

nebraskan sports

Doves prove elusive; pheasant season shortened

By Jim Hunt

With the close of mourning dove season Sept. 30, hunters in Nebraska will focus attention on duck, goose and pheasant season.

This is the first year since 1953, when the state classified the mourning dove as a song bird, that it has been legal to hunt doves.

Because the dove is a migratory bird, the season is regulated by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

The service permits a 60-day season on doves, but Nebraska adopted a 30-day season, from Sept. 1 to 30, when most of the birds are in the state.

Light hunting

"Dove hunting appears to be rather light across the state," said Kenneth Johnson, chief of Nebraska Games and Parks Wildlife Division. "Success has varied, but we have received good reports from all areas of the state."

"What most people don't realize is that the mourning dove is a very tricky bird," he said. "There are more shells shot at doves and missed than at almost any other bird. The national average is about four shells a bird, and I don't think our hunters have done much to change it."

The bag limit on doves is 10 daily and 20 in possession.

Duck season will run from Oct. 4 to 12 and from Oct. 25 to Dec. 14 in the Low Plains district, in the eastern half of Nebraska.

In the High Plains district, in the western end of the state, duck season will run from Oct. 11 to Jan. 1.

Goose hunting season will run from Oct. 4 to 24 and Nov. 1 to Dec. 21.

A special federal water fowl stamp is needed for duck and goose hunting.

This year's pheasant hunting season will be shortened to 44 days and the Panhandle region of Nebraska will be closed to pheasant hunting.

The season was shortened from 72 days last year because of a reduction in the pheasant population because of poor habitat.

General decline

"Conservationists are concerned about the dwindling pheasant population across the state," Johnson said. "This decline is general across the state and is due to poor habitat, not hunters."

There was a 40 per cent decrease in the pheasant population in the Panhandle, partly because of two blizzards that hit the area last spring, he said.

Southwestern Nebraska "probably will be the best area for pheasants, but there should be other areas of the state that are good," he said.

Bag limits on pheasants are three daily and nine in possession. The season runs from Nov. 1 to Dec. 14.

Quail season

There will be a 72-day quail season again this year from Nov. 1 to Jan. 11. Bag limits on quail are six daily and 18 in possession.

An upland game stamp is required for hunting upland game birds.

Other species, dates and bag limits: Coot, same as duck, 15 daily and 30 in possession. Cottontail, Sept. 1 to Feb. 29, seven daily and 15 in possession. Crow,

Oct. 28 to April 2, no limit. Grouse, Sept. 20 to Oct. 26, three daily and six in possession.

Merganser, same as duck, point system. Rail, Sept. 1 to Nov. 9, 25 daily and 25 in possession. Squirrel, Sept. 1 to Jan. 31, seven daily and 21 in possession. Common Snipe, Sept. 15 to Nov. 18, eight daily and 16 in possession. Raccoon and opossum,

Nov. 1 to Feb. 15, no limit.

Special permits are required for: Antelope (archery), Aug. 20 to Sept. 26 and Oct. 6 to Oct. 31. Antelope (firearm), Sept. 27 to Oct. 5. Deer (archery), Sept. 20 to Nov. 7 and Nov. 17 to Dec. 31. Deer (firearm), Nov. 8 to Nov. 16. Wild Turkey (archery) Oct. 11 to Oct. 24. Wild Turkey (shotgun), Oct. 25 to Nov. 7.

UNL gymnast eyes slot on Pan-American team

By Scott Jones

