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HUNTER ACTIVITIES, CONFLICTS, AND OPINIONS FOLLOWING IMPLEMENTATION OF A CONTROLLED WATERFOWL HUNTING PROGRAM ON THE REND LAKE PUBLIC HUNTING AREA IN 1995-96

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Abstract: Waterfowl hunters who utilized the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area (RLPHA) were surveyed (mail questionnaire) to obtain information about hunter activity, conflicts, and attitudes/opinions following implementation of a controlled hunting program in most of the Casey Fork Subimpoundment in 1995-96. The mailing list was developed by using legible names and addresses on hunter report cards and daily registration forms. Of 1,429 potential hunters, the U.S. Postal Service delivered questionnaires to 1,294 (91%). Usable questionnaires were received from 809 individuals (63%), of which 772 (95%) hunted waterfowl (ducks, geese, and/or coots) on the RLPHA in 1995-96. Most (88%) of the hunters were also active on the area during ≥ 1 of the 3 previous seasons. Approximately 1,000 individual hunters visited the RLPHA in 1995-96, compared to 1,200 the previous year. In 1995-96, more than one-half of the hunters resided in Franklin and Jefferson counties (34%) or in adjacent counties (25%), and 63% of them traveled ≤ 50 miles to pursue waterfowl on the RLPHA. Hunting pressure was heaviest during the 50 days (4 November-23 December) when both the duck season and goose season were underway. The Casey Fork Subimpoundment (controlled and uncontrolled portions combined) accounted for proportionally more hunters and days afield in 1995-96 (68% and 46%, respectively) than in 1994-95 (60% and 41%). Majorities (>50%) of the hunters liked changing the pit-allocation procedure to allow standby hunters at the Whistling Wings controlled hunting area. Majorities also liked the newly-implemented controlled hunting program in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment and the regulations used to operate this program. Majorities of the hunters thought that the quality of waterfowling was better in the controlled areas (Casey Fork and Whistling Wings) but about the same as in previous years in the uncontrolled areas. Hunter conflicts on uncontrolled portions of the RLPHA decreased by $\geq 50\%$ from 1994-95 to 1995-96. However, 2 locations--Honker's Point on the main lake and Bonnie Camp ramp area in the uncontrolled portion of Casey Fork Subimpoundment--continue to have problems. Recommendations are made to prevent hunters from abusing the privileges afforded by a public area intended for equitable public use.

Rend Lake's 40,000 acres of water and surrounding public land (Fig. 1) attract large numbers of waterfowl and waterfowl hunters. Located in Franklin and Jefferson counties in southern Illinois, the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area (RLPHA) accounted for an average of 15,400 waterfowl hunter-days (days afield) annually from 1991 through 1995 (Whitton 1996). The annual waterfowl harvest averaged 6,000 ducks and 2,900 Canada geese during this 5-year period.

As a consequence of its popularity, the RLPHA has had chronic problems with conflicts among hunters and unethical hunter behavior. Complaints arising from hunter conflicts have both persisted and intensified over the years. In response to these complaints, the Illinois Department of Conservation (largest agency forming the current Illinois Department of Natural Resources [DNR]) conducted a study of hunter activities and conflicts for the 1994-95 season. The study (mail-questionnaire survey) disclosed that hunter conflicts were rampant on the area (Anderson et al. 1995). Based on these findings and other considerations, a controlled waterfowl hunting program was implemented in most of the Casey Fork Subimpoundment for the 1995-96 hunting season.

The primary objective of the present study was to solicit the opinions of waterfowl hunters utilizing the RLPHA following implementation of the controlled hunting program in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment in 1995-96. As in 1994-95, a mail-questionnaire survey was the instrument used to fulfill this objective.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The mailing list for this survey was developed from names/addresses on hunter report cards and daily registration forms collected at all access points on the RLPHA from 4 November 1995 to 3 January 1996. After this latter date, relatively few "new" hunters used the RLPHA. The 3,865 report cards available for review represented 87% of the total received for the entire season. Similarly, the 9,604 names on registration forms available for review represented 74% of the total received for the entire season.

From the report cards/registration forms, 1,429 names and complete (or nearly complete) addresses were obtained. If the street address/post office box number was missing, local telephone directories and CD ROM (Phonedisk USA) were referenced in an effort to obtain the necessary information. The remaining (reviewed but not used) report cards/names on registration forms included 8,985 duplicates, 2,505 not legible/incomplete names or addresses, and 550 non-residents.

The questionnaire used for this survey was designed to obtain information about activities, conflicts, and attitudes/opinions of waterfowl hunters on the RLPHA for the 1995-96 season (Fig. 2). The opinion-type questions focused on the controlled hunting program in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment and hunter conflicts in uncontrolled portions of the RLPHA. The questionnaire and a letter of explanation (Fig. 3) were initially mailed on 12 February 1996. Non-respondents were sent 2nd and 3rd copies of the questionnaire, and accompanying letters (Figs.

4 and 5), on 25 March and 3 May, respectively. The U.S. Postal Service reached 1,294 (91%) of the people on the mailing list. As of 26 June 1996, 809 usable questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 63%.

Data were transferred from the filled-out questionnaires to a computer file using a data management program (Ashton-Tate dBASE III+). The data were analyzed with a statistical program (SPSS, Inc. SPSS/V2.0).

All written comments returned with the questionnaires were sorted by subject matter and, where applicable, by area or portion of the RLPHA. The results were summarized in tabular format.

SEASON LENGTHS AND BAG LIMITS

The 1996 duck hunting season in southern Illinois, where the RLPHA is located, began on 4 November and ended on 23 December. Five ducks (including 4 mallards) were allowed in the daily bag limit. For Canada geese, the season ran from 4 November 1995 to 31 January 1996. The bag limit was 3 Canada geese per day. On the RLPHA, legal shooting hours for both ducks and geese were from 1/2 hour before sunrise to 1:00 pm, except during the last 3 days of the Canada goose season when shooting time closed at sunset.

Hunters on the RLPHA were restricted to using portable blinds that had to be removed each day. The minimum distance between hunting parties on the RLPHA, including the 2 major subimpoundments, was 200 yards. All hunters and boats had to be

out of the subimpoundments from 2:00 pm to 4:30 am the next morning, except during the last 3 days of the Canada goose season when the departure time was extended to 1 hour after sunset. For goose hunting, a maximum of 5 hunters were allowed per party, and each hunter could possess no more than 5 shotgun shells per Canada goose in the daily bag limit.

Beginning with the 1995-96 season, a controlled waterfowl hunting program was operational in most of the Casey Fork Subimpoundment. Each party of hunters at each of 2 drawings (held at check stations located at the Cottonwood and Casey Fork Dam ramps) selected a staked location each morning (4:00 am during November and 4:30 am during December and January) of the season. The 1st party drawn had the 1st choice of hunting sites, the 2nd party drawn had the 2nd choice, and so on until all parties had selected staked locations or all locations were filled. Hunters selected in the daily drawing could move to any unoccupied stake, and late hunters were allowed to claim any unoccupied stake between 9:00 and 9:30 am. However, once set up, the hunters had to remain ≤ 10 yards of the stake.

The 4 goose pits at the Whistling Wings area were allocated to hunting parties in a separate drawing held each morning (4:30 am) at the Casey Fork Dam check station. Two parties of standby hunters (also selected in the drawing) were permitted to refill pits after move-up of the initial parties, in reverse order in which the pits were drawn.

