

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
WILDLIFE DIVISION
LANSING, MICHIGAN 48926

Report No. 2685

1971 Managed Waterfowl Hunting Season
at the
Allegan State Game Area
by
Charles E. Friley, Jr.

GENERAL

Waterfowl hunting on the two managed hunting units of the Allegan State Game Area opened on October 21. This was fifteen days later than the opening of the duck and goose seasons in Zones 2 and 3. The duck and goose seasons on the Highbanks and Farm Units lasted 25 days, closing on November 14. The Farm Unit opened for pheasant hunting one day before the waterfowl dates. Details of seasons and bag limits may be found in the "1971 Rules for Hunting Waterfowl in Michigan" and in the managed hunting unit rules and regulations appended to this report.

The goose flock was down about 8 per cent from 1970. The 1970 peak count of 13,400 included 100 blue and snow geese. The 1971 hunting season peak count of 12,400 included 400 blue and snow geese. The largest 1971 blue and snow goose concentration here was 1,200 and occurred 7 days after the peak goose count of November 4. Thus the Canada goose flock, at peak, was 8 per cent lower this year than in 1970.

Canada geese arrived on September 20 and 1,200 were present on October 4. By October 15, 6,500 Canada geese were present. There were 9,000 present on October 20, 10,000 on October 28, and 12,000 on November 4. There were 200 blue and snow geese present on October 20 and 400 present on November 4. The population increased to 1,200 by November 11, and declined to less than 50 by November 23. With minor fluctuations, the Canada goose counts stayed between 11,000 and 12,500 through November, dropped to 3,400 December 13, and recovered by the end of the month to around 8,000.

The duck population, largely mallards, was 500 on September 28, 3,000 on October 11, 5,000 on October 15, 8,000 November 1, 9-10,000 November 11, about 7,500 through the first half of December, and dropped to about 2,500 the last half of the month.

Procedures for the issuance of Highbanks hunting permits were revised to provide for a system of preregistration well ahead of the season. Applications were received in Lansing from September 1 to 25. A drawing from each day's applicants determined the 58 parties who would hunt that day. Permits were returned to each day's successful applicants thus assuring them of a chance to hunt. A drawing was held each morning to determine shooting positions. A copy of the informational sheet available to hunters before sending in applications is appended.

All days were filled through November 7. No dates were filled from November 8 through 14. Inadequate, too late publicity on the change in registration procedure for the Highbanks permits resulted in undersubscription for the season. This is expected to be corrected for 1972 through more timely publicity on the part of the Department and a year's experience on the part of the disappointed hunter.

The permit procedures at the Farm Unit remained the same as in 1970. The limitation on week end hunting at the Farm Unit was removed. Gun size, shot size, and shell possession limit remained in effect at both units. Additional details of general rules and permit procedures may be found on the appended Highbanks and Farm hunting maps.

The Ottawa Marsh, though not a part of the permit hunting system, was closed to all hunting until October 21 and after November 14, and was closed to hunting after 3 p.m. during waterfowl season.

OPERATION OF THE CHECKING STATIONS

The goose harvest on the game area declined 35 per cent from 1970, the duck harvest was down 11 per cent, and the total permits issued was down 5 per cent. The greater decline in all three elements of these data occurred at the Highbanks. Permit decline was the result of undersubscription in the Highbanks preregistration system. Goose harvest decline resulted from a period of very little movement of the goose flock from the Farm Unit food supply to the Highbanks marsh during the middle of the season. The causes of this reduced flight - if not mild weather and good food supply - are unknown.

The daily average number of hunter permits issued was 110 at the Highbanks and 326 at the Farm Unit; down 16 per cent at the Highbanks and 1.5 per cent at the Farm. Forty per cent of all permits were issued on weekends, up from 1970. The greater variation here was at the Farm Unit since the preregistration system at the Highbanks smoothed out the day to day variations. The heaviest weekday hunting pressure at the Farm Unit was on Thursday. Monday and Friday were equally the slowest days at the Farm Unit, permit-wise.

