

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
GAME DIVISION
Lansing, Michigan 48926

Report No. 2659
January 28, 1970

Michigan's 1969 Waterfowl Season

by
Edward J. Mikula

From a prophecy of doom to the promise of a cornucopia, in a span of six months, and then fulfillment of the promise as we experienced the best hunting season in several years, that was the big story for Michigan waterfowl in 1969. Starting in March there was frustration and anguish on the part of waterfowl biologists; in August came mixed elation and puzzlement. At its mid-winter meeting, the Mississippi Flyway Council reviewed waterfowl population data that dimmed the prospects for duck hunting in the fall. No matter how the data were analyzed, they led to one unalterable conclusion, that we were on the brink of a waterfowl disaster -- the continental mallard population had been reduced to a level where further hunting would seriously jeopardize the future status of the species.

Yet in August, the Flyway Council learned that waterfowl production in the Canadian prairie "duck factory" was excellent, and that the fall population forecast was good. Astonishment came with the announcement by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife that it had "found" an additional 2.5 million mallards over and above previous estimates. The Bureau explained that these newly found mallards were a result of a cumulative error in breeding grounds sampling over the years. With these newly found birds, the prospects for a 1969 duck season brightened considerably. It appeared we could have a longer hunting season than in 1968.

The 1969 duck hunting season framework, as announced by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, reflected the optimism expressed at the summer Flyway Council meeting. Two options were offered to states in the Mississippi Flyway: (1) a 30-day season with a 4-duck daily bag limit and a daily species restriction of 2 mallards, 2 wood ducks, 1 canvasback or 1 redhead, and (2) a 40-day duck season with a 4-duck daily bag limit and daily species restriction of 1 mallard, 2 wood ducks, and 1 canvasback or 1 redhead. The federal framework in 1968 offered only a 30-day duck season, with a 3-duck daily bag limit with species restrictions of 1 mallard, 2 black ducks, 2 wood ducks, and 1 canvasback or 1 redhead. As in 1968, the shooting hours offered were from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

Michigan adopted the 40-day option to provide more hunting recreation. We also imposed additional restrictions within the general framework, which is the prerogative of any state. The hunting dates selected were Friday, October 10 through Tuesday, November 18. During the first nine

days of the duck season, hunters could take 2 blue-winged teal as a bonus, in addition to their daily bag of 4 ducks. Starting on November 1 and extending to the end of the duck season, a bonus scaup season was authorized on 17 designated areas throughout the state. The basic daily bag limit was 4 ducks, but the daily bag could not include more than 1 mallard, 1 black duck, 2 wood ducks, and 1 canvasback or 1 redhead. The bag limit on American, red-breasted, and hooded mergansers was 5 daily and 10 in possession, except that no more than 1 daily and 2 in possession could be a hooded merganser. The daily bag limit on coots was 10 and the possession limit was 20.

Even though a framework of 70 days was offered for goose hunting, the dates we selected were October 1 through November 30 (61 days) in Zones 1 and 2, and from October 10 through November 30 (52 days) in Zone 3. In the Saginaw County Goose Management Area the goose season was from October 1 through November 14 (45 days) and from October 21 through November 14 (25 days). The basic goose bag limit was 5 daily and 5 in possession, but no more than 2 could be Canada geese or their subspecies. In the Saginaw County Goose Management Area and in Allegan County the bag and possession limit on Canada geese was one.

As in 1968, Michigan adopted uniform waterfowl shooting hours that were more restrictive than those offered by the Bureau. The state was divided into two zones with the Lower Peninsula and eastern Upper Peninsula in one zone and the western Upper Peninsula in the other zone. The shooting hours were uniform within each zone, so that no matter where a person hunted in that zone, the shooting hours were the same and did not change between meridians, as was the practice prior to 1968. The purpose of using uniform shooting hours was to: (1) simplify the shooting timetable so that no matter where a person hunted he would have only to remember one shooting time for a specified number of calendar days; and he would not have to remember daily time changes for each meridian as when shooting hours referred to the sunrise-sunset timetable, (2) reduce hunting during the poor light periods of the day when most mallards and black ducks are harvested, and when species identification is the most difficult.

