



**ASSATEAGUE ISLAND
NATIONAL SEASHORE
ANNUAL SINEPUXENT DISTRICT
2003-2004 HUNTING REPORT**

I. Participating Rangers

- A. Assistant Chief Ranger Andrew Zavanelli
- B. Operations Supervisor Willie Bowman
- C. Park Ranger David Rapp
- D. Park Ranger Todd Garrett
- E. Park Ranger Dana Condrón
- F. Park Ranger John Pfaehler (seasonal)

II. General

The park's hunting seasons followed Maryland's as much as possible with only a few differences;

1. Vertical bow season was open in the park continuously from September 15 to January 31.
2. The park had only one designated muzzle loading season as opposed to Maryland's two seasons. The park's one muzzle loading season started two days before Maryland's.
3. The park had only one firearm deer season as opposed to Maryland's two seasons. The park's firearms season followed the time frame as Maryland.
4. The upland game seasons for Eastern Cottontail Rabbit and Quail ended in the park one week and two weeks respectively before the respective state seasons ended.

The park again operated as a Maryland Big Game Check Station for the 5th straight year. Department of Natural Resources employee Denny Price provided big game possession tags. For the First time, all completed big game tags were electronically scanned into a computer database prior to their return to the Department of Natural Resources.

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III. Seasons

DEER SEASONS

Species	Type of Season	Dates	Season Bag Limit
Whitetail Deer	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
Sika	Archery (Bow)	Sept 15 – Jan 31	Four*
Sika	Archery (Crossbow)	Oct. 1 - Oct. 15 Jan. 15 - Jan. 31	Four*
Sika	Muzzleloader	Oct 14 – Oct 18	Two*
Sika	Shotgun/Muzzleloader	Nov 29 – Dec 13	Four*
Junior Sika Hunt (Hunters age 16 or younger only; must be accompanied by a licensed unarmed adult age 21 or older)	Shotgun	Nov 15	One

Upland Game Seasons

Species	Open Season	Bag Limit (Possession limit same as bag limit)
Eastern Cottontail Rabbit	Nov 1 – Jan 31	4
Quail	Nov 1 – Jan 31	6
Mourning Dove	Sept 15 – Oct 18 Nov 10 – Nov 15 Dec 20 – Jan 3	12
Fox	Nov 15 – Jan 15	No Limit
Crow, Woodcock, Clapper and King Rails, Sora and Virginia Rails, Common Snipe	Closed	Closed

Ducks, Mergansers and Coots

Species	Season Dates	Bag Limit
Ducks*	Oct. 25 – Nov. 1 Nov. 8 – Nov. 28 Dec. 16 – Jan. 24	See Duck Daily Bag Limit*
Black Duck	Nov. 8 – Nov. 28 Dec. 16 – Jan. 24	One
Pintail	Oct. 25 – Nov. 1 Dec. 30 – Jan. 24	One
Canvasback	Dec. 22 - Jan. 24	One
Junior Waterfowl Day	TBA	See Duck Daily Bag Limit * (Plus 1 Canada Goose)

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Sea Ducks, Geese and Brant

Species	Season Dates	Bag Limit
Sea Ducks (Scoters, Long-tailed Duck, and Eiders)	Oct. 4 – Nov. 28 Dec. 1 - Jan. 24	5 per day (no more than 4 Scoters)
Canada Geese (Atlantic Population)	Nov. 15 – Nov. 28 Dec. 18 – Jan. 24	1 per day
Atlantic Brant	Nov. 8 – Nov. 28 Dec. 3 – Jan. 20	3 per day
Greater Snow Geese	Oct. 18 – Nov. 28 Dec. 6 – Jan. 31 Feb. 2 - Mar. 10*	15 per day (no possession limit) *Season open only on Mon., Wed., Fr. And Sat.
Tundra Swan	SEASON CLOSED	SEASON CLOSED

IV. Deer

Deer hunting was restricted to Sika deer only and limited to the general hunting zone which is as follows;

Northern Boundary: The northern boundary is the east-west trail located south of the Life of the Dunes Trail.

Southern Boundary: The southern boundary is the Maryland-Virginia State Line.

Eastern Boundary: The off-road vehicle boundary posts, east of the primary dunes, define the eastern boundary.

Deer were allowed to be hunted by the following methods during the listed dates;

1. Vertical Bow, September 15 to January 31.
2. Crossbow, October 1 - October 15 and January 15 - January 31 (hunters with a state issued crossbow permit based upon physical disabilities were allowed to hunt with a crossbow during the general hunting season).
3. Muzzle loading rifle, October 14 – October 18 and November 29 – December 13.
4. Shotgun, November 29 – December 13.

