



January 23, 2023

To All THC Members



"Rosie" & Cameron Donnell

**All Time Club Record!**

This past weekend an all-time harvest record (over 37 seasons) was set by the club with 8,305 birds. In all likelihood the number will exceed the previous record season by 1,000 birds and will exceed last season by close to 2,000 birds. It has been one heck of a season! Final week! Hunt!

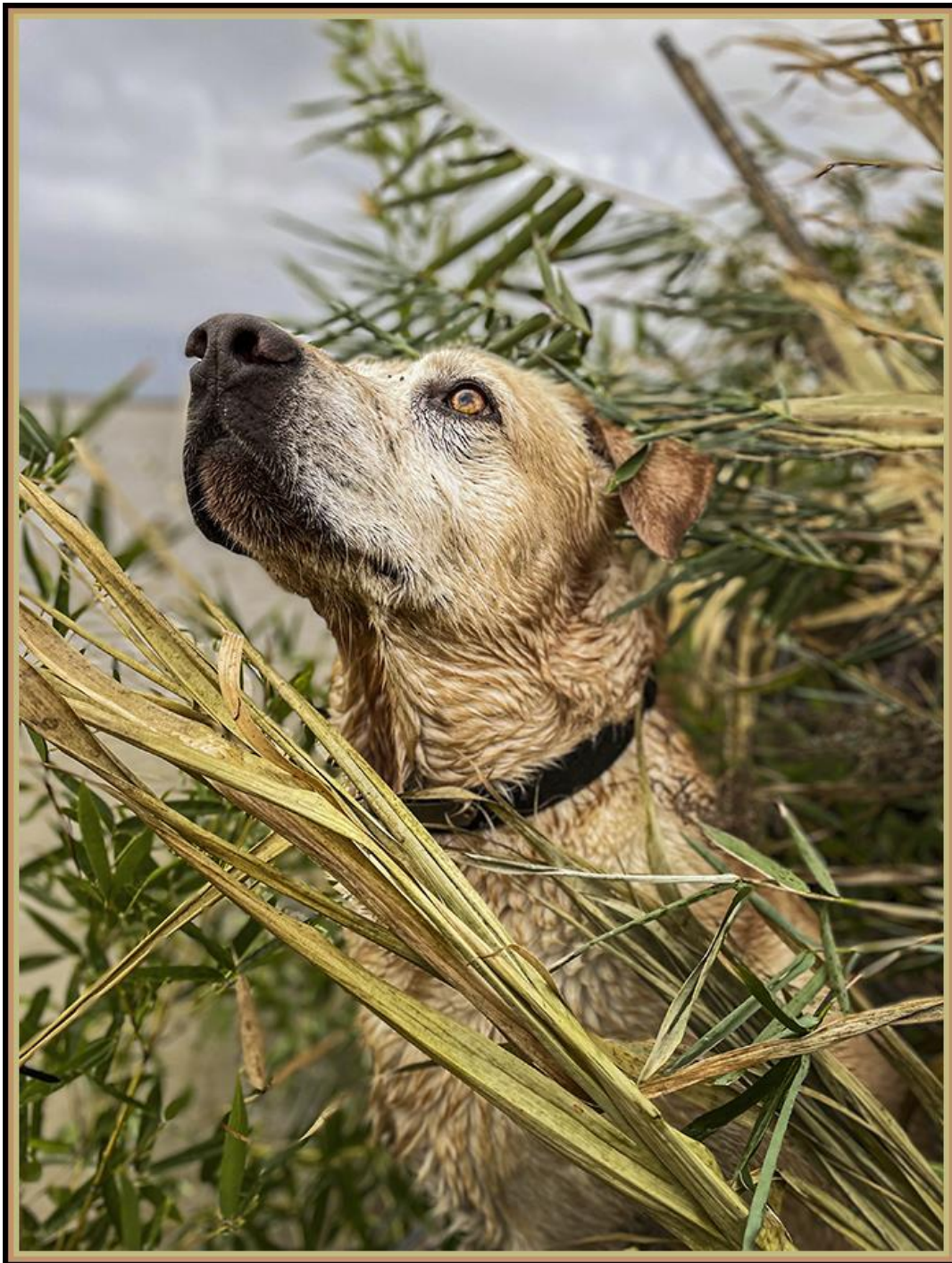
[www.ThunderbirdHuntingClub.com](http://www.ThunderbirdHuntingClub.com)