The continued use of the uniform shooting hour timetable has reduced gunning pressure early in the season on locally produced birds that have been harvested at too high a rate in past years. This reduction in pressure and kill will allow us to increase Michigan's duck breeding population and eventually will increase the number of birds available for the Michigan hunters in future years.

Following is the shooting timetable that was used during the 1969 waterfowl season:

SHOOTING TIMETABLE FOR MIGRATORY BIRDS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Lower Peninsula and Eastern Upper Peninsula*</u>	<u>Western Upper Peninsula**</u>
October 1-31*** (See below for 10th & 20th)	7:00 a.m. - 5:25 p.m. (EST)	7:15 a.m. - 5:45 p.m. (EST)
November 1-30	7:45 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (EST)	8:00 a.m. - 5:15 p.m. (EST)

*All of Lower Peninsula and eastern Upper Peninsula east of a line described as follows:

Starting at the tip of Stony Point in Sec. 28, T40N, R19W, Delta County; north-westerly along the shoreline of Big Bay deNoc to the town of Nahma; north on county highway 497 to highway US-2 in Sec. 1, T40N, R20W; east on highway US-2 to the junction of Federal Forest Highway 13 in Sec. 6, T40N, R19W; north on Federal Forest Highway 13 to highway M-28; northwesterly on M-28 to the junction of M-28 and Elm Avenue in the city of Munising; north on Elm Avenue to the shore of Lake Superior; thence north from the shoreline to the International Boundary.

**That part of the Upper Peninsula west of the line described in (*) footnote above.

***Opening shooting hour on October 10 is 10:00 a.m. (EST) statewide and on October 20 is 10:00 a.m. (EST) in the Lower Peninsula.

Michigan's duck season opened at 10:00 a.m. (EST) Friday, October 10, 1969. The lengthening of the season and increase in the basic bag limit stimulated hunter interest on opening day. Hunter activity data showed that the number of hunters afield was 19 percent greater than on opening day of the 1968 duck season and 6 percent greater than the eight-year average.

Each year, Department game biologists conduct waterfowl hunter activity and bag checks on selected public hunting areas throughout the state. These areas range from the western Upper Peninsula to the marshes of Lake Erie. The following two tables present comparative data for opening day and opening day plus the opening weekend:

COMPARATIVE WATERFOWL HUNTING SEASON DATA Opening Day 1962 - 1969 (Based on selected sample check areas)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Estimated no. of waterfowl hunters</u>	<u>No. of hunters interviewed</u>	<u>No. of birds examined</u>			<u>Crippling loss</u>	<u>Hours hunted</u>
			<u>Ducks</u>	<u>Coots</u>	<u>Geese</u>		
1969	7,079	2,695	2,901	638	53	980	10,447
1968	5,730	2,225	1,821	159	87	713	9,080
1967	6,150	2,375	2,499	289	43	1,008	9,150

COMPARATIVE WATERFOWL HUNTING SEASON DATA (Cont.)

Year	Estimated no. of waterfowl hunters	No. of hunters interviewed	No. of birds examined			Crippling loss	Hours hunted
			Ducks	Coots	Geese		
1966	6,911	2,296	2,623	390	29	1,165	10,363
1965	7,260	2,450	1,381	234	24	440	9,887
1964	9,243	2,795	3,272	282	185	1,042	11,512
1963	7,402	2,506	2,664	341	29	940	9,695
1962	3,486	1,733	1,721	50	29	656	6,413
8-yr. aver.	6,675	2,655	2,384	298	60	868	9,568

COMPARATIVE WATERFOWL HUNTING SEASON DATA
Opening Day & Opening Weekend 1962 - 1969