FINDINGS

Of the 809 participants in the survey, 772 (95%) reported hunting waterfowl (ducks and geese) on the RLPHA during the 1995-96 season. Of the 772 active hunters in 1995-96, 677 (88%) also pursued waterfowl on the RLPHA during ≥ 1 of the 3 previous seasons.

Distance Traveled and County of Residence

The hunters reported traveling an average distance of 60 miles (1 way) to hunt waterfowl on the RLPHA during the 1995-96 season (Table 1). However, almost two-thirds (63%) of them traveled ≤ 50 miles, compared to 37% who traveled ≥ 51 miles.

One-third (34%) of the hunters resided in Franklin or Jefferson counties, which are the 2 counties that encompass Rend Lake (Table 1). An additional 25% were from 6 adjacent counties (Jackson, Marion, Perry, Washington, Wayne, and Williamson), and 22% were from the 2 counties (Madison and St. Clair) in the East St. Louis metropolitan area. The remaining 19% represented 39 different counties in the state.

The above findings for distances traveled and county of residence are virtually the same as those reported for RLPHA hunters during the 1994-95 season (Anderson et al. 1995).

Waterfowl Hunting Activity

The surveyed hunters reported pursuing waterfowl on the RLPHA for an average of 13 days per hunter during the 1995-96 season. This average divided into the total days afield for the

entire season (12,700, Whitton 1996) suggests that a total of 1,000 individual waterfowl hunters used the RLPHA in 1995-96. In 1994-95, hunters reported visiting the RLPHA for an average of 14 days, and an estimated 1,200 individual hunters used the area. Early freeze up and prolonged icy conditions curtailed hunting, especially goose hunting, in 1995-96.

Almost all (94%) of the hunters were active on the RLPHA during the 50 days from 4 November to 23 December--i.e., when both the duck and goose season were underway (Table 2). During the remaining 39 days (24 December-31 January), when the goose season only was in progress, 58% of the hunters were afield. The average number of hunters per day were estimated to be 162 and 117, respectively, during these 2 time periods. For the entire season, the average was 144 hunters per day, which is 39% less than the average for 1994-95 (Anderson et al. 1995). The reduction in the average number of hunters per day in 1995-96 was attributed to a reduction in hunting activities (caused by icing) and longer duck/goose seasons in that year.

The Casey Fork Subimpoundment (controlled and uncontrolled portions combined) attracted 68% of the hunters and accounted for 46% of the total days afield on the RLPHA during the 1995-96 season (Table 3). The Big Muddy Subimpoundment attracted 29% of the hunters and accounted for 14% of the days afield. Corresponding values for the main body of Rend Lake were 40% and 21%, respectively. For the Whistling Wings area, the values were 17% and 5%. Most of the hunters were active in ≥ 2 areas, and most utilized both controlled and uncontrolled areas (Table 4).

Compared to the 1994-95 season, proportionally more hunting activity occurred in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment, and proportionally less in the Big Muddy Subimpoundment, in 1995-96 (Table 3 and Anderson et al. 1995). Proportional hunting activity in the main lake changed only slightly during the 2 hunting seasons. In the Casey Fork Subimpoundment, 63% of the hunters were associated exclusively with the controlled portion, 15% were associated exclusively with the uncontrolled portion, and 22% were associated with both portions. For days afield, 67% occurred in the controlled portion and 33% occurred in the uncontrolled portion.

The Casey Fork Subimpoundment (controlled and uncontrolled portions combined) was credited with two-thirds (65%) of RLPHA's entire duck harvest, and slightly more than one-fourth (29%) of the entire goose harvest, for the 1995-96 season (Table 3). The Big Muddy Subimpoundment accounted for 20% of the duck harvest and 11% of the goose harvest. Conversely, the main lake was credited with 29% of the goose harvest but only 11% of the duck harvest.

Proportionally more ducks were harvested in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment, and proportionally fewer were taken in the Big Muddy Subimpoundment, in 1995-96 than in the previous year (Table 3 and Anderson et al. 1995). The proportional goose harvest decreased in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment, and did not change in the Big Muddy Subimpoundment, during the 2 years. Proportional duck and goose harvests in the main lake did not change appreciably during the 2 years.

In the Casey Fork Subimpoundment, 66% of the duck harvest and 90% of the goose harvest occurred in the controlled portion in 1995-96. The remaining percentages (34% for ducks and 10% for geese) were attributed to the uncontrolled portion.

According to Whitton (1996), hunter success on the entire RLPFA averaged 0.55 waterfowl (ducks+Canada geese) per day afield during the 1994-95 season and 0.70 waterfowl per day afield during the 1995-96 season.

Hunter Attitudes/Opinions

Allocating Pits at Whistling Wings. The drawing used for allocating pits at the Whistling Wings area was changed in 1995-96 to allow 2 parties of standby hunters. These parties were permitted to refill pits after move-up of initial hunting parties, in reverse order in which the pits were filled. When asked to express their opinion of this change, a majority (63%) of the Whistling Wings hunters indicated they liked it (Table 5). Only 12% of the Whistling Wings hunters disliked the change to allow standby hunters.

Controlled Hunting Program. The hunters were asked a series of questions designed to assess the controlled hunting program in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment and the regulations used for operating this program. In rating the quality of waterfowl hunting, decisive majorities of hunters in the controlled portion (63-80%) thought the following criteria were somewhat or much better compared to previous years: fairness to all hunters, conflicts among hunters, hunter safety, and overall hunting

experience (Table 6). The views of all RLPHA hunters echoed these same sentiments, although the percentages (48-64%) were less overwhelming.

Majorities of hunters in the controlled portion (59-66%), as well as all hunters (51-57%), thought the times used for holding the drawings (4:00 am during November and 4:30 am during December and January) were about right (Table 6). Majorities of both groups of hunters (71% and 62%, respectively) also believed the drawing should be held every day of the week. Similarly, majorities of both groups (68-78% and 59-67%) thought the regulations that allowed drawn hunters to move to unoccupied stakes, and late hunters to claim unoccupied stakes after 9:00 am, were neither too liberal nor too restrictive.

When asked how they felt about continuing/modifying the controlled hunting program, pluralities of the controlled portion hunters (38%) and of all hunters (34%) thought the size of the controlled area should remain the same (Table 6). Almost as many hunters (36% and 29%, respectively) thought the controlled area should be increased in size. Only small percentages of the hunters felt the area should be reduced in size (10% and 10%) or discontinued altogether (13% and 15%). Overall, 70% of the controlled portion hunters and 54% of all RLPHA hunters liked the controlled hunting program in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment.

When the idea of implementing a controlled waterfowl hunting program in the Big Muddy Subimpoundment was addressed, 73% of the hunters who were active in this subimpoundment and 48% of all RLPHA hunters reacted negatively (Table 7). Apparently, hunters

like the existing controlled hunting program in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment, but they prefer minimal regulations when hunting elsewhere on the RLPHA.

Access to Boat Ramps in Uncontrolled Areas. Question #10 on the questionnaire dealt with the issue of vehicular congestion at boat ramps in uncontrolled areas of the RLPHA. Majorities of the Big Muddy Subimpoundment hunters (57%) and Casey Fork Subimpoundment (uncontrolled portion) hunters (51%) indicated that, during the 1995-96 season, they drove to a boat ramp at least 1 hour before legal entry time and discovered that other waterfowl hunters had already parked their vehicles and boat trailers on the ramp (Table 8). For all uncontrolled area hunters, 39% experienced vehicle congestion at boat ramps. When asked to name the ramp(s) at which they encountered this situation, the Bonnie Camp ramp (31%) in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment, and the Dareville (27%) and Waltonville (18%) ramps in the Big Muddy Subimpoundment, were most frequently listed by the hunters who experienced vehicle congestion. (The percentages were 12%, 10%, and 7%, respectively, for all hunters who responded to question #10.)

