

## Primitive Weapons Approved for 2008-09 Deer Season

Act 51 of the recent Louisiana legislature changed the wording of Louisiana’s black powder season from “muzzleloader” season to “primitive firearms” season. A list of firearms has been approved by the LDWF that meets the criteria set forth by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission. Approved firearms must be a single shot, breech loaded, metallic cartridge rifle with metallic cartridges loaded with black powder or modern smokeless powder, .38 caliber or larger, of a kind or type manufactured prior to 1900. Replicas, reproductions or reintroductions of these type rifles having an exposed hammer are also allowed. The pre-1900 designation applies only to the firearm and not the ammunition. All approved firearms may be fitted with magnified scopes. A list of approved primitive weapons for the upcoming season includes:

Sharps rifles or replicas, Remington Rollingblock rifles or replicas, Ballard rifles, Maynard rifles or carbines, Burnside carbines, Frank Wesson rifles, Farrow rifles, Remington Hepburn rifles, M1873-1888 Springfield (Trapdoor) rifles and carbines and replicas, Snider (British) rifles and replicas, Wesson and Harrington 1871 rifles, New England Firearms or Harrington and Richardson Handi rifles in caliber larger than .38, Winchester M1885 Hi Wall or Lo Wall rifles or replicas (also Browning B78 or 1885) .38 caliber or larger, Knight KP-1 in caliber .38 or larger, CVA Optimma Elite in caliber .38 or larger, Traditions Pursuit break-open single shot in .38 caliber or larger, Thompson Encore and Omega rifles fitted with black powder barrels.



## Tentative Migratory Bird Seasons Set

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission has tentatively adopted guidelines for the upcoming dove and teal seasons. The September teal season is set to run for 16 days from September 13–28. A daily bag limit of four will be allowed. Dove season will be broken down into a north and south zone with each zone having three segments that includes mourning-doves, white-winged doves, Eurasian collared-doves and ringed turtle-doves. Specific dates are as follows:

South Zone	North Zone
Sept. 6 – 14	Sept. 6 - 21
Oct. 18 – Nov. 30	Oct. 11 – Nov. 9
Dec. 20 – Jan. 5	Dec. 13 – Jan. 5

The daily bag limit for mourning, white-winged and fully dressed Eurasian collared-doves and ringed turtle doves is 15. There is no bag limit on Eurasian collared-doves or ringed turtle-doves provided that a fully feathered wing and head remain attached to the carcass of the bird.

The Commission also adopted the proposed seasons, dates, bag limits and shooting hours for the 2008-09 migratory waterfowl season. A 60-day season was recommended within the following framework:

West Zone	East Zone
Nov. 8 – Nov. 30	Nov. 15 – Nov. 30
Dec. 13 – Jan. 18	Dec. 13 – Jan. 25

Youth waterfowl weekend is Nov. 1-2 for the west zone and Nov. 8-9 for the east zone.

The daily bag limit on ducks is six and may include no more than four mallards (no more than two of which may be females), one pintail, three mottled ducks, one black duck, three wood ducks and two red-heads. The daily bag limit for scaup is one per day until Dec. 30 in the west zone and one per day until Jan. 6 in the east zone. After these dates, the daily scaup bag limit is two per day for the remainder of the season. The daily bag limit on coots is 15. The daily bag limit for mergansers is five, only two of which may be hooded mergansers.

## New Tagging Laws To Take Effect For the Upcoming Season

Deer hunters are reminded that the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries will begin enforcing the new deer-tagging system that was implemented last year on a voluntary basis. All deer hunters, regardless of age or license status, must obtain deer tags and carry them when hunting deer just as they carry their hunting licenses. For lifetime, youth and resident senior license holders, tags will be issued free of charge when the appropriate license or proof of age is presented.

Harvested deer must be tagged prior to removal from the site of the kill, and documentation of the kill must be made on the harvest report card portion of the tag. The tag must remain attached to the deer while kept at the camp or when in transport to the domicile of the hunter or to a cold storage facility. Within 72 hours of the harvest of each deer, the hunter must validate the kill by calling the toll free number 1-866-484-4805 or via the Internet <https://www3.wildlifelicense.com/la/start.php>. The validation number that is presented to the hunter must be recorded on the harvest report card.

Hunters who harvest antlerless deer on Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) or Landowner Antlerless Deer Tag (LADT) lands should use the tags issued under their cooperative agreement rather than those accompanying their deer harvest report card. Antlered deer that are harvested on these areas, however, must be tagged with the antlered deer tags as provided with the deer harvest report card. No call-in validation is necessary for any deer harvested on DMAP or LADT lands since this information is obtained from the harvest report sheets provided with each program and turned in at the conclusion of deer season.

## Wildlife Species Profile Swamp Rabbit (*Sylvilagus aquaticus*)

Although maybe not as well known as its close relative the eastern cottontail, the swamp rabbit actually inhabits a wider range within our state. The area along our extreme southern coast generally provides better habitat for swamp rabbits. Other common names for the swamp rabbit include marsh rabbit and cane-cutter. The common name, along with the species name "aquaticus" (meaning found in water), are suitable names for a species with a strong preference for wet situations and will take to the water and swim. Swamp rabbits are appreciably larger and darker than eastern cottontails. Their sides, rump, tail and feet are much more brownish, along with a pinkish-cinnamon eye-ring as opposed to the whitish eye-ring in eastern cottontails.

