

BALLARD WMA

FROM THE BLIND

# KENTUCKY DUCK CALLS

A PUBLICATION FOR KENTUCKY'S VOLUNTEERS



GREENWING HUNT



# From The Duck Blind

Wearing a mask is certainly not something new to me. As you can see in the photo below I'm quite comfortable with one and wear it often. As most of you know, shining faces and duck hunting just don't go together very well. But the reason for wearing my mask has obviously changed since this picture was taken in January. The corona virus pandemic has affected most every aspect of our lives including why we wear a mask. It has definitely changed the way Ducks Unlimited goes about the business of conservation and fundraising. Across the country, we have seen virtual auctions become the norm this summer and virtual events becoming more commonplace as we move into the fall.

Kentucky Ducks Unlimited is no different. When it became obvious that our normal slate of summer in-person events was not going to take place, we relied on virtual auctions to offset the loss of normal events. Because of the success of these auctions we were able to engage our membership in a new way to fundraise and usher in a whole new way to keep things moving forward during this crazy time.

As the fall banquet season arrives, I want to thank each of you for your patience through the past several months and ask for your continued support in the months ahead. I look forward to working with all our area chairs and their committees as we move into the fall. I know there will be challenges as we move forward, but understand that we are ready to help in any way we can to further your success. Our hope is that we can have as many in-person events as possible but realize that in many cases a virtual event may be the best option this fall. To that end, our regional director Bob Bezkor and I are putting together a "virtual team" to provide a core group of DU volunteers who are familiar with Zoom and other virtual platforms to set up and assist committees as you run your events until the time we can return to normal in-person events and activities.

The first of these fall events will be a virtual auction held by



the Campbell County Chapter of DU. Area Chairman Norb Weyer and his committee always have a tremendous amount of unique merchandise including, boats, decoys, all manner of hunting equipment, as well as a lot of great preferred vendor merchandise that you may not see at the average event. The auction will be held on August 29. Go to the Kentucky page of the DU website and click on local events to see how you can participate.

One of the things that I have regretted the most during this time is that we have not been able to schedule our normal Volunteer Celebration Weekend/State Convention. That time of celebrating the successes of our chapters is, I believe, one of the most important and fun times we have as Kentucky DU members and volunteers. Our state leadership has determined the most feasible thing to do this year is to have a virtual state convention. We have a lot to celebrate and this is going to be a new and unique way to do it. Past

State Chairman Mike Hough, Regional Director Bob Bezkor and I will gather (while social distancing) to host the 2020 KYDU Virtual Volunteer Celebration Event at the Duck Shack in Bowling Green. This event will be live-streamed through Zoom on the evening of Thursday, September 10. We encourage all of our membership to join us for this very exciting evening as we recognize our flight award winning chapters, state award winners, and individual recognitions from 2019. A great way to watch the festivities is to gather your chapter committees for the evening and throw a watch party to celebrate your successes as a team. Remember to wear masks and social distance. Again, go to the Kentucky page of the DU website and click on local events to see how to participate. I hope you'll take time to read through the rest of this newsletter. Steve Keister's article about the KYDU Legacy Greenwing Youth Waterfowl Hunt back in February is an excellent example of how Kentucky DU recognizes the importance of getting our youth out to enjoy what we work so hard to preserve. It was a great time and emphasizes the importance of sharing with the next generation the beauty and splendor of the marsh and its importance not only to waterfowl and wildlife, but to people as well.

You will be pleased to see that even though our fundraising may have gotten redirected this spring and summer, our "on the ground" conservation work never missed a beat. Tremendous work at Ballard WMA has been taking place which will transform the habitat there into what I believe will be a world class destination for ducks and duck hunting. Our DU biologists and engineering team report on the progress of the work at Ballard in "New Tools for Kentucky Waterfowl Wonder". This is one of many projects which will ultimately bring about a systematic upgrading of western Kentucky's wetlands. And don't forget to take part in the first DU Virtual National Convention. It's being billed as the "Virtually Unconventional" Convention. The festivities will take place beginning on Thursday, September 24, at 7:00 pm Central Time with DU's family reunion and live auction. And on Friday, September

25, the 83rd annual general business session goes live. If you've never been to a National Convention this is a great way to join in the fun and excitement right from your own home. The zoom sessions will be open to all DU members. More details to come at [convention.ducks.org](http://convention.ducks.org).

Finally I want to welcome the newest member of the Kentucky Ducks Unlimited State Committee. Richard Brown joins us as our first Social Media Chairman for the state. Richard is from the Oldham County Chapter and brings a wealth of knowledge to this fast growing segment of DU.

Thank you, Richard, for your willingness to serve.