In response to a similar question in the 1994-95 survey, 59% of Big Muddy Subimpoundment hunters, 64% of Casey Fork Subimpoundment hunters, and 53% of all RLPHA hunters said they encountered vehicular congestion at boat ramps (Anderson et al. 1995). The ramps most frequently listed were Dareville and Waltonville Dam in the Big Muddy Subimpoundment and Casey Fork Dam, Cottonwood, and Bonnie Camp in the Casey Fork

Subimpoundment. Thus, the Bonnie Camp ramp vaulted to the top of the list for vehicular congestion in 1995-96, when the controlled waterfowl hunting program became operational in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment. This finding was not unexpected because the Bonnie Camp area has traditionally been one of the most popular of (what is now) the uncontrolled areas for duck hunters.

Conflicts Among Hunters in Uncontrolled Areas. Thirteen percent of all uncontrolled area hunters said they went to a preferred hunting site on the RLPHA during the 1995-96 season and discovered that other hunters had "claimed" the site by putting out decoys and leaving them unattended (Table 9). Dry land hunters experienced this condition at the rate of 17%, main lake hunters at the rate of 16%, Casey Fork Subimpoundment (uncontrolled portion) hunters at the rate of 15%, and Big Muddy Subimpoundment hunters at the rate of 11%. The boat ramp/access area most frequently associated with the unattended-decoy dilemma was Honker's Point (22%) on the main lake. Bonnie Camp (15%) in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment ranked 2nd, and Turnip Patch (11%) and Ward Branch (11%) on the main lake tied for 3rd. In the 1994-95 survey, 28-32% of RLPHA hunters had problems with other hunters claiming hunting sites via placement of unattended decoys (Anderson et al. 1995).

One-fifth (21%) of all hunters in the uncontrolled areas reported having other hunters move too close to them during the 1995-96 season (Table 10). This type of hunter conflict was most frequently experienced by dry land hunters (30%). The move-too-close syndrome was reported by 24-26% of the hunters in the other

uncontrolled areas. The boat ramps/access areas most often associated with this type of hunter conflict were Honker's Point (15%) and Lambrusco (10%) on the main lake, and Dareville (10%) in the Big Muddy Subimpoundment. In the 1994-95 survey, 49-58% of the RLPHA hunters indicated they had problems with other hunters moving too close to them (Anderson et al. 1995).

As in the previous survey, hunters in 1995-96 were asked whether they ever felt as though they were being threatened or intimidated by other hunters. Nine percent of all hunters in the uncontrolled areas responded with "yes" (Table 11). The incidence of hostile acts, as reported by the hunters, ranged from 9% to 12% in the various areas. The boat ramp/access area most frequently associated with threats or acts of intimidation was Bonnie Camp (25%) in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment. Dareville (14%) in the Big Muddy Subimpoundment was 2nd, and Honker's Point (10%) and Lambrusco (10%) tied for 3rd. In the 1994-95 survey, 21-26% of the RLPHA hunters said they encountered threats/intimidation from other hunters (Anderson et al. 1995).

Assessment of Hunting Quality. For the controlled portion of the Casey Fork Subimpoundment, 62% of the hunters indicated that the overall quality of waterfowl hunting was better in 1995-96 than in previous years (Table 12). For the Whistling Wings area, also controlled by daily drawing, 57% of the hunters said the overall quality of hunting was better. For the other areas, all uncontrolled, only 12-16% of the hunters thought the overall quality of hunting was better. To the contrary, for these latter areas, hunters were more apt to think that the quality of hunting

was worse (23-28%) than better. These negative assessments of hunting quality were not associated with increases in hunting pressure in the uncontrolled areas (Table 3 and Anderson et al. 1995).

Written Comments. Of the 772 hunters who participated in this survey, 164 (21%) submitted 390 written comments with their questionnaires (Table 13). Of these comments, 188 (48%) related to the controlled hunting program in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment, 18 (5%) related to the uncontrolled portion of Casey Fork, 30 (8%) related to the controlled hunting program at Whistling Wings, and 154 (39%) related to other areas or were general statements that could not be assigned to a specific area.

The most frequent comments about the controlled hunting program in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment were supportive/complimentary statements (20%), suggestions to increase the size of the area (13%), requests to improve locations of stakes (9%), unsupportive statements (9%), and requests to liberalize program for standby/late hunters (8%). Other comments were to the effect that the drawing time was too early (7%), the 10-yard-within-stake limit was too restrictive (5%), some stakes are too close together (4%), need more cover (vegetation) at stakes (3%), should maintain area at same size (3%), should decrease size of area (2%), and should have drawing on weekends/holidays only (2%). The other comments (15%) addressed 15 miscellaneous subjects.

For the uncontrolled portion of the Casey Fork Subimpoundment, almost all of the comments were complaints about

1 group of hunters "monopolizing" the Bonnie Camp boat ramp and adjacent hunting area (88%). The other comments dealt with concerns about commercial hunting (6%) or advocated implementing a daily drawing to determine the order in which boats are launched (6%).

Comments about the Whistling Wings controlled hunting program included suggestions to combine all drawings into one (7%), pleas to add more pits (20%), and requests to eliminate the 4-dozen decoy limit (17%). The other comments addressed 9 miscellaneous subjects (36%).

The remaining comments indicated that more waterfowl food should be planted at Rend Lake (12%), skybusting/ crippling were problems (12%), need more law enforcement (10%), should improve handicapped-hunters' blind (7%), and should not implement controlled hunting program in the Big Muddy Subimpoundment/main lake (7%). Additional comments were requests to improve water control (5%), offers to assist/advise with management (5%), requests to implement controlled hunting program in the Big Muddy Subimpoundment/main lake (5%), and general compliments/supportive statements about the RLPHA (5%). The remaining comments addressed 31 miscellaneous subjects (32%).

DISCUSSION

As stated in the INTRODUCTION, the primary objective of this study was to solicit the opinions of waterfowl hunters utilizing the RLPHA following implementation of the controlled hunting program in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment in 1995-96. Thus, the

goal was to determine whether and to what extent hunter activities, conflicts, and attitudes/opinions changed from a year with minimal controls (1994-95) to the first year with major controls in a portion of the complex. Mail-questionnaire surveys were used to obtain data for both years.

According to the 2 surveys, hunters traveled average distances (1 way) of 61 miles in 1994-95 and 60 miles in 1995-96 to hunt waterfowl on the RLPHA (Table 1 and Anderson et al. 1995). In both years, 63% of the hunters traveled ≤ 50 miles and 37% traveled ≥ 51 miles. Each survey indicated that one-third (33% and 34%) of the hunters resided in Franklin and Jefferson counties, which encompass the RLPHA, and that another one-fourth (25% and 23%) were from adjacent counties.

The 1994-95 survey indicated that hunters used the RLPHA for an average of 14 days and a total of 1,200 waterfowlers visited the area. In comparison, the 1995-96 survey suggested that hunters used the RLPHA for an average of 13 days and that 1,000 individual waterfowlers came to the area. Unfavorable weather conditions (icing) curtailed hunting activities during the latter part of the 1995-96 season. Overall, the surveys for the 2 years produced remarkably similar findings for hunter activities, which suggests that any biases that may exist in the methodology are consistent in both surveys. Thus, the 2 surveys can be compared without concern about whether the data are skewed.