Year	Estimated no. of waterfowl hunters	No. of hunters interviewed	No. of birds examined			Crippling loss	Hours hunted
			Ducks	Coots	Geese		
1969	16,738	6,185	4,328	919	228	1,414	23,769
1968	11,742	6,555	2,471	328	91	898	26,652
1967	8,972	3,438	3,102	357	57	1,150	13,202
1966	12,599	4,259	2,916	662	36	1,406	15,833
1965	17,837	3,997	1,834	338	29	742	17,681
1964	22,348	6,119	4,501	452	227	1,422	23,813
1963	19,971	5,425	3,679	555	92	1,230	21,143
1962	10,116	4,331	3,003	119	101	1,125	16,705
8-yr. aver.	15,040	5,039	3,229	463	107	1,173	19,850

While opening day hunting pressure increased 19 percent from 1968, the duck harvest also showed spectacular gains. The opening day harvest of ducks was 37 percent greater than in 1968 and 19 percent greater than the eight-year average. The average kill per hunter was 1.1 compared to 0.8 for 1968. The length of time spent afield on opening day was 3.87 in 1969, compared to 4.04 hours in 1968 and 3.85 hours in 1967.

The crippling loss of ducks on opening day continues to be high. For each 100 ducks in the hunter's bag, 34 were lost -- 5 less than the 39 cripples lost per 100 in the hunter's bag in 1968. Crippling loss in both 1969 and 1968 was considerably lower than the all-time recorded high of 60 cripples lost per 100 ducks in the hunter's bag that occurred on the opening day of the 1960 duck season.

Crippling loss after the opening day continues at a high level but slightly below that for the opening day. During the past eight years, it has ranged from a high of 48 birds lost per 100 ducks in the bag to a low of 31 birds lost per 100 birds in the hunter's bag. During the 1969 season, 32 cripples were lost per 100 birds taken home.

A review of the species composition of the kill shows that mallards are still number 1 in the hunter's bag. The availability of large numbers of locally produced mallards coupled with the "eastern" non-prairie mallards that migrate through Michigan makes the mallard accessible and available to more Michigan hunters than most other species. All species, except the black duck and green-winged teal, made up a greater percentage of the harvest, than in 1968. The black duck kill is continually going downhill. We hope that added protection these past three hunting seasons will reverse or stabilize the downward trend. We anticipate that a reduced harvest will gradually increase Michigan's nesting population of black ducks. Migrant ducks, which includes the important species of diving ducks, made up more of the early season's bag than they did in 1968. The table on page 6 details the species composition of the duck harvest during the early part of the season for the years of 1960 through 1969. These data are based on bag checks made by game biologists on designated sample checks of public hunting areas throughout the state.

All birds examined by biologists were aged. Age ratios for the most important species are shown in the following table:

Age Ratios by Species
Based on Sample of Ducks Examined During Bag Checks

<u>Species</u>	<u>1969</u> <u>Juvenile/Adult</u>	<u>1968</u> <u>Juvenile/Adult</u>	<u>1967</u> <u>Juvenile/Adult</u>
Mallard	2.1 to 1	1.8 to 1	1.9 to 1
Black duck	1.2 to 1	1.4 to 1	1.2 to 1
Wood duck	1.5 to 1	0.9 to 1	0.9 to 1
Blue-winged teal	3.4 to 1	3.2 to 1	3.5 to 1
Green-winged teal	1.8 to 1	2.4 to 1	3.1 to 1
Pintail	3.0 to 1	4.7 to 1	2.4 to 1
Baldpate	4.3 to 1	2.5 to 1	8.1 to 1
Ringneck	2.8 to 1	3.3 to 1	2.4 to 1
Redhead	2.2 to 1	1.0 to 1	2.3 to 1

The age ratio for mallards was significantly better than in 1968. The young per adult age ratio for 1969 was 2.1 to 1 compared to 1.8 to 1 for 1968 and 1.9 to 1 for 1967. These early season age ratios are somewhat lower than those recorded for the entire season in the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife wing survey data and season kill data for the Shiawassee River State Game Area.

There are three theories as to what a high juvenile to adult age ratio can tell us. A high age ratio can mean: (1) that we had a good hatch of young or (2) that locally produced birds are being overharvested; or (3) that we are harvesting segregated age groups that have a migration pattern different from the adults. Most of Michigan's mallard harvest apparently comes from locally reared birds and from birds reared in that part of Canada east of the prairies. Because these birds nest in areas having relatively stable water habitat, there is a continually high and stable rate of production that doesn't fluctuate as widely as it does in prairie Canada.

