

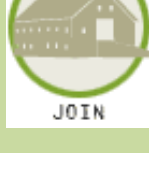
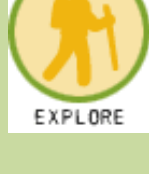


Hunting News

Grafton Land Trust

Preserving Grafton's open spaces since 1958

November 2014



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Submit Your Pics!

Got a cool photo from a recent hunting trip in Grafton? Send it to hunting@grafftonland.org and we'll publish it in the "Photo of the month" section of *Hunting News*.



We are a member supported organization that relies on you - hunters - as well as hikers, equestrians and other recreational users to manage our lands. Please [become a member](#) today!

Dear Hunter,

RE: Early Season Wood Ducks: A Rainbow of Color

The only way to truly appreciate the stunning beauty of a wood duck is to hold a mature drake in your hand. It is a marvel of nature. A rainbow of color that twists and turns through the edge of dawn and streaks like a fighter jet from the tangled brush of the oak swamps it calls home. Its aerobatics test the most seasoned waterfowlers and dropping more than one from an incoming flight remains an elusive prize for many hunters. As table fare, it is surpassed only, perhaps, by the Green-winged teal.



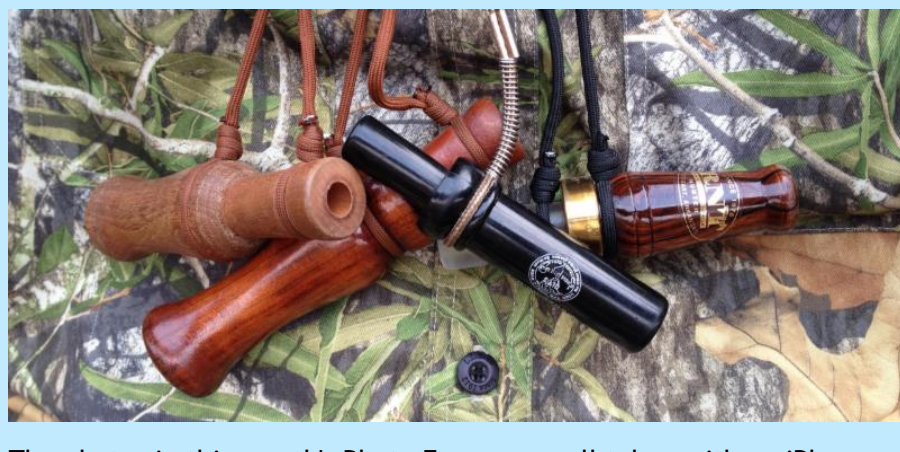
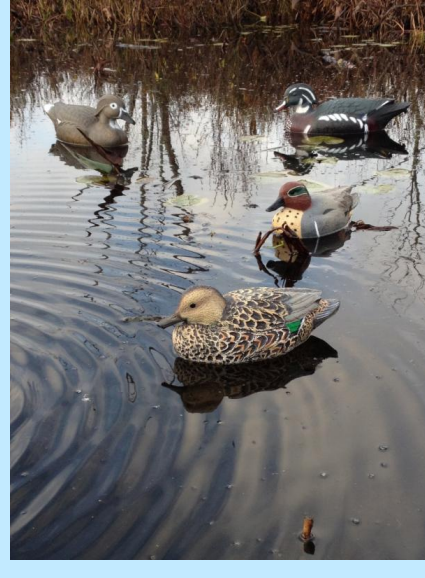
The wood duck is also a tremendous conservation success. By the late 1800s to early 1900s, the extinction of the wood duck seemed imminent. Destruction of bottomland hardwood forests and market hunting were two major factors in the duck's decline. The passage of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act in 1918, which prohibited the hunting of the species, aided in its recovery. Wood duck populations recovered and seasons were reopened in 1941.

The placement of wood duck nest boxes by state and federal wildlife agencies, sportsmen, and conservation and community groups continues to aid the species today and I can say from experience that this year we are seeing unprecedented numbers of wood ducks in local wetlands! On a good day, hundreds can fill the morning sky and offer top-notch jumpshooting throughout the day. But even with population numbers at current levels, bagging a daily limit of three remains quite a challenge. But even if you connect only once, it will be a hunt to remember.

See you in the field.

Troy Gipps
 Vice President & Hunting Program Coordinator
 Grafton Land Trust
hunting@grafftonland.org

PHOTO ESSAY: Early Season Wood Ducks



The photos in this month's Photo Essay were all taken with an iPhone 4S. (Photos by Troy Gipps)

A little luck goes a long way

Pheasant hunting without a dog is like walking around in the dark without a flashlight. At any moment you could fall in a hole or get whacked in the face with a tree limb and there is no warning.

That's what it felt like when the first of two pheasants I harvested on October 31st lifted from the edge of a small pond at the Westboro Wildlife Management Area. It was the last spot I expected to put up a bird. I shouldered my 28 gauge over and under, fumbled with the safety, and swung on a blur of feathers as the bird passed the 30-yard mark. The hammer fell and the pheasant tumbled! It was a once-in-a-season shot.



Later that morning, I was equally startled when a fat ringneck burst up from dry grass along the edge of a field and flew through the tangled limbs of an elderly apple tree. I swung the little 28 and managed to squeeze off a round through an opening in the limbs. Again, the pheasant fell. I searched for the bird for sometime before enlisting the help of another hunter who had a dog. The pointer made three circles through the brush before locking up at the base of the tree. His owner gave a verbal command and the dog leapt forward the grabbed the pheasant. It was a Halloween pheasant hunt to remember. (Photo by Troy Gipps)

Photo of the month



Two ring-necked pheasants taken with a 28 gauge shotgun at the Westboro Wildlife Management Area in Westboro, Massachusetts on October 31, 2014. (Photo by Troy Gipps)

What's in season this month?

Deer (archery) ... Oct. 20 - Nov. 29
 Black Bear (Zones 1-9) ... Nov. 3 - Nov. 22
 Gray Squirrel (Zones 1-9) ... Sep. 8 - Jan. 2, 2015
 Cottontail Rabbit ... Oct. 18 - Feb. 28, 2015
 Pheasant ... Oct. 18 - Nov. 29
 Ruffed Grouse ... Oct. 18 - Nov. 29
 Woodcock ... Oct. 27 - Nov. 22
 Ducks (Central) ... Oct. 14 - Nov. 29
 Canada Geese (Central) ... Oct. 14 - Nov. 29
 Coyote ... Oct. 18 - Mar. 7, 2015
 Fox (red or gray) ... Nov. 1 - Feb. 28, 2015
 Raccoon ... Oct. 1 - Jan. 31, 2015
 Opossum ... Oct. 1 - Jan. 31, 2015
 Crow ... Jul. 2 - Apr. 10, 2015 (Fri/Sat/Mondays only)
 Snapping Turtle ... Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2014



For complete waterfowl and migratory bird rules see the [2014-2015 Migratory Bird Regulations](#).

Open Season (year-round, except during shotgun season for deer; no chipmunk or seasonal bag limit): English sparrow, flying squirrel, red squirrel, chipmunk, porcupine, skunk, starling, weasel, and woodchuck.



The Grafton Land Trust is a private, non-profit, member-supported organization that preserves, maintains, and advocates for open space in Grafton, and promotes environmental education and stewardship.

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