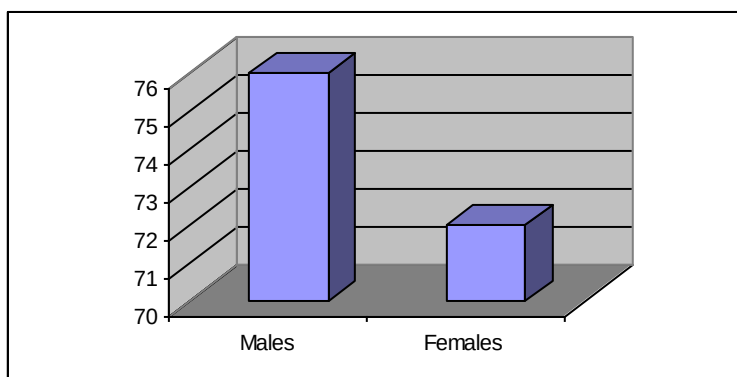
State wide, the initial harvest numbers for deer were lower than in previous years. The majority of the deer harvested in NPS areas was during the Shotgun season. After the season, the park's harvest numbers were within the parameters of last years harvests. A total of 147 deer were harvested from within the park.

The following are statistics for deer hunting during the season;

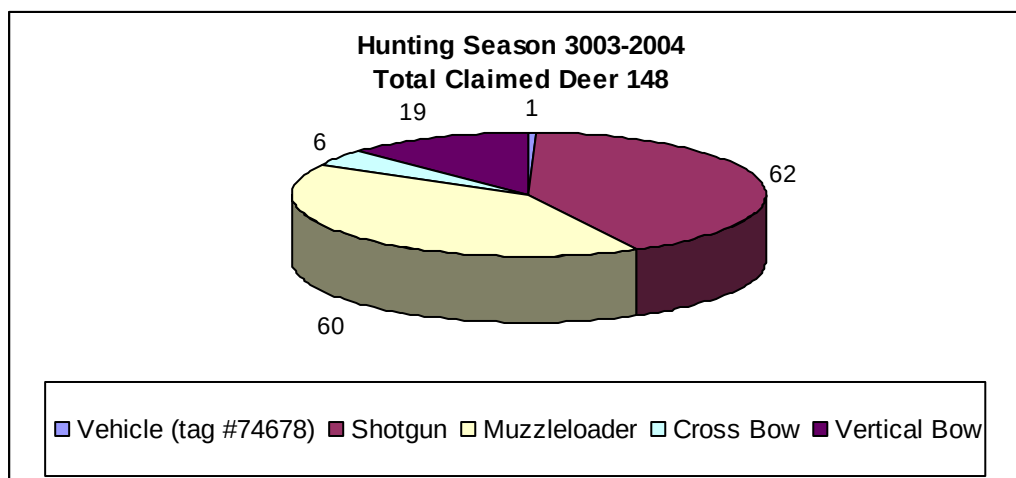
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Total Deer Harvested

Males	76
Females	72
	148



Total Deer Claimed



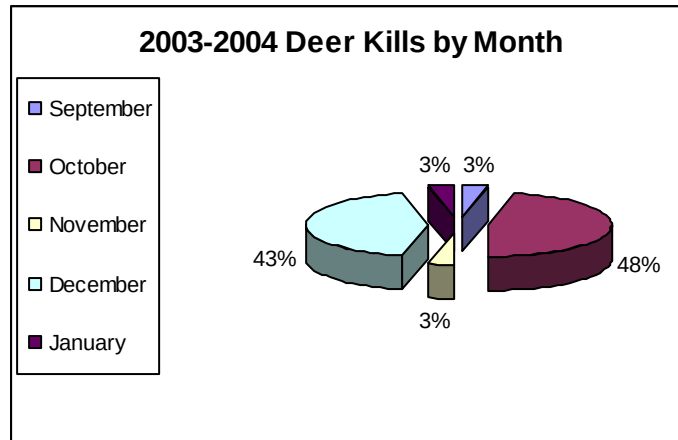
Vehicle (tag #74678)	1
Shotgun	62
Muzzleloader	60
Cross Bow	6
Vertical Bow	19
	148