Species Composition of the Harvest
During the Early Part of the Season

1960 - 1969

Year	Mallard	Black Duck	Wood Duck	Blue-winged teal	Green-winged teal	Other	Totals
1969	1,154	154	299	408	758	765	3,538
% of total	32.7	4.3	8.4	11.5	21.4	21.7	100%
1968	778	187	176	218	565	400	2,324
% of total	33.5	8.0	7.6	9.4	24.3	17.2	100%
1967	1,254	222	305	281	534	506	3,102
% of total	37.2	7.2	9.8	9.1	17.2	16.3	100%
1966	1,087	195	384	161	422	667	2,916
% of total	37.2	6.6	13.1	5.5	14.5	23.1	100%
1965	485	183	203	157	172	634	1,834
% of total	26.4	10.0	11.0	8.6	9.4	34.6	100%
1964	1,394	367	410	378	1,070	894	4,513
% of total	30.9	8.1	9.1	8.3	23.7	19.9	100%
1963	1,320	333	807	542	455	222	3,679
% of total	35.8	9.1	8.3	23.7	19.9	6.1	100%
1962	1,173	319	465	279	433	334	3,003
% of total	39.1	10.6	15.5	9.3	14.4	11.1	100%
1961	1,382	443	375	281	342	450	3,273
% of total	42.2	13.5	11.5	8.6	10.4	13.8	100%
1960	1,906	789	482	331	363	489	4,360
% of total	43.6	18.1	11.0	7.6	8.3	11.4	100%
	11,933	3,192	3,906	3,036	5,114	5,361	32,542
10-yr. aver.	36.7	9.8	12.0	9.3	15.7	16.5	100%

From October 10 through October 18 a statewide bonus of 2 blue-winged teal was authorized in addition to the basic daily bag of 4 ducks. There were only a few locations in the state where hunters could make use of the bonus provision because most blue-winged teal had left the state prior to the opening of the duck season.

From November 1 through the end of the duck season (November 18) a bonus scaup season was authorized on 17 areas throughout the state. The scaup bonus provided that hunters in any of the 17 designated areas could take 2 greater and/or lesser scaup daily in addition to their regular daily bag of 4 ducks. This meant that persons hunting in a bonus scaup area could shoot six ducks a day as long as two of the birds were scaup. Following is an evaluation of each of the 17 areas.

1. Lower Detroit River and Lake Erie

Hunting pressure above last year. A good scaup population in area on November 1. Excellent scaup hunting from November 1-5. November 5-12, weather conditions (light winds and fog) resulted in poor hunting and a low kill. From November 13-18 large flights of new scaup arrived and the period provided the best hunting of the season. Throughout the bonus scaup period 98 percent of the kill in the area was scaup. Most hunting was done with layout boats. Hunters were enthused and happy with the season.

2. Lake St. Clair

Major movement of scaup was through area prior to November 1. Very few scaup were available during the bonus period. Hunter interest was moderate and the harvest of scaup was light.

3. Saginaw Bay

Hunters could not make much use of the bonus provision because most scaup had moved out of the area prior to November 1. Late migrating scaup arrived on November 14 but cold weather and the deer season kept hunting pressure to a low level. The season in future years should open in mid-October.

4. Tawas Bay

Low hunter interest because most scaup had migrated through area prior to November 1. Migration peak of scaup arrived on October 15 with very few scaup remaining after October 23. Season should be earlier.

5. Thunder Bay

Low hunter interest because most scaup had left area prior to November 1. Season should be earlier.

6. Glen Lake

Some hunter interest but very few scaup present. Scaup harvest was light. Season should be earlier.

7. Big Platte Lake

Some hunter interest, but very few scaup present. Scaup harvest was light. Season should be earlier.

8. Bear Lake

Little or no hunter interest and very few scaup present during the season. Season should be earlier.

9. Hamlin Lake

Much hunter interest and activity throughout the season. About 3,000+ scaup were in the area throughout the bonus period. About 75 percent of the kill during period was scaup.