The drawing procedure for allocating pits at the Whistling Wings area was modified to allow 2 parties of standby hunters in 1995-96. Most of the Whistling Wings hunters said they liked

this change (Table 5). However, based on written comments, there is sentiment for making additional changes, especially to combine the drawing with the Casey Fork drawings and to eliminate the 4-dozen decoy limit (Table 13).

If all drawings were combined into 1, all hunters would have an equal opportunity to select a hunting site regardless of whether it was a pit at Whistling Wings or a staked location in the controlled portion of the Casey Fork Subimpoundment. However, hunters who have the capacity to hunt either area would have a greater number of hunting locations to select from than those who are prepared to hunt only at Whistling Wings. In this context, we believe that hunters should not be allowed to "double dip", but should be required to choose either Whistling Wings or the Casey Fork area before the drawings are held each morning. However, after the Whistling Wings drawing, unsuccessful hunters should have the opportunity to select staked locations not claimed in the Casey Fork drawing.

The limit on number of decoys at Whistling Wings is a site-specific regulation that will be reviewed, and possibly revised, by management personnel.

The controlled hunting program in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment was well accepted by RLPHA hunters. Majorities of hunters who used the controlled portion, as well as all hunters, said they liked the program (Table 6). Majorities or pluralities of both groups of hunters rated the quality of hunting as (somewhat or much) better in 1995-96 than in previous years (Tables 6 and 12).

In conjunction with these attitudes, we note that proportionally more hunting activity occurred in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment (controlled and uncontrolled portions combined), and proportionally less occurred in the Big Muddy Subimpoundment, in 1995-96 than in 1994-95 (Table 3 and Anderson et al. 1995). Proportional hunting activity in the main lake changed only slightly during the 2 hunting seasons. Clearly, the controlled hunting program did not deter hunters from coming to the Casey Fork, and in fact, probably contributed to the subimpoundment's popularity during the 1995-96 season.

The hunters also appeared to accept the regulations used for governing the Casey Fork drawing and staked hunting area. For example, majorities of the hunters thought the times selected for holding the drawings were about right, that the drawings should be held every day of the week, and that the rules for allowing drawn hunters to move from stake to stake and late hunters to claim unoccupied stakes were neither too restrictive nor too liberal.

The issue of some RLPHA hunters parking their vehicles on boat ramps before legal entry time in uncontrolled areas (and therefore gaining an advantage in claiming hunting locations) was problematic in 1994-95. In that year, a majority (53%) of all hunters encountered vehicular congestion at boat ramps (Anderson et al. 1995). In 1995-96, 39% of all hunters in uncontrolled areas indicated they experienced this condition when they arrived at ramps at least 1 hour before entry time (Table 8). Based on these findings, and to the extent that the questions in the 2

surveys are comparable, the problem of hunters using their vehicles to control access to the boat ramps was less severe in 1995-96 than the previous year.

Nevertheless, vehicle congestion at boat ramps continues to be a problem in the Big Muddy Subimpoundment and the uncontrolled portion of the Casey Fork, where 57% and 51% of the hunters, respectively, reported the condition in 1995-96 (Table 8). The ramps most frequently associated with vehicular tie-ups were the Bonnie Camp ramp (31%) in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment and the Dareville ramp (27%) in the Big Muddy Subimpoundment (Table 8). The written comments directed toward the uncontrolled portion of the Casey Fork were dominated by complaints that 1 group of hunters "monopolized" the Bonnie Camp ramp and adjacent hunting areas in 1995-96 (Table 13).

After each day's hunt, this group of hunters reportedly delayed using the boat ramp until the other hunting parties had loaded their boats onto trailers and departed. By being the last to remove their boats from the water, this group of hunters automatically became the 1st in line for launching the following day--i.e., their vehicles remained at the ramp from 2:00 pm to 4:30 am the next morning. Thus, other hunters had virtually no chance of claiming the 1st position for launching their boats (and for claiming premiere hunting locations) on any morning. While technically within the laws and regulations that govern the RLPFA, this activity abused the privileges afforded by a major public hunting area. That is, the general waterfowling public was denied a reasonable and equitable opportunity to enjoy the

benefits afforded by a public-owned facility.

Overall, episodes of hunter conflicts apparently declined in uncontrolled portions of the RLPHA from 1994-95 to 1995-96. Reported incidences of hunters encountering problems with other hunters using unattended decoys to claim hunting spots decreased from 28% to 13%, incidences of other hunters moving too close decreased from 49% to 21%, and incidences involving threats or acts of intimidation decreased from 21% to 9% during the 2 years (Tables 9-11 and Anderson et al. 1995). The boat ramps/access areas most frequently associated with hunter conflicts were Honker's Point (unattended-decoy and moving-too-close syndromes) on the main lake and Bonnie Camp (threats or acts of intimidation) in the uncontrolled portion of Casey Fork Subimpoundment (Tables 9-11).

In the report for the 1994-95 survey, we considered 3 alternatives for addressing waterfowl hunter management on the RLPHA: do nothing, implement a limited controlled hunting program, and implement total control (Anderson et al. 1995). Based on our findings and recognizing logistical constraints, we recommended the 2nd alternative, which translated into a controlled hunting program in most of the Casey Fork Subimpoundment.

At that time, we pointed out that our recommendation would not solve all the hunter management problems on the RLPHA, and in fact, could aggravate conflicts in the Big Muddy Subimpoundment and on the main lake. Fortunately, our concerns did not materialize. Hunter conflicts not only failed to increase but

actually decreased by $\geq 50\%$ in uncontrolled areas (Tables 9-11 and Anderson et al. 1995). The positive impacts of the controlled hunting program in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment apparently manifested themselves throughout most of the RLPHA.

Although the controlled hunting program was a resounding success in 1995-96, problems with hunter conflicts still exist on the RLPHA. Honker's Point, located on the west side of the main lake and managed by the U.S. Corps of Engineers, ranked high in the number of complaints about hunters interfering with each other (Tables 9-11). In our opinion, the DNR should sanction a thorough review of hunting conditions on this area and support whatever regulatory changes are needed to improve the quality of waterfowling at this dry-land facility.

Hunter-conflict problems are also excessive at the Bonnie Camp ramp and adjacent hunting areas in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment. This popular duck hunting area ranked highest in the number of complaints about vehicular congestion at boat ramps (Table 8) and threats/acts of intimidation (Table 11). It also received many complaints about 1 group of hunters "monopolizing" the boat ramp and nearby hunting areas (Table 13). To resolve this situation, we recommend including all of the Casey Fork Subimpoundment, which encompasses the Bonnie Camp area, in the controlled hunting program. Since 74% of the hunters in the controlled portion, and 63% of all RLPHA hunters, thought the controlled area should remain the same size or be expanded (Table 6), we believe that most of the hunters will support this change if they are apprised of the rationale behind it.

One objective of the management program at the RLPHA is to

provide a safe, equitable, and enjoyable hunting experience for as many hunters as possible. The controlled hunting program in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment has reduced hunter conflicts and helped bring the actual conditions in line with the objective. Expansion of the controlled hunting program to the entire RLPHA complex would be a drastic and costly move. However, such a move may ultimately be justified if hunters continue to abuse the privileges offered by a public hunting area intended to provide equitable recreational opportunities for the sportsmen of Illinois.

