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It may be late in the season but hunting still good

There still are 17 days left in the 1983-84 goose and duck hunting season, but according to reports from area clubs, the hunting has improved considerably, compared to November.

However, there still is some controversy among hunters and guides over the mandated use of steel shot, and the recent freezing weather left "pitiful" evidence of its crippling effect.

Bill Appelt, manager of the Jimmy Reel Club, was the first to alert the Headlight to the improved kills. Many of his parties have been bringing in "double digit" harvests since the cold weather set in.

Cliff Tyler, who has his own club, mirrored Appelt's comment, adding "I don't know why its better, but it seems obvious the weather...as well as feeding conditions, helped." He said many of his parties have been bringing in 15 to 20 ducks per outing.

According to veteran hunters when the wind is up and their fog on the ground, hunting improves. During December, one weather front after another kept the patterns changing, and changed the behavior of the area waterfowl.

The lack of food also was another factor in the behavior change. This helped the "white spreads" to be more effective, as the birds decayed in to them more readily. "Even" the adult waterfowl seemed

less aware of the dangers, because they were desperate for food and water," Tyler said.

Steel shot debate continues

Even as the hunting improved, the debate on the merits of the state-mandated use of steel shot continues. As the season opened, the discussion centered on whether steel shot caused more misses and more wounding, than lead shot did.

Tyler said that he probably will have about the same number of hunters in the field this year as last, but estimates a lower harvest this year. By the time hunting season ends January 22, he said Tuesday, those same number of hunters will have killed 1,000 less than the 6,000 birds they shot down last year.

And, when the ponds froze over the holidays, the crippled birds that made it to water but couldn't escape, were frozen dead in the ice. "To be objective," Tyler said, "I've never seen a freeze like this around here," so that's not to say birds wounded by lead shot wouldn't have been frozen in too. Tyler contends there would not have been nearly as many.

Hunters contend that steel shot is less effective than lead, and causes many more birds to be crippled. These birds are able to fly out of the range of hunting



Bags Greater Canadian

Jim Stanley of San Antonio took this Greater Canadian Goose home with him last week. He said he plans to have it mounted. Although not rare, few such birds are brought down in this area. Stanley was hunting with the Jimmy Reel Club, guided by Ray Sykowski, who said it was the first bird over the spread that morning. That automatically made the day a good hunt, Sykowski said.

dogs, to later be killed by predators. Conservationists wanted the steel shot to replace lead, because they contend the birds ingest the lead, and later die of lead poisoning.

Tyler cited several examples of ponds he and his crews saw, that had frozen birds. Because of the ice, he said, predators were unable to destroy the carcasses. On one pond, he said 14 frozen birds were counted. And that was a pond that no one had been hunting.

On the other side of the debate, Appelt remains positive about steel shot.

"I've got no quarrel with it," he said last week. As the season opened, he also was positive about the new shells and the personal trials he gave them. Another hunter also said that even if hunters didn't get their limit, they claim it was a good hunt when the guide was good and all the shells were fired.

Last week, Vic Corman said his shotgun mis-fired with a steel shot shell, and had he not taken the time to investigate — finding a jammed wadding — the barrel might have exploded if used again.

Maybe 'Cowboy' Stone can answer your questions at Chamber dinner

When Ray Stone steps to the microphone Jan. 17 for the annual Chamber of Commerce banquet, he'll probably have a lot of answers about the Dallas Cowboy football team's late-season slide.

Never-the-less, if you don't purchase a ticket to the dinner from any Chamber board member, you may never hear all the answers...or better yet, won't be able to ask the questions.

Stone is the voice behind the radio program, Dallas Cowboy Report, and is the chamber's banquet speaker.

The annual banquet, projected to be the most successful yet because of Stone and the local interest in the Cowboys, also will feature the give-away of a football autographed by some of the Cowboy players. Tickets for the

dinner are \$6, with football tickets at \$1 each.

Stone, says he has been a Texan all of his life and has been a dyed-in-the-wool Cowboy fan dating back to the lean years of the '60s. He was born in Edna and attended high school in San Antonio.

After a two-year enlistment in the military, he attended Texas Tech College at Lubbock, then played professional baseball for the Montgomery, Ala., team in the Southwestern League. In 1962 Stone became active in radio and television, and by 1969 formed Ray Stone & Associates.

Ray and his wife Lorna now live in Dallas with their son and daughter. This is the eighth year he has produced the Cowboys Football Report, a syndicated daily radio program airing in seven states on 200 stations.



Chamber banquet speaker Ray Stone

You can pay local taxes here

For the convenience of area taxpayers, the Colorado County Central Appraisal District will set up an office, for one day, on Jan. 6 in the Eagle Lake municipal building.

This service helps area property taxpayers, since

they do not have to go to the Courthouse in Columbus. This district has been billing county and Rice

school taxes, but this year also is billing Eagle Lake taxes on the same statement.

District basketball play for boys opens; Girls continue district with two games played

Tuesday night marked the opening of district basketball play for the boys teams in district 24-AAA, while for the girls teams, it marked the continuation of district play that already is two-games old.

The Rice Raider boys opened at home in Raider gym, which is only the second game of the 1983-84 season that has been played at home. For the season, the Raider varsity boys are even with a 7-7 won-loss record, while the Raider varsity girls are 3-8 on the season, and 1-1 for the district.

This week of the sports page, the complete season records of four of the eight District 24-AAA boys and girls varsity teams are printed, and next week — if the coaches can be reached — the other four will be published. Included this week are Rice, Columbus, Bellville and LaGrange. The Headlight was unable to contact the coaches at Sealy, Waller, Hempstead and Brookshire Royal.

With two district games played, the Columbus Cardinal girls have a perfect district record at 2-0, but are 4-11 for the season. LaGrange girls are 1-1 for district and 3-11 for the season, while the Bellville girls are 0-2 and 0-11 on the season.

Of the four reporting, the LaGrange and Rice boys varsity teams have the best records at 7-7, with Columbus at 6-10, trailed by Bellville at 4-8.

For the Tuesday night openers for the boys, Rice hosts LaGrange; Columbus is at Brookshire Royal, and Bellville is at Hempstead. For the girls, Rice plays in LaGrange, Brookshire Royal visits Columbus, and the Hempstead girls play in Bellville.

Friday night's schedule for the girls is Sealy at Rice; LaGrange at Brookshire Royal; Hempstead at Columbus, and Bellville at Waller. For the boys, Rice is at Sealy, Columbus is at Hempstead, Brookshire Royal is at LaGrange and Waller is at Bellville.

Raiders beat LaGrange 52-30

The Rice Raider varsity boys won their District 24-AAA opener Tuesday night in Raider Gym, by beating the LaGrange Leopards by a score of 52-30. The Raiders lead at the half was 25-17. Below, in third quarter action, Malcolm Thomas handles the ball with the help of Shawn Spanihel.



Judges for Sunday's Broesche Chili Cook-off were from left Wayne Corman, Tillie Neaubauer, Emil Zahradnik, Gary Glaiser and Fire Chief Sonny Spanihel.



The Winners — 1984 Broesche Chili Cook-off

Darrell Gertson, above left, and Gene Jones Jones. Below are other winners from left: second place team, Dawn & Richie Zahradnik and Gaye Reedy; third place, Pete and Jeanette Canaris, and fourth place, Donna Brown, Angie Zahradnik and helpers.

Trucker killed on I-10

A trucker was killed about 10:30 p.m. Tuesday night when the 18-wheeler truck went off a bridge west of Columbus on I-10, before the rest area. No other information was available at midnight.

