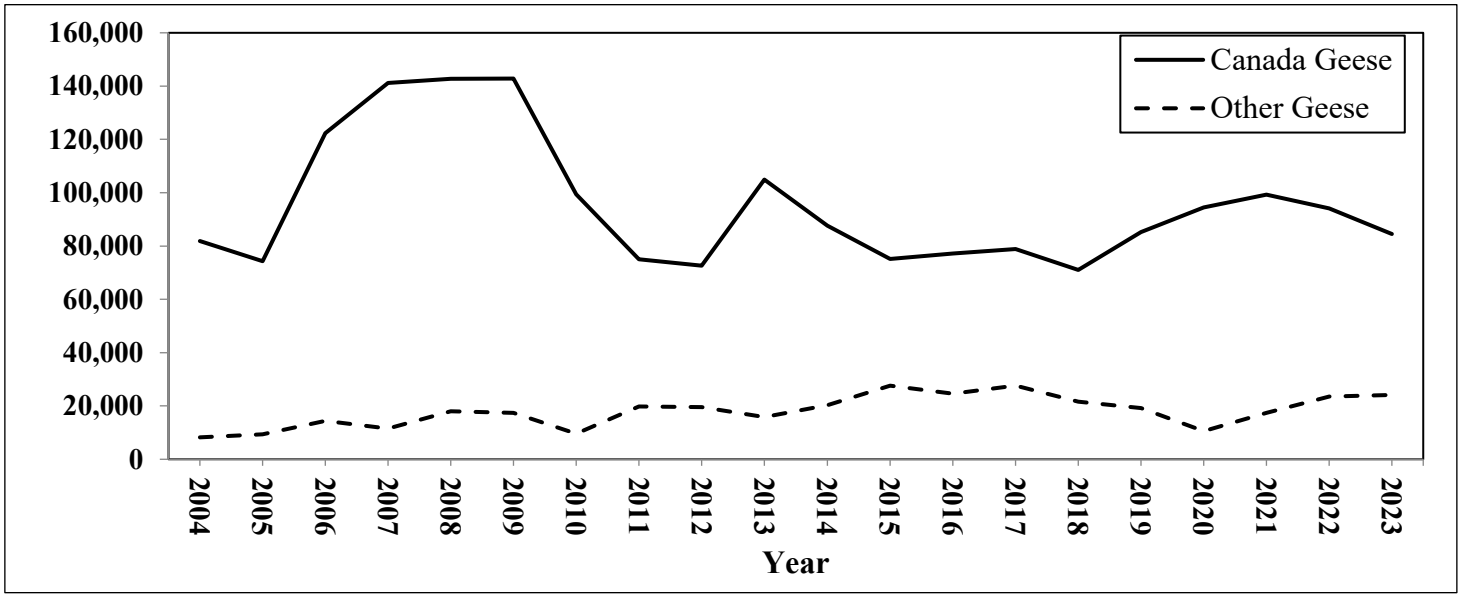

Figure 19. Goose harvest during Illinois' regular goose season from 2004-2023.

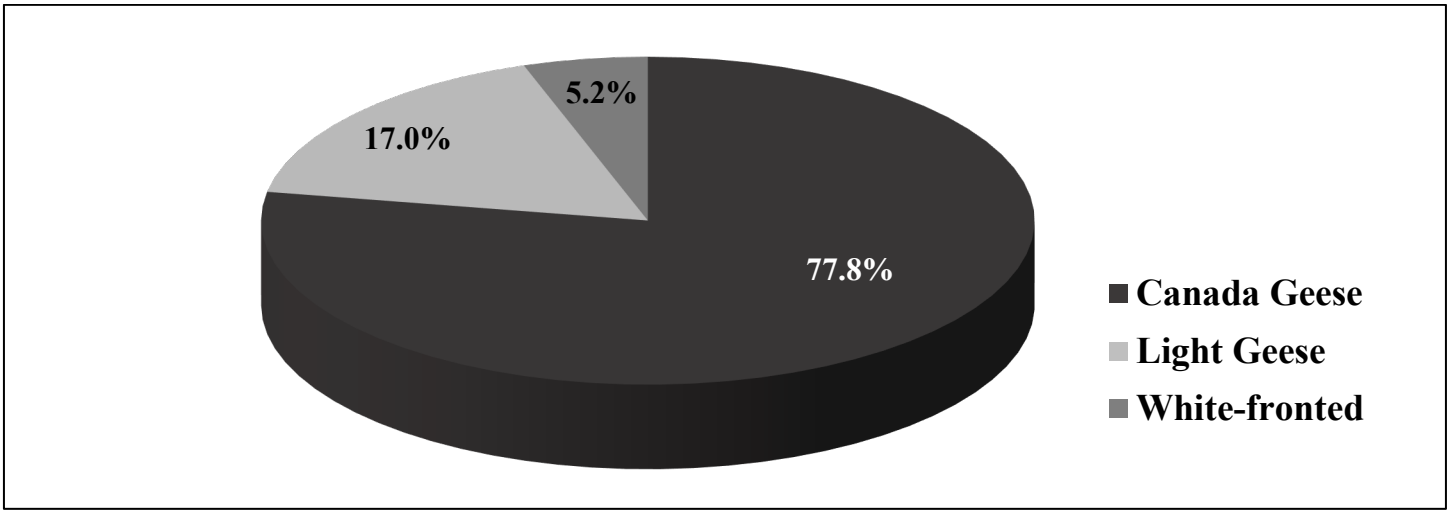

Figure 20. 2023-24 Illinois' regular goose season harvest.

Goose hunters reported a mean of 11.93 days afield and mean harvest of 4.34 geese per season and 0.36 geese per hunter per day; 26.5% of goose hunters harvested ≥ 5 geese (Figure 21, Tables 13 and 14). The Central Zone led the state in the number of goose hunters (53.4%), days afield (48.7%,), and harvest of Canada geese (50.4%), White-fronted geese (75.4%), and light geese (66.8%; Table 14). Harvest of Canada geese is summarized by zone and year (2021-22 through 2023-24) in Table 15.

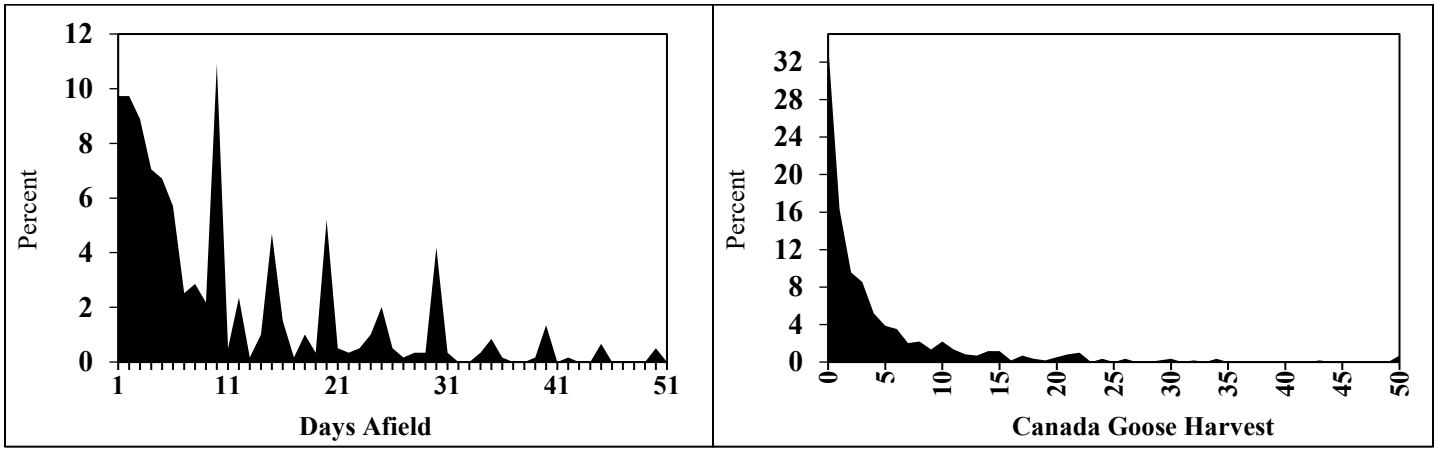

Figure 21. Distribution of days afield per hunter and geese harvested per hunter for Illinois' 2023-24 regular goose season.

Crippling Losses

Crippling losses (birds downed but not retrieved) during the 2023-24 regular season were estimated at 40,103 ducks and 5,974 geese (Table 16). These estimates, considered to be indices because they contain information about the relative number and are not actual number or abundance estimates, equate to 15.8 ducks and 6.5 geese lost per 100 harvested.

Public and Private Land Use

Over forty percent (43.7%) of hunters hunted on Illinois state-owned (IDNR) public lands during the 2023-24 seasons (Figure 22). Among those who used public lands, sites in the Central Zone were most popular (Figure 23). Most hunters (61.1%) who used public lands had at least one hunt in a blind awarded through a lottery (Figure 24). Hunters' satisfaction with IDNR public land was greatest for "harvest reporting requirements for public land you hunt" (72.1%), "clarity of hunting regulations for public sites" (71.4%), and "ease of finding site regulations for site you hunted" (68.4%) (Table 17). Hunters were least satisfied with "amount of waterfowl on public land" (17.4%), "habitat quality on public hunting land" (43.8%), and "number of other hunters you saw while hunting" (46.7%).

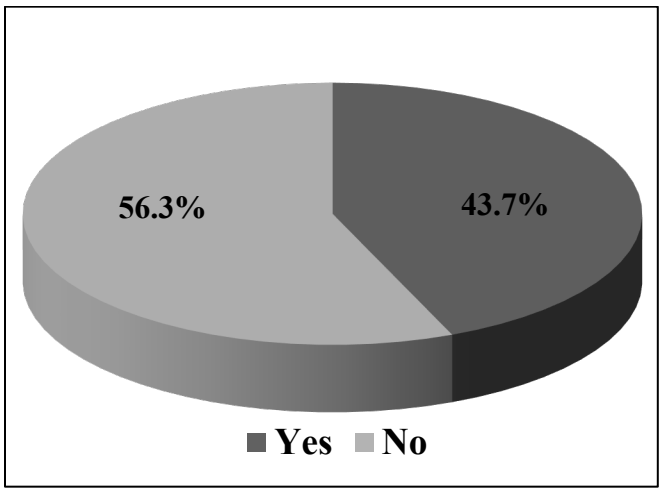

Figure 22. Hunters* who hunted on Illinois state-owned (IDNR) public lands during 2023-24 seasons (n = 939)

*Cases selected for those who indicated they hunted at least one day during 2023-24.

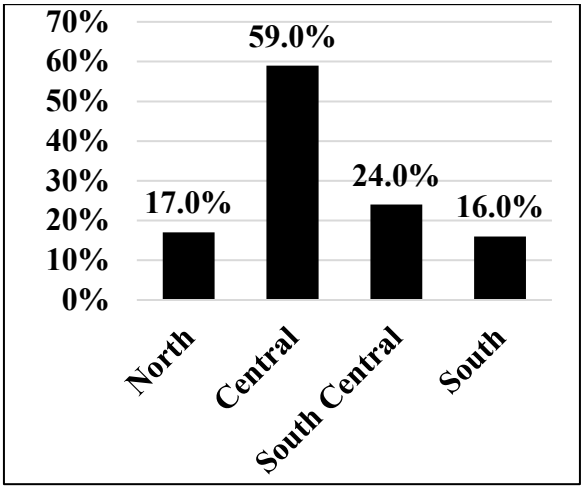

Figure 23. Zone in which public land hunted was located (n = 410).

* Cases selected for those who indicated they hunted on Illinois state-owned (IDNR) public lands during 2023-24 seasons

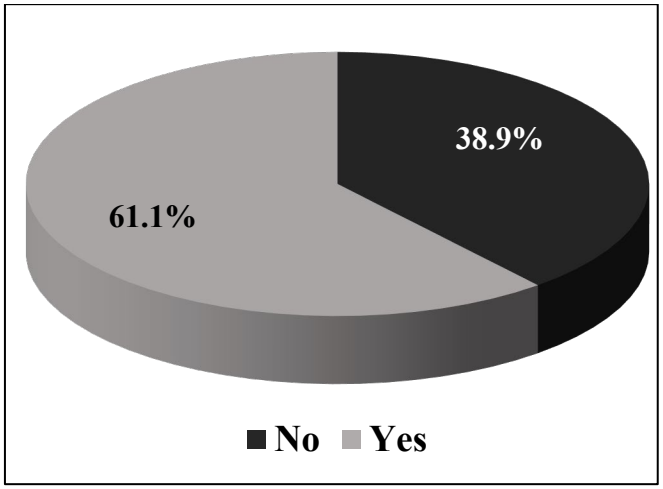

Figure 24. Waterfowl hunters whose public land use was in a blind awarded by lottery (n = 404).

* Cases selected for those who indicated they hunted on Illinois state-owned (IDNR) public lands during 2023-24 seasons

Satisfaction with Season Timing and Zone Configuration

As a condition of implementing a four-zone structure, Illinois was required to collect information on hunter satisfaction in areas of the state impacted by waterfowl zone changes. The former South Zone was divided into two zones with a goal of providing preferred season dates to most hunters in the South Central and South Zones. Central Zone duck hunters harvested the highest average number of ducks per hunter per season ($\overline{X}$ = 8.73), an average of 1.55 more than South Zone hunters, 2.11 more than hunters in the South Central Zone, and 2.51 more than hunters in the North Zone. North Zone duck hunters were most satisfied with all aspects of

the most recent duck season(s) in Illinois, though Central and South Zone duck hunters were equally satisfied with "number of ducks migrating through areas you hunted" and "waterfowl hunting regulations" (Table 18). South Central Zone hunters were the least satisfied zone with all aspects. Satisfaction with the 2023-24 waterfowl hunting season in Illinois was low, though respondents were most satisfied with: (1) bagging ≥1 duck during a day in the field, (2) bagging drakes, and (3) bagging a variety of different duck species (Table 19). Respondents were least satisfied with: (1) seeing ducks in the field, (2) bagging their daily limit, (3) bagging mallards, and (4) bagging a lot of ducks over the season.

Most respondents (56.6%) who hunted in the North and Central Zones were satisfied with the current Illinois Waterfowl Zone line separating these zones, 33.6% were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied, and 9.8% were dissatisfied (Table 20). Forty-eight percent of respondents (48.7%) who hunted in the Central and South Central Zones were satisfied with the current waterfowl zone line separating these zones, 38.1% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 13.2% were dissatisfied. Forty-six percent of respondents (46.2%) who hunted in the Central and South Zones were satisfied with the current waterfowl zone line separating these zones, 41.3% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 12.5% were dissatisfied. Respondents who hunted in the South Central and South Zones were least satisfied with the current waterfowl zone line separating these zones (43.4%), 38.7% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and 17.9% were dissatisfied. Respondents hunted waterfowl most frequently in Fulton (n = 75), Will (n = 66), McHenry (n = 64), and Mason counties (n = 42). Most respondents (89.7%) believed that the county where they hunted waterfowl most often was in the correct zone (Figure 25). The counties that respondents most frequently believed were in the incorrect zone were Will (n = 13), Perry (n = 11), Jackson (n = 9), and Franklin counties (n = 7).

When asked about season timing, hunters' opinions varied between regions with most hunters in the Central and South Central Zones believing that the 2023-24 regular duck season was "too early" (Central: 51.2%, South Central: 67.2%), though hunters in the North and South Zones were split between believing that the duck season was "too early" (North: 38.2%, South: 43.1%) and "about right" (North: 45.2%, South: 38.9%) (Figure 26, Table 21). Most teal hunters (North: 83.3%, Central: 70.6%, South Central: 60.0%, South: 87.5%) and September goose hunters (North: 76.4%, Central: 76.6%, South Central: 60.0%, South: 77.8%) in each

zone reported those seasons were timed “about right” (Table 21). Most goose hunters in the South Central (60.5%) and South Zones (53.8%) believed the timing for the 2023-24 regular goose season was “too early”, though most North Zone hunters (62.8%) believed the season was “about right” and Central Zone hunters were split between “too early” and “about right” (48.3% and 44.6%, respectively) (Figure 26). The most important considerations to respondents when deciding on their preferred 2023-24 duck season dates for the zone that they hunted most often during the 2023-24 duck season were: (1) peak of duck migration (47.3%), (2) timing of mallard migration (18.4%), and (3) maximize number of January hunting days (7.8%). Respondents were asked their preferred dates for the 2024-25 duck season in Illinois for the zone in which they intend to hunt most often during the 2024-25 duck season. Respondents in the North Zone preferred that the season take place October 19th to December 17th (24.6%), Central Zone preferred October 26th to December 24th (21.6%), and respondents in the South Central and South Zones preferred that the season always close on January 31st” (44.0% and 53.3%, respectively) (Figure 27).

Currently Illinois has a continuous duck season with four duck hunting zones. The next opportunity to change zone options will be during 2025 for the period 2026 through 2030. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service only allows split seasons with three or fewer duck season zones. Respondents in the Central, South Central and South Zones would prefer three duck zones with two season segments (split seasons) and combining South and South Central Zones (42.3%, 67.2%, and 50.0%, respectively), whereas the largest proportion of respondents in the North Zone preferred no change from the current system with four duck zones and no splits (36.3%) (Figure 28, Table 22). Respondents preferred to combine the South Central and South Zones most frequently to (1) “simplify hunting regulations” (50.1%), (2) ‘change both season opening and closing dates in the area that I hunt” (23.6%), (3) “other” (13.9%), (4) “only change season closing dates in the area that I hunt” (8.2%), and (5) “only change season opening dates in the area that I hunt” (4.1%).

Respondents were asked their preferred season structure if a split season were used during the 2026 through 2030 duck seasons in Illinois. Respondents who reside in the North Zone preferred splits that: (1) open and close later using a split to extend season (Option B; 38.6%), (2) stay with current season structure and dates (no split) (Option F; 22.5%), and (3) open on the current date/close later using split to give ducks a rest and “2nd

opening day" (Option A; 10.4%) (Figure 29). Respondents who reside in the Central Zone preferred splits that: (1) open on the current date/close later using split to give ducks a rest and "2nd opening day" (Option B; 23.1%), (2) open earlier and close later using large split to target late migrants (Option C; 23.0%), and (3) open and close later using split to extend season (Option A; 17.4%) (Figure 30). Respondents who reside in the South Central and South Zones preferred splits that: (1) open later than current South Central Zone and close near January 31st using split to target late migrants (Option E; 36.4%), (2) open earlier than current South Central Zone and close later using large split to extend season (Option A; 15.9%), and (3) open later than current South Central Zone using split to extend season to January 31st (Option C; 15.9%) (Figure 31).

Most respondents were satisfied with the current length of the September Goose Season (83.9%; Figure 32). Forty-one percent of respondents (41.6%) were supportive of shortening the 15-day September Canada Goose season to a 9-day season and adding those days later in the season, 34.8% were neither supportive or unsupportive, and 23.6% were unsupportive. Forty-six percent of respondents (46.0%) were supportive of overlapping the September Canada Goose and September Teal seasons if doing so meant the September Canada Goose season would open when teal season opens, 46.0% were neither supportive or unsupportive, and 8.0% were unsupportive.