Swamp rabbits generally are found in heavily wooded areas and coastal marshes. They are replaced by cottontails in dry upland cultivated areas of Louisiana. Ideal swamp rabbit habitat within hardwood bottomland swamps consist of canal banks and wooded ridges that provide an abundance of cover. In coastal marshes, swamp rabbits are found in dense stands of giant Roseau cane, bulrush and other marsh plants. As with all rabbits, cover is the key habitat component in managing for swamp rabbits. Even though their swimming abilities lack the speed to escape a pack of hunting dogs, swamp rabbits elude pursuers by lying still in the water surrounded by brush or plant debris with only their nose visible.

Young swamp rabbits are born almost any month of the year, but the greatest reproductive activity is from late January to the end of September, with a peak between February and May, when an abundance of vegetation is available. Females have a 40-day gestation period and produce from one to six individuals. The nest in which the young are born consist of a slight depression in the earth that is filled with grasses mixed with rabbit hair.

Rival males will often engage in aggressive encounters that sometimes become violent enough to kill one of the combatants. When fighting, males will stand on their hind legs and use their teeth and claws to inflict wounds on their opponent. They will also jump from the ground and strike with the sharp claws of the hind feet.

Swamp rabbits consume aquatic and succulent herbaceous vegetation such as grasses, sedges and cane. They feed mainly at night but rain showers will often cause them to feed during daytime as well.

The Louisiana rabbit hunting season does not differentiate between cottontail or swamp rabbits. The season normally opens the first Saturday in October and allows a daily bag limit of eight with a possession limit of 16.



# Critter Corner

## Apple Snails (Family: Ampullariidae)

Apple snails are a tropical or subtropical freshwater snail represented by seven to 10 Genera and approximately 120 different species. They occur naturally in Africa, South and Central America, and Southern Asia. These snails, which can grow up to 6 inches in diameter are well-adapted to regions with periods of drought alternated with periods of excessive rainfall. They possess gills similar to fish on one side of their body and lungs on the opposite side. This lung/gill combination greatly aids their mobility when searching for food.

Most species of apple snails lay brightly colored egg masses above the normal water line. This strategy prevents egg predation from fish and other aquatic invertebrates. Another predator specific adaptation for apple snails is the tubular siphon on their left side that is used to breathe air while staying submerged. This makes them less vulnerable to snail-eating birds. Although many snail species are hermaphroditic, apple snails have male and female sexes on different individuals.

Apple snails reached the United States by way of the aquarium pet trade. Their attractive appearance and size has made them a popular addition to many home aquariums. In other parts of the world, apple snails have been introduced in an attempt to start an escargot industry. It was believed that this type of food culture could provide protein for local populations who were lacking this essential component in their diets. These introductions, which were primarily made in Taiwan, quickly spread to Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Hong Kong, southern China, Japan and the Philippines. In none of these areas has the food value of apple snails been realized.



*Apple snail egg masses*

Introductions into Hawaii in 1989 have also failed to serve as a food source.

Apple snails are not selective in their eating habits and will consume almost any type of vegetation that is available. They do tend, however, to prefer soft succulent plants over those that are older and tougher. When food supplies are lacking in their aquatic environment, apple snails take advantage of their amphibian life styles and leave the water in search of food. Other food items in their diet include the eggs of other snails in addition to the snails themselves.

The life cycle of apple snails is determined by food availability and water temperature. With high water temperatures and abundant food, apple snails exhibit a very short life cycle of less than three months. Under these conditions, reproductive activity occurs throughout the year. When faced with food shortages and low water temperatures, reproductive activity is limited to the spring and early summer, and individuals can live for up to 3 years.

When depositing their eggs, female apple snails climb from the water, usually during the night or early morning. Eggs are



*Apple snail*

deposited on a stem of emergent aquatic vegetation, tree trunk, rock or other structure. A new egg emerges from the female approximately every 30 seconds until an egg mass of anywhere from 100 to 1,000 brightly colored orange, pink or green eggs is present. The time from egg deposition to hatching varies from two to four weeks depending on temperature and species.

**Control Measures.** Apple snails have been found in significant numbers in our state, most notably along the ditches and streams of the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain. Releases from aquariums are believed to be the source of these invaders into our native waterways. The biggest concern at this point is the impact that large numbers would have on our states rice industry. In many countries where they now occur, significant damages are reported on area rice fields. The impact comes from their feeding habits, especially on young succulent rice plants. The LSU AgCenter is currently testing several pesticides, labeled for use on rice fields, which might aid in the control of apple snails. At present, the best control measure is to knock the brightly colored egg masses back into the water any time they are spotted.

## Plant Species Profile

### Common Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*)

Common persimmon grows to be a very large tree in Louisiana with the state champion measuring more than 11 feet in circumference and 51 feet in height. Large specimens are easily identifiable by the heavy black blocky bark that is often referred to as "alligator bark." The leaves are 2-5 inches long and ovate to elliptic. The best recognition features on younger plants are the hairy leaf undersurfaces and leaf petioles along with a strong tendency for the leaves to become smaller as they progress from the tip of a twig back towards the main stem. When lacking leaves, distinct black buds are another good identification feature.

The wood of common persimmon is extremely hard and durable. It is used for furniture, paneling and flooring, in addition to being the wood of choice for driver-type golf club heads.

Common persimmon is a dioecious species, meaning that male and female flowers are found on separate trees. When planting only one or two persimmon trees it is not uncommon to never see any fruit production when both happen to be male trees. In regards to wildlife management, the soft mast fruit produced by female trees are a relished delicacy sought after by a host of species, including box turtles, raccoons, opossums, squirrels and white-tailed deer. The fruit is a fleshy berry, averaging 1¼ to 2 inches in diameter with several easily distinguishable flattened seeds. Many white-tailed deer in Louisiana have met their demise at the hands of a bow-hunter perched near a persimmon tree loaded with fruit during our October bow season.



*Common persimmon fruit*



*Common persimmon bark*

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