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**Jason McIntosh's Dog "Scout" Back in Action  
Retrieved 24 Ducks on Saturday from the Bree Pond  
A long road of recovery from a hip and femur fracture two years ago!**

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**"Serious" Saturday Limits from the Gadwall Pond**

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**JC Reeves with His Groups 4-man Limits  
Greenwing Pond - Saturday**

**Note the Drake Bluewing, Now Once Again Starting to Show Up on Straps**

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### **Forrest East Pond Sunday Limits**

For the Sixth Full Week of the Second Split in Duck Season (Jan 18-21-22) 576 birds were harvested by 101 guns for an average of 5.7 birds/gun/day (BGD) or 22.8 birds/4-man blind/day. Twenty-one groups out of twenty-eight groups shot full duck blind limits, for a success rate of 75%.

Full group limits were shot on the following ponds during the Sixth Week; Bree, Forrest East, Forrest Middle, Forrest West (3), Gadwall (3), Greenwing, Hunter NE (2), Mallard (2), Northern Roost, Remington, Southern Roost, OM Marsh, Remington, Shoveler, Widgeon.

- For Wednesday 119 birds were harvested by 21 guns for an average of 5.6 birds/gun/day with 5/6 groups shooting full limits, 83%.
- For Saturday 311 birds were harvested by 59 guns for an average of 5.3 birds/gun/day with 10/16 groups shooting full limits, 63%.
- For Sunday 126 birds were harvested by 21 guns for an average of 6.0 birds/gun/day with 6/6 groups shooting full limits, 100%.

**To Date: 8,305 Birds Harvested - New Record**  
**Previous Record - 7,990 Birds (2019/2020 Season)**

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Amy & Chad  
Hunter Pond  
Limits



"Karchach"



Another Pantry  
Piggie for  
Craig Jones



Shoveler Pond  
Limits



Swale Pond  
Sunrise

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**Thunder Pond - 22 Ducks & 1 Goose - Saturday**

### **Last Week's Recap & This Week's Forecast**

#### **Influx of Greenwings**

As mentioned in the last newsletter I thought the sustained south winds of early last week would usher in a new batch of ducks and a following cold front would drop ducks out into our ponds. It appears that is exactly what happened with a bounteous number of greenwings on the straps which I will venture to guess made up over 90% of the ducks bagged last week.

#### **Last Week's Highs & Lows**

One high would be Mallard Pond shooting two full group limits on ducks last week, but buyer beware the Mallard Pond is like Katy Perry's song, "Your Hot & Your Cold." Even when it scouts well ducks will get up and vacate, but at the same time the opposite holds true as per Ryan Kiefer rolling the dice on Sunday with a previous day's scout of 22 ducks ... four guns, four limits.

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Another from the highlight reel is the Gadwall Pond, three straight limits last week. Digging back even further the Gadwall Pond has shot five straight limits (108 ducks). When we headed out on Sunday the pond was already building ducks, hopefully tomorrow's rains do not screw up the carefully adjusted water levels that took weeks to achieve. Forrest West continues to truck along with three straight group full limits last week. And the drawdown on the two Hunter North Ponds are providing outstanding duck hunts as well.

On the low side is the Northern and Southern Roost Ponds (they were the hot ponds the previous week). There was only one full group limit shot on these ponds last week and it was not for lack of birds. Easily both ponds were holding in excess of 3,000 ducks before last week's Wednesday and Saturday hunts. All groups reported they should have setup differently so if you elect to hunt these ponds pay special attention to the Scouting Report, put out big scattered spreads, and stay late if you want to shoot a limit of ducks. On Sunday both ponds were once again stacked with ducks.



### **The North Verses the South**

Again, the Northern Properties (76%) outshot the Southern Properties (24%) when it came to full group limits. An unusual season for sure as it is generally the opposite during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Split in the season.