Most respondents (56.9%) indicated that the area in northeastern Illinois that is currently in the North Zone for duck season and Central Zone for goose season should remain as it is, 26.1% believed it should be part of the North Zone for both duck and goose seasons, and 17.0% believed that it should be part of the Central Zone for both duck and goose seasons. Twenty-six percent of respondents (26.6%) were supportive of allowing the regular goose season to open before duck season if a three duck zone configuration was used for the period of 2026 through 2030 with a split duck season, 48.9% had no opinion, and 24.5% were unsupportive. Forty-three percent of respondents (43.7%) were supportive of allowing goose hunting during the regular duck season split (during the period closed to duck hunting), 41.8% had no opinion, and 14.5% were unsupportive. One-half of respondents (50.0%) were supportive of increasing bag limits (from 2 geese to 5 geese) in the South Central and South Zones during the September Canada Goose Season to match North and Central Zones, 38.7% were neither supportive nor unsupportive, and 11.3% were unsupportive.

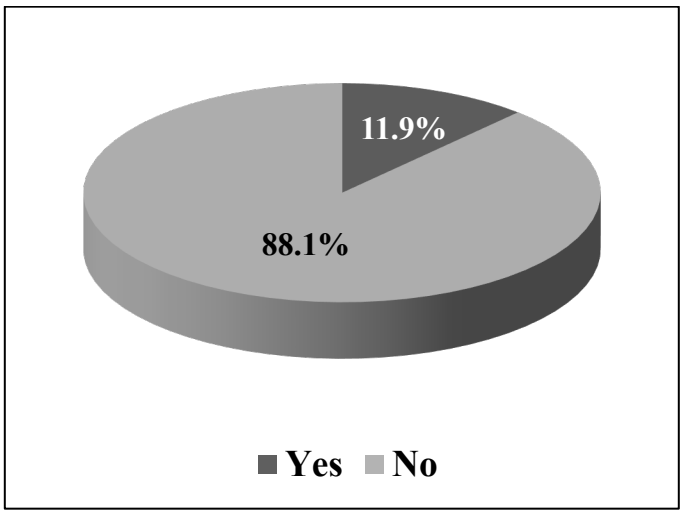

Figure 25. Percentage of respondents' that believe the county where they hunt waterfowl most often is in the correct zone (n = 1,396).

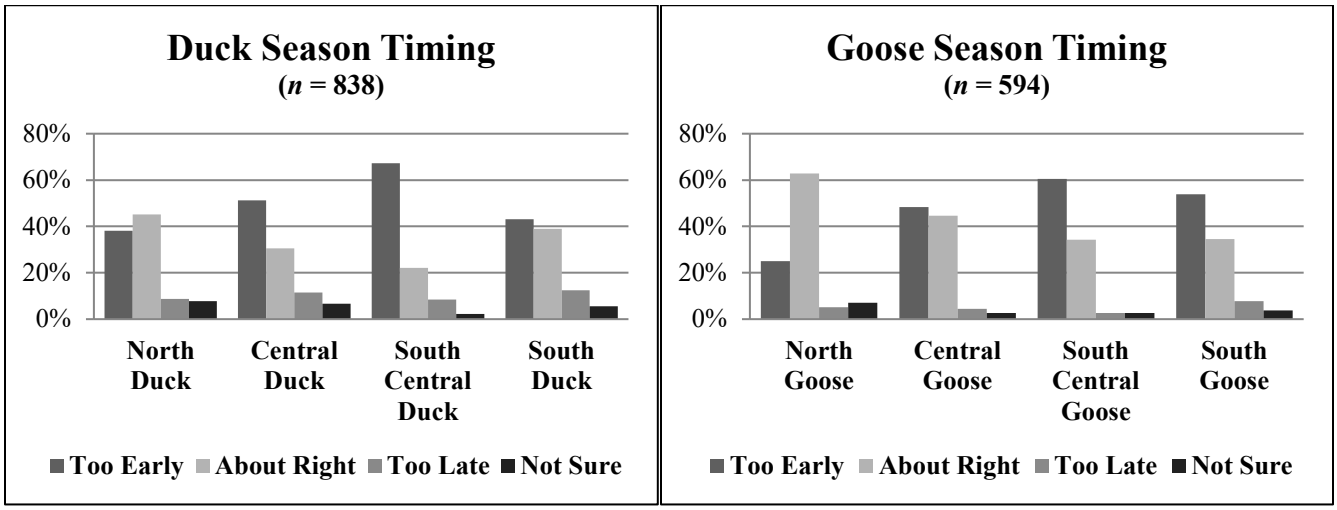

Figure 26. Duck and goose hunter* opinions about the timing of the 2023-24 waterfowl seasons.

*Cases selected for those who hunted at least one day in the corresponding season zone.

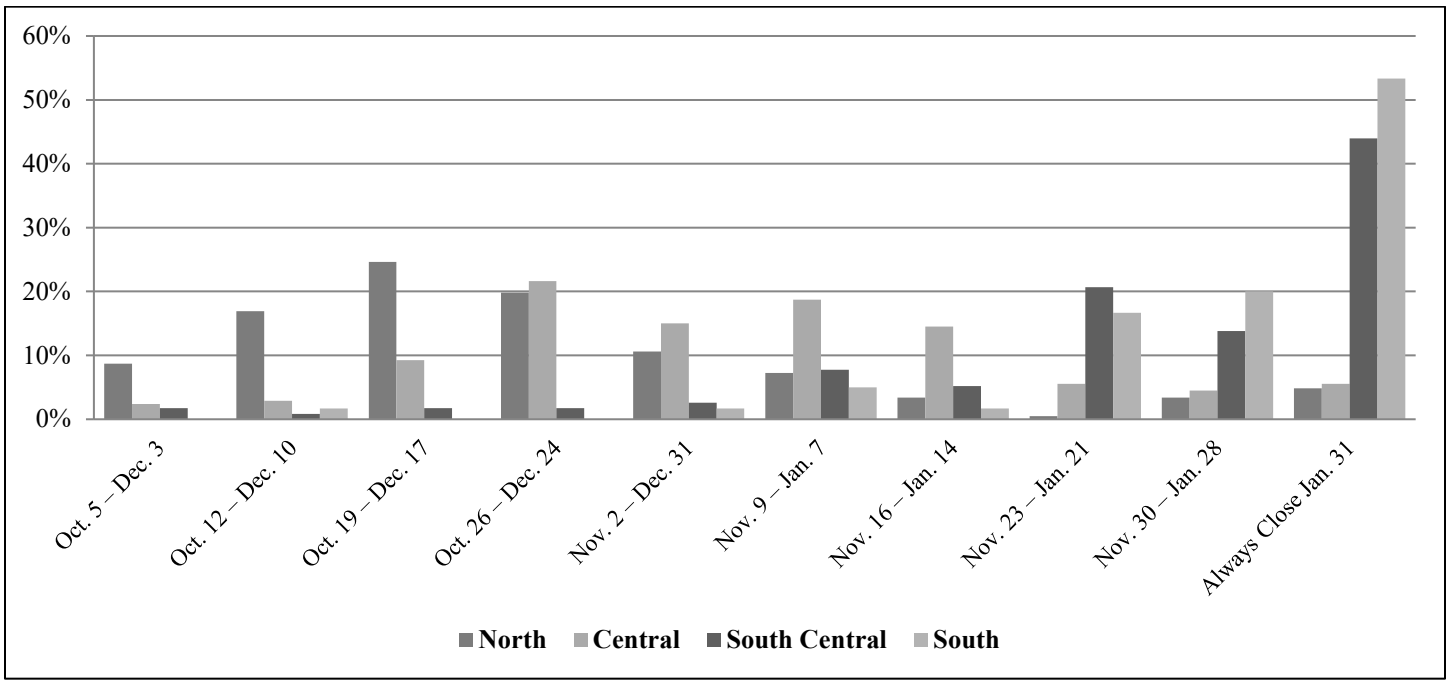

Figure 27. Preferred 2024-25 duck season dates in the zone respondents intend to hunt most often during the 2024-25 duck season in Illinois (n = 961).

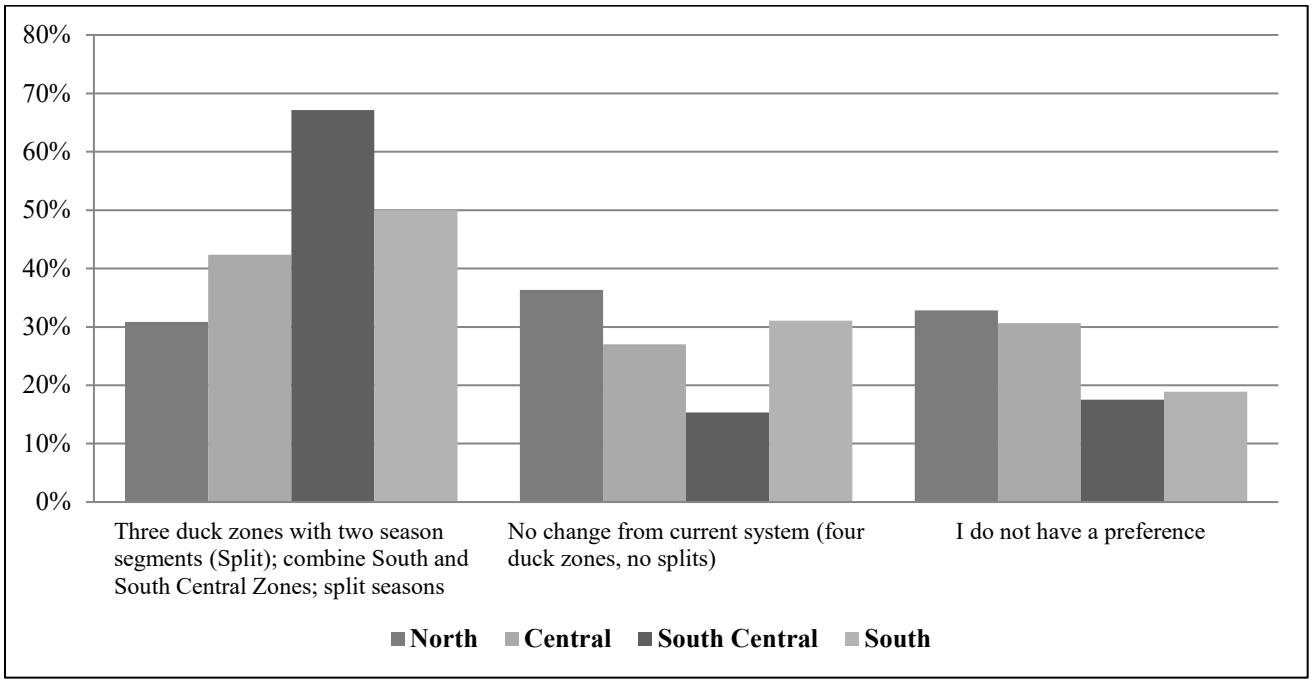

Figure 28. Respondents preferred zoning option for Illinois for the period of 2026 through 2030 (n = 937).

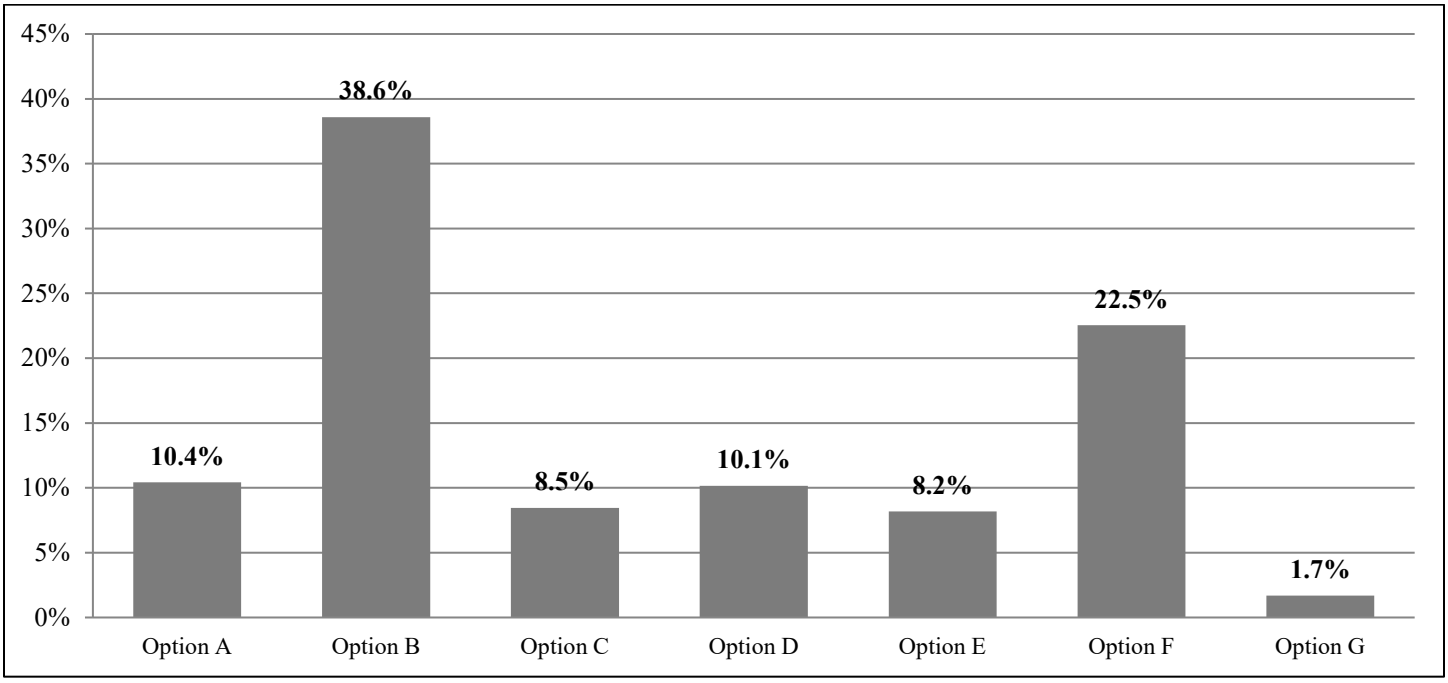

Figure 29. Preferred splits* for the duck hunting season in Illinois among respondents that reside in the North Zone (n = 355).

***Option A** – Open on the current date/close later using split to give ducks a rest and "2nd opening day." **Option B** – Open and close later using split to extend season. **Option C** – Open earlier and close later using large split to extend season. **Option D** – Open on the current date/close later using large split to target late migrants. **Option E** – Open earlier/close on current date with small split to give ducks rest and "2nd opening day." **Option F** – Stay with current season structure and dates (no split). **Option G** – Prefer a split season, but with other option than those above.

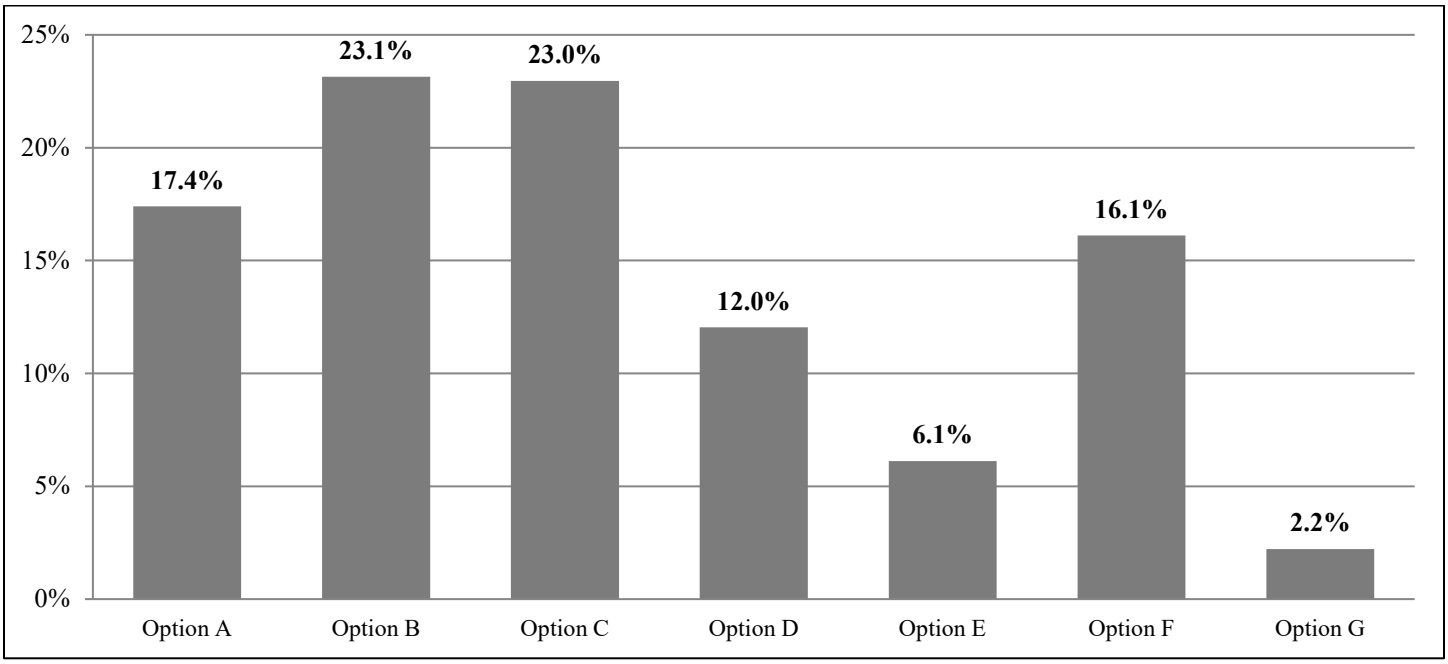

Figure 30. Preferred splits* for the duck hunting season in Illinois among respondents that reside in the Central Zone (n = 540).

***Option A** – Open and close later using split to extend season. **Option B** – Open on the current date/close later using split to give ducks a rest and "2nd opening day." **Option C** – Open earlier and close later using large split to target late migrants. **Option D** – Open and close later without a split. **Option E** – Open earlier/close on current date with small split to give ducks rest and "2nd opening day." **Option F** – Stay with current season structure and dates (no split). **Option G** – Prefer a split season, but with other option than those above.

