

By LEM MESEE  
Outdoors writer

The figures aren't all in yet, but they don't look particularly good for southeastern Michigan duck and deer hunters.

Ducks were scarce in these parts, and it seems to be part of a multi-state problem. Mild weather during fall is to blame.

"Many birds were still up in some parts of Canada in the second week of November," said Ed Mikula, waterfowl specialist for the state Department of Natural Resources.

The weather turned cold in September but warmed in October and early November. Waterfowl in Canada did not begin to migrate south until later in the season.

Wisconsin and Minnesota hunters had the same bad luck.

"A YEAR ago, we were in the throes of a drought, and birds were concentrated in certain areas of the state," said Mikula. "This year, the birds were scattered over more, and not as obvious in some places."

The upper peninsula had an earlier opening date and some good hunting in the eastern part, Mikula said. "Waterfowl didn't have a good nesting season this year," he added. "This year's light harvest will probably result in a higher carryover of birds into next year. If habitat conditions stay the same as they were this fall, we anticipate a good production in 1978."

Areas in 1977 that were restricted to steel shot will be restricted again, he said. Some areas of the state had short supplies of steel shot because the Winchester firm started its production late, but Mikula sees no such problem next year.

DEER HUNTERS are giving mixed, but generally unfavorable reports.

In Livingston County, hunting pressure was moderate. Snow was good for tracking, the kill was good, and hunters reported seeing a lot of deer.

Oakland County deer hunters reported little success, and in Washington County hunting conditions were poor.

Oakland County trappers are active in open marshes and waters. A good snowfall—one that lasts—will revive interest in the popular cottontail rabbit for the remainder of the winter. Low, brushy areas such as creek bottoms, swamps and marshes are likely rabbit territory.

A good rabbit hound is a big help, according to my hunting buddy, C.O. Jones. He says to hunt slowly and quietly, letting the dog bring the rabbits to you.

**Duck, deer figures down this season**

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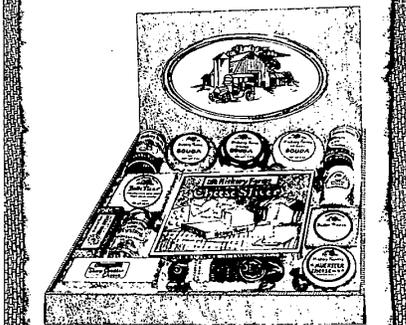
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