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Table 1. Distance traveled and county of residence for waterfowl hunters on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area (Illinois 1995-96). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Characteristic	Value
Distance traveled (1 way)	(763)
Mean	60 miles
Distribution	
0-25 miles	37%
26-50	26
51-100	23
100-200	9
>200	5
County of residence	(772)
Franklin	18%
Jefferson	16
Madison	13
Williamson	13
St. Clair	9
Marion	3
Perry	3
Clinton	2
Jackson	2
Washington	2
Wayne	2
Champaign	2
Others (37 counties)	15 ^a

^a≤1% per county.

Table 2. Temporal distribution of waterfowl hunting activity on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area (Illinois 1995-96). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Dates	Percentage		Hunters Per Day
	Hunters	Days Afield	
	(760)	(9,826)	
November 4 - December 23 (duck and goose season)	94	64	162
December 24 - January 31 (goose season only)	58	36	117
Entire season (12,682) ^a	100	100	144

^aTotal days afield (hunter-days) during the 1995-96 season (Whitton 1996).

Table 3. Spatial distribution of hunting activity and waterfowl harvest on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area (Illinois 1995-96). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Subunit	Percentage			
	Hunters	Days Afield	Ducks	Geese
	(761)	(9,564)	(8,251)	(2,548)
Casey Fork Subimpoundment				
Controlled (daily draw) portion	58 ^a	31	43	23
Uncontrolled portion	25 ^a	15	22	6
Whistling Wings Controlled (daily draw) area	17	5	2	10
Big Muddy Subimpoundment	29	14	20	11
Main Body of Rend Lake	40	21	11	29
Dry Land Away From Lake	23	12	1	19
Other Areas ^b	5	2	1	2

^aWhen combined, these areas accounted for 68% of the hunters.

^bPrimarily Gun Creek, Handicapped Blind, and Ten Mile Creek.

Table 4. Distribution of waterfowl hunters as expressed by overlap among portions of the Rend Lake Public Waterfowl Hunting Area visited (Illinois 1995-96). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Primary Area Associated With Hunters	Percentage of Hunters Who Were Also Active in:							
	None	Casey Fork Subimpoundment		Whistling Wings Area	Big Muddy Subimp.	Main Lake	Dry Land	Other Areas
		Cont.	Uncont.					
Casey Fork Subimp. Controlled	30	--	26	21	24	37	20	3
Uncontrolled	(438)	59	--	20	38	38	27	5
Whistling Wings Area	16	70	30	--	20	40	32	3
Big Muddy Subimp.	13	48	32	12	--	38	19	5
Main Lake	27	54	24	17	28	--	31	5
Dry Land	20	50	29	24	24	54	--	5
Other Areas	16	35	27	11	27	38	24	--
	27							

Table 5. Attitudes of waterfowl hunters toward the procedure used to allocate pits at Whistling Wings controlled (daily draw) area on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area (Illinois 1995-96). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Responses to the following questions:

"The procedure used for allocating pits at the Whistling Wings Controlled (daily draw) Area was changed in 1995-96 to allow two parties of standby hunters. These parties were permitted to refill pits after move-up of initial hunting parties, in reverse order in which the pits were drawn.

"Did you like or dislike this procedure for allocating pits at Whistling Wings in 1995-96?"

	<u>Whistling Wings Hunters</u> (129)	<u>All Hunters</u> (752)
Liked	63%	33%
Disliked	12	8
No opinion	25	59

Table 6. Attitudes of hunters toward the controlled waterfowl hunting program in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area and the rules that governed this program (Illinois 1995-96). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Responses to the following questions:

"A controlled waterfowl hunting program was implemented in a portion of the Casey Fork Subimpoundment for the 1995-96 season. Each party of hunters selected a staked location in the subimpoundment at a drawing held each morning of the season. The 1st party drawn had the 1st choice of hunting sites, the 2nd party drawn had the 2nd choice, and so on until all parties had selected staked locations or all locations were filled. Once on the area, hunters were free to move to any unoccupied staked location."

"Use the following categories to rate the quality of waterfowl hunting in the controlled portion of the Casey Fork Subimpoundment in 1995-96 compared to hunting in this subimpoundment in previous years."

	<u>Fairness to All Hunters</u>	<u>Conflicts Among Hunters</u>	<u>Hunter Safety</u>	<u>Overall Hunting Experience</u>
	(432/714) ^a	(429/705)	(430/708)	(430/708)
Much better	62/49%	55/42%	47/38%	43/33%
Somewhat better	18/15	19/16	21/16	20/15
No change	6/6	15/13	20/17	9/9
Somewhat worse	4/4	3/3	3/3	11/9
Much worse	6/6	2/2	4/3	12/11
No opinion	4/20	6/24	5/23	5/23

"In 1995-96, the daily drawing for staked locations in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment was held at 4:00 am during November and at 4:30 am during December and January. What do you think about using these same drawing times for the 1996-97 season?"

	<u>November (4:00am)</u>	<u>December (4:30am)</u>	<u>January (4:30am)</u>
	(434/736)	(428/730)	(424/725)
Too early	28/21%	23/19%	29/24%
About right	65/57	66/57	59/51
Too late	2/2	6/5	5/4
No opinion	5/20	5/19	7/21

Table 6 - continued.

Table 6. Continued - page 2.

"In 1995-96, hunters selected during the daily drawing could move to any unoccupied stake at any time after they had entered the Casey Fork Subimpoundment and late hunters who missed the drawing were allowed to claim any unoccupied stake after 9:00 am. In your opinion, are these regulations too restrictive, about right, or too liberal?"

	<u>Allowing Drawn Hunters to Move</u> (435/734)	<u>Allowing Late Hunters to Claim Stakes</u> (433/732)
Too restrictive	5/4%	13/12%
About right	78/67	68/59
Too liberal	11/11	10/10
No opinion	6/17	9/19

"For the 1996-97 season, do you think the controlled waterfowl hunting program should be reduced in size to include only that portion of the Casey Fork Subimpoundment located to the south of the causeway (Bonnie blacktop), expanded to include all of the Casey Fork Subimpoundment, remain the same size as in 1995-96, or discontinued altogether?"

	(437/749)
Reduced	10/10%
Expanded	36/29
Same size	38/34
Discontinued	13/15
No opinion	3/12

"For the 1996-97 season, do you think the controlled waterfowl hunting program in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment should be active every day or only on weekends and holidays?"

	(432/739)
Every day	71/62%
Weekends and holidays	22/24
No opinions	7/14

"Overall, did you like or dislike the controlled waterfowl hunting program in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment during the 1995-96 season?"

	(436/749)
Liked	70/54%
Disliked	23/23
No opinion	7/23

^aHunters who hunted in the controlled area/all hunters.

Table 7. Attitudes of waterfowl hunters toward implementing a controlled waterfowl hunting program in the Big Muddy Subimpoundment on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area (Illinois 1995-96). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Responses to the question,

"In your opinion, should or should not a controlled waterfowl hunting program be implemented in the Big Muddy Subimpoundment for the 1996-97 season?"

	Big Muddy Subimpoundment Hunters <hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/> (223)	All Hunters <hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/> (755)
Should	19%	31%
Should not	73	48
No opinion	8	21

Table 8. Assessment by waterfowl hunters of vehicular congestion at boat ramps in uncontrolled portions of the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area (Illinois 1995-96). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Responses to the following questions:

"During the 1995-96 season, did you drive to a boat ramp on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area at least 1 hour before legal entry time and discover that other waterfowl hunters had already parked their vehicles on the ramp and were waiting to launch their boat(s)?"