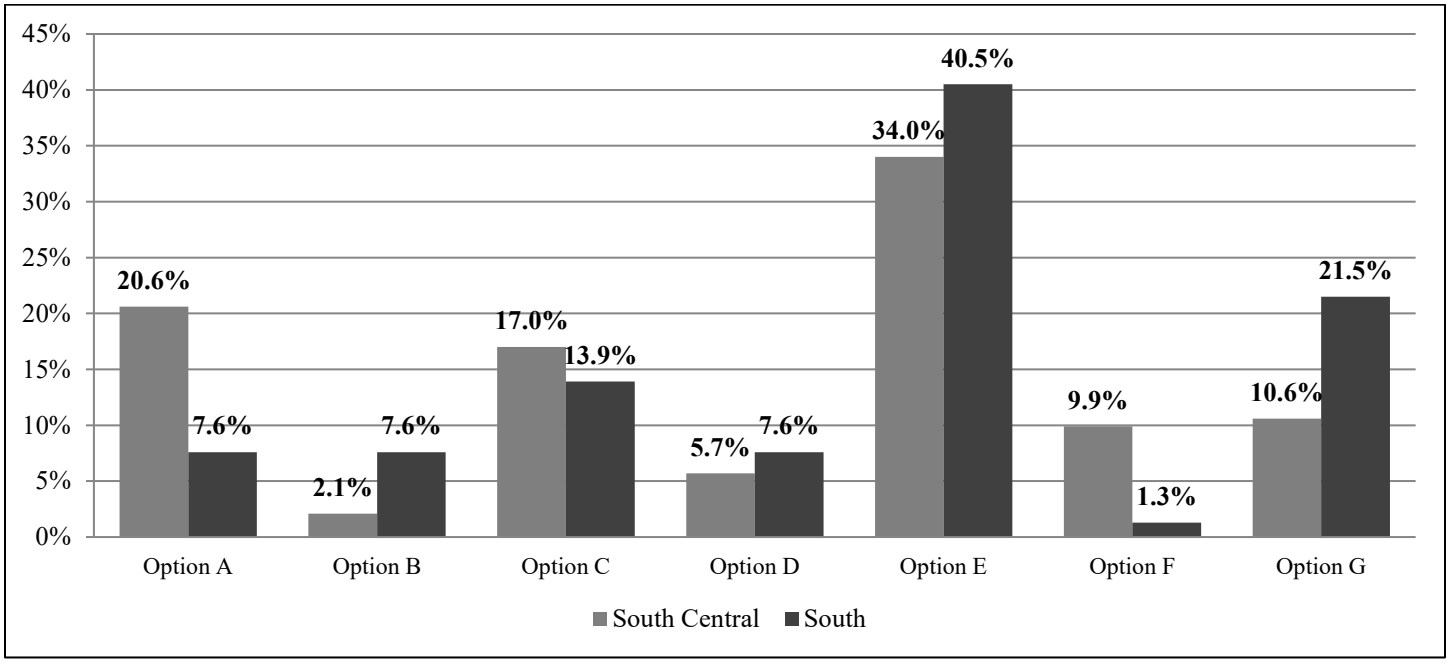

Figure 31. Preferred splits* for the duck hunting season in Illinois among respondents that reside in the South Central (n = 141) and South Zones (n = 79).

***Option A** – Open earlier than current South Central Zone and close later using large split to extend season. **Option B** – Open on current South Central Zone date and close later with split to give ducks a rest and "2nd opening day." **Option C** – Open later than current South Central Zone using split to extend season to January 31st. **Option D** – Open on current South Central Zone date and close later using early split to extend the season. **Option E** – Open later than current South Central Zone and close near January 31st using split to target late migrants. **Option F** – Use current South Central Zone season dates (no split). **Option G** – Use current South Zone season dates (no split).

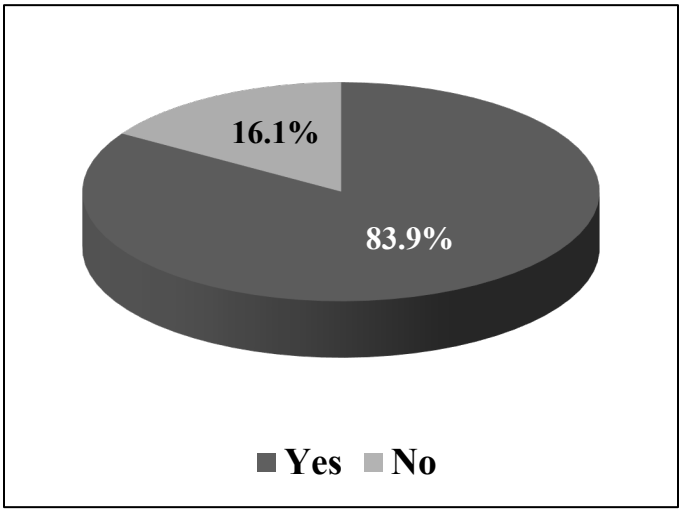

Figure 32. Percentage of respondents' that were satisfied with the current length of the September Goose Season in Illinois (n = 1,397).

Hunter Characteristics

Respondents who hunted during the 2023-24 waterfowl season have hunted waterfowl in Illinois for a mean of 28.0 years. On average, these hunters were 51.4 years of age and started waterfowl hunting at 19.9 years of age. Respondents were most frequently residents of Cook (*n* = 86), Peoria (*n* = 70), Will (*n* = 63), Madison (*n* = 60), and Tazewell counties (*n* = 60). A minority (11.9%) of respondents hunted as a youth (17 years of age or younger) during Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days in Illinois (Figure 33). On average, these respondents hunted 4.4 years during Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days. The largest proportion (40.5%) of respondents described themselves as "an avid duck hunter and I spend a lot of time hunting or preparing to hunt," followed by "I am an occasional duck hunter, who hunt ducks 1 or 2 times a year with family or friends" (17.3%) and "I am a deer hunter who occasionally hunt ducks" (16.7%; Figure 34). Respondents indicated that if they only had one day to hunt, then they would hunt: (1) ducks (32.7%), (2) deer firearm season (22.2%), (3) deer archery season (15.3%), (4) geese (8.7%), (5) pheasants (7.4%), and (6) turkeys (6.2%).

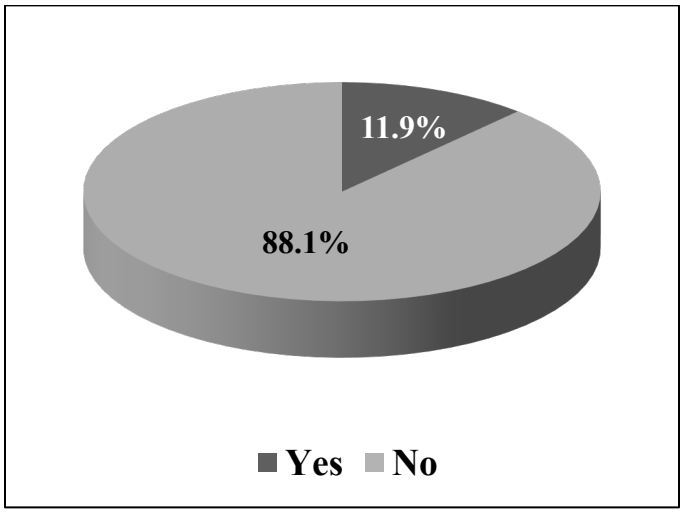

Figure 33. Percentage of respondents that hunted as a youth (17 years of age or younger) during the Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days in Illinois (*n* = 1,521).

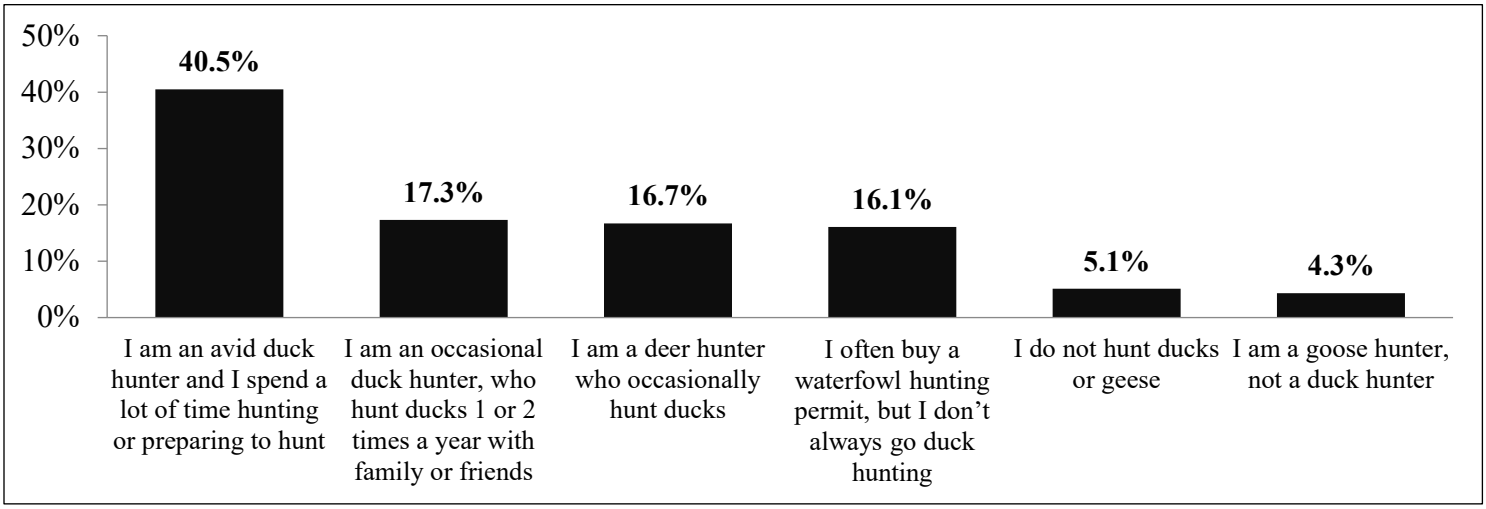

Figure 34. Respondents' agreement with statements describing their duck hunting participation (*n* = 1,521).

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Table 1. Summary of Illinois Migratory Waterfowl Stamps purchased, hunter activity, and waterfowl harvest in Illinois from 2011 through 2023 hunting seasons.

Season[a] (Year)	Stamps Purchased	Estimated Hunters	Estimated Days Hunted	Estimated Harvest[b]
2011	66,581	52,660	1,147,037	577,654
2012	64,896	50,740	1,155,346	580,557
2013	66,394	49,170	1,052,728	605,720
2014	70,391	50,698	982,193	550,946
2015	58,247	40,104	795,289	488,321
2016	54,920	41,242	870,721	490,463
2017	52,069	37,215	732,166	421,384
2018	55,303	40,047	831,043	412,402
2019	55,255	35,185	841,828	471,872
2020	52,849	39,525	837,609	406,259
2021	54,044	42,839	1,000,494	543,858
2022	47,156	36,419	778,576	489,094
2023	49,118	33,592	715,627	392,232

[a] Full listing for harvest 1983-Present can be found in Appendix F.
[b]Teal, ducks, coots, and geese combined, and including September teal and Canada goose seasons and youth hunt.

Table 2. Percentage of waterfowl hunters who hunted exclusively ducks, exclusively geese, or both ducks and geese in Illinois from 2011 through 2023 seasons.

Season[a] (Year)	Hunted Ducks Only	Hunted Geese Only	Hunted Both Ducks and Geese	Duck Hunters	Goose Hunters
2011	20.7%	18.3%	61.0%	81.7%	79.3%
2012	29.4%	9.8%	60.8%	90.2%	70.6%
2013	30.2%	9.8%	60.0%	90.2%	69.8%
2014	30.8%	10.9%	58.3%	89.1%	69.2%
2015	28.3%	8.6%	63.0%	91.3%	71.6%
2016	29.3%	8.2%	62.5%	91.8%	70.7%
2017	29.8%	12.3%	57.8%	87.6%	70.1%
2018	31.9%	9.2%	58.9%	90.8%	68.1%
2019	32.8%	7.9%	59.3%	92.1%	67.2%
2020	32.6%	10.7%	56.7%	87.1%	65.8%
2021	30.0%	10.2%	59.9%	87.3%	68.1%
2022	28.7%	10.8%	60.5%	87.3%	69.8%
2023	35.3%	8.8%	55.9%	89.5%	63.5%

[a]1983-2023 information can be located in Appendix F.

Table 3. Summary of teal harvest and hunter activity during September teal season (Illinois, 2011-23).

Season [a] (Year)	Estimated Hunters	Estimated Days Hunted	Estimated Teal Harvest
2011	11,221	42,811	21,227 ± 7,993
2012	10,944	46,719	31,942 ± 11,740
2013	10,378	37,431	21,967 ± 7,169
2014	11,282	42,635	29,058 ± 10,909
2015	9,615	37,574	28,031± 9.911
2016	8,969	38,610	25,346 ± 9,296
2017	7,526	28,306	15,062 ± 5,480
2018	9,263	35,334	23,326 ± 8,817
2019	7,955	32,706	19,268 ± 8,795
2020	7,975	27,962	18,967 ± 8,767
2021	11,382	50,585	28,913 ± 10,142
2022	8,602	33,970	23,122 ± 9,926
2023	8,013	31,374	20,522 ± 9,171

[a]1983-2023 information can be located in Appendix F.

Table 4. Teal harvest and hunter activity by zones during September teal season (Illinois, 2023).

	n	Estimated Hunters[a]	Estimated Days Hunted	Estimated Teal Harvested
North Zone	57	2,039	8,729	5,538
Central Zone	122	4,364	17,672	12,080
South Central Zone	40	1,431	4,150	2,706
South Zone	7	250	823	197
Unknown	0	0	0	0

[a]The number of individual teal hunters in the state is less than the sum of duck hunters from the categories above because some hunted in more than one zone.

Table 5. Rates of teal harvest and hunter activity during September teal season (Illinois, 2011-2023).

Season[a] (Year)	Season Length/ Bag Limit	Days Hunted Per Hunter	Teal Harvest per Hunter	
			Per Day	Per Season
2011	16/4	3.82	0.50	1.90
2012	16/4	4.27	0.68	2.92
2013	16/6	3.61	0.59	2.12
2014	16/6	3.78	0.68	2.58
2015	16/6	3.91	0.75	2.92
2016	16/6	4.31	0.66	2.83
2017	16/6	3.76	0.53	2.00
2018	16/6	3.81	0.66	2.52
2019	16/6	4.11	0.59	2.42
2020	16/6	3.51	0.68	2.38
2021	16/6	4.44	0.57	2.54
2022	16/6	3.95	0.68	2.69
2023	16/6	3.92	0.65	2.56

[a]1983-2023 information can be located in Appendix F.

Table 6. Waterfowl harvest and hunter activity during Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days, 2011-2023.

Season[a] (Year)	Adult Participation	Youth Participation	Days Hunting	Mean Youths/ Hunting Party	Total Ducks	Ducks/ Youth/Day	Total Coots	Coots/ Youth/ Day	Total Geese	Geese/ Youth/ Day
2011	6,325	8,642	14,059	1.63	9,569	0.68	1,333	0.09	1,318	0.09
2012	7,825	10,001	52,448[b]	1.27	8,147[c]	0.41	503[c]	0.03	1,064[c]	0.05
2013	8,438	8,639	19,136	1.02	12,715	1.33	359	0.04	2,065	0.23
2014	6,405	8,572	13,798	1.33	9,004	1.30	192	0.03	929	0.14
2015	4,718	6,291	9,873	1.33	8,171	1.65	117	0.02	571	0.12
2016	4,398	5,921	8,553	1.34	6,731	1.57	139	0.03	927	0.23
2017	4,780	6,459	9,956	1.35	8,283	1.66	89	0.02	1464	0.32
2018	4,822	5,775	8,663	1.20	7,452	1.72	205	0.05	729	0.18
2019	4,039	4,528	10,158	1.31	5,748	1.13	107	0.02	790	0.16
2020	5,029	6,950	14,926	1.38	7,799	1.04	48	0.01	1,118	0.16
2021	5,410	6,859	13,156	1.27	9,820	1.49	0	0.00	1,738	0.28
2022	4,521	6,593	10,455	1.46	11,026	2.11	220	0.04	1,426	0.29
2023	3,899	5,438	8,800	1.39	8,280	1.88	36	0.01	718	0.17

[a]1997-2023 information can be located in Appendix F.

[b]Results include youth hunts during the regular season and the 2-day Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days.

[c]Results are a 2-day estimate based on the mean number harvested by youth from the entire season.

Table 7. Summary of duck and coot harvest and hunter activity during the regular duck season (Illinois 2011-2023).

Season (Year)[a]	Hunters	Days Afield	Number of Ducks					
			Mallards	Wood Ducks	Canvasback	Other Ducks	Total	Coots
2011	46,619	632,712	222,405	54,294	---[b]	150,786	427,484 ± 66,551	4,327 ± 2,663
2012	43,444	630,233	244,988	47,623	---[b]	185,776	478,387 ± 50,294	4,133 ± 3,536
2013	43,653	563,961	225,873	49,001	---[b]	155,306	430,179 ± 29,431	2,143 ± 4,031
2014	44,019	525,114	197,997	48,216	4,820	133,795	384,828 ± 39,741	4,681 ± 3,311
2015	36,499	496,656	166,506	43,655	4,437	115,182	329,780 ± 34,835	3,185 ± 1,960
2016	34,386	459,029	154,698	47,986	6,794	123,928	333,406 ± 37,408	4,424 ± 1,338
2017	30,025	394,034	136,381	29,372	3,642	108,295	277,689 ± 24,826	1,544 ± 921
2018	33,836	464,327	147,733	29,003	5,200	90,887	272,823 ± 28,512	2,088 ± 1,764
2019	31,850	482,946	164,043	51,564	4,798	103,542	323,946 ± 34,906	2,238 ± 1,799
2020	34,432	462,541	127,525	35,335	3,739	88,081	254,680 ± 26,546	1,701 ± 1,224
2021	37,399	532,635	175,565	42,851	4,266	138,017	360,698 ± 36,223	3,688 ± 3,718
2022	31,804	426,633	152,698	35,815	3,429	121,901	315,558 ± 36,443	3,429 ± 2,795
2023	30,050	397,952	106,892	29,698	3,316	114,133	254,039 ± 33,400	2,993 ± 2,105

[a]1983-2023 information can be located in Appendix F.
[b]Hunters were not asked to distinguish canvasback from other ducks and are included in other ducks for this year.

Table 8. Duck harvest and hunter activity by waterfowl zones and selected areas during the regular duck season (Illinois 2023-24).

Zone	*n*	Hunters[a]	Estimated Days Hunted	Estimated Ducks Harvested	Days Hunted/ Hunter	Ducks/ Hunter/ Day	Ducks/ Hunter/ Season
North	240	8,586	100,883	53,392	11.75	0.53	6.22
Central	440	15,741	196,722	137,379	12.50	0.70	8.73
South Central	151	5,402	61,389	35,774	11.36	0.58	6.62
South	107	3,828	38,958	27,494	10.18	0.71	7.18
Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Statewide	840	30,050	397,952	254,039	13.24	0.64	8.45

[a]The number of individual duck hunters in the state is less than the sum of duck hunters from the categories above because some hunted in more than one zone.

Table 9. Rates of duck harvest and hunter activity during the regular duck season (Illinois 2011-2023).