10. Houghton Lake

The main flights of scaup had passed through this area prior to November 1. There were huntable numbers of scaup on the lake throughout the bonus season but nowhere near the number prior to October 23. It is estimated that 288 hunters harvested 256 scaup during this period.

11. Muskegon Lake

The season was successful in providing more incentive for ardent duck hunters, but made little difference in the total number of scaup harvested due to light hunting pressure and the early migration of scaup. The season should have been earlier.

12. Gun Lake

Very little scaup use and hunter interest during the bonus season.

13. St. Martins Bay

Little hunter interest because main flight of scaup had passed through area prior to November 1. Some scaup use at end of season but no one was hunting because of the deer season. The season should be earlier.

14. St. Marys River

Little hunter interest because main flights of scaup had passed through the area prior to November 1. The season should be earlier.

15. Big and Little Bay deNoc

Scaup arrived in early October and not many were left on November 1. There was little hunter interest and a light kill of scaup during the bonus season. The season should be earlier.

16. Manistique Lake

Little or no scaup use during the bonus season and no hunter interest.

17. Portage Lake

Some hunter interest and a light harvest of scaup. Few scaup present during early part of bonus scaup season, but large flight arrived just prior to opening of the gun deer season on November 15. There was no hunter interest the last four days because of the deer season. The season should start earlier.

It was the consensus of our biologists that Michigan should continue its participation in future bonus scaup seasons. If possible, the bonus provision should start earlier in the season (October 20) and should be expanded to include more area. We are considering asking the Bureau to permit us to open all of Michigan to bonus scaup hunting on a date earlier than November 1.

Again, as in past years, the 1969 goose season was more restrictive than the 70 days authorized by the federal government. Hunting dates selected for the Upper Peninsula and northern Lower Peninsula (Zones 1 and 2) were October 1 through November 30 (61 days), and October 10 through November 30 (52 days) in the southern Lower Peninsula (Zone 3).

The first major influx of Canada geese was noted in the Upper Peninsula in late September. Other major flights into or through the state occurred during the period of October 13-23 and again during the first week of November. Blue and snow goose migrations bordered on the phenomenal this past fall. During the period of October 13 through October 28 these birds could be found almost anywhere in the state.

What kind of a goose harvest did we have in 1969? The take of Canada geese was greater than in 1968 and the kill of blue and snow geese exceeded the good harvest in 1964. The total goose harvest for 1969 is the greatest for the decade.

Two areas within the state had goose hunting regulations that were more restrictive. In the Saginaw County Goose Management Area the 45-day season ran from October 1 through November 14. The daily shooting hours for geese was from opening hour to 12:00 noon. The daily bag and possession limit could not include more than one Canada goose. The Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge again allowed goose hunting on the refuge under a permit system. In addition a small portion of the federal refuge was administered for goose hunting by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources as an adjunct to the managed hunting program for the Shiawassee River State Game Area. A total of 137 Canada geese and 33 blue and snow geese were harvested on the federal refuge. On the Shiawassee River State Game Area, 220 Canada geese and 20 blue and snow geese were shot, while on the private lands within the management zone, 300 Canada geese and 750 blue and snow geese were taken. The total goose harvest on the management zone was 657 Canada geese and 803 blue and snow geese. The 657 Canada geese compared to 100 for 1968 and 300 in 1967. The Canada goose population peaked at 31,000 in the management zone. This was some 11,000 more than in 1968; and 17,000 more than in 1967.

Allegan County was the other area having special goose hunting restrictions. The open season was from October 21 through November 14 (25 days), the daily bag and possession limit could not include more than one Canada goose, and the daily shooting hours for geese were from opening hour to 12:00 noon.

A comparison of the waterfowl use and harvest data for 1966, 1967, 1968, and 1969 follows:

Waterfowl Season Data
Allegan State Game Area

	Highbanks Unit				Farm Unit			
	1969	1968	1967	1966	1969	1968	1967	1966
No. of permits issued	2,844	2,177	3,606	3,253	5,287	4,406	7,641	6,688
Goose harvest	839	244	564	300	442	161	372	251
Duck harvest	83	37	157	190	153	89	232	293
Peak goose numbers	11,800	5,500	2,700	2,600	11,800*	5,500*	2,700*	2,600*

*Farm Unit geese are same birds that use the Highbanks Unit.