	Casey Fork Subimp. <u>Hunters</u> (187) ^a	Big Muddy Subimp. <u>Hunters</u> (218)	Main Lake <u>Hunters</u> (298)	All <u>Hunters</u> (616)
Yes	51%	57%	41%	39%
No	39	34	46	43
Never used a boat ramp	10	9	13	18

"If 'yes', at which ramp(s)?"

	All <u>Hunters</u> (222) ^b
Casey Fork Subimp.	
Bonnie Camp	31%
Silo	2
Big Muddy Subimp.	
Dareville	27
Waltonville Dam	18
Buck Creek	4
Nason	3
Main Body of Lake	
Turnip Patch	10
Ina	4
Jackie Branch	1
Others ^c	0

^aNumber of hunters.

^bNumber of reports.

^cIncludes 3 ramps.

Table 9. Hunter conflicts (using unattended decoys to claim hunting spots) reported by waterfowl hunters in uncontrolled portions of the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area (Illinois 1995-96). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Responses to the following questions:

"During the 1995-96 season, did you go to a preferred location to hunt waterfowl on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area and discover that other hunters had "claimed" the spot by setting out decoys and leaving them unattended?"

	<u>Casey Fork Subimp. Hunters</u>	<u>Big Muddy Subimp. Hunters</u>	<u>Main Lake Hunters</u>	<u>Dry Land Hunters</u>	<u>All Hunters</u>
	(191) ^a	(220)	(300)	(176)	(624)
Yes	15%	11%	16%	17%	13%
No	85	89	84	83	87

"If 'Yes', near which ramp(s) or access area(s)?"

	<u>All Hunters (82)^b</u>
Casey Fork Subimp.	
Bonnie Camp	15%
Silo	4
Big Muddy Subimp.	
Dareville	6
Waltonville Dam	1
Buck Creek	6
Nason	0
Main Body of Lake	
Turnip Patch	11
Ina	5
Jackie Branch	2
Honker's Point	22
Lambrusco	10
Ward Branch	11
County Line	5
Mine 21	0
Others ^c	2

^aNumber of hunters.

^bNumber of reports.

^cIncludes 7 ramps/access areas.

Table 10. Hunter conflicts (other hunters moving too close) reported by waterfowl hunters in uncontrolled portions of the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area (Illinois 1995-96). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Responses to the following questions:

"Did you have any problems with other waterfowl hunters moving in too close to you after you had already claimed your spot and set out decoys on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area during the 1995-96 season?"

	<u>Casey Fork Subimp. Hunters</u>	<u>Big Muddy Subimp. Hunters</u>	<u>Main Lake Hunters</u>	<u>Dry Land Hunters</u>	<u>All Hunters</u>
	(189) ^a	(217)	(299)	(172)	(620)
Yes	26%	24%	25%	30%	21%
No	74	76	75	70	79

"If 'Yes', near which ramp(s) or access area(s)?"

	<u>All Hunters</u> (130) ^b
Casey Fork Subimp.	
Bonnie Camp	8%
Silo	2
Big Muddy Subimp.	
Dareville	10
Waltonville Dam	6
Buck Creek	8
Nason	1
Main Body of Lake	
Turnip Patch	8
Ina	5
Jackie Branch	2
Honker's Point	15
Lambrusco	10
Ward Branch	9
County Line	5
Mine 21	3
Others ^c	6

^aNumber of hunters.

^bNumber of reports.

^cIncludes 7 ramps/access areas.

Table 11. Hunter conflicts (acts of intimidation) reported by waterfowl hunters in uncontrolled portions of the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area (Illinois 1995-96). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Responses to the following questions:

"While hunting waterfowl on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area during the 1995-96 season, did you ever feel as though you were being threatened or intimidated by other hunters?"

	<u>Casey Fork Subimp. Hunters</u> (190) ^a	<u>Big Muddy Subimp. Hunters</u> (219)	<u>Main Lake Hunters</u> (300)	<u>Dry Land Hunters</u> (174)	<u>All Hunters</u> (623)
Yes	12%	11%	11%	9%	9%
No	88	89	89	91	91

"If 'Yes', near which ramp(s) or access area(s)?"

	<u>All Hunters</u> (49) ^b
Casey Fork Subimp.	
Bonnie Camp	25%
Silo	0
Big Muddy Subimp.	
Dareville	14
Waltonville Dam	4
Buck Creek	6
Nason	0
Main Body of Lake	
Turnip Patch	8
Ina	4
Jackie Branch	0
Honker's Point	10
Lambrusco	10
Ward Branch	8
County Line	6
Mine 21	0
Others ^c	5

^aNumber of hunters.

^bNumber of reports.

^cIncludes 7 ramps/access areas.

Table 12. Assessment by waterfowl hunters of the overall quality of waterfowl hunting on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area in 1995-96 compared to previous years (Illinois 1995-96). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

responses to the question,

"In your opinion, was the overall quality of waterfowl hunting on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Areas better or worse in 1995-96 compared to previous years?"

	Casey Fork Subimp. Hunters (385) ^a	Casey Fork Subimp. Hunters (166)	Whistling Wings Hunters (114)	Big Muddy Subimp. Hunters (202)	Main Lake Hunters (272)	Dry Land Hunters (164)
	(Controlled)	(Uncontrolled)	(Controlled)	(Uncontrolled)	(Uncontrolled)	(Uncontrolled)
Better	62%	16%	57%	15%	15%	12%
No Change	9	48	28	54	54	54
Worse	25	28	12	27	23	25
No opinion	4	8	3	4	8	9

^aHunters who hunted in the specified area in 1995-96 and also hunted on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area in 1992-93, 1993-94, and/or 1994-95.

Table 13. Summary of written comments that were returned with the questionnaire used for the 1995-96 Rend Lake Public Waterfowl Hunting Area Survey (Illinois 1995-96). Sample sizes are in parentheses.

Casey Fork Subimp. (Controlled)	(188)
Supportive/complimentary statements	20%
Increase in size	13
Improve locations of stakes	9
Unsupportive of program	9
Liberalize for standby/late hunters	8
Drawing time was too early	7
10 yards within stakes is too restrictive	5
Some stakes are too close to each other	4
Need more cover at stakes	3
Maintain at same size	3
Decrease in size	2
Have drawing on weekends/holidays only	2
Others (15 miscellaneous subjects)	15
Casey Fork Subimp. (Uncontrolled)	(18)
One group of hunters monopolized Bonnie Camp boat ramp/hunting areas	88%
Suspect commercial hunting	6
Implement drawing for launching boats	6
Others	0
Whistling Wings (Controlled)	(30)
Combine all drawings into one	27%
Need to add more pits	20
Eliminate 4-dozen decoy limit	17
Others (9 miscellaneous subjects)	36
Other Areas (Uncontrolled)/General Subjects	(154)
Should plant more food	12%
Skybusting/crippling are problems	12
Need more law enforcement	10
Improve handicapped hunters' blind	7
Do not implement controlled hunting program in Big Muddy Subimp./main lake	7
Improve water control	5
Offers to assist/advise with management	5
Implement controlled hunting program in Big Muddy Subimp./main lake	5
Complimentary of RLPHA program and its management	5
Others (31 miscellaneous subjects)	32