Season[a] (Year)	Season Length/ Bag Limit	Days Afield/ Hunter	Duck Harvest/Hunter[b]	
			Per Day	Per Season
2011	60/6(4,2)	13.57	0.68	9.17
2012	60/6(4,2)	14.51	0.76	11.01
2013	60/6(4,2)	12.92	0.76	9.85
2014	60/6(4,2)	11.93	0.73	8.74
2015	60/6(4,2)	13.61	0.66	9.01
2016	60/6(4,2)	13.35	0.73	9.70
2017	60/6(4,2)	13.12	0.70	9.25
2018	60/6(4,2)	13.72	0.59	8.06
2019	60/6(4,2)	15.16	0.67	10.17
2020	60/6(4,2)	13.43	0.55	7.40
2021	60/6(4,2)	14.24	0.68	9.64
2022	60/6(4,2)	13.41	0.74	9.92
2023	60/6(4,2)	13.24	0.64	8.45

[a]1983-2023 information can be located in Appendix F.
[b]Excludes ducks harvested coincidentally while goose hunting.

Table 10. Distribution of the number of days afield and number of ducks harvested in 2023-24.

	Days Hunting Ducks (%)	Number of Ducks Harvested (%)
0	---	19.9%
1-5	38.3%	38.7%
6-10	21.8%	15.6%
11-15	10.4%	9.2%
16-20	8.9%	4.6%
21-25	4.6%	3.9%
26-30	5.5%	2.0%
>30	10.5%	6.1%

*Number of ducks harvested was calculated by taking responses and applying the correction factor (Anderson 1985).

Table 11. Canada goose harvest and hunter activity during the early September Canada goose season (Illinois 2011-2023).

			Waterfowl Zone				
	Year[a]	Statewide	North	Central	South Central	South	Unknown
Hunters[b]	2011	4,214	4,625	7,889		1,700	0
	2012	11,192[b]	4,601	5,928	1,161	249	0
	2013	10,865[b]	3,646	6,076	681	462	0
	2014	12,147	4,153	6,679	934	554	0
	2015	10,659	3,226	6,104	1,075	443	0
	2016	9,973	3,324	5,125	1,316	381	0
	2017	9,225	2,746	5,472	849	296	0
	2018	9,916	3,187	5,503	899	599	0
	2019	8,658	3,855	4,161	490	245	0
	2020	9,064	3,747	4,036	1,025	352	0
	2021	11,855	4,523	5,972	1,064	384	0
	2022	9,387	3,987	4,458	628	408	0
	2023	7,978	2,683	4,114	1,037	286	0
Days Afield	2011	49,306	16,832	27,441		5,033	0
	2012	39,589	17,079	18,613	3,524	373	0
	2013	40,955	12,323	24,816	2,042	1,774	0
	2014	44,919	16,300	23,844	3,288	1,488	0
	2015	38,744	13,505	21,191	2,404	1,645	0
	2016	41,935	14,925	20,950	4,883	1,177	0
	2017	33,817	9,442	19,714	3,595	1,067	0
	2018	35,361	12,777	18,035	2,779	1,771	0
	2019	33,410	15,634	15,695	1,316	765	0
	2020	34,272	15,054	14,638	3,491	1,089	0
	2021	50,585	19,838	25,307	4,435	1,005	0
	2022	33,656	14,348	16,451	1,570	1,287	0
	2023	31,911	11,698	15,669	3,935	608	0
Canada Geese	2011	18,790	6,339	10,874		1,577	0
	2012	18,028	8,557	7,664	1,599	228	0
	2013	15,644	5,165	9,271	523	685	0
	2014	19,089	7,527	9,015	1,770	777	0
	2015	15,693	4,233	8,587	2,147	726	0
	2016	17,711	7,895	7,780	1,539	497	0
	2017	16,155	4,154	10,282	1,199	510	20
	2018	13,165	4,909	6,928	925	404	0
	2019	15,429	7,912	6,932	249	336	0
	2020	16,811	8,421	7,165	750	475	0
	2021	22,258	8,140	11,503	2,205	410	0
	2022	16,598	7,639	7,654	615	690	0
	2023	13,201	4,737	6,413	1,710	342	0

[a]1983-2023 information can be located in Appendix F.

[b]Less than the sum of hunters in individual zones because some hunters hunted more than 1 zone.

Table 12. Summary of goose harvest and hunter activity during the regular goose season (Illinois 2011-2023).

Season[a] (Year)	Hunters	Days Afield	Number of Geese		
			Canada Geese	Other Geese	Total
2011	36,996	411,380	75,061 (618)	19,862 (33)	94,923 (651) ± 22,387
2012	34,034	386,356	72,682 (0)	19,597 (0)	92,280 (0) ± 19,570
2013	33,809	391,246	104,887 (0)	15,859 (0)	120,746 (0) ± 12,775
2014	34,226	369,179	87,672 (50)	20,313 (0)	107,985 (50) ± 15,517
2015	31,280	330,482	75,198 (0)	27,576 (0)	102,774 (0) ± 17,608
2016	26,490	312,725	77,216 (0)	24,563 (0)	101,779 (0) ± 18,215
2017	24,039	276,009	78,850 (0)	27,637 (0)	106,486 (0) ± 14,607
2018	25,363	296,021	71,035 (0)	21,578 (0)	92,613 (0) ± 16,720
2019	23,222	292,766	85,188 (0)	19,158 (0)	104,346 (0) ± 23,241
2020	26,008	312,834	94,510 (0)	10,625 (0)	105,135 (0) ± 18,356
2021	29,180	366,689	99,276 (0)	17,467 (0)	116,743 (0) ± 18,853
2022	25,430	286,107	94,139 (0)	23,576 (0)	117,715 (0) ± 25,397
2023	21,321	254,390	71,923 (0)	20,520 (0)	92,443 (0) ± 20,694

Numbers in parentheses represent the number of geese harvested while duck hunting.
[a]1983-2023 information can be located in Appendix F.

Table 13. Distribution of the number of days afield and number of geese harvested.

	Days Hunting Geese (%)	Number of Geese Harvested (%)
0	---	33.9%
1-5	42.1%	43.5%
6-10	24.2%	11.2%
11-15	8.7%	5.2%
16-20	8.2%	1.8%
21-25	4.4%	2.2%
26-30	5.5%	0.8%
>30	6.9%	1.3%

Table 14. Goose harvest and hunter activity by zones during the regular goose season (Illinois 2023-24).

			Estimated Goose Harvest						
Zone	Hunters	Days Afield	Canada Geese	White-Fronted Geese	Snow/ Blue Geese[b]	Total Geese	Total Days Hunted/ Hunter	Total Geese/ Hunter/ Day	Total Geese/ Hunter/ Season
North	7,298	93,693	29,754	86	257	30,096	12.84	0.32	4.12
Central	11,376	123,815	36,235	3,608	10,517	50,360	10.88	0.41	4.43
South Central	2,468	30,372	3,557	821	4,138	8,516	12.30	0.28	3.45
South	1,359	6,511	2,377	274	821	3,471	4.79	0.53	2.55
Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Statewide	21,321	254,390	71,923	4,788	15,732	92,443	11.93	0.36	4.34

[a]Less than the sum of hunters in individual zones because some hunters hunted more than 1 zone.
[b]Harvest estimates include Ross' geese.

Table 15. Canada goose harvest by zone during the regular goose season, three-year trend (Illinois 2020-21 through 2023-24).

Zone	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	3-Year Mean	S.D.
North	44,445	47,227	29,754	40,475	9,388
Central	47,596	42,065	36,235	41,965	5,681
South Central	4,748	3,407	3,557	3,904	735
South	2,487	1,441	2,377	2,102	575
Unknown	-	-	-	-	-
Statewide	99,276	94,139	71,923	88,446	14,538

Table 16. Summary of the number of ducks and geese crippled (Illinois 2011-2023 regular seasons).

Season[a] (Year)	Estimated Ducks		Estimated Geese	
	Total	Per 100 Bagged	Total	Per 100 Bagged
2011	64,268	15.0	6,937	7.3
2012	71,054*	14.9*	10,452*	11.3*
2013	59,064	13.7	8,847	7.3
2014	51,909	13.5	7,856	7.3
2015	47,442	14.4	7,622	7.4
2016	43,666	13.1	6,149	5.6
2017	37,491	13.5	6,657	6.3
2018	36,996	13.6	5,558	6.0
2019	40,630	12.5	5,783	5.5
2020	33,984	13.3	7,495	7.1
2021	44,731	12.4	6,859	5.9
2022	35,320	11.2	7,378	6.3
2023	40,103	15.8	5,974	6.5

[a]1983-2023 information can be located in Appendix F.
*Amended from 2012-13 report.

Table 17. Satisfaction with IDNR public land sites that respondents hunted in Illinois.

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Habitat quality on public hunting land (n = 409)	9.3%	18.1%	28.9%	35.9%	7.8%
Clarity of hunting regulations for public sites (n = 409)	1.2%	6.8%	20.5%	54.5%	16.9%
Ease of finding public hunting sites (n = 408)	3.7%	9.8%	25.5%	48.5%	12.5%
Number of nonhunters using site while you were hunting (n = 407)	2.5%	5.9%	33.2%	37.8%	20.6%
Ease of finding site regulations for site you hunted (n = 408)	2.7%	7.8%	21.1%	51.7%	16.7%
Harvest reporting requirements for public land you hunt (n = 409)	1.7%	3.9%	22.2%	51.8%	20.3%
Number of other hunters you saw while hunting (n = 409)	4.9%	13.0%	35.5%	38.1%	8.6%
Amount of waterfowl on public land (n = 408)	19.1%	36.8%	26.7%	14.2%	3.2%
Number of parking sites on public land (n = 408)	2.5%	6.1%	28.2%	49.3%	14.0%
Overall hunting experience (n = 409)	5.1%	15.4%	30.6%	42.8%	6.1%

*Cases selected for those who hunted on Illinois state-owned (IDNR) public land during the 2023-24 season.

Table 18. Illinois duck hunters' satisfaction with various aspects of the 2023-24 duck seasons.

	Zone (*n* in parentheses)	Very Dissatisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Unsure (%)	Satisfied (%)	Very Satisfied (%)	$\bar{x}$ (S.D.) [a]
Number of ducks you saw	North (217)	17.5%	38.2%	21.7%	18.9%	3.7%	2.5 (1.1)
	Central (420)	22.4%	38.3%	23.1%	14.5%	1.7%	2.3 (1.0)
	South Central (130)	38.5%	43.1%	11.5%	5.4%	1.5%	1.9 (0.9)
	South (72)	20.8%	37.5%	23.6%	16.7%	1.4%	2.4 (1.0)
Mid-season matched peak of duck migration	North (217)	15.7%	39.2%	30.0%	13.8%	1.4%	2.5 (1.0)
	Central (420)	22.9%	41.4%	26.9%	8.1%	0.7%	2.2 (0.9)
	South Central (130)	40.0%	36.2%	21.5%	0.8%	1.5%	1.9 (0.9)
	South (72)	27.8%	34.7%	26.4%	11.1%	0.0%	2.2 (1.0)
Amount of shooting you got in	North (217)	14.3%	35.0%	31.8%	18.0%	0.9%	2.6 (1.0)
	Central (419)	20.3%	37.5%	31.3%	9.1%	1.9%	2.3 (1.0)
	South Central (130)	36.9%	36.9%	20.0%	5.4%	0.8%	2.0 (0.9)
	South (72)	25.0%	34.7%	25.0%	15.3%	0.0%	2.3 (1.0)
Number of ducks migrating through areas you hunted	North (217)	21.2%	41.5%	22.6%	13.8%	0.9%	2.3 (1.0)
	Central (420)	20.0%	40.5%	28.3%	9.5%	1.7%	2.3 (1.0)
	South Central (130)	37.7%	37.7%	20.0%	3.8%	0.8%	1.9 (0.9)
	South (72)	25.0%	34.7%	22.2%	18.1%	0.0%	2.3 (1.0)
Amount of time you spent duck hunting	North (217)	6.9%	23.5%	31.8%	33.6%	4.1%	3.0 (1.0)
	Central (420)	8.6%	28.8%	34.8%	22.6%	5.2%	2.9 (1.0)
	South Central (130)	19.2%	17.7%	30.0%	28.5%	4.6%	2.8 (1.2)
	South (72)	16.7%	18.1%	27.8%	29.2%	8.3%	2.9 (1.2)
Number of ducks you harvested	North (217)	17.1%	31.3%	35.5%	14.7%	1.4%	2.5 (1.0)
	Central (420)	23.8%	35.5%	29.0%	10.2%	1.4%	2.3 (1.0)
	South Central (129)	39.5%	28.7%	22.5%	7.0%	2.3%	2.0 (1.1)
	South (72)	27.8%	29.2%	25.0%	13.9%	4.2%	2.4 (1.2)
Season start date allowed the season to match migration	North (213)	16.0%	29.1%	39.4%	14.6%	0.9%	2.6 (1.0)
	Central (417)	25.4%	32.1%	31.2%	10.1%	1.2%	2.3 (1.0)
	South Central (130)	46.9%	22.3%	24.6%	5.4%	0.8%	1.9 (1.0)
	South (71)	21.1%	26.8%	32.4%	12.7%	7.0%	2.6 (1.2)
Weather during duck season	North (217)	8.3%	18.0%	42.9%	29.0%	1.8%	3.0 (0.9)
	Central (420)	15.0%	25.5%	41.7%	16.9%	1.0%	2.6 (1.0)
	South Central (129)	22.5%	23.3%	38.8%	14.7%	0.8%	2.5 (1.0)
	South (72)	15.3%	13.9%	45.8%	19.4%	5.6%	2.9 (1.1)
Waterfowl hunting regulations	North (216)	4.6%	7.4%	47.2%	37.0%	3.7%	3.3 (0.8)
	Central (420)	5.7%	10.5%	48.3%	30.7%	4.8%	3.2 (0.9)
	South Central (130)	10.0%	7.7%	57.7%	20.0%	4.6%	3.0 (0.9)
	South (72)	11.1%	8.3%	34.7%	33.3%	12.5%	3.3 (1.1)

[a]1= Very Dissatisfied, 5= Very Satisfied

*Cases selected for those who hunted at least 1 day during the 2023-24 regular duck season.

Table 19. Satisfaction with aspects during the 2023-24 waterfowl hunting season in Illinois.

	Not at all Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
Seeing ducks in the field (*n* = 1,397)	15.7%	26.5%	45.2%	11.3%	1.4%
Bagging my daily limit (*n* = 1,397)	16.5%	22.6%	52.5%	7.2%	1.2%
Bagging at least 1 duck during a day in the field (*n* = 1,395)	12.8%	18.6%	50.5%	15.5%	2.7%
Bagging drakes (*n* = 1,397)	12.2%	16.2%	56.0%	14.0%	1.6%
Bagging a lot of ducks over the season (*n* = 1,397)	16.2%	20.8%	55.2%	6.7%	1.1%
Bagging a variety of different duck species (*n* = 1,397)	13.0%	16.9%	55.9%	13.0%	1.3%
Bagging diving ducks (*n* = 1,397)	12.8%	14.9%	62.9%	8.7%	0.7%
Bagging mallards (*n* = 1,397)	16.0%	22.1%	48.5%	11.7%	1.8%
Bagging teal and wood ducks (*n* = 1,394)	13.5%	18.1%	55.1%	11.8%	1.5%

Table 20. Satisfaction with the current Illinois Waterfowl Zone lines.

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
North and Central Zones (*n* = 1,137)	3.9%	5.9%	33.6%	48.7%	7.9%
Central and South Central Zones (*n* = 897)	5.6%	7.6%	38.1%	42.5%	6.2%
Central and South Zones (*n* = 848)	7.0%	5.5%	41.3%	40.9%	5.3%
South Central and South Zones (*n* = 775)	9.2%	8.8%	38.7%	38.1%	5.3%

*Cases selected for those who hunt in zones bordering waterfowl zone line.

Table 21. Hunter* opinions of the timing of 2023-24 waterfowl seasons.**

Season	*n*	Too Early (%)	About Right (%)	Too Late (%)	Not Sure (%)
North September Teal	54	9.3%	83.3%	3.7%	3.7%
Central September Teal	126	10.3%	70.6%	11.9%	7.1%
South Central September Teal	35	25.7%	60.0%	14.3%	0.0%
South September Teal	8	12.5%	87.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Combined September Teal	223	12.6%	72.6%	9.9%	4.9%
North September Goose	72	16.7%	76.4%	2.8%	4.2%
Central September Goose	111	10.8%	76.6%	4.5%	8.1%
South Central September Goose	30	20.0%	60.0%	10.0%	10.0%
South September Goose	9	11.1%	77.8%	11.1%	0.0%
Combined September Goose	222	14.0%	74.3%	5.0%	6.8%
North Regular Duck	217	38.2%	45.2%	8.8%	7.8%
Central Regular Duck	418	51.2%	30.6%	11.5%	6.7%
South Central Regular Duck	131	67.2%	22.1%	8.4%	2.3%
South Regular Duck	72	43.1%	38.9%	12.5%	5.6%
Combined Regular Duck	838	49.6%	33.8%	10.4%	6.2%
North Regular Goose	196	25.0%	62.8%	5.1%	7.1%
Central Regular Goose	296	48.3%	44.6%	4.4%	2.7%
South Central Regular Goose	76	60.5%	34.2%	2.6%	2.6%
South Regular Goose	26	53.8%	34.6%	7.7%	3.8%
Combined Regular Goose	594	42.4%	48.8%	4.5%	4.2%

*Cases selected for those who indicated they hunted at least 1 day during the corresponding zone/season in 2023-24.
**Zone determined by zone hunted in most often for species in 2023-24 season.

Table 22. Respondents preferred zoning option for Illinois for the period of 2026 through 2030.

	Zones			
	North (*n* = 256)	Central (*n* = 470)	South Central (*n* = 137)	South (*n* = 74)
Three duck zones with 2 season segments (Split); combine South and South Central Zones; split seasons	30.9%	42.3%	67.2%	50.0%
No change from current system (four duck zones, no splits)	36.3%	27.0%	15.3%	31.1%
I do not have a preference	32.8%	30.6%	17.5%	18.9%

Illinois Waterfowl Hunter Survey
2023-24 Season

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Division of Wildlife Resources
&
The Illinois Natural History Survey

The Department of Natural Resources is requesting disclosure of information that is necessary to accomplish the statutory purpose as outlined under the Illinois Compiled Statutes, The Wildlife Code, Chapter 520. Disclosure of information is voluntary. This study is funded by the federal Wildlife Restoration Fund through your purchase of sporting arms and ammunition.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!
All of your responses will be kept confidential.
Please return this survey in the postage-paid return envelope provided.

N

Section 1. Waterfowl Hunting in Illinois. Please provide the following information so the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) waterfowl biologists may understand hunters in Illinois to better manage waterfowl.

1. Did you purchase an Illinois State Waterfowl Stamp for the 2023-24 season? _____ Yes _____ No

2. Which of the following best describes how often you hunt **waterfowl** (ducks, geese, or coots) in Illinois?

_____ Every year _____ Most years _____ Occasional years _____ Rarely _____ Never

If you NEVER hunt waterfowl in Illinois, please go to Section 5.