In spite of the fact that preregistration permits were issued for 58 Highbanks shooting posts for each of the 18 days from October 21 through November 7, between 45 and 56 posts were utilized during this period as follows:

Posts Occupied	Number of Days
56	1
55	3
54	3
53	2
52	2
51	2
49	3
48	1
45	<u>1</u>
	18

We filled some dates in 1971 with second choice dates and with unchosen dates which might account for some posts not being used. If, as anticipated for 1972, all dates are oversubscribed for primary choices, I would not anticipate more than 4 "no-shows" on any day.

The greatest one-day issue of permits at the Farm Unit was 584 on the opening day of goose season. Between 341 and 494 permits were issued on weekend days. Between 332 and 151 permits were issued on weekdays after opening day.

Hunting parties present for the drawing at the Farm Unit increased substantially on Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays over 1970. There were, on the average, 204 hunting parties present for the drawing on Saturdays, 188 present on Sundays, and 81 present on Mondays. The upsurge on weekends is almost surely a reflection of the unavailability of Highbanks permits at the time when most people are free to hunt.

GEESE

The goose harvest at the Highbanks decreased 53 per cent and at the Farm Unit decreased 20 per cent from 1970. The buildup appeared comparable to 1970, but during a period in the middle of the season the evening flight out from the Farm Unit involved only one-fourth to one-fifth of the birds in the area. The age composition of the Canada goose harvest was in the ratio of about 59 after-hatching-year birds to 41 young-of-the-year, very much like the composition in 1969, but a greater proportion of adults than in 1970. Fifteen Hutchins' and 6 Blue geese were taken. The proportion of banded geese in the harvest remained at 3.3 per cent. Three geese carried bands affixed at the Allegan Game Area, all shot the same month as banded.

The greatest one-day harvest at the Farm Unit occurred on Friday, November 5, when 45 geese were shot. The next largest harvest was 44 on opening day Thursday, October 21. At the Highbanks, the highest one-day goose harvest was 58 on October 21. The second highest was 54 on Friday, October 22. Geese were harvested every day of the season at both units. Low harvest at the Farm Unit was 3 on Thursday, October 28, and at the Highbanks was 7 on Sunday, November 7.

Most geese at the Farm Unit were taken in Zones 8, 7, 3, and 5. At least 3 geese were taken in every zone. Most successful blinds in Zone 8 were 7 with 26 geese, 5 with 21 geese, and 12 with 19 geese. Most successful posts at the Highbanks were 36 with 39 geese, 31 with 35 geese, and 34 with 33 geese. Seventeen shooting posts had 20 or more geese taken.

DUCKS

The duck kill declined 11 per cent from the 1970 harvest. Only 11 ducks were taken at the Highbanks. The harvest included 169 mallards and 37 black ducks.

PHEASANTS

Hunter interest on the opening day of the pheasant season (one day before opening of waterfowl season at the Allegan Game Area Managed Hunting Units) was the highest it has been in the past five years; 240 permits were issued on October 20. A total of 132 pheasants was taken on opening day, the highest kill in the records of this unit starting in 1964. Forty-four per cent of the season's total harvest were taken opening day, 62 per cent were taken through the first weekend (5 days), and 81 per cent of the season's total were taken through the first two weekends (12 days). The age ratio derived by measurement of the spur of the harvested birds was 1 adult to 6.9 juveniles. Zorb's results from examining 246 sets of wings and legs (81.7% of the total kill) was 1 adult to 7.8 juveniles. The heaviest birds (2 of them) weighed 3 pounds and 6 ounces, same maximum weight as in 1970.

SOURCE OF PERMITTEES

From 1958 through 1962 when the Highbanks accommodated all hunters who showed up to hunt, the county in which permittees lived was tabulated. During that period the Highbanks served most hunters from the following ten counties (listed in order): Kent, Berrien, Kalamazoo, Ottawa, Wayne, Muskegon, Allegan, Calhoun, VanBuren and Cass. Indiana ranked just ahead of Cass County.