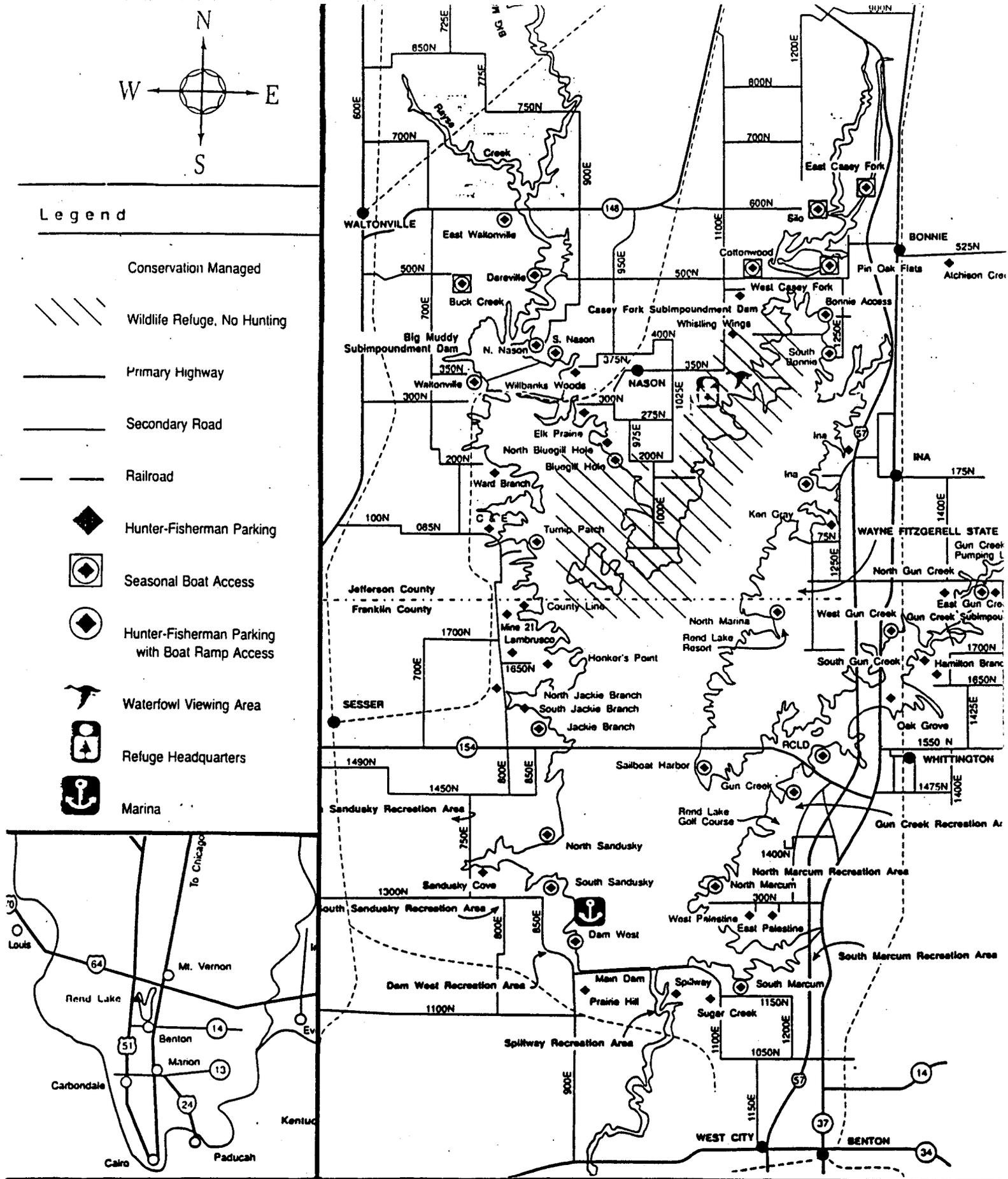
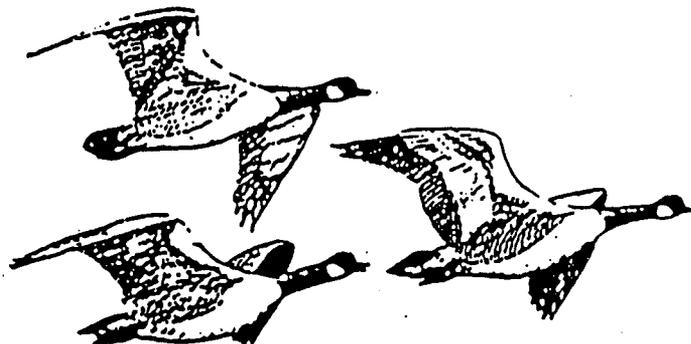


Figure 1. Rend Lake and surrounding area in Illinois.



1995-96 REND LAKE PUBLIC WATERFOWL HUNTING AREA SURVEY



INSTRUCTIONS

To properly manage the waterfowl resources on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area, the Department of Natural Resources needs information about waterfowl hunters, their hunting activities, and their opinions of selected issues. Please answer the questions beginning below regarding your waterfowl hunting experiences on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area during the 1995-96 season.

The questionnaire is divided into three parts: General Information, Waterfowl Hunting Activities, and Your Experiences and Opinions.

Report only your kill. DO NOT report the kill of others with whom you may have hunted. Write in the number of days on which you hunted waterfowl on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area. Include your unsuccessful days. If you can't remember the exact figures, give your best estimate.

Your responses are strictly confidential and will never be associated with your name. Your participation and your opinions are very important.

When completed, insert questionnaire into the self-addressed envelope and mail. POSTAGE IS PREPAID.

Your comments are welcome but please write them on a separate paper to receive proper attention.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. What is the name of the county in which you currently reside?

Name of county _____

2. Did you hunt waterfowl (ducks, geese, and/or coots) on the Rend Lake Public Hunting area during the 1995-96 season? (circle number for appropriate answer)

Yes.....1 No.....2

3. Did you hunt waterfowl on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area during any of the three previous years--i.e., during the 1992-93, 1993-94, or 1994-95 seasons? (circle number for appropriate answer)

Yes.....1 No.....2

Figure 2. The questionnaire used for conducting the 1995-96 Rend Lake Public Waterfowl Hunting Area Survey.

Figure 2 - continued.

WATERFOWL HUNTING ACTIVITIES

4. How many different days did you hunt waterfowl on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area during the 1995-96 season?

- a. Days between Nov. 4 and Dec. 23 (duck and goose season)....._____
- b. Days between Dec. 24 and Jan. 31 (goose season only)....._____
- c. Total days....._____

5. List the number of days you hunted waterfowl, and the number of ducks and geese you harvested, in each of the following subunits of the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area during the 1995-96 season. If you did not hunt in a subunit, write in "0" for Days Hunted.

	<u>Days Hunted</u>	<u>Ducks Harvested</u>	<u>Geese Harvested</u>
a. Casey Fork Subimpoundment			
(1) Controlled (daily draw) portion.....	_____	_____	_____
(2) Uncontrolled portion.....	_____	_____	_____
b. Whistling Wings Controlled (daily draw) Area.....	_____	_____	_____
c. Big Muddy Subimpoundment.....	_____	_____	_____
d. Main Body of Rend Lake.....	_____	_____	_____
e. Dry Land Away From Water.....	_____	_____	_____
f. Other Areas (write in).....	_____	_____	_____

6. On the average, about how many miles did you travel (one way) to hunt waterfowl on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area during the 1995-96 season?