3. Did you hunt waterfowl in Illinois during the 2023-24 waterfowl hunting season?

_____ Yes _____ No (If "No," please go to **Section 3**)

Please refer to the zone map on the back of the included cover letter to answer Question 4.

4. In which of the following zones did you hunt **waterfowl MOST often**? (Please check **one** response)

_____ North Zone _____ Central Zone _____ South Central Zone _____ South Zone

5. Did you hunt waterfowl on **Illinois state-owned (IDNR) public land** during the 2023-24 seasons?

_____ Yes _____ No (If "No," please go to **Question 6**)

5a. In which zone(s) did you hunt waterfowl on public land? (Please check **all** that apply)

_____ North Zone _____ Central Zone _____ South Central Zone _____ South Zone

5b. Did any of your hunts on public lands use a blind awarded through a lottery? _____ Yes _____ No

5c. Please rate your **SATISFACTION with IDNR public land sites *you hunted*** in Illinois during the 2023-24 waterfowl seasons. (Please circle **one** number that matches your response)

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Habitat quality on public hunting land	1	2	3	4	5
Clarity of hunting regulations for public sites	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of finding public hunting sites	1	2	3	4	5
Number of nonhunters using site while you were hunting	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of finding site regulations for site you hunted	1	2	3	4	5
Harvest reporting requirements for public land you hunt	1	2	3	4	5
Number of other hunters you saw while hunting	1	2	3	4	5
Amount of waterfowl on public land	1	2	3	4	5
Number of parking sites on public land	1	2	3	4	5
Overall hunting experience	1	2	3	4	5

6. Did you hunt fewer or more days during the 2023-24 waterfowl season compared to the last 5 years?

_____ Much fewer _____ Fewer _____ About the same _____ More _____ Much more

Section 2. Waterfowl Harvest in Illinois. Please provide the following information so that IDNR waterfowl biologists may estimate waterfowl harvest, conserve waterfowl populations, and provide hunting opportunities in Illinois. **If you did not hunt waterfowl in Illinois during the 2023-24 seasons, please go to Section 3.**

1. Please report your hunting effort and harvest in Illinois between September 1st, 2023 and January 31st, 2024 in the following tables.
   - Include only **your personal effort and harvest** (**DO NOT** include harvests for party)
   - Count part of 1 day as 1 whole day.
   - Only report days hunted in the table for the species you targeted that day.

a. **September Teal Season** (**DO NOT** include harvest after September)

Zone hunted	County hunted	Total days hunted	Teal harvested	Teal downed but not retrieved

b. **September Canada Goose Season** (**DO NOT** include harvest after September)

Zone hunted	County hunted	Total days hunted	Geese harvested	Geese downed but not retrieved

c. **Regular Duck Season** (**DO NOT** include harvest from September)

Zone hunted	County hunted	Total days hunted	Mallards harvested	Wood ducks harvested	Canvas-backs harvested	Other ducks harvested	Coots harvested	Ducks downed but not retrieved

d. **Regular Goose Season** (**DO NOT** include harvest from September or Conservation Order Light Goose season that occurs after regular goose season closes)

Zone hunted	County hunted	Total days hunted	Canada geese harvested	White-fronted (Specklebelly) geese harvested	Snow/Blue /Ross' geese harvested	Geese downed but not retrieved

Section 3. Youth Hunts. Please answer the following questions about mentoring youth hunters in Illinois.

1. Did you take a youth (17 years old or younger) hunting during the **2023 Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days**?

_____ Yes _____ No (If "No," please go to **Section 4**)

1a. Was this **at least one youth's first time** duck or goose hunting? _____ Yes _____ No

1b. Was this **YOUR** first time accompanying a youth during the **Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days**?

_____ Yes (If "Yes," please go to **Question 2**) _____ No

1c. How often do you accompany a youth during the **Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days**?

_____ Every year _____ Most but not every year _____ Occasionally

2. Please report information for each youth that hunted during the **2023 Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days**. (North Zone: **Oct. 14-15**, Central Zone: **Oct. 21-22**, South Central Zone: **Nov. 4-5**, South Zone: **Nov. 25-26**) Enter **0** if the youth did not harvest any ducks, geese, or coots.

	Age	Number of Days hunted	County hunted	Mallards harvested	Wood ducks harvested	Other ducks harvested	Geese harvested	Coots harvested
Youth 1								
Youth 2								
Youth 3								
Youth 4								

Section 4. Satisfaction and Zone Timing. The following questions will tell us about your satisfaction with the **2023-24 Illinois waterfowl season(s).**

1. Do you feel the dates of the 2023-24 waterfowl hunting seasons were too early, about right, or too late in the zone where you hunted **most often**? (Please circle **one** number that matches your response for each season)

	Too early	About right	Too late	I am not sure	I did not hunt this season
Teal season (*September only*)	1	2	3	4	5
September Canada Goose Season (*September only*)	1	2	3	4	5
Duck Season	1	2	3	4	5
Canada Goose Season	1	2	3	4	5

2. Please indicate the **most important** consideration when deciding on your preferred 2023-24 **duck season** dates for the zone that you hunted **most often** during the 2023-24 duck season. (Please check **one** response)

____ Timing of wood duck migration
____ Timing of mallard migration
____ Maximize number of January hunting days
____ Ice (I prefer hunting after freeze up)
____ Peak of duck migration
____ Minimize impact on firearm deer hunting season
____ Avoid bad weather (e.g., snow, cold temperatures)
____ Minimize impact on upland game season
____ Ice (I do not hunt once the water freezes)
____ Overlap goose season
____ Other (please identify): _____

3. Please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects **during the 2023-24 waterfowl hunting season in Illinois**.

(Please circle **one** number that matches your response)

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Seeing ducks in the field	1	2	3	4	5
Bagging my daily limit	1	2	3	4	5
Bagging at least 1 duck during a day in the field	1	2	3	4	5
Bagging drakes	1	2	3	4	5
Bagging a lot of ducks over the season	1	2	3	4	5
Bagging a variety of different duck species	1	2	3	4	5
Bagging diving ducks	1	2	3	4	5
Bagging mallards	1	2	3	4	5
Bagging teal and wood ducks	1	2	3	4	5

4. Please rate your **SATISFACTION during 2023-24 duck season(s) you hunted in Illinois** by circling the number that best matches your response. **If you did not hunt ducks during 2023-24, please go to Question 5.**

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Number of ducks you saw	1	2	3	4	5
Mid-season matched peak of duck migration	1	2	3	4	5
Amount of shooting you got in	1	2	3	4	5
Number of ducks migrating through areas you hunted	1	2	3	4	5
Amount of time you spent duck hunting	1	2	3	4	5
Number of ducks you harvested	1	2	3	4	5
Season start date allowed the season to match migration	1	2	3	4	5
Weather during duck season	1	2	3	4	5
Waterfowl hunting regulations	1	2	3	4	5

5. Using the table below, please indicate your satisfaction with the current Illinois Waterfowl Zone lines. (Please circle **one** number that matches your response)

Zone line between…	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	I do not hunt these zones
North and Central Zones	1	2	3	4	5	0
Central and South Central Zones	1	2	3	4	5	0
Central and South Zones	1	2	3	4	5	0
South Central and South Zones	1	2	3	4	5	0

6. In which county do you hunt waterfowl most often? _____ County

6a. Do you feel this county is located in the correct zone? _____ Yes (If "Yes," please go to **Question 7**) _____ No

6b. In which zone do you feel this county should be placed?

_____ North Zone _____ Central Zone _____ South Central Zone _____ South Zone

7. Currently Illinois has a continuous duck season with 4 duck hunting zones. The next opportunity to change zone

options will be for the period **2026 through 2030**. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service **only allows split seasons with 3 or fewer duck zones**. Which option do you prefer for Illinois for the period **2026 through 2030**?

Note that split seasons open for a segment, close for a period, and then reopen. (**Please check ONE response**)

____ Three duck zones with 2 season segments (Split); combine South and South Central Zones; split seasons may be used in one, two, or all three zones

____ **No change** from current system (four duck zones, no splits)

____ I do not have a preference

7a. If a **split season** were used for the period of **2026 through 2030**, there are several possible options for when the seasons could be closed. Please refer to the diagram and choose how you would prefer splits be used in Illinois for the zone you hunt most often. (**Please check ONE response**)

	October	November	December	January
Illinois Currently	CLOSED	OPEN		CLOSED
Option A	CLOSED	OPEN	CLOSED OPEN	CLOSED
Option B	CLOSED	OPEN	CLOSED OPEN	CLOSED
Option C	CLOSED	OPEN	CLOSED OPEN	CLOSED
Option D	CLOSED	OPEN	CLOSED OPEN	CLOSED
Option E	CLOSED	OPEN	OPEN	CLOSED

____ **Option A** Open on the current date/close later using split to give ducks a rest and "2nd opening day."

____ **Option B** Open and close later using split to extend season.

____ **Option C** Open earlier and close later using large split to extend season.

____ **Option D** Open on the current date/close later using large split to target late migrants.

____ **Option E** Open earlier/close on current date with small split to give ducks rest and "2nd opening day."

____ **Option F** Stay with current season structure and dates (no split).

____ **Option G** Prefer a split season, but with other option than those above.

7b. If you would like to combine the South Central and South Zones, why would you prefer to make this change?

____ Simplify hunting regulations

____ Only change season opening dates in the area that I hunt

____ Only change season closing dates in the area that I hunt

____ Change both season opening and closing dates in the area that I hunt

____ Other (Please identify): _____

8. Please select your preferred 2024-25 **DUCK season** dates for the zone you intend to hunt in most often during the 2024-25 duck season. The 2023-24 duck season dates were as follows: North Zone: **Oct. 21 – Dec. 19**, Central Zone: **Oct. 28 – Dec. 26**, South Central Zone: **Nov. 11 – Jan. 9**, South Zone: **Dec. 2 – Jan. 30**. (**Please check ONE response**)

____ Oct. 5 – Dec. 3	____ Oct. 12 – Dec. 10	____ Oct. 19 – Dec. 17	____ Oct. 26 – Dec. 24
____ Nov. 2 – Dec. 31	____ Nov. 9 – Jan. 7	____ Nov. 16 – Jan. 14	____ Nov. 23 – Jan. 21
____ Nov. 30 – Jan. 28	____ Always Close Jan. 31	____ No Preference	

9. Are you satisfied with the current length of the September Goose Season? _____ Yes _____ No

9a. How supportive would you be of shortening the 15-day September Canada Goose season to a 9-day season and adding those days later in the season? (Please circle **one** number that matches your response)

Extremely Unsupportive	Very Unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neither	Supportive	Very Supportive	Extremely Supportive
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9b. How supportive would you be of overlapping the September Canada Goose and September Teal seasons if doing so meant the September Canada Goose season would open when teal season opens? (Please circle **one** number that matches your response)

Extremely Unsupportive	Very Unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neither	Supportive	Very Supportive	Extremely Supportive
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. What should happen to the **striped area** in northeastern Illinois that is currently in the North Zone for duck season and Central Zone for goose season? Refer to the map on the back of the cover letter if necessary.

____ Remain as it is, in the North Zone for duck season and Central Zone for goose season.

____ Be part of the North Zone for both duck and goose seasons.

____ Be part of the Central Zone for both duck and goose seasons.

11. Please indicate whether you support each of the following statements if a three duck zone configuration were used for the period of **2026 through 2030** with a split duck season in the zone you hunt most often. (Please circle **one** number that matches your response)

	Very Unsupportive	Unsupportive	No Opinion	Supportive	Very Supportive
Allow regular goose season to open before regular duck season.	1	2	3	4	5
Allow goose hunting during regular duck season split (during the period closed to duck hunting).	1	2	3	4	5

12. How supportive would you be of increasing bag limits (from 2 geese to 5 geese) in the South Central and South zones during the September Canada Goose Season to match North and Central Zones? (Please circle **one** number that matches your response)

Extremely Unsupportive	Very Unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neither	Supportive	Very Supportive	Extremely Supportive
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 5. Background Information. The following questions allow us to understand more about the people

1. How many years have you hunted waterfowl in Illinois? _____ Years

2. At what age did you first hunt waterfowl? _____ Years old

3. Have you ever hunted as a youth (**17 years of age or younger**) during the **Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days** in Illinois?

   _____ Yes _____ No (If "No," please go to **Question 4**)

   3a. How many years did you hunt as a youth during the Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days? _____Y ears

4. What is your county of residence? _____ County (If nonresident, please include state)

5. Please give your age. _____ Years old

6. Which of the following statements about duck hunting best describes you? (Please check **one** response)

   _____ I am an avid duck hunter and I spend a lot of time hunting or preparing to hunt

   _____ I am an occasional duck hunter, who hunt ducks 1 or 2 times a year with family or friends

   _____ I often buy a waterfowl hunting permit, but I don't always go duck hunting

   _____ I am a deer hunter who occasionally hunt ducks

   _____ I am a goose hunter, not a duck hunter

   _____ I do not hunt ducks or geese

7. If you could have only one day to hunt, which of the following would you hunt? (Please check **one** response)

_____ Deer Firearm Season	_____ Deer Archery Season	_____ Geese	_____ Ducks
_____ Turkeys	_____ Pheasants	_____ Quail	_____ Squirrel
_____ Rabbits	_____ Doves	_____ Furbearers	_____ None

_____ Other (please identify): _____

Comments

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ASSISTANCE!

Please return this survey in the postage-paid envelope provided.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources receives federal assistance and therefore must comply with federal anti-discrimination laws. In compliance with the Illinois Human Rights Act, the Illinois Constitution, Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act as amended, and the U.S. Constitution, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, or disability. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, please contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, Department of Natural Resources, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62701-1787, (217) 782-7616 or the Officer of Human Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240.

Appendix B

ILLINOIS NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

Prairie Research Institute
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Dear Waterfowl Hunter,

Your name was randomly selected from a list of 2023 resident/non-resident State Waterfowl stamp purchasers and Illinois Harvest Information Program (HIP) registrants. We are asking you to provide information about your activities during the 2023-24 waterfowl hunting seasons in Illinois. **Even if you did not hunt ducks or geese in Illinois during the 2023-24 seasons, we need to hear from you and we ask that you take a few minutes to complete and return the enclosed questionnaire.**

We have included the Illinois waterfowl zone map on the back of this letter if you need it to determine the zone(s) you hunted.

This study, jointly conducted by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Illinois Natural History Survey, is an effort to learn about waterfowl hunting activities in Illinois. Results of this study will help waterfowl managers make decisions to improve hunting opportunities and to better manage Illinois' duck and goose populations. **Your responses are voluntary and completely confidential**. By responding you will help us more effectively manage waterfowl and hunting in Illinois.

If you do not wish to participate, please return the blank questionnaire so we can remove you from our mailing list.

You may access the results of this and other studies of hunters and hunting in Illinois at https://publish.illinois.edu/human-dimensions/. You may also find information about Illinois Department of Natural Resources wildlife management programs and wildlife in Illinois at https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/wildlife.

If you have questions regarding this study, please call us at (217) 244-5121.

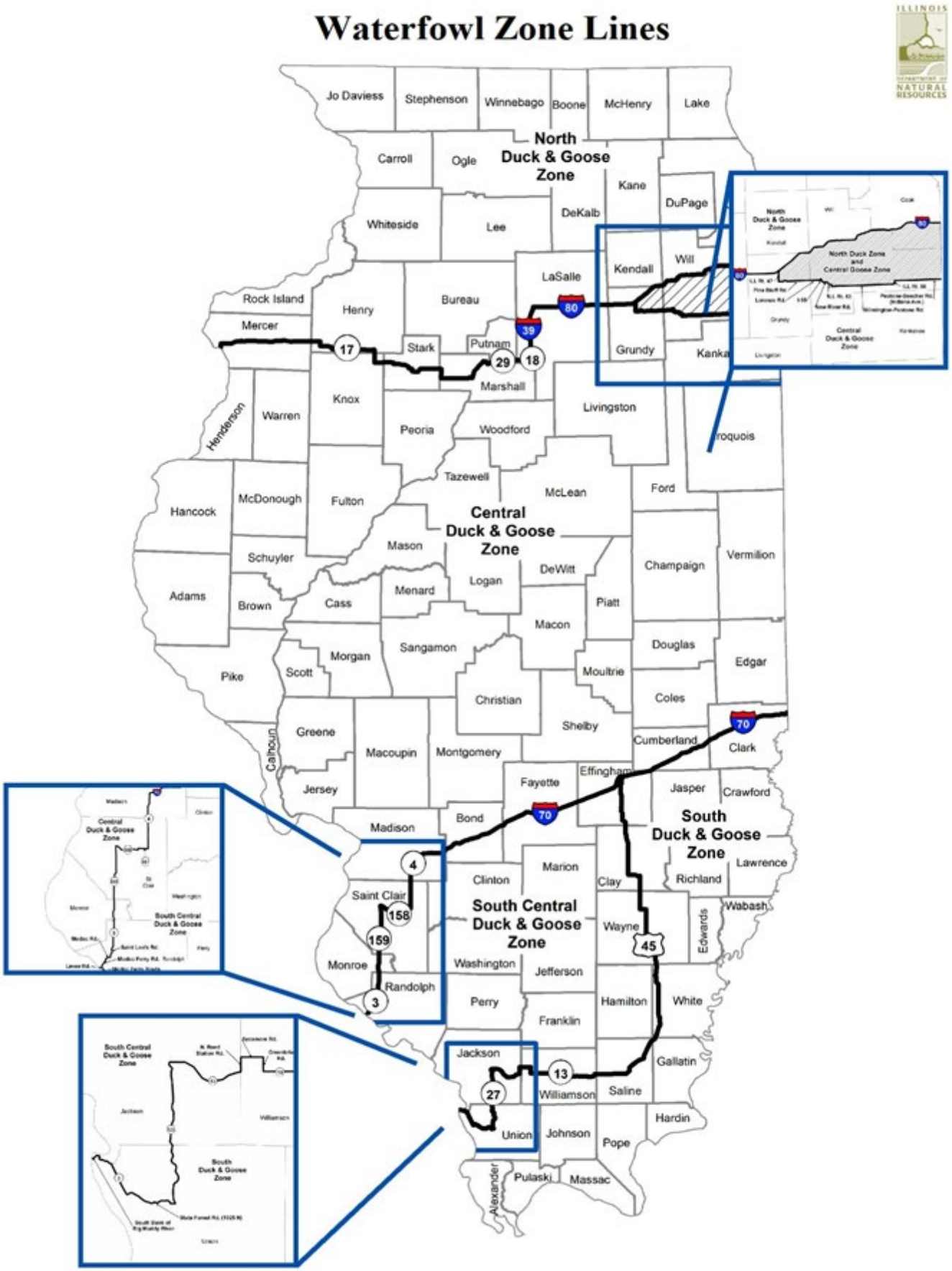
Sincerely,

Craig A. Miller
Human Dimensions Research Program

Paul B Johnson ©

1816 South Oak Street,
Champaign, Illinois 61820 USA

Waterfowl Zone Lines



Appendix C

ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL
RESOURCES

Dear Waterfowl Hunter,

Recently you were mailed a questionnaire about your waterfowl hunting activities in Illinois. We have not yet received your response. **If you have already returned the questionnaire, we thank you. If you have not returned the questionnaire, please do so as soon as possible. Your input is very important!**

Your name and address will be deleted from our mailing list when your questionnaire is received. Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix D

ILLINOIS NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

Prairie Research Institute
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Dear Waterfowl Hunter,

Your name was randomly selected from the list of 2023 resident/non-resident State Waterfowl stamp purchasers and Illinois Harvest Information Program (HIP) registrants. We recently mailed you a questionnaire regarding your hunting experiences in Illinois during the 2023-24 waterfowl season. If you have already returned the questionnaire, we thank you.

