

# 27 duck species found in Kansas

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Kansas hosts 27 species of duck, most produced in states and Canadian provinces to the north.

Waterfowl numbers are slightly below last year, the department says but well above the long-term average.

Hunting conditions on the Sebelius Reservoir in Norton this fall look pretty good, officials say. The high lake levels have increased the shallow water in the reservoir. According to the last report by the department on Oct. 14, the reservoir holds 500 ducks, mostly teal, mallards and widgeon, and 400 resident geese.

The state Department of Wildlife in Parks says 14 species of ducks will nest in Kansas, but the majority of this resident breeding population, estimated at about 20,000 pairs, is composed of wood ducks, blue-winged teal and mallards.

Duck numbers in Kansas were at their peak in the 1970's, when an all-time high of 10 million were reported during waterfowl surveys in 1972. The department believes the reason

for the decline since then is a loss of breeding habitat in Canada and states north of Kansas, aging of our reservoirs and changing agricultural practices in our state.

Duck numbers usually increase beginning in late August and peaking in September and early October. The five most common ducks in Kansas are the mallard, the northern pintail, green-winged teal, gadwall and blue-winged teal.

Of the five, the blue teal is the first to arrive. The population peaks in September and early October. The mallard is the last to arrive, as its population peaks in late December.

Kansas hunters are allowed to hunt four species of doves: Eurasian collared dove, ringed turtle dove, mourning dove and white-winged dove. Pigeons are classified as a pest species, not a game species, and can be shot year-around.

Another waterfowl species that can be hunted in Kansas is snipe. The department reports that the Cheyenne Bottoms and other marshy areas are the best place to hunt snipe in Kansas. Snipe are hard to kill because hunters often have to wade through mucky areas to flush snipe. Many times there are no shots taken because



Geese took to flight over a lake outside McCook, Neb. Birds like these along with a variety of ducks can be seen throughout northwest Kansas and southwest Nebraska.

— Photo by Dave Bergling/The Oberlin Herald

the hunter is off balance and doesn't want to fall in the mud.

There are nine populations of geese in Kansas, including two types of Canada geese.

The daily bag limit per duck during waterfowl season is five. The department requires hunters to take no more than two scaups, two redheads and two wood ducks. Only one duck from the following group may be included in a daily bag: hen mallard, mottled duck or canvasback. For example, if a pintail is taken, no other hen mallard, pintail, mottled duck or canvasback can be taken that day.

All waterfowl hunters 16 or older must have a federal Migratory Bird and Conservation Stamp, and all hunters who are required to

obtain a license must also have a Kansas Waterfowl Habitat Stamp and a Kansas Harvest Information Program stamp before attempting to take ducks, geese or mergansers. All can be bought at any licensed agent, the Pratt Operations Office, or online, except for the Federal Waterfowl Stamp, which is bought at a post office.

The Kansas Habitat Stamp is \$2.50, State Waterfowl Stamps are \$6.65, Federal Waterfowl Stamps are \$15.50 and a 48-Hour Waterfowl Stamp is \$27.50.

Waterfowl stamps are not required to hunt coot, dove, rail, snipe, woodcock or sandhill Cranes. Habitat stamps are required, however.

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