Deer Kills by Month

September	5
October	69
November	5
December	64
January	5

148

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V. Migratory Game Birds

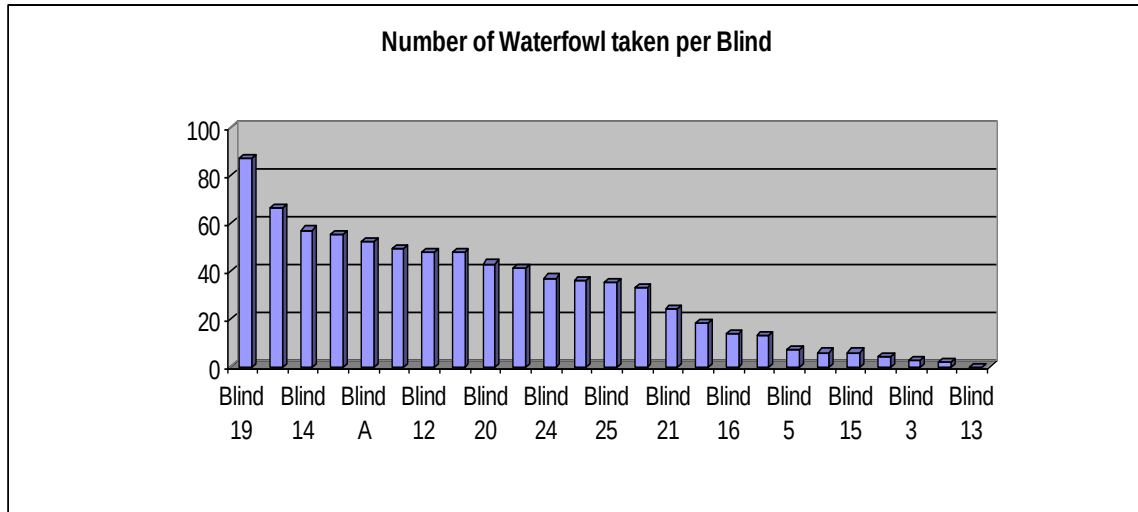
The state moved its first split of the Migratory game bird season back to the end of October in contrast to the previous year when the season started the first week of October. Despite this modification, warm weather prevailed throughout the first of the two split seasons. During the last split the weather took a drastic turn as temperatures dropped well below freezing and remained there. Some nights the lows reached the single digits and some days did not rise above 20 degrees. Cold temperatures caused the bay's shoreline and guts to ice over. Many hunters stated that the harvesting of migratory game birds wasn't as productive as it could have been due to the warm weather and then adverse ice conditions. Towards the end of December and through mid January the bay's water level was about 8 to 10 inches below normal. Hunting blinds such as 11, 13 and 22 were frequently left with little to no water.

The park maintained its previous hunting blind numbering system that was revised prior to the 2001-2002 hunting season. Twenty-four of the twenty-five blinds were open during all 3 seasons. Blind 13, which is a pit blind, was consistently flooded, even after being pumped out on 2 separate occasions. Blind 13 did not receive any use the hunting season. Blind 4, also a pit blind also had to be pumped out on two separate occasions and flooded a third time.

Special locks were applied to the gates for "A" blind (the persons with disabilities blind), blind 4, blind 5 and blind 16. Hunters who registered to hunt these blinds were given a key in order to access the area. Hunters who wished to launch a non-trailer vessel from Green Run were given a key and allowed to do so. Generally, these hunters registered for area 19.