During the 1971 hunting season permittees came from the following counties (in numerical order): Kent, Kalamazoo, Ottawa, Berrien, Allegan, VanBuren, Barry, Ingham, Calhoun, and Wayne. Indiana was far down the list.

Publicity about the change to preregistration for Highbanks permits was evidently sparse in the Detroit and Muskegon areas, judging by complaints we received as the opening day approached and as the season progressed. After 1962, the permit system changed from handling all hunters on a first-come, first-served basis with some preference posts, to a limited number of posts, then one hunt per season, and finally to the preregistration system. With the benefit of one year's experience and publicity and next year's pre-season publicity relating to preregistration, I believe the great majority of waterfowl hunters will have knowledge of the preregistration requirement at the Highbanks.

Permit and Game Kill Summary - 1971

	<u>Highbanks</u>	<u>Farm</u>	<u>Total</u>
Permits	2,744	8,478	11,222
Geese	624	511	1,135
Ducks	11	218	229
Pheasants	--	301	301
Woodcock & Grouse	--	4 each	8
Rabbits	--	15	15
Snipe & Squirrel	--	1 each	2

25-day goose and duck season (Oct. 21 - Nov. 14)
at both units, plus opening day of small game
season, October 20, at Farm Unit.

DAILY RECORD OF PERMITS ISSUED AND GAME KILLED - 1971

DATE	PERMITS ISSUED			GEESE			DUCKS			PHEASANTS			OTHER GAME
	HIGHBANKS	FARM	TOTAL	HIGHBANKS	FARM	TOTAL	HIGHBANKS	FARM	TOTAL	HIGHBANKS	FARM	TOTAL	
Oct. 20	0	239	239	59	44	103	1	4	5	132			1 rab; 1 wdck
21	140	584	724	54	33	87	2	4	6	26			
22	127	257	384	49	34	83	0	8	8	10			
23*	123	494	617	48	24	72	2	5	7	11			
24*	130	487	617	45	12	57	3	4	7	7			
25	136	332	468	37	11	48	1	6	7	12			1 snipe
26	143	304	447	23	15	38	0	6	6	9			
27	134	262	396	25	3	28	0	3	3	4			
28	135	305	440	21	4	25	0	3	3	5			
29	121	200	321	28	11	39	0	5	5	8			2 rab; 1 wdck
30*	138	436	574	16	8	24	0	8	8	8			1 rab; 1 fox squirrel
31*	142	415	557										
Nov. 1	121	151	272	16	9	25	0	3	3	5			2 rab; 1 wdck
2	122	327	449	13	37	50	0	15	15	7			2 rab; 1 grouse
3	127	248	375	9	24	33	0	6	6	13			
4	118	288	406	12	19	31	0	13	13	5			
5	107	236	343	17	45	62	1	6	7	2			
6*	133	503	636	16	13	29	0	6	6	3			7 rab; 3 grse; 1 wdck
7*	124	455	579	7	32	39	0	19	19	2			
8	80	218	298	14	21	35	1	3	4	4			
9	63	311	374	20	41	61	0	46	46	7			
10	39	252	291	11	20	31	0	5	5	9			
11	45	224	269	29	5	34	0	4	4				
12	39	244	283	15	9	24	0	12	12				
13*	114	365	479	26	25	51	0	16	16				
14*	43	341	384	14	12	26	0	8	8				
Totals	2,744	8,478	11,222	624	511	1,135	11	218	229	301			1 SNIPE 4 GROUSE 15 RABBITS 4 WOODCOCK 1 FOX SQUIRREL

*A Saturday or Sunday

PERMITS ISSUED IN 1971 BY CALENDAR WEEK (DAILY AVERAGE)

	<u>Highbanks</u>	<u>Farm</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of 1970</u>
October 21-23	130	445	575	125.8
24-30	134	332	466	106.4
Oct. 31 - Nov. 6	124	310	434	91.8
November 7 - 13	72	296	368	78.8
14	43	341	384	

PERMITS ISSUED IN 1971 BY DAY OF THE WEEK (SEASON AVERAGE)

	<u>Highbanks</u>	<u>Farm</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of 1970</u>
Sunday (4)	110	424	534	93.8
Monday (3)	112	234	346	106.8
Tuesday (3)	109	314	423	102.7
Wednesday (4)*	100*	250	350*	68.1
Thursday (4)	109	350	459	103.6
Friday (4)	99	234	333	87.2
Saturday (4)	127	450	577	102.3
Season	110	326	436	95.0

*No Hunting Wednesday, October 20, at the Highbanks.