The goose hunting closure order for the area surrounding the Seney National Wildlife Refuge was extended through the 1969 hunting season. A high gosling mortality from Leucocytozoon this past summer prevented the local flock from increasing to a level where it could be hunted without jeopardizing the future status of the local flock.

At the close of the 1969 waterfowl season, questionnaires were distributed to all district game biologists for their comments on the season. Following is a summary of their questionnaire comments:

- 1) The abundance of waterfowl in Michigan this past fall when compared to 1968 was:
 - a) Dabbling ducks - many more local and migrants throughout the state
 - b) Diving ducks - about the same number or slightly more throughout most of the state, except that there were many more in the Detroit River and Lake Erie area
 - c) Mergansers - fewer
 - d) Coots - the same
 - e) Canada geese - more throughout the state except in the west central Upper Peninsula which had fewer
 - f) Blue and snow geese - many, many more throughout the entire state
 - g) Snipe - the same
- 2) Waterfowl hunting activity was judged to be much greater than in 1968. The following tables present a breakdown of hunting activity by time periods for each administrative unit of the state for 1969 and 1968.

Percent of Hunter Activity by Time Periods
For the 1969 and 1968 Waterfowl Season

Administrative Region	October '69				November '69				December '69
	1-7	8-14	15-22	23-31	1-7	8-14	15-22	23-30	1-15
I	13	47	24	10	3	2	1	--	--
II	1	41	28	18	5	5	1	1	--
III	7	36	19	15	10	8	3	2	--

Administrative Region	October '68				November '68				December '68
	1-7	8-14	15-22	23-31	1-7	8-14	15-22	23-30	1-15
I	13	47	23	11	4	2	--	--	--
II	1	67.5	14	10	6	1	0.4	0.1	--
III	--	55	18	13	9	3	1.5	0.5	--

Hunter activity in the Upper Peninsula (Region I) was approximately the same for both years, while the Lower Peninsula (Region II and III) showed a marked shift in 1969 to more hunter activity in late October and early November.

- 3) The statewide harvest of waterfowl was much greater than in 1968. The following table expresses that percentage of the total waterfowl harvest that occurred during designated time periods for each of the three administrative regions in Michigan. (See page 13.)
- 4) The first significant influx of Canada geese into the Upper Peninsula occurred on September 22; at the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge in Saginaw County on September 16; and in Allegan County on September 19. Large flights were observed throughout the last half of September and into early October. On October 17 and 18 stormy weather triggered a mass influx of blue and snow geese and Canada geese throughout the state. This was the greatest influx of blue and snow geese for the past decade. The one difference from the last year when these birds stopped in number, was that geese were universally distributed this year and not confined to the Upper Peninsula as in 1964. Many of the mid-October migrant geese stayed in our state for an extended period compared to the normal "few day" period of most years.
- 5) Approximately 72 percent of the total waterfowl hunting activity occurred between October 1 and October 22. This compares to 80 percent of the total hunter activity that occurred during the same period in 1968. During the period of October 1-22, 76 percent of all waterfowl were harvested in Michigan. This compares to 88 percent for the comparable period during the 1968 season.
- 6) The average date for the temporary freeze-up which restricted waterfowl hunting activity was on November 7 in the Upper Peninsula, November 8 for the northern Lower Peninsula, and November 29 for the southern Lower Peninsula. The dates for the permanent "freeze-up" on Upper Peninsula waters was November 17. It was November 28 for the northern Lower Peninsula and December 15 for the southern Lower Peninsula.
- 7) Hunter attitudes and opinions were again mixed about uniform shooting hours and restrictions on the bread and butter ducks (mallards and black ducks). Most hunters were satisfied with the season and with the supply of local and migrant waterfowl that made 1969 the best season in a decade.