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**Hunter NE Pond Limits - Wednesday**

### **Ponds Rested for Last Week**

For this week's duck hunting we have some excellent rested ponds, this coupled with anticipated new birds from the south, and ducky weather should once again give us a rock-solid final week at Thunderbird.

- HL - Both Herlin and Stu Ponds will have two weeks of rest. The Thunder Pond will have a full week's rest.
- OM - All ponds will have a full week's rest.
- Harrison - All ponds will have a full week's rest.
- Northern - All ponds will have three days of rest.

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**Benelli Pond Limits - Saturday**

### **Soothsayer Stuff**

Tomorrow - strong southeast winds up to 70-mph, heavy rains up to 6-inches, large hail, lightning, possible tornados associated straight-line front, and power outages.

- Impact on the ducks. Any ducks on the bays will seek inland shelter from the weather. Ponds such as Gadwall will whitecap and ducks will relocate to ponds such as Mallard and Widgeon where the water is shallower, but ducks should return quickly once winds subside. Heavy rains could also redistribute ducks as new food sources are flooded. Let's hope for less than 2-inches!

Wednesday Hunt - favorable weather for duck hunting with sunny NW winds between 10-15-mph all morning.

- Ducks however might sit exhausted after fighting the nasty Tuesday weather.

Friday - southeast winds return.

- May trigger new ducks to arrive from the south.

Saturday / Sunday - favorable southeast winds continue through Sunday morning with rain showers throughout the weekend. Should be another excellent weekend to wrap up the season.

- Suspect we will see the front edge of bluewings returning from down south. BC seems to always catch the first wave of returning bluewings.

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**Mallard Pond Limits - Wednesday**

### **Scouting Report Alert**

Nancy and myself will be out scouting the Northern Properties at first light. I generally like to scout a little later in the morning to count ducks that have dropped off late in the morning but ... conditions are going to be brutal tomorrow with extremely high winds, lightning, hail, and potential rainfall in the inches so we will be trying to beat tomorrow's inclement weather. Please note that these conditions could put ducks in the air and impact numbers, could be more, could be less. In addition, ducks could relocate on ponds due to winds and higher water levels.

Nancy started a new **Scouting Report Alert**. It takes considerable time to scout the properties, especially to the south. At the very earliest we are done around noon, but most of the time we finish the scouting between 3-4 PM. Rather than have you calling the Scouting Report Line all afternoon looking for the report, we will now alert you via e-mail that the Scouting Report has been posted to the Google Drive, called into the Scouting Report Line, and there is a written Scouting Report in the lodge. So, pay attention to your e-mails on Tuesday and Friday. We hope this helps everyone and streamlines the process.

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Hunter NE Pond  
Saturday Limits



Forrest West Pond  
Sunday Limits



One Tired  
Puppy Dog



Remington Pond  
Saturday Limits



Forrest West Pond  
Saturday Limits







### **Black Drum Fishing**

Pound for pound Black Drum are one of the strongest fighting gamefish in the bays. I also rate small Black Drum as the second tastiest fish at the OM culverts with Speckled Trout being number one. You never know what will show up at the OM culverts, especially in the dead of winter. Cold snaps can send fish scurrying out of the bays to lie on the warmer mud of the deep holes at the culverts. Recently a number of smaller, but legal, Black Drum moved into the culverts. They can be at times finicky to hook as they like to nibble at the bait, often stripping the hook before you can even think about setting the hook. If you use your regular redfish hooks you will miss out on many of the Black Drum. Best to have a small treble hook on a slip sinker, covering the treble with a small piece of shrimp. Then patiently wait on the tap, tap, tap, when there is a small run on the line instantly set the hook and you will have some tasty skillet filets.

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“Tilly”



“Scout”

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Retired "Toby"

### **Dog Training**

We try to keep as much water on the landscape to help migrating ducks in the spring, but after hunting season there are some ponds that we drain to help ranchers with their grass and farmers in their prep of the land for crops. They take priority. We also like to keep some water in the ponds for dog training. Over the weekend I discussed with Craig Jones where we will most likely will leave water in the ponds. Craig will be heading up spring dog training with members, please contact Craig if interested.