If you have not returned your completed questionnaire, please do so as soon as possible. We have enclosed another copy for your use. The information you and other selected hunters provide will help waterfowl managers make decisions to improve hunting opportunities and to better manage Illinois' duck and goose populations. **Your responses are voluntary and completely confidential.** We have included the Illinois waterfowl zone map on the back of this letter if you need it to determine the zone(s) you hunted.

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If you have questions regarding this study, please call us at (217) 244-5121.

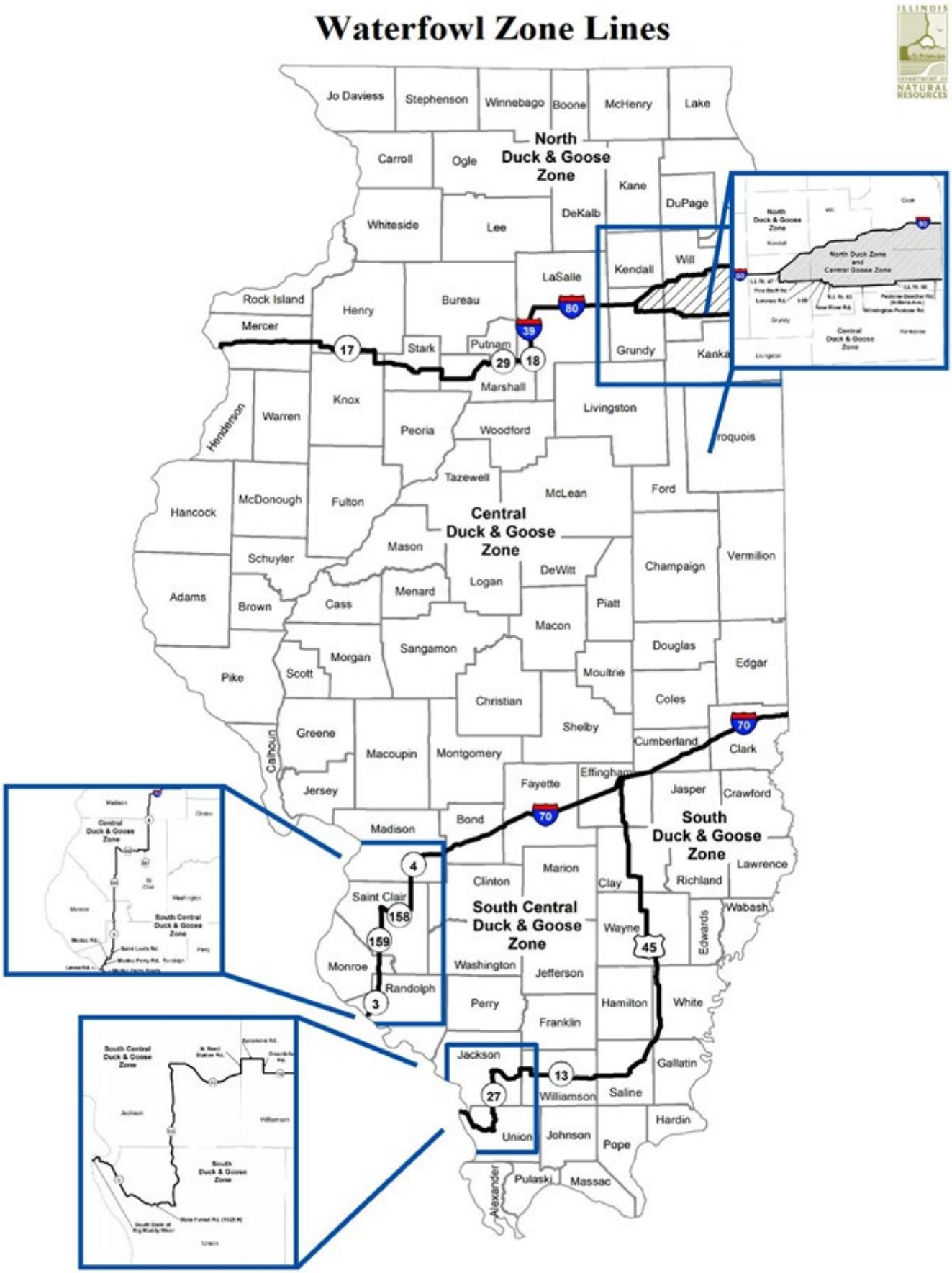
Thank you for helping with this important study.

Sincerely,

Craig A. Miller
Human Dimensions Research Program

Paul B Johnson ©

1816 South Oak Street,
Champaign, Illinois 61820 USA


Waterfowl Zone Lines
ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Jo Daviess
Stephenson
Winnebago
Boone
McHenry
Lake
North Duck & Goose Zone
Carroll
Ogle
Kane
DuPage
DeKalb
Whiteside
Lee
Kendall
Will
LaSalle
Rock Island
Henry
Bureau
Mercer
Putnam
Stark
Grundy
Kankakee
Marshall
Knox
Warren
Henderson
Peoria
Woodford
Livingston
Iroquois
Tazewell
McLean
Ford
Hancock
McDonough
Fulton
Central Duck & Goose Zone
Mason
Schuyler
Champaign
Vermilion
Adams
Brown
Cass
Menard
Logan
DeWitt
Piatt
Macon
Douglas
Edgar
Pike
Scott
Morgan
Sangamon
Moultrie
Coles
Christian
Shelby
Cumberland
Clark
Calhoun
Greene
Macoupin
Montgomery
Effingham
Jasper
Crawford
Jersey
Fayette
Bond
Madison
South Duck & Goose Zone
Clinton
Marion
Clay
Richland
Lawrence
Saint Clair
South Central Duck & Goose Zone
Wayne
Wabash
Edwards
Monroe
Washington
Jefferson
Randolph
Perry
Hamilton
White
Franklin
Jackson
Gallatin
Williamson
Saline
Union
Johnson
Pope
Hardin
Alexander
Pulaski
Massac
4
158
159
3
13
27
45
70
17
29
18
39
80
Central Duck & Goose Zone
South Central Duck & Goose Zone
South Duck & Goose Zone
North Duck Zone and Central Goose Zone

Appendix E

ILLINOIS NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY
Prairie Research Institute
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Dear Waterfowl Hunter,

Your name was randomly selected from the list of 2023 resident/non-resident State Waterfowl stamp purchasers and Illinois Harvest Information Program (HIP) registrants. We recently mailed you a questionnaire regarding your hunting experiences in Illinois during the 2023-24 waterfowl season. If you have already returned the questionnaire, we thank you.

If you have not returned your completed questionnaire, please do so as soon as possible. We have enclosed another copy for your use. The information you and other selected hunters provide will help waterfowl managers make decisions to improve hunting opportunities and to better manage Illinois' duck and goose populations. **Your responses are voluntary and completely confidential. A postage paid envelope is provided for you to return the questionnaire to us.**

If you do not wish to participate, please return the blank questionnaire so we can remove your name from our mailing list.

We have included the Illinois waterfowl zone map on the back of this letter if you need it to determine the zone(s) you hunted. You may access the results of this and other studies of hunters and hunting in Illinois at https://publish.illinois.edu/human-dimensions/. You may also find information about Illinois Department of Natural Resources wildlife management programs and wildlife in Illinois at https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/wildlife/.

If you have questions regarding this study, please call us at (217) 244-5121.

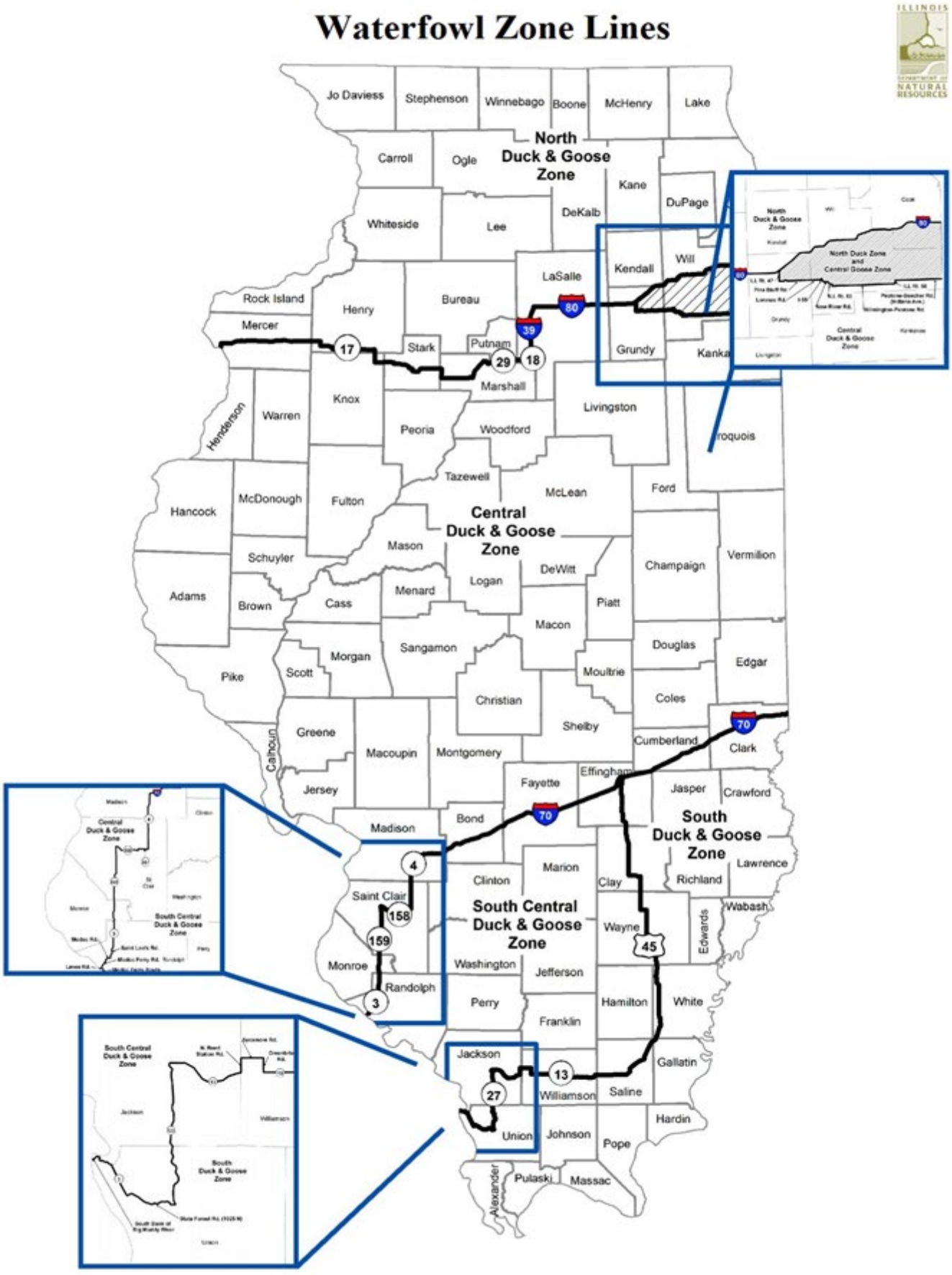
Thank you for helping with this important study.

Sincerely,

Craig A. Miller
Human Dimensions Research Program

Paul B Johnson ©

1816 South Oak Street,
Champaign, Illinois 61820 USA


Waterfowl Zone Lines
ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Jo Daviess
Stephenson
Winnebago
Boone
McHenry
Lake
North Duck & Goose Zone
Carroll
Ogle
Kane
DuPage
DeKalb
Whiteside
Lee
Kendall
Will
LaSalle
Rock Island
Henry
Bureau
Mercer
Stark
Putnam
Grundy
Kankakee
Marshall
Knox
Warren
Henderson
Peoria
Woodford
Livingston
Iroquois
Tazewell
McLean
Ford
Hancock
McDonough
Fulton
Central Duck & Goose Zone
Mason
Schuyler
DeWitt
Champaign
Vermilion
Adams
Brown
Cass
Menard
Logan
Piatt
Macon
Douglas
Edgar
Pike
Scott
Morgan
Sangamon
Moultrie
Christian
Coles
Shelby
Greene
Calhoun
Macoupin
Montgomery
Cumberland
Clark
Jersey
Fayette
Effingham
Jasper
Crawford
Madison
Bond
South Duck & Goose Zone
Clinton
Marion
Clay
Lawrence
Saint Clair
South Central Duck & Goose Zone
Richland
Wabash
Wayne
Edwards
Monroe
Washington
Jefferson
Randolph
Perry
Hamilton
White
Franklin
Jackson
Gallatin
Williamson
Saline
Union
Johnson
Pope
Hardin
Alexander
Pulaski
Massac
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Appendix F

Table F-1. Summary of Illinois Migratory Waterfowl Stamps purchased, hunter activity, and waterfowl harvest in Illinois from 1983 through 2023 hunting seasons.

Season (Year)	Stamps Purchased	Estimated Hunters	Estimated Days Hunted	Estimated Waterfowl Harvest[a]
1983	56,162	58,240	815,523	475,601
1984	55,250	56,533	748,390	420,357
1985	55,670	56,899	699,113	392,253
1986	59,734	61,876	887,446	467,164
1987	58,803 (5,550)[b]	60,371	814,918	354,194
1988[c]	53,498 (4,350)	53,450	644,056	264,316
1989[c]	55,693 (3,570)	55,709	749,033	322,359
1990[c]	55,009 (2,390)	55,152	708,391	270,796
1991[c]	58,421 (2,130)	59,038	855,279	406,854
1992	51,261 (1,395)	51,274	714,550	292,535
1993	50,976 (995)	51,340	682,498	326,446
1994	57,543 (955)	53,226	816,185	332,803
1995	60,564 (665)	55,454	884,328	498,854
1996	62,417 (545)	56,956	836,793	376,248
1997	59,961 (480)	54,715	881,030	401,236
1998	54,550 (450)	50,288	795,561	471,072
1999	63,782 (350)	58,003	1,472,301	783,195
2000	62,701 (330)	56,954	1,115,076	708,092
2001	63,745 (300)	59,029	1,337,297	695,790
2002	61,345 (1,520)	53,428	1,054,047	504,616
2003	61,991 (260)	57,985	1,251,974	650,906
2004	60,264	54,803	1,083,910	494,775
2005	55,734	48,772	868,299	526,221
2006	63,965	58,302	1,194,801	700,571
2007	66,765	57,454	1,150,304	678,623
2008	69,590	59,379	1,175,243	660,306
2009	68,549	59,987	1,222,980	613,335
2010	64,828	50,936	985,075	513,882
2011	66,581	52,660	1,147,037	577,654
2012	64,896	50,740	1,155,346	580,557
2013	66,394	49,170	1,052,728	605,720
2014	70,391	50,698	982,193	550,946
2015	58,247	40,104	795,289	488,321
2016	54,920	41,242	870,721	490,463
2017	52,069	37,215	732,166	421,384
2018	55,303	40,047	831,043	412,402
2019	55,255	35,185	841,828	471,872
2020	52,849	39,525	837,609	406,259
2021	54,044	42,839	1,000,494	543,858
2022	47,156	36,419	778,576	489,094
2023	49,118	33,592	715,627	392,232

[a]Teal, ducks, coots, and geese combined, and including September teal and Canada goose seasons and youth hunt. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service suspended the September Teal season in 1988 through 1991.

[b]Stamps purchased for commercial art purposes. These stamps were not included in the numbers to the left.

[c]Estimates of waterfowl hunters and days afield for these years reduced to 92.48% - 96.48% of the original estimates. Estimates of waterfowl (teal, ducks, coots, and geese combined) harvested reduced to 94.54% - 97.74 of original estimates. See Anderson and Williamson (1994) for explanation.

Table F-2. The percentage of regular season waterfowl hunters who hunted exclusively ducks, exclusively geese, or both ducks and geese in Illinois from 1983 through 2023 seasons.

Season (Year)	Hunted Ducks Only	Hunted Geese Only	Hunted Both Ducks and Geese	Duck Hunters	Goose Hunters
1983	55.0%	13.4%	31.6%	86.6%	45.0%
1984	60.3%	12.1%	27.6%	87.9%	39.7%
1985	61.1%	9.7%	29.2%	90.3%	38.9%
1986	51.0%	13.4%	35.6%	86.6%	49.0%
1987	46.6%	14.3%	39.1%	85.7%	53.4%
1988	35.5%	19.1%	45.4%	80.9%	64.5%
1989	29.2%	21.3%	49.5%	78.7%	70.8%
1990	26.7%	29.7%	43.6%	70.3%	73.4%
1991	26.0%	27.3%	46.7%	72.7%	74.0%
1992	31.3%	23.4%	45.3%	76.6%	68.7%
1993	30.9%	20.2%	48.9%	79.8%	69.1%
1994	30.3%	16.5%	53.2%	83.5%	69.7%
1995	33.2%	23.4%	43.4%	76.6%	66.8%
1996	35.8%	22.3%	41.9%	77.7%	64.2%
1997	38.8%	22.2%	39.0%	77.8%	61.2%
1998	47.6%	17.0%	35.4%	83.0%	52.4%
1999	27.2%	10.6%	62.2%	89.4%	72.8%
2000	34.0%	23.1%	42.9%	76.9%	66.0%
2001	33.0%	9.9%	57.1%	90.1%	67.0%
2002	33.8%	10.2%	56.0%	89.8%	66.2%
2003	32.3%	12.6%	55.1%	87.4%	67.7%
2004	32.1%	10.5%	57.4%	89.5%	67.9%
2005	37.2%	11.5%	51.3%	88.5%	62.8%
2006	28.8%	13.5%	57.7%	86.5%	71.2%
2007	27.7%	12.2%	60.1%	87.8%	72.3%
2008	25.9%	10.6%	63.5%	89.4%[a]	74.1%[a]
2009	27.5%	8.4%	64.1%	91.6%[a]	72.5%[a]
2010	25.0%	13.1%	61.9%	86.9%[a]	75.0%[a]
2011	20.7%	18.3%	61.0%	81.7%	79.3%
2012	29.4%	9.8%	60.8%	90.2%	70.6%
2013	30.2%	9.8%	60.0%	90.2%	69.8%
2014	30.8%	10.9%	58.3%	89.1%	69.2%
2015	28.3%	8.6%	63.0%	91.3%	71.6%
2016	29.3%	8.2%	62.5%	91.8%	70.7%
2017	29.8%	12.3%	57.8%	85.9%	68.8%
2018	31.9%	9.2%	58.9%	90.8%	68.1%
2019	32.8%	7.9%	59.3%	92.1%	67.2%
2020	32.6%	10.7%	56.7%	87.1%	65.8%
2021	30.0%	10.2%	59.9%	87.3%	68.1%
2022	28.7%	10.8%	60.5%	87.3%	69.8%
2023	35.3%	8.8%	55.9%	89.5%	63.5%

[a]2008-2010 numbers changed to reflect responses in the sample.