As I close, I want to take a moment to relay to you, our membership the importance of your participation in our fundraising events this fall. Memberships and Sponsorships are what pay the way for our habitat work. I know we have all been affected by the events of the last few months. There have been financial hardships, illness, and loss of friends and family because of this pandemic. The world has changed and us with it. And while the work of wetlands conservation is not nearly as important as our own well being and that of our families, I also know how resilient and dedicated our members are to the cause of conservation. So be safe, take care of your family and be available for those around you who may need help and if you're able, don't forget to do your part for conservation. Your willingness to participate this fall in DU's work by attending events and maybe doing a little extra Christmas shopping while you're at it, will pay big dividends for the ducks for years to come. Thanks always for your support of DU.

Jeff Adams  
Kentucky State Chairman







Addison Thompson receives recognition for his two years of service as UKDU Area Chairman



Joey McCaslin receives his 30 year Volunteer Service Award pin from Bob Bezkor for his more than thirty years of service as a Caldwell County Chapter Volunteer. Thanks Joey for all your years of dedicated service to wetland conservation



Wesley and Amy Lynn received their Life Sponsor Pins from Bob Bezkor at the Caldwell Co. Banquet with the help of their Granddaughter, Olivia Franklin. Thanks Wesley and Amy for your commitment to become a Major Donor.



# New Tools for Kentucky Waterfowl Wonder



The next steps are in motion on a multi-year effort to enhance a historic western Kentucky waterfowl area.

Ballard Wildlife Management Area is an 8,000-acre state-owned habitat on the banks of the Ohio River. Established in the 1950s, Ballard quickly gained national reputation as a Canada goose hunting destination as populations from the southern shores of Hudson Bay and James Bay visited the area by the tens of thousands each year.

A changing climate and shifting land uses have dramatically reduced the number of geese wintering here each season. In 2017, Ducks Unlimited joined representatives from nine state, two federal wildlife agencies, two joint ventures and other non-profit organizations to contemplate habitat management, hunting management and water level management at Ballard WMA. The decision was to shift habitat conditions from a centralized deep-water roost for geese to a variety of shallow, moist-soil wetlands with interspersed refuge areas for ducks.

One of the projects that broke ground in 2020 was the installation of new water-control infrastructure on a 243-acre managed unit.

The original culverts were too small and failed. New structures will more than quadruple the former capacity, allowing wetland managers to manage both the north and south units. Better conditions will allow for annual moist soil crops, flooding the site for shorebirds and early migrating teal, holding water long enough to meet off-site demands and draining southward out of the units to be distributed to other wetland units in time to supply food to migrating and wintering waterfowl.

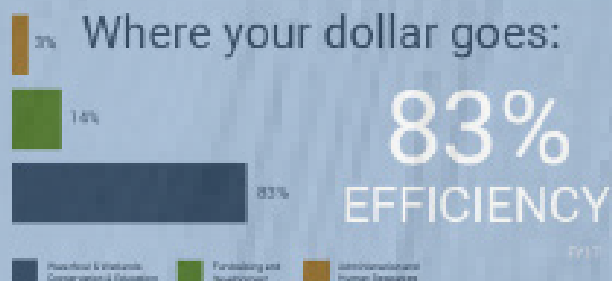
““Ballard WMA hosts 2,000 waterfowl hunter trips per year,” said Dane Cramer, DU regional biologist for Kentucky. “Ducks and duck hunters will see the benefits, but this project has other valuable benefits, too. This area absorbs an impressive amount of floodwater, benefitting every downstream along the Mississippi River.”

The construction scene of pouring concrete and setting steel will soon lead to a more natural landscape for ducks and people.

Over the next few years, several other large-scale wetland enhancement projects at Ballard WMA before moving on to other areas.

The ultimate goal being the systematic upgrading of western Kentucky’s wetlands over the next decade.





# **Kentucky Ducks Unlimited 2020 Virtual State Convention**

**Thursday, September, 10th 7:00PM Central**

**Door Prizes  
Chapter Flight Awards  
Guest Speakers  
Volunteer Appreciation  
District Chairman Recognition  
Area Chairman of the Year**

**Broadcast Live on Zoom from the  
"DUCK SHACK"  
in Bowling Green, KY**



**MAKE A DIFFERENCE  
VOLUNTEER**

*HAVE FUN, MEET NEW PEOPLE, SUPPORT DU*





Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources Commissioners at the Major Donor Evening of Conservation at Bandana Hilton in Ballard County last November with new Ducks Unlimited Chief Conservation Officer Karen Waldrop, PhD.



Major donor chairman Dr. Brian Priddle and Director of Development Mike Checkett present host and hostess Dr. and Mrs. Charlie Shields with a thank you gift during the Evening of Conservation at the Shields' Bandana Hilton last November.







Oldham Co. Committee celebrates after their local banquet at Ashbourne Farms.

Dr. Bruce Burkett on his first trip to National Headquarters in Memphis



Louisville Committee receives "Years of Service" pins.