SUMMARY

Waterfowl production in prairie Canada made a remarkable comeback from that during the drought of 1968. The finding of an additional 2.5 million breeding mallards further brightened the prospects for a good duck season in 1969. These factors, coupled with excellent local duck production in Michigan, set the stage for one of our best duck seasons of the decade. Michigan selected the 40-day duck season option with the season opening on Friday, October 10 and extending through November 18.

Distribution of Waterfowl Harvest by Time Period
for the 1969 and 1968 Season
Expressed in Percentages for Each Region

Regions	OCTOBER						NOVEMBER					
	1-7		8-14		15-22		1-7		8-14		15-22	
	1969	1968	1969	1968	1969	1968	1969	1968	1969	1968	1969	1968
Region I												
Dabblers	--	--	65	75	25	16	6	6	1	1	1	--
Divers	--	--	46	43	32	28	14	16	3	3	1	--
Mergansers	--	--	25	23	30	38	16	29	6	2	3	--
Coots	--	--	65	41	31	47	4	11	--	--	--	--
Snipe	--	--	70	85	20	15	10	--	--	--	--	--
Geese	32	41	30	34	30	17	6	8	--	--	--	--
Region II												
Dabblers	5	--	47	68	27	14	13	12	1	--	1	--
Divers	--	--	13	34	28	64	36	--	6	--	2	--
Mergansers	--	--	31	80	37	10	24	7	3	1	2	--
Coots	2	--	58	94	21	3	11	3	1	--	1	--
Snipe	15	--	53	95	16	3	15	2	--	--	--	--
Geese	2	10	7	57	53	15	32	13	2	--	1	--
Region III												
Dabblers	--	--	46	62	25	12	17	17	3	--	1	--
Divers	--	--	10	23	30	23	21	30	11	9	6	1
Mergansers	--	--	--	--	--	20	25	30	35	2	4	--
Coots	--	--	67	45	27	29	5	23	--	--	--	--
Snipe	--	--	50	60	35	21	15	17	--	--	--	--
Geese	3	--	15	25	25	20	35	18	6	1	3	1

The goose season opened on October 1 in Zones 1 and 2 and on October 10 in Zone 3, and in all zones extended through November 30. Uniform shooting hours were selected within the framework of sunrise to sunset. Additional daily bag limit restrictions were imposed on the black duck. One black duck was permitted in the daily bag instead of the 4 black duck daily bag limit as was offered by the Bureau.

Hunting effort and success was the best in the past 10 years. Hunting effort on the opening day of the duck season was 19 percent above 1968 and the duck harvest on opening day was 37 percent greater than in 1968. Crippling loss was on a par with 1968. The mallard is still the number one duck in the hunter's bag as it made up 32 percent of the take-home bag of hunters. Mallard age ratios were the highest in a number of years.

A bonus blue-winged teal season was offered statewide for the first nine days of the duck season. Not many hunters could make use of the bonus because most blue-winged teal had left the state before the season opened.

A bonus scaup season was authorized on 17 designated areas during the dates of November 1-18. Hunters could take 2 "bonus" scaup in addition to their daily bag of 4 ducks. Only a minimum number of scaup were noted on a number of the northern "bonus" areas during the "bonus" scaup seasons. A late October storm triggered an exodus of most scaup from many of these areas prior to November 1. Some of the southern areas had excellent "bonus" scaup hunting. An earlier opening in future years would give more assurance for hitting the migration peak so more hunters could make use of the bonus provision.

Not only did Michigan have an excellent duck season, but 1969 was also the year for the goose hunter. A tremendous influx of blue and snow geese and Canada geese between October 15-18 triggered a goose hunting spectacular. The Saginaw County Goose Management Area and Allegan County had special goose hunting regulations. The Saginaw County Goose Management Area goose season started on October 1 and extended through November 14, and in Allegan County the goose season opened on October 21 and extended through November 14. In both areas the daily bag and possession limit on Canada geese was one, and shooting hours were only in the morning. The goose hunting closure in the area surrounding the Seney National Wildlife Refuge was extended through the 1969 waterfowl season.