Table F-3. Summary of teal harvest and hunter activity during September teal season (Illinois, 1983-2023).

Season (Year)	Estimated Hunters	Estimated Days Hunted	Estimated Teal Harvest
1983	13,295	39,475	29,355
1984	14,158	39,481	32,730
1985	13,852	36,521	29,260
1986	15,449	40,241	30,375
1987	12,297	32,582	23,193
1988 [a]	------	------	------
1989 [a]	------	------	------
1990 [a]	------	------	------
1991 [a]	------	------	------
1992	7,696	18,265	12,069
1993	6,474	16,722	8,562
1994	8,062	20,341	12,436
1995	9,123	24,865	19,731
1996	8,964	22,825	11,565
1997	11,819	32,179	22,005
1998	10,307	33,049	21,270
1999	20,036	74,170	55,199
2000	14,733	52,229	38,597
2001	17,222	61,199	36,013
2002	10,171	29,381	12,542
2003	10,522	34,505	20,453
2004	8,097	23,928	8,463
2005	6,686	17,708	10,953
2006	12,378	43,223	28,016
2007	13,478	48,115	29,800
2008	14,652	52,365	19,981
2009	15,436	55,139	19,222 ± 7,372
2010	13,038	49,038	20,127 ± 9,322
2011	11,221	42,811	21,227 ± 7,993
2012	10,944	46,719	31,942 ± 11,740
2013	10,378	37,431	21,967 ± 7,169
2014	11,282	42,635	29,058 ± 10,909
2015	9,615	37,574	28,031 ± 9.911
2016	8,969	38,610	25,346 ± 9,296
2017	7,526	28,306	15,062 ± 5,480
2018	9,263	35,334	23,326 ± 8,817
2019	7,955	32,706	19,268 ± 8,795
2020	7,975	27,962	18,967 ± 8,767
2021	11,382	50,585	28,913 ± 10,142
2022	8,602	33,970	23,122 ± 9,926
2023	8,013	31,374	20,522 ± 9,171

[a]September teal season was suspended by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during these years.

Table F-4. Rates of teal harvest and hunter activity during September teal season (Illinois, 1983-2023).

Season (Year)	Season Length/ Bag Limit	Days Hunted Per Hunter	Teal Harvest Per Hunter	
			Per Day	Per Season
1983	9/4	2.97	0.74	2.21
1984	9/4	2.79	0.83	2.31
1985	9/4	2.64	0.80	2.11
1986	9/4	2.60	0.75	1.97
1987	9/4	2.65	0.71	1.89
1988[a]	----	----	----	----
1989[a]	----	----	----	----
1990[a]	----	----	----	----
1991[a]	----	----	----	----
1992	9/4	2.37	0.66	1.57
1993	9/4	2.58	0.51	1.32
1994	9/4	2.52	0.61	1.54
1995	9/4	2.73	0.79	2.16
1996	9/4	2.55	0.51	1.29
1997	9/4	2.72	0.68	1.86
1998	16/4	3.21	0.64	2.06
1999	16/4	3.70	0.74	2.75
2000	16/4	3.55	0.74	2.62
2001	16/4	3.55	0.59	2.09
2002	9/4	2.89	0.43	1.23
2003	16/4	3.28	0.59	1.94
2004	9/4	2.96	0.35	1.05
2005	9/4	2.65	0.62	1.64
2006	16/4	3.49	0.65	2.26
2007	16/4	3.60	0.62	2.21
2008	16/4	3.57	0.38	1.36
2009	16/4	3.57	0.35	1.25
2010	16/4	3.76	0.41	1.54
2011	16/4	3.82	0.50	1.90
2012	16/4	4.27	0.68	2.92
2013	16/6	3.61	0.59	2.12
2014	16/6	3.78	0.68	2.58
2015	16/6	3.91	0.75	2.92
2016	16/6	4.31	0.66	2.83
2017	16/6	3.76	0.53	2.00
2018	16/6	3.81	0.66	2.52
2019	16/6	4.11	0.59	2.42
2020	16/6	3.51	0.68	2.38
2021	16/6	4.44	0.57	2.54
2022	16/6	3.95	0.68	2.69
2023	16/6	3.92	0.65	2.56

[a]September teal season was suspended by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during these years.

Table F-5. Waterfowl harvest and hunter activity during Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days, 1997-2022.

Season[a] (Year)	Adult Participation	Youth Participation	Days Hunting	Mean Youths/ Hunting Party	Total Ducks	Ducks/ Youth/Day	Total Coots	Coots/ Youth/ Day	Total Geese	Geese/ Youth/ Day
1997	3,163	4,322	4,322	1.37	3,451	0.80	387	0.09	----[a]	---
1998	3,343	5,142	5,142	1.54	4,159	0.81	208	0.04	289	0.06
1999	5,505	8,113	8,113	1.47	5,835	0.72	629	0.08	571	0.07
2000	6,815	10,107	14,079	1.48	8,388	0.60	38	<0.01	882	0.06
2001	9,140	15,148	22,525	1.67	11,727	0.52	480	0.02	971	0.04
2002	8,498	13,325	19,548	1.57	9,085	0.46	271	0.01	887	0.05
2003	7,415	11,419	17,985	1.54	9,184	0.51	178	0.01	1,116	0.06
2004	5,603	7,891	12,997	1.41	7,477	0.58	48	<0.01	561	0.04
2005	4,540	6,489	10,268	1.58	5,644	0.55	583	0.06	965	0.09
2006	5,447	8,024	11,903	1.48	9,863	0.83	133	0.01	732	0.06
2007	6,259	8,981	14,356	1.60	9,141	0.64	850	0.06	1,701	0.12
2008	6,402	9,878	14,799	1.50	10,380	0.70	241	0.02	1,466	0.10
2009	7,073	9,772	15,922	1.63	11,229	0.71	599	0.04	2,396	0.15
2010	5,471	7,452	11,828	1.59	9,156	0.77	419	0.04	1,420	0.12
2011	6,325	8,642	14,059	1.63	9,569	0.68	1,333	0.09	1,318	0.09
2012	7,825	10,001	52,448[b]	1.27	8,147[c]	0.41	503[c]	0.03	1,064[c]	0.05
2013	8,438	8,639	19,136	1.02	12,715	1.33	359	0.04	2,065	0.23
2014	6,405	8,572	13,798	1.33	9,004	1.30	192	0.03	929	0.14
2015	4,718	6,291	9,873	1.33	8,171	1.65	117	0.02	571	0.12
2016	4,398	5,921	8,553	1.34	6,731	1.57	139	0.03	927	0.23
2017	4,780	6,459	9,956	1.35	8,283	1.66	89	0.02	1,464	0.32
2018	4,822	5,775	8,663	1.20	7,452	1.72	205	0.05	729	0.18
2019	4,039	4,528	10,158	1.31	5,748	1.13	107	0.02	790	0.16
2020	5,029	6,950	14,926	1.38	7,799	1.04	48	0.01	1,118	0.16
2021	5,410	6,859	13,156	1.27	9,820	1.49	0	0.00	1,738	0.28
2022	4,521	6,593	10,455	1.46	11,026	2.11	220	0.04	1,426	0.29
2023	3,899	5,438	8,800	1.39	8,280	1.88	36	0.01	718	0.17

1996–1999 were one day seasons and 2000 – present were 2-day seasons.

[a]Could not hunt geese during the Youth Waterfowl Hunting Day in 1997.

[b]Results include youth hunts during the regular season and the 2-day Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days.

[c]Results are a 2-day estimate based on the mean number harvested by youth from the entire season.

Table F-6. Summary of duck and coot harvest and hunter activity during the regular duck season (Illinois 1983-2023).

Season (Year)	Hunters	Days Afield	Number of Ducks				Coots
			Mallards	Wood Ducks	Other Ducks[b]	Total	
1983	50,440	651,409	220,317	72,237	110,862	403,416	10,472
1984	49,715	606,325	182,132	52,955	120,016	355,103	7,702
1985	51,362	556,800	168,549	51,216	97,155	316,920	5,773
1986	53,588	638,090	201,676	65,414	112,490	379,580	7,372
1987	51,704	558,172	155,783	58,488	74,748	289,019	2,694
1988[a]	43,233	381,985	119,149	23,743	42,836	185,728	1,936
1989[a]	43,841	407,478	133,128	28,065	63,073	224,266	2,049
1990[a]	38,759	350,119	112,370	33,253	51,562	197,185	2,287
1991[a]	42,911	393,247	177,221	49,556	80,793	307,570	1,101
1992	39,272	362,275	124,112	34,280	58,035	216,427	3,275
1993	40,941	366,656	134,334	39,906	43,360	217,600	1,445
1994	44,447	475,264	137,263	44,683	64,998 (3,760)	246,944	3,880
1995	42,499	482,620	230,505	47,155	99,632 (5,393)	377,292	3,386
1996	44,219	460,517	163,311	38,783	82,431 (4,348)	284,525	3,286
1997	42,587	514,934	145,533	44,678	100,950 (5,800)	291,161	3,935
1998	41,755	517,372	200,030	57,393	129,439 (3,948)	386,862	2,920
1999	51,850	860,368	311,325	69,930	181,650 (4,977)	562,905	3,654
2000	43,810	621,542	271,903	58,604	166,834 (4,231)	497,341	2,206
2001	53,194	797,884	305,180	61,515	167,883 (1,968)	534,578	2,904
2002	47,964	642,542	197,392	46,238	106,213 (851)	349,843	1,743
2003	50,658	738,914	285,011	48,023	153,165 (1,789)	486,199	1,693
2004	49,046	652,960	207,982	44,725	116,951 (2,100)	369,658	1,607
2005	43,185	539,672	240,897	37,942	133,509 (3,918)	412,348	2,186
2006	50,437	658,881	308,000	38,366	161,098 (5,927)	507,464	3,065
2007	49,114	600,614	265,369	34,628	164,369 (5,925)	464,366	3,771
2008	50,683	600,574	247,895	43,051	156,849	447,795	2,266
2009	49,648	626,832	228,211	41,549	129,795	399,555 ± 69,698	3,904 ± 3,342
2010	43,450	499,758	193,758	39,611	121,375	354,859 ± 60,571	1,770 ± 2,435
2011	46,619	632,712	222,405	54,294	150,786	427,484 ± 66,551	4,327 ± 2,663
2012	43,444	630,233	244,988	47,623	185,776	478,387 ± 50,294	4,133 ± 3,536
2013	43,653	563,961	225,873	49,001	155,306	430,179 ± 29,431	2,143 ± 4,031
2014	44,019	525,114	197,997	48,216	138,615 (4,820)	384,828 ± 39,741	4,681 ± 3,311
2015	36,499	496,656	166,506	43,655	119,619 (4,437)	329,780 ± 34,835	3,185 ± 1,960
2016	34,386	459,029	154,698	47,986	130,722 (6,794)	333,406 ± 37,408	4,424 ± 1,338
2017	30,025	394,034	136,381	29,372	111,937 (3,624)	277,689 ± 24,826	1,544 ± 921
2018	33,836	464,327	147,733	29,003	96,087 (5,200)	272,823 ± 28,512	2,088 ± 1,764
2019	31,850	482,946	164,043	51,564	108,340 (4,798)	323,946 ± 31,987	2,238 ± 1,799
2020	34,432	462,541	127,525	35,335	91,820 (3,739)	254,680 ± 26,546	1,701 ± 1,224
2021	37,399	532,635	175,565	42,851	142,135 (4,118)	360,698 ± 36,223	3,688 ± 3,718
2022	31,804	426,633	152,698	35,815	121,901 (3,429)	315,558 ± 36,443	3,429 ± 2,795
2023	30,050	397,952	106,892	29,698	3,316 (3,316)	254,039 ± 33,400	2,993 ± 2,105

[a]Estimates of duck hunters, days afield, ducks and coots harvested for these years have been reduced to 92.48% - 96.48% of the original estimates. See Anderson and Williamson (1994) for explanation.

[b]Numbers in parentheses represent harvest of Canvasback.

Table F-7. Rates of duck harvest and hunter activity during the regular duck season (Illinois 1983-2023).

Season (Year)	Season Length/ Bag Limit[b]	Days Afield Per Hunter	Duck Harvest Per Hunter[a]	
			Per Day	Per Season
1983	50/10(4,2)	12.91	0.62	8.00
1984	50/10(4,2)	12.20	0.59	7.14
1985	40/5(3,1)	10.84	0.57	6.17
1986	40/5(3,1)	11.91	0.59	7.08
1987	40/5(3,1)	10.80	0.52	5.59
1988	30/3(2,1)	8.84	0.49	4.30
1989	30/3(2,1)	9.29	0.55	5.12
1990	30/3(2,1)	9.03	0.54	4.90
1991	30/3(2,1)	9.16	0.72	6.57
1992	30/3(2,1)	9.22	0.57	5.22
1993	30/3(2,1)	8.96	0.58	5.21
1994	40/3(2,1)	10.96	0.51	5.47
1995	50/5(4,1)	11.36	0.74	8.40
1996	50/5(4,1)	10.41	0.58	6.03
1997	60/6(4,2)	12.09	0.57	6.84
1998	60/6(4,2)	12.39	0.75	9.27
1999	60/6(4,2)	16.59	0.65	10.86
2000	60/6(4,2)	14.19	0.80	11.36
2001	60/6(4,2)	15.00	0.67	10.05
2002	60/6(4,1)	13.40	0.54	7.29
2003	60/6(4,1)	14.59	0.66	9.60
2004	60/6(4,2)	13.31	0.57	7.54
2005	60/6(4,2)	12.50	0.76	9.55
2006	60/6(4,2)	13.06	0.77	10.06
2007	60/6(4,2)	12.23	0.77	9.45
2008	60/6(4,2)	11.85	0.75	8.84
2009	60/6(4,2)	12.63	0.64	8.05
2010	60/6(4,2)	11.50	0.71	8.17
2011	60/6(4,2)	13.57	0.68	9.17
2012	60/6(4,2)	14.51	0.76	11.01
2013	60/6(4,2)	12.92	0.76	9.85
2014	60/6(4,2)	11.93	0.73	8.74
2015	60/6(4,2)	13.61	0.66	9.01
2016	60/6(4,2)	13.35	0.73	9.70
2017	60/6(4,2)	13.12	0.70	9.25
2018	60/6(4,2)	13.72	0.59	8.06
2019	60/6(4,2)	15.16	0.67	10.17
2020	60/6(4,2)	13.43	0.55	7.40
2021	60/6(4,2)	14.24	0.68	9.64
2022	60/6(4,2)	13.41	0.74	9.92
2023	60/6(4,2)	13.24	0.64	8.45

[a]Excludes ducks harvested coincidentally while goose hunting.
[b]The Point System was used in 1983-1987 (Havera 1999: 17-18). A maximum of 10 ducks (4 mallards, 2 hens) wereallowed in 1983-1984, and a maximum of 5 ducks (3 Mallards, 1 hen) was allowed in 1985-1987.

Table F-8. Number of hunters who participated in the early September Canada goose season (Illinois 1997-2023).

			Waterfowl Zone				
	Year	Statewide	North	Central	South Central	South	Unknown
Hunters[a]	1997	11,765	5,577	5,768	-----	-----	420
	1998	11,981	4,837	5,915	-----	677	552
	1999	16,945	6,005	9,869	-----	693	378
	2000	13,289	5,410	6,908	-----	971	0
	2001	20,359	7,318	10,807	-----	2,085	149
	2002	12,459	4,517	6,665	-----	1,135	142
	2003	14,973	5,532	7,761	-----	1,348	332
	2004	11,170	4,250	6,220	-----	984	0
	2005	9,448	3,949	5,034	-----	1,085	0
	2006	12,609	4,848	6,607	-----	1,154	0
	2007	12,788	4,723	6,413	-----	1,652	0
	2008	13,157	4,934	6,690	-----	1,533	0
	2009	15,102	5,232	8,089	-----	1,781	0
	2010	11,015	3,918	5,813	-----	1,285	0
	2011	14,214	4,625	7,889	-----	1,700	0
	2012	11,192[a]	4,601	5,928	1,161	249	0
	2013	10,865[a]	3,646	6,076	681	462	0
	2014	12,147[a]	4,153	6,679	934	554	0
	2015	10,659[a]	3,226	6,104	1,075	443	0
	2016	9,973[a]	3,324	5,125	1,316	381	0
	2017	9,225	2,746	5,472	849	296	0
	2018	9,916	3,187	5,503	899	599	0
	2019	8,658	3,855	4,161	490	245	0
	2020	9,064	3,747	4,036	1,025	352	0
	2021	11,855	4,523	5,972	1,064	384	0
	2022	9,387	3,987	4,458	628	408	0
	2023	7,978	2,683	4,114	1,037	286	0

[a]Less than the sum of hunters in individual zones because some hunters hunted more than 1 zone.

Table F-9. Number of Canada geese harvested during the early September Canada goose season (Illinois 1997-2023).

	Year	Statewide	North	Central	South Central	South	Unknown
Canada Geese	1997	11,443	7,621	3,774	-----	-----	48
	1998	7,852	4,184	3,046	-----	384	238
	1999	20,223	9,124	10,491	-----	491	117
	2000	15,897	6,191	8,774	-----	932	0
	2001	26,021	10,979	13,170	-----	1,580	290
	2002	21,534	8,971	11,130	-----	1,433	0
	2003	15,267	5,907	7,103	-----	2,221	36
	2004	13,587	6,319	5,915	-----	767	0
	2005	9,896	4,862	4,047	-----	987	0
	2006	14,578	6,771	6,717	-----	1,090	0
	2007	16,207	6,057	8,645	-----	1,505	0
	2008	17,419	7,343	8,951	-----	1,125	0
	2009	16,212	6,101	8,336	-----	1,774	0
	2010	17,115	7,967	7,859	-----	1,289	0
	2011	18,790	6,339	10,874	-----	1,577	0
	2012	18,028	8,557	7,664	1,599	228	0
	2013	15,644	5,165	9,271	523	685	0
	2014	19,089	7,527	9,015	1,770	777	0
	2015	15,693	4,233	8,587	2,147	726	0
	2016	17,711	7,895	7,780	1,539	497	0
	2017	16,155	4,154	10,282	1,199	510	20
	2018	13,165	4,909	6,928	925	404	0
	2019	15,429	7,912	6,932	249	336	0
	2020	16,811	8,421	7,165	750	475	0
	2021	22,258	8,140	11,503	2,205	410	0
	2022	16,598	7,639	7,654	615	690	0
	2023	13,201	4,737	6,413	1,710	342	0

Table F-10. Number of days afield during the early September Canada goose season (Illinois 1997-2023).