# GREENWING HUNT



Each year for the past eight years the Kentucky Ducks Unlimited Greenwing Program has held a Legacy Greenwing Hunt at Henderson Farms in Henderson County, Kentucky. Henderson Farms is owned and managed by Spurg Gabhart who hosts the event each year. The hunt is held during the West Kentucky youth waterfowl season which is usually the first full weekend of February.

The purpose of the hunt is to introduce young people to the incredible sport of waterfowl hunting in a mentored environment and teach them about the importance of wetlands and habitat conservation. For many youth, this has been their first opportunity to experience the excitement of waterfowling.

During the year randomly chosen Ducks Unlimited committees across the state receive one hunt to be sold at auction. Upon purchasing the hunt the buyer's child automatically becomes a Legacy Greenwing member of Ducks Unlimited which consists of being a Greenwing member of DU until they reach the age of 18. Then, their membership automatically rolls into an adult membership until they reach the age of 21. If the child is already a Legacy Greenwing member, the money for the membership goes toward their cumulative giving to Ducks Unlimited.

This year there were seven youth hunters, each accompanied by a parent or guardian, who participated in the hunt. Here is a short run down of the activities they experienced this year.

Day 1, Friday, January 31st: Hunters and parents arrived for a meet and greet at Henderson Farms. They settled into their rooms as dinner was prepared which consisted of fried fish, hush puppies, homemade slaw and fresh cut french fries. State Youth and Education Chairman, Steve Keister along with volunteers Bobby Payne and Alex "Bebo" Jerger fried up the fish and prepared all the trimmings. Rumor has it if you didn't get in line quickly you might have missed out and we're talking over fifteen pounds of catfish fillets.

After the meal, a short meeting was held to introduce the hunters to the organizers and the guides for the weekend's hunt. The weekend's schedule of activities was announced, as were the rules of the hunt, along with proper gun handling and safety practices expected during the hunt. Spurg and his crew of guides/callers discussed the layout of the blinds/pit, transportation to and from the hunting areas, and rules of the lodge. **THE NUMBER ONE RULE IS SAFETY FIRST WHILE EVERYONE HAS FUN!!!**



Day 2, Saturday, February 1st: WAKE UP 5am. Everyone headed to the blinds at 5:45am; that's parents and hunters. After everyone left, the volunteers started breakfast, which consisted of five pounds of freshly sliced bacon, 4 1/2 dozen eggs and biscuits all of which were brought to the hunters in the blind.

After breakfast and while the hunters were still hunting, Steve and his crew started lunch; fresh deer chili and peanut butter sandwiches. The chili was cooked in a 25 gallon kettle by Steve and the sandwiches were fixed by Sharon Kamuf, Steve's wife.

The hunting parties came in around noon for lunch, took a small break then returned to the blind to hunt that afternoon while Bobby and Bebo cooked up fifty, 1 inch thick, pork chops with potatoes and green beans on Bobby's smoker.

Following the afternoon hunt, the parties returned to the lodge, cleaned up and prepared for supper. After the meal, the State Greenwing Chairman spoke with participants about Ducks Unlimited's mission to preserve wetlands habitat and how each of us is important to that goal. Each hunter was given a goody bag of gifts and everyone discussed the successes of the first day's hunt.

Day 3, Sunday, February 2: Same as Saturday, up at 5am, out to hunt with breakfast delivered to the blinds. After the morning hunt lunch was served back at the lodge.

Then good-byes were said as everyone headed home with a new experience under their belts and visions of future hunts on their minds.

Summary of the hunt: six ducks, one of which was banded and that hunter's first, along with one blue goose and one white fronted goose.

The Legacy Greenwing Hunt is one of the ways Kentucky Ducks Unlimited is working to preserve our hunting heritage and passing on the traditions of waterfowling to the next generation.

By: Steve Keister,

KYDU Youth & Education Chairman





# Kentucky Ducks Unlimited Staff Member Recognized for Excellence



MEMPHIS, Tenn. – Sept. 30, 2019 – Bob Bezkor was named Ducks Unlimited's (DU) Regional Director (RD) of the Year for his outstanding efforts as a staff member in Region 5, an area that encompasses Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Indiana and Kentucky.

"With a focus on combining three regional director regions under one RD position, the Kentucky DU team of volunteers and Regional Director Bob Bezkor had an exceptional year," said Todd Carlton, DU director of fundraising and volunteer relations. "The team's focus on recruitment and filling event halls paid large dividends for the chapters in Kentucky."

Bezkor, a resident of Bowling Green, Ky., covers the state of Kentucky and works with local volunteer committees hosting successful fundraisers across the commonwealth.



Thursday, September 24, 7:00 pm central – DU's family reunion and live auction

Friday, September 25 – DU's 83rd annual general business session goes live!

More details to come!



# Kentucky State Committee Contact List



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Open

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