41.2 per cent of Farm Unit permits were issued on weekends.
34.5 per cent of Highbanks permits were issued on weekends.

Opening day of goose season was on Thursday. Veteran's Day occurred on Monday.

HARVEST DATA - 1971
ALLEGAN STATE GAME AREA

GOOSE KILL BY AGE

CANADA GEESE:

	<u>Highbanks</u>	<u>Farm</u>	<u>Total</u>
Adult	439 (71%)	225 (46%)	664 (60%)
Immature	183 (29%)	267 (54%)	450 (40%)
Totals	622	492	1,114

GOOSE KILL BY AGE (CONT.)

BLUE GEESE:

	<u>Highbanks</u>	<u>Farm</u>	<u>Total</u>
Adult	0	4	4
Immature	0	2	2
Totals	0	6	6

SNOW GEESE: None taken

HUTCHINS' GEESE:

Adult	1	5	6
Immature	1	8	9
Totals	2	13	15

GEESE KILLED AND PERMITS ISSUED
PER ZONE AT FARM

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Geese Killed</u>	<u>Permits Issued</u>	<u>% Permits This Group</u>	<u>Permits Per Goose</u>
2	34	598	18.1	18
3	69	570	17.3	8
4	22	506	15.4	23
5	58	627	19.0	11
6	28	400	12.1	14
7	74	596	18.1	8
Total	285	3,297	100.0%	12

The above group of zones borders the refuge and the number of permits for each zone is limited.

1	3	392	19.1	130
9	3	260	12.6	87
10	14	1,406	68.3	100
Total		2,058	100.0%	101

This group of zones does not touch the refuge, permits are not limited, and dogs may be used.

GEESE KILLED AND PERMITS ISSUED
PER ZONE AT FARM

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Geese Killed</u>	<u>Permits Issued</u>	<u>% Permits This Group</u>	<u>Permits Per Goose</u>
8	206	2,884	--	14
There are 44 blinds in this zone.				
Grand Total	511	8,239	--	16

GEESE KILLED PER BLIND - FARM ONLY
(ZONE 8 - 44 BLINDS)

<u>Blind</u>	<u>Geese</u>	<u>Blind</u>	<u>Geese</u>	<u>Blind</u>	<u>Geese</u>	<u>Blind</u>	<u>Geese</u>
1	4	12	19	23	4	34	2
2	0	13	9	24	3	35	4
3	7	14	6	25	7	36	4
4	4	15	3	26	4	37	1
5	21	16	2	27	7	38	2
6	5	17	7	28	7	39	2
7	26	18	5	29	3	40	0
8	2	19	3	30	0	41	0
9	1	20	3	31	1	42	3
10	6	21	6	32	4	43	1
11	0	22	6	33	1	44	1
						Total	206

HIGHBANKS GOOSE KILL BY POST

<u>Post</u>	<u>Geese</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>Geese</u>
1-11	9	30	19
12	1	31	35
13	2	32	29
14	3	33	24
15	3	34	33
16	6	35	27
17	4	36	39
18	8	37	29
19	9	38	29
20	11	39	28
21	14	40	24
22	9	41	15
23	12	42	20
24	23	43	22
25	21	44	17
26	11	45	6
27	24	46	6
28	20	47 - 58	4
29	28		4
			<u>624</u>

BANDED WATERFOWL HARVESTED

	Canada Geese*				Ducks*	
	<u>F & WS</u>	<u>Miner</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of Unit Kill</u>	<u>F & WS</u>	<u>% of Unit Kill</u>
Highbanks	19	1	20	3.2	0	
Farm	<u>11</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>3.5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2.3</u>
Totals	<u>30</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>3.3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2.2</u>

*3 geese and 4 ducks were banded on the Game Area.