	Year	Statewide	North	Central	South Central	South	Unknown
Days Afield	1997	34,988	17,991	15,890	-----	-----	1,107
	1998	37,322	15,891	18,247	-----	1,880	1,304
	1999	64,881	21,795	39,768	-----	2,625	693
	2000	47,831	17,396	27,078	-----	3,357	0
	2001	73,587	26,359	40,208	-----	6,318	702
	2002	39,485	14,303	21,049	-----	4,092	41
	2003	51,083	18,799	26,532	-----	5,422	330
	2004	37,941	14,279	19,670	-----	2,592	0
	2005	29,143	12,184	14,352	-----	2,607	0
	2006	42,444	16,735	22,621	-----	3,088	0
	2007	41,549	14,169	22,080	-----	5,300	0
	2008	45,637	17,305	23,174	-----	5,158	0
	2009	51,318	19,591	26,048	-----	5,678	0
	2010	39,019	15,929	19,236	-----	3,854	0
	2011	49,306	16,832	27,441	-----	5,033	0
	2012	39,589	17,079	18,613	3,524	373	0
	2013	40,955	12,323	24,816	2,042	1,774	0
	2014	44,919	16,300	23,844	3,288	1,488	0
	2015	38,744	13,505	21,191	2,404	1,645	0
	2016	41,935	14,925	20,950	4,883	1,177	0
	2017	33,817	9,442	19,714	3,595	1,067	0
	2018	35,361	12,777	18,035	2,779	1,771	0
	2019	33,410	15,634	15,695	1,316	765	0
	2020	34,272	15,054	14,638	3,491	1,089	0
	2021	50,585	19,838	25,307	4,435	1,005	0
	2022	33,656	14,348	16,451	1,570	1,287	0
	2023	31,911	11,698	15,669	3,935	608	0

Table F-11. Summary of goose harvest and hunter activity during the regular goose season (Illinois 1983-2023).

Season (Year)	Hunters	Days Afield	Number of Geese		
			Canada Geese	Other Geese	Total
1983	26,199	124,639	31,395 (4,325)	962 (577)	32,357 (4,902)
1984	22,426	102,583	23,147 (2,859)	1,675 (593)	24,822 (3,452)
1985	22,160	105,792	37,976 (5,248)	2,324 (753)	40,300 (6,001)
1986	30,327	200,291	45,535 (11,348)	2,625 (832)	48,160 (12,180)
1987	32,246	224,164	36,103 (3,563)	1,525 (499)	37,628 (4,062)
1988[a]	34,456	251,176	72,550 (3,871)	1,832 (350)	74,382 (4,221)
1989[a]	39,459	329,369	91,379 (2,988)	1,715 (182)	93,094 (3,170)
1990[a]	40,459	346,036	67,127 (1,515)	1,319 (97)	68,446 (1,612)
1991[a]	43,692	450,807	92,239 (1,245)	2,434 (70)	94,673 (1,315)
1992	35,253	334,010	59,352 (2,679)	1,412 (170)	60,764 (2,849)
1993	35,489	299,120	93,361 (1,260)	1,314 (82)	94,675 (1,342)
1994	37,090	320,580	67,790 (1,895)	1,753 (77)	69,543 (1,972)
1995	37,060	367,341	92,478 (4,034)	3,183 (245)	95,661 (4,279)
1996	36,582	339,253	65,864 (2,527)	4,939 (114)	70,803 (2,641)
1997	33,498	295,107	61,282 (4,772)	7,572 (438)	68,854 (5,210)
1998	26,343	202,676	43,222 (2,463)	4,290 (305)	47,512 (2,968)
1999	42,246	464,769	119,611 (1,846)	14,568 (152)	134,179 (1,998)
2000	37,593	383,367	128,387 (1,406)	16,356 (0)	144,743 (1,406)
2001	39,570	382,102	64,907 (1,761)	18,189 (263)	83,096 (2,024)
2002	35,352	323,091	89,297 (3,259)	19,414 (1,433)	108,711 (4,692)
2003	39,275	409,487	83,207 (1,526)	10,458[b] (342)	93,665[b] (1,868)
2004	37,189	345,279	81,859 (3,418)	8,231 (349)	90,090 (3,767)
2005	30,614	271,708	74,293 (1,653)	9,353 (62)	83,646 (1,715)
2006	41,521	438,350	122,294 (1,338)	14,426 (869)	136,720 (2,207)
2007	43,046	445,670	141,205 (404)	11,582 (55)	152,787 (459)
2008	44,404	461,868	142,806 (590)	17,956 (0)	160,762 (590)
2009	44,601	473,769	142,836 (585)	17,382 (355)	160,218 ± 36,569 (940)
2010	36,803	385,432	99,422 (534)	9,594 (46)	109,016 ± 22,523 (580)
2011	36,996	411,380	75,061 (618)	19,862 (33)	94,923 ± 22,387 (651)
2012	34,034	386,356	72,682 (0)	19,597 (0)	92,280 ± 19,570 (0)
2013	33,809	391,246	104,887 (0)	15,859 (0)	120,746 ± 12,775 (0)
2014	34,226	369,179	87,672 (50)	20,313 (0)	107,985 ± 15,517 (50)
2015	31,280	330,482	75,198	27,576	102,774 ± 17,608 (0)
2016	26,490	312,725	77,216 (0)	24,563 (0)	101,779 (0) ± 18,215
2017	24,039	276,009	78,850 (0)	27,637 (0)	106,486 (0) ± 14,607
2018	25,363	296,021	71,035 (0)	21,578 (0)	92,613 (0) ± 16,720
2019	23,222	292,766	85,188 (0)	19,158 (0)	104,346 (0) ± 23,241
2020	26,008	312,834	94,510 (0)	10,625 (0)	105,135 (0) ± 18,356
2021	29,180	366,689	99,276 (0)	17,467 (0)	116,743 (0) ± 18,853
2022	25,430	286,107	94,139 (0)	23,576 (0)	117,715 (0) ± 25,397
2023	21,321	254,390	71,923 (0)	20,520 (0)	92,443 (0) ± 20,694

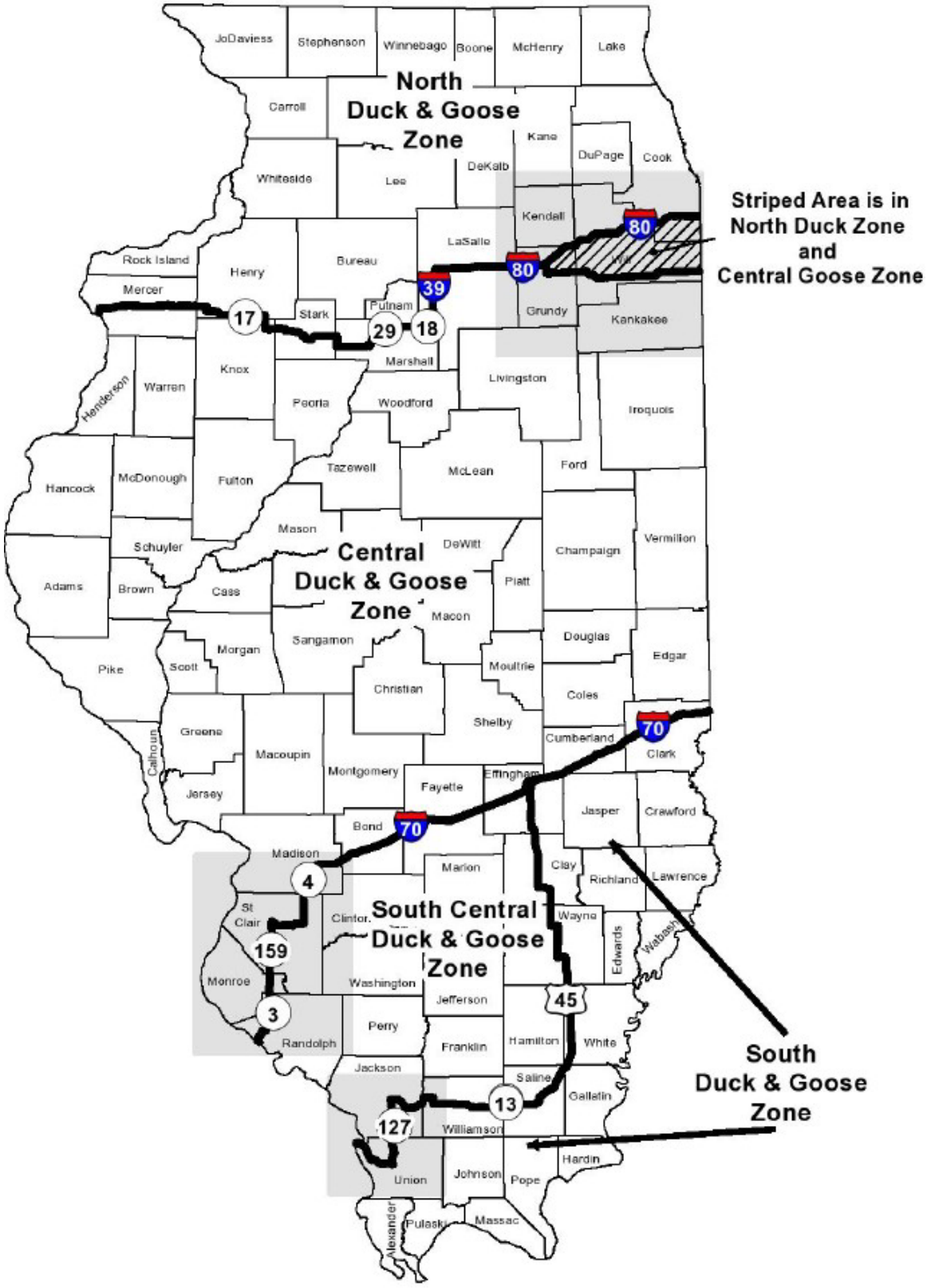
[a]The estimates of goose hunters and days hunted for these years have been reduced to 92.48%-96.48% of the original estimates. The estimates for geese harvested have not been reduced (Anderson and Williamson 1994).
[b]Reduced by 23,151 from estimate given in 2002 report to exclude Conservation Order snow goose harvest.

Table F-12. Summary of the number of ducks and geese crippled (Illinois 1983-2023 seasons).

Season (Year)	Estimated Ducks		Estimated Geese	
	Total	Per 100 Bagged	Total	Per 100 Bagged
1983	96,907	24.0	7,627	23.6
1984	84,665	23.8	5,711	23.0
1985	100,191	31.6	15,918	39.5
1986	145,283	38.3	20,699	41.5
1987	98,155	34.0	18,375	48.8
1988	65,856	35.5	22,730	30.6
1989	66,150	29.5	21,696	23.3
1990[a]	59,007	29.9	23,895	34.9
1991[a]	74,932	24.4	27,164	28.7
1992	68,027	31.4	18,631	32.1
1993	62,250	28.6	21,067	22.3
1994	65,266	26.4	16,234	23.3
1995	86,834	23.0	18,391	19.2
1996	64,324	22.6	16,641	23.5
1997	67,979	23.3	12,490	18.1
1998	74,679	19.3	5,514	11.6
1999	95,961	17.0	12,934	9.6
2000	70,423	14.2	10,071	7.0
2001	88,019	16.5	7,148	8.6
2002	59,005	16.9	6,382	5.9
2003	77,361	15.9	12,661	10.8
2004	63,765	17.2	9,433	10.5
2005	68,121	16.5	7,666	9.2
2006	83,648	16.5	14,110	10.3
2007	77,914	16.8	16,627	10.9
2008	74,044	16.5	14,166	8.8
2009	67,718	16.9	12,245	7.6
2010	57,388	16.2	9,217	8.5
2011	64,268	15.0	6,937	7.3
2012	71,054*	14.9*	10,452*	11.3*
2013	59,064	13.7	8,847	7.3
2014	51,909	13.5	7,856	7.3
2015	47,442	14.4	7,622	7.4
2016	43,666	13.1	6,149	5.6
2017	37,491	13.5	6,657	6.3
2018	36,996	13.6	5,558	6.0
2019	40,630	12.5	5,783	5.5
2020	33,984	13.3	7,495	7.1
2021	44,731	12.4	6,859	5.9
2022	35,320	11.2	7,378	6.3
2023	40,103	15.8	5,974	6.5

[a]The estimates of ducks and geese crippled for these years have been reduced to 92.48% - 96.48% of the original estimates. The estimates for the number of geese crippled per 100 bagged have been similarly reduced. See Anderson and Williamson (1994) for explanation.
*Amended from 2012-13 report.

Appendix G


North Duck & Goose Zone
Striped Area is in North Duck Zone and Central Goose Zone
Central Duck & Goose Zone
South Central Duck & Goose Zone
South Duck & Goose Zone
JoDaviess
Stephenson
Winnebago
Boone
McHenry
Lake
Carroll
Kane
DuPage
Cook
Whiteside
Lee
DeKalb
Kendall
LaSalle
Rock Island
Henry
Bureau
Mercer
Putnam
Stark
Grundy
Kankakee
Knox
Warren
Henderson
Peoria
Woodford
Livingston
Iroquois
Hancock
McDonough
Fulton
Tazewell
McLean
Ford
Mason
Schuyler
DeWitt
Champaign
Vermilion
Adams
Brown
Cass
Macon
Platt
Sangamon
Douglas
Edgar
Pike
Scott
Morgan
Moultrie
Coles
Christian
Shelby
Greene
Calhoun
Macoupin
Montgomery
Cumberland
Clark
Jersey
Fayette
Effingham
Jasper
Crawford
Bond
Madison
Marion
Clay
Richland
Lawrence
St Clair
Clinton
Wayne
Edwards
Wabash
Monroe
Washington
Jefferson
Perry
Franklin
Hamilton
White
Randolph
Jackson
Saline
Gallatin
Williamson
Union
Johnson
Pope
Hardin
Alexander
Pulaski
Massac
17
29
18
39
80
80
4
159
3
45
13
127
70
70

Appendix H

WATERFOWL SEASON DATES AND LIMITS

SPECIES	ZONE	DATES (inclusive)	HOURS	DAILY LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT	ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS
Teal (early season)	Statewide	9-24 Sep 2023	Sunrise to Sunset	6	18	Blue-winged teal, green-winged teal and cinnamon teal are the only legal duck species during this season. Daily and possession limits are for all teal species combined (in the aggregate).
Rail (Sora and Virginia only)	Statewide	9 Sep - 17 Nov 2023		25	75	Daily and possession limits are for both rail species combined (in the aggregate).
Snipe (Wilson's snipe)	Statewide	9 Sep - 24 Dec 2023		8	24	
Ducks (but see Scaup below)	North	21 Oct - 19 Dec 2023		6	18	Basic daily limit is 6 ducks of any species. However, daily limit can consist of no more than the following: 4 mallards (of which no more than 2 can be hen mallards), 3 wood **ducks, 2 Scaup for the first 45 days in** each zone, 1 Scaup for the last 15 days in each zone, 2 redheads, 2 canvasback, 2 black ducks, 1 pintail and 1 mottled duck. Possession limit for ducks is three times the daily limit by species and sex.
	Central	28 Oct - 26 Dec 2023				
	South Central	11 Nov 2023 - **9 Jan 2024**				
	South	2 Dec 2023 - **30 Jan 2024**				
Mergansers	Same as ducks	Same as ducks		5	15	Mergansers do not count toward your daily limit of ducks, but only 2 can be hooded mergansers. Merganser possession limit is no more than three times their daily limit, including max of 6 hooded mergansers.
Coots	Same as ducks	Same as ducks		15	45	
Scaup (Bluebills)	North	21 Oct - 4 Dec 2023 & 5 Dec - 19 Dec 2023	½ hour before sunrise to sunset	2/day First 45 days 1/day Last 15 days	First 45 days 6 Last 15 Days 3	FWS regulations require 45 days with 2/day bag limit, 15 days with 1/day bag limit. Dates will be different in each zone.
	Central	28 Oct - 11 Dec 2023 & 12 Dec - 26 Dec 2023				
	South Central	11 Nov - 25 Dec 2023 & 26 Dec 2023 - **9 Jan 2024**				
	South	2 Dec 2023 - **15 Jan 2024** & **16 Jan - 30 Jan 2024**				

WATERFOWL SEASON DATES AND LIMITS

SPECIES	ZONE	DATES (inclusive)	HOURS	DAILY LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT	ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS
Canada Geese (early season)	North and Central	1-15 Sep 2023		5	15	
	South Central and South			2	6	
Canada Geese	North	21 Oct 2023 - **18 Jan 2024**		3	9	
	Central	28 Oct 2023 - 5 Nov 2023 & 12 Nov 2023 - **31 Jan 2024**				
	South Central	11 Nov 2023 - **31 Jan 2024**				
	South	2 Dec 2023 - **31 Jan 2024**				
Light Geese (Snow/Blue/Ross' Geese)	North	21 Oct 2023 - **18 Jan 2024**	½ hour before sunrise to sunset	20	Unlimited	Daily bag limit is for both species combined (in the aggregate).
	Central	28 Oct 2023 - **31 Jan 2024**				
	South Central	11 Nov 2023 - **31 Jan 2024**				
	South	2 Dec 2023 - **31 Jan 2024**				
Brant	Same as light geese	Same as light geese		1	3	
White-fronted Geese (Specklebellies)	North	23 Oct 2023 - **18 Jan 2024**		2	6	
	Central	5 Nov 2023 - **31 Jan 2024**				
	South Central	11 Nov 2023 - **31Jan 2024**				
	South	2 Dec 2023 - **31 Jan 2024**				
Conservation Order Light Geese (Snow/Blue/Ross' Geese)	North	**19 Jan - 30 Apr 2024**	½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset	Unlimited	Unlimited	The following apply to the Conservation Order only: 1) unplugged shotguns may be used and there is no limit to the number of shells that may be placed in a shotgun, 2) electronic calling devices may be used, 3) federal duck stamp not required, 4) Illinois duck stamp and hunting license is required.
	Central, South Central, South	1 Feb - **30 Apr 2024**				
Youth Waterfowl	North	14-15 Oct 2023	½ hour before sunrise to sunset	Same as during regular duck, goose, and coot seasons	Same as during regular duck, goose, and coot seasons	The following apply to the Youth season only: 1) youth hunters must be 17 years of age or younger and have a hunting license and **HIP registration/certification unless** hunting on property they reside; 2) no stamps are required for youth under age 16; 3) federal waterfowl stamps are required for all hunters age 16 and older; 4) an adult at least 18 years of age must accompany the **youth hunter into the field; 5) hunters** aged 18 years and older may not hunt waterfowl and/or coots during Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days, even if hunting with a Youth License.
	Central	21-22 Oct 2023				
	South Central	4-5 Nov 2023				
	South	25-26 Nov 2023				