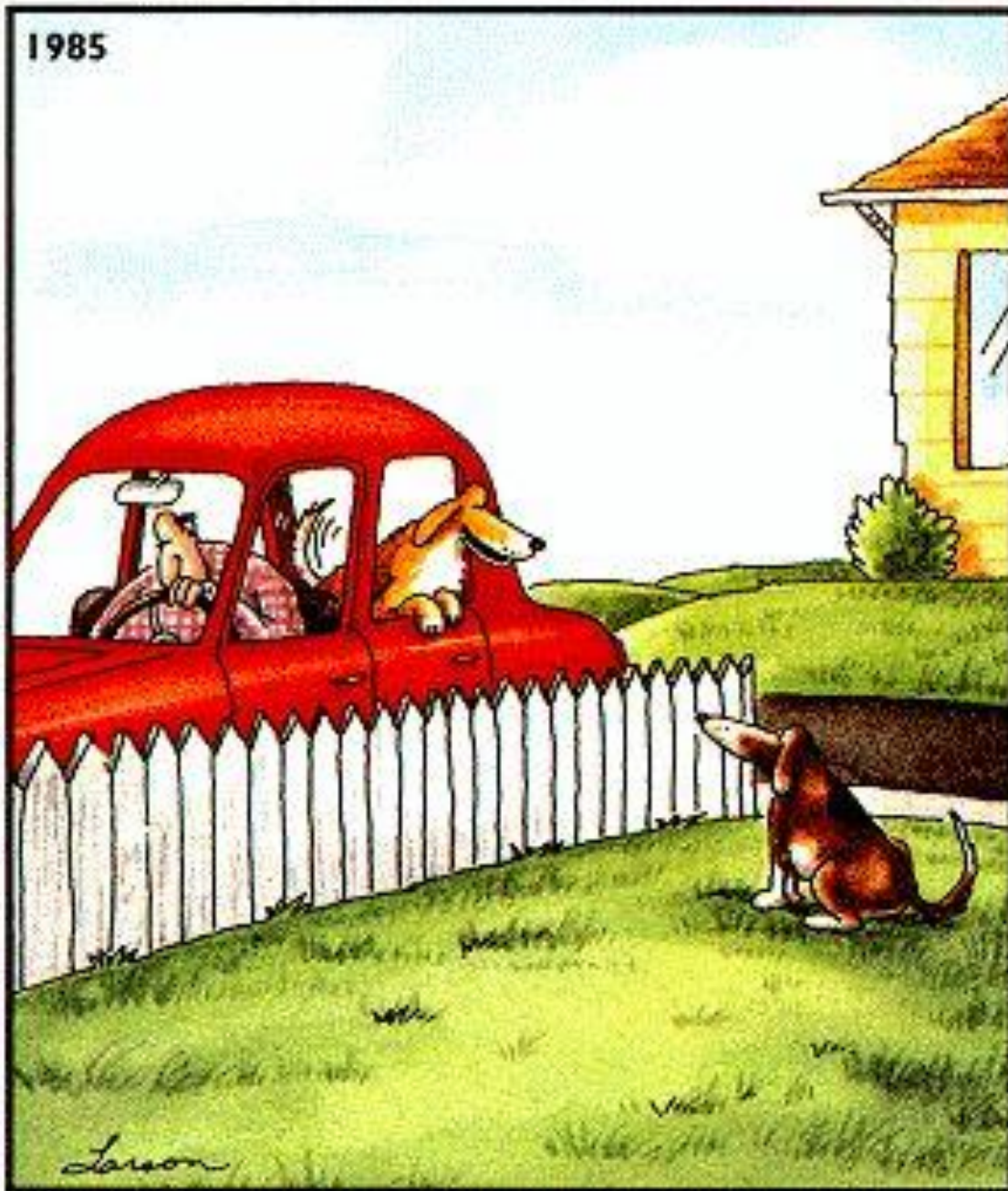
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“Ha ha ha, Biff. Guess what? After we go to the drugstore and the post office, I’m going to the vet’s to get tutored.”

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