DUCKS KILLED

<u>Highbanks Posts</u>	<u>Ducks</u>	<u>Farm Zone</u>	<u>Ducks</u>
1-10	2	1 & 10	0
11-20	2	2	10
21-30	1	3	11
31-40	5	4	4
41-50	1	5	47
51-58	0	6	31
	<u>11</u>	7	26
		8	88
		9	0
		Unknown	<u>1</u>
			218

DUCK KILL BY SPECIES

	<u>Highbanks</u>	<u>Farm</u>	<u>Total</u>
Mallard	9	160	169
Black Duck	-	37	37
Pintail	-	7	7
Baldpate	-	5	5
Wood Duck	2	3	5
Greenwinged Teal	-	3	3
Bluewinged Teal	-	2	2
Ringneck	-	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	<u>11</u>	<u>218</u>	<u>229</u>

PHEASANTS KILLED PER ZONE
(FARM ONLY)

Zone 1	22	Zone 6	17
Zone 2	33	Zone 7	24
Zone 3	26	Zone 8	71
Zone 4	43	Zone 9	2
Zone 5	16	Zone 10	47

Total Pheasant Kill - 301

TIME-DISTRIBUTION OF PHEASANT KILL

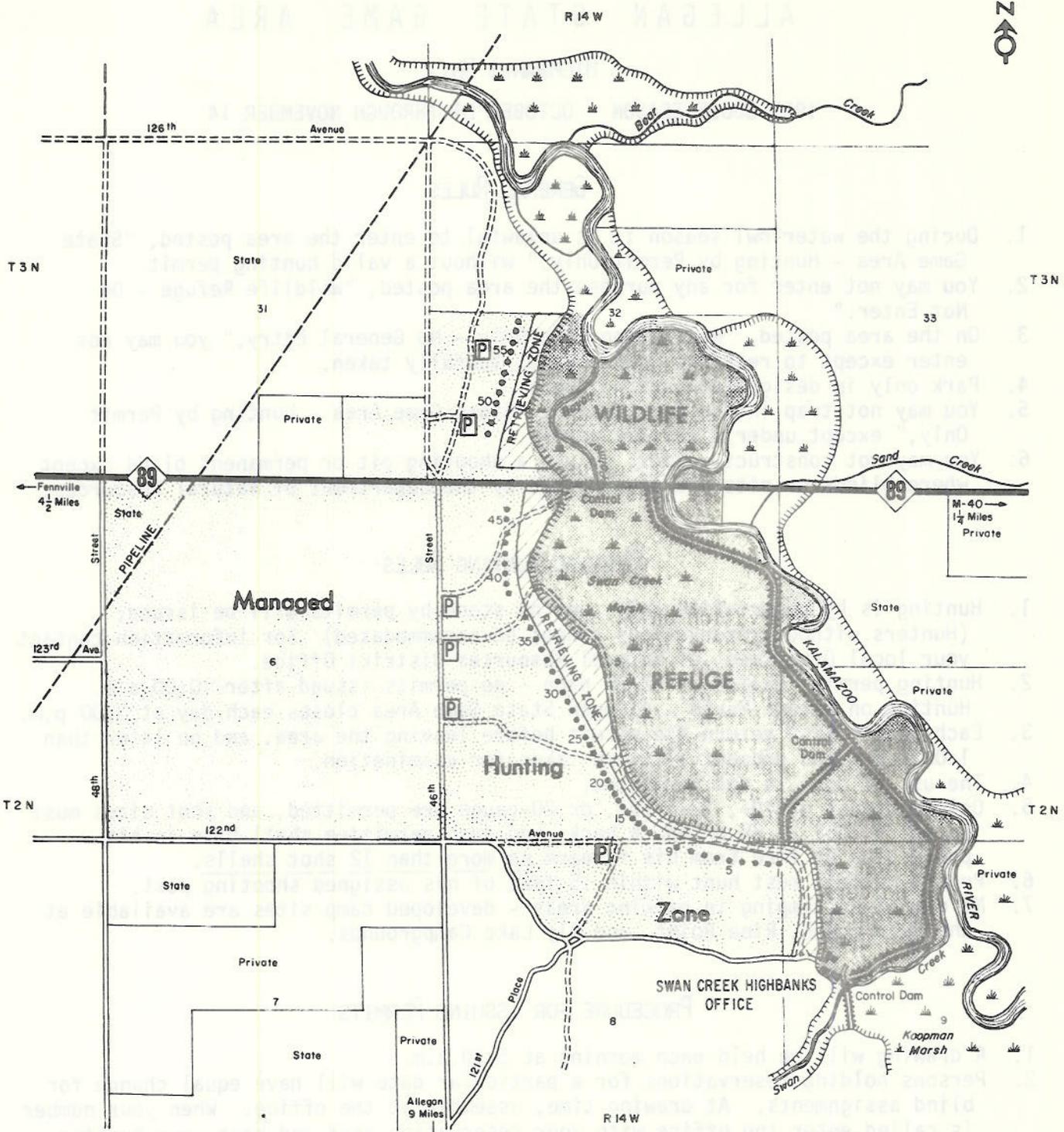
First day (October 20)	(132)	44%
First 5 days (through the first weekend)	(186)	62%
Last 7 days (November 4-10)	(32)	11%

WEATHER AT THE GAME AREA HEADQUARTERS - 1969 - 1971

	PRECIPITATION (Total)			TEMPERATURE (Average)		
	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1971</u>
October	4.83	3.12	1.72	49.9	55.6	57.8
November	3.30	3.37	2.17	38.4	40.6	37.4

COUNTY OF RESIDENCE - Highbanks Hunters

	<u>1971</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>1958-62</u>
Kent	19.9		13.9
Kalamazoo	15.9		9.5
Ottawa	11.2		8.5
Berrien	9.6		11.1
Allegan	9.5		5.1
VanBuren	3.9		3.8
Barry	2.9		1.7
Ingham	2.8		3.0
Calhoun	2.7		3.8
Wayne	2.3		6.3
Muskegon	2.2		5.3
Cass	2.1		3.3
Eaton	2.0		1.4
Oakland	1.7		2.3
St. Joseph	1.3		1.0
Lenawee	1.1		(in other)
Ionia	1.1		1.0
Other Michigan	7.0		15.0
Out-of-state	.8		4.0
	100.0		100.0
Total permits	2,744		55,032



MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

ALLEGAN STATE GAME AREA

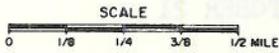
SWAN CREEK HIGHBANKS MANAGED HUNTING UNIT



- LEGEND**
- Hard surfaced road
 - Good dirt road
 - Poor dirt road
 - Trail
 - Parking area
 - Shooting post
 - Escarpment
 - Dike
 - WILDLIFE REFUGE - DO NOT ENTER
 - RETRIEVING ZONE ONLY - NO GENERAL ENTRY
 - MANAGED HUNTING ZONE - HUNTING BY PERMIT ONLY

ALLEGAN STATE GAME AREA

FENNVILLE FARM MANAGED HUNTING UNIT



- PAVED ROAD
- GRAVEL ROAD
- DIRT ROAD
- DRAIN
- PARKING AREA
- BLIND

Legend

- WILDLIFE REFUGE - Do not enter.
- MANAGED HUNTING ZONE 8 - Hunting by permit only. (Party Permits - 2 or 3 hunters per party) Use of dogs prohibited.
- MANAGED HUNTING ZONES 1 through 7, 9 and 10 - Hunting by permit only (individual permits) You may use a dog only in Zone 1, 9 and 10