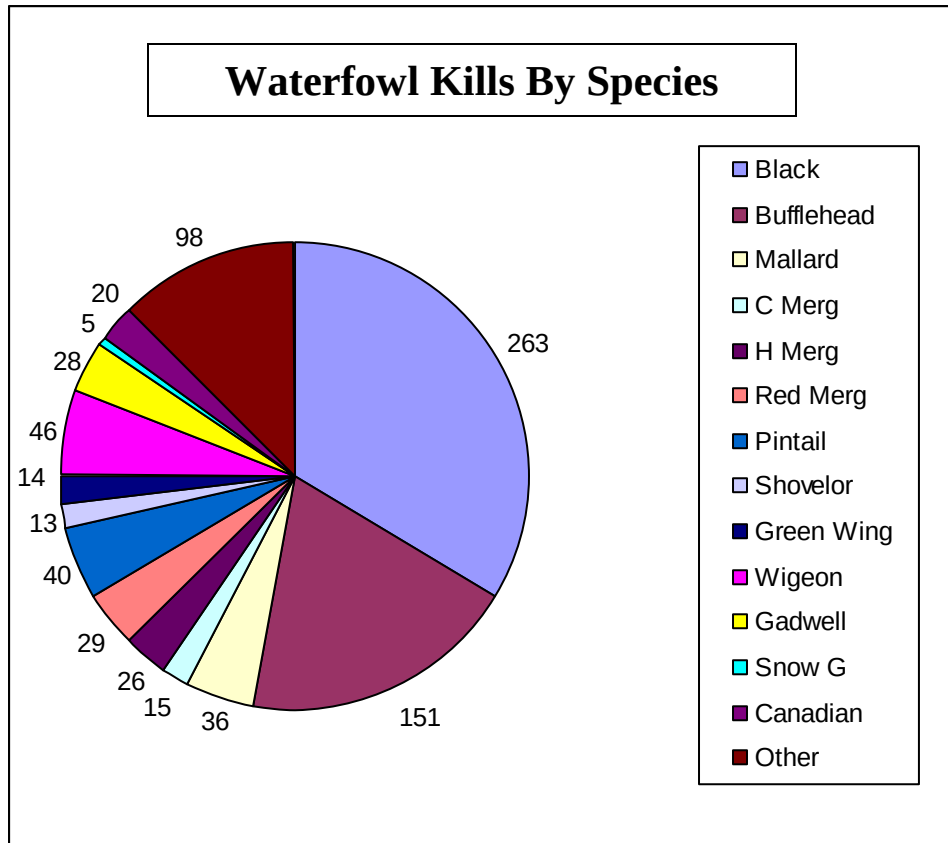
A total of 1325 hours were spent to harvest 784 migratory game birds within the park. The following is the harvest statistics for migratory game birds:

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Blind 19	87
Blind 2	66
Blind 14	57
Blind 6	55
Blind A	52
Blind 17	49
Blind 12	48
Blind 10	48
Blind 20	43
Blind 22	41
Blind 24	37
Blind 1	36
Blind 25	35
Blind 4	33
Blind 21	24
Blind 11	18
Blind 16	14
Blind 9	13
Blind 5	7
Blind 8	6
Blind 15	6
Blind 18	4
Blind 3	3
Blind 7	2
Blind 13	0

784



Black	263
Bufflehead	151
Mallard	36
C Merg	15
H Merg	26
Red Merg	29
Pintail	40
Shoveler	13
Green	
Wing	14
Wigeon	46
Gadwell	28
Snow G	5
Canadian	20
Other	98
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BLIND PRODUCTIVITY

Blind #	# Hours	Number of Ducks		Rank	Blind	Ducks/Hours
2	127	66	0.519685	1	22	1.28
19	123	87	0.707317	2	12	0.82
111	118	52	0.440678	3	9	0.76
14	102	57	0.558824	4	10	0.76
20	77	43	0.558442	5	6	0.75
25	74	35	0.472973	6	1	0.73
6	73	55	0.666667	23	19	0.7
17	71	49	0.753425	7	17	0.69
10	63	48	0.690141	8	8	0.66
24	59	37	0.761905	9	4	0.63
12	58	48	0.627119	10	24	0.62
4	52	33	0.827586	11	20	0.55
1	49	36	0.634615	12	14	0.55
11	46	18	0.734694	13	21	0.54
21	44	24	0.333333	24	2	0.51
16	41	14	0.391304	14	25	0.47
22	32	41	0.545455	15	111	0.44
18	28	4	0.341463	16	5	0.43
15	20	6	1.28125	17	11	0.39
3	20	3	0.142857	18	16	0.34
9	17	13	0.3	19	7	0.33
5	16	7	0.15	20	15	0.3
8	9	6	0.764706	21	3	0.15
7	6	2	0.4375	22	18	0.14
13	0	0	0	25	0	0
	1325	784				

VI. Violations

The following are violations observed and the number of times for each;

A. Unsigned federal duck stamp	1
B. Hunting without state duck stamp	1
C. Shoot at migratory game birds on the water	2
D. Shoot prior to/after legal shooting time	2
E. Possession of toxic shot	1
F. Take in excess of daily bag limit	6
G. Take out of season	1
H. Possession of alcohol in hunting area	2
I. Hunt outside designated blind	1
J. Take whitetail deer	1
K. Leave deer stand overnight	4

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VII. Training

From January 26th to the 30th the park hosted a waterfowl enforcement training program. The program was attended by employees of the National Park Service, including a science technician from the National Capital Region, and Maryland Department of Natural Resources and for a total of a dozen students. Topics included migratory game bird identification, state and federal laws, the migratory bird treaty act, enforcement techniques, legal issues and role playing scenarios. The training program was paid for by funds from the wildlife restitution fund.

Report Prepared by Dana L. Condrón, Park Ranger 1732