Number of miles _____ (one way)

YOUR EXPERIENCES AND OPINIONS

7. A controlled waterfowl hunting program was implemented in a portion of the Casey Fork Subimpoundment for the 1995-96 season. Each party of hunters selected a staked location in the subimpoundment at a drawing held each morning of the season. The 1st party drawn had the 1st choice of hunting sites, the 2nd party drawn had the 2nd choice, and so on until all parties had selected staked locations or all locations were filled. Once on the area, hunters were free to move to any unoccupied staked location.

7a. Use the following categories to rate the quality of waterfowl hunting in the controlled portion of the Casey Fork Subimpoundment in 1995-96 compared to hunting in this subimpoundment in previous years. (circle appropriate number for each category)

	<u>Much Better</u>	<u>Some- what Better</u>	<u>No Change</u>	<u>Some- what Worse</u>	<u>Much Worse</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
Fairness to all hunters.....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	5.....	6
Conflicts among hunters.....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	5.....	6
Hunter safety.....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	5.....	6
Overall hunting experience..	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	5.....	6

7b. In 1995-96, the daily drawing for staked locations in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment was held at 4:00 am during November and at 4:30 am during December and January. What do you think about using these same drawing times for the 1996-97 season? (circle appropriate number for each month)

	<u>Too early</u>	<u>About right</u>	<u>Too late</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
November (4:00 am).....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....
December (4:30 am).....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....
January (4:30 am).....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....

7c. In 1995-96, hunters selected during the daily drawing could move to any unoccupied stake at any time after they had entered the Casey Fork Subimpoundment and late hunters who missed the drawing were allowed to claim any unoccupied stake after 9:00 am. In your opinion, are these regulations too restrictive, about right, or too liberal? (circle appropriate number for each regulation)

	<u>Too restrictive</u>	<u>About right</u>	<u>Too liberal</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Allowing drawn hunters to move.....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....
Allowing late hunters to claim stakes...	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....

7d. For the 1996-97 season, do you think the controlled waterfowl hunting program should be reduced in size to include only that portion of the Casey Fork Subimpoundment located to the south of the causeway (Bonnie blacktop), expanded to include all of the Casey Fork Subimpoundment, remain the same size as in 1995-96, or discontinued altogether? (circle number for appropriate answer)

Reduced..1 Expanded..2 Same size..3 Discontinued..4 No opinion..5

7e. For the 1996-97 season, do you think the controlled waterfowl hunting program in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment should be active every day or only on weekends and holidays? (circle number for appropriate answer)

Every day...1 Weekends and holidays...2 No opinion...3

7f. Overall, did you like or dislike the controlled waterfowl hunting program in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment during the 1995-96 season? (circle number for appropriate answer)

Liked.....1 Disliked.....2 No opinion.....3

7g. If you have suggestions for improving the controlled waterfowl hunting program in the Casey Fork Subimpoundment, write them on separate paper.

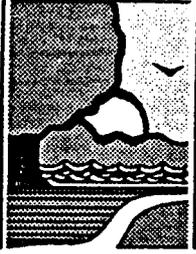
8. In your opinion, should or should not a controlled waterfowl hunting program be implemented in the Big Muddy Subimpoundment for the 1996-97 season? (circle number for appropriate answer)

Should.....1 Should not.....2 No opinion.....3

9. The procedure used for allocating pits at the Whistling Wings Controlled (daily draw) Area was changed in 1995-96 to allow two parties of standby hunters. These parties were permitted to refill pits after move-up of initial hunting parties, in reverse order in which the pits were drawn.

9a. Did you like or dislike this procedure for allocating pits at Whistling Wings in 1995-96? (circle number for appropriate answer)

Liked.....1 Disliked.....2 No opinion.....3



ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

524 South Second Street, Springfield 62701-1787

Jim Edgar, Governor ● Brent Manning, Director

Dear Fellow Sportsman:

You are one of a select group of sportsmen being asked to furnish information about your waterfowl hunting activities and experiences on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area.

The information supplied by you and other selected hunters is important to our management plans at Rend Lake: (1) to safeguard waterfowl populations, (2) to grant maximum, equal, and safe waterfowl hunting opportunity to license holders, and (3) to maintain an attractive level of hunter success.

The information you provide is used to improve the management of our waterfowl resources and waterfowl hunting. These statistics include distribution of total harvest, number of hunters, hunting success, and hunter opinions.

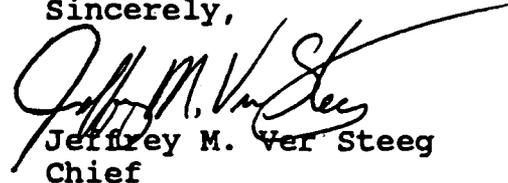
Your reply is very important, even if your hunting effort was unsuccessful. Your response is urgently needed.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the parts of the questionnaire that apply to you. If you do not remember exact figures, please give your best estimate.

Drop the completed questionnaire in the mail. Postage is prepaid.

Yours for better waterfowling.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey M. Ver Steeg
Chief

Division of Wildlife Resources

JMV:WLA:lc
Enclosure
RL1

Figure 3. The letter that accompanied the first mailing of the questionnaire.



ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

524 South Second Street, Springfield 62701-1787

Jim Edgar, Governor ● Brent Manning, Director

Dear Fellow Sportsman:

Recently we mailed you a Rend Lake Public Waterfowl Hunting Area Questionnaire, and requested that you fill out and return it as soon as possible. We have not received your form at this time -- perhaps because you have misplaced the questionnaire or haven't found time to complete it and return it to us.

We are enclosing another questionnaire which we hope you will complete and return to us. If you have already returned a questionnaire, please discard this one. The information supplied by you and other waterfowl hunters being sampled will be of great value to the Department of Natural Resources in better directing the management of our waterfowl resources and waterfowl hunting at Rend Lake.

Please fill out the questionnaire completely and return it even if your hunting effort was unsuccessful.

Postage is prepaid for returning the completed questionnaire. Your prompt attention will be sincerely appreciated.

Thank You.

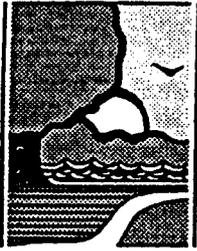
Sincerely,

Jeffrey M. Ver Steeg
Chief

Division of Wildlife Resources

JMV:WLA:lc
Enclosure
RL2

Figure 4. The letter that accompanied the second mailing of the questionnaire.



ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

524 South Second Street, Springfield 62701-1787

Jim Edgar, Governor ● Brent Manning, Director

Dear Fellow Sportsman:

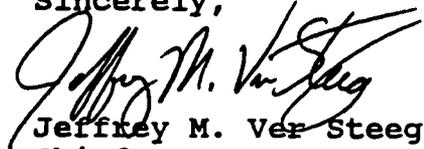
This letter is to remind you that we still would like to receive a report of your waterfowl hunting activities on the Rend Lake Public Hunting Area for the past season. We don't like to keep bothering you, but this information is very important which only you can supply.

Another copy of the questionnaire is enclosed. We hope you will complete it and return it as soon as possible. If you have already returned a questionnaire, please discard this one. Your response is needed--even if you had an unsuccessful season.

Postage is prepaid for returning the questionnaire. Just fill it out and drop in the mail. Please help us complete this survey by sending your questionnaire now. Your prompt attention will be greatly appreciated.

Thank You.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey M. Van Steeg
Chief

Division of Wildlife Resources

JMV:WLA:lc
Enclosure
RL3

Figure 5. The letter that accompanied the third mailing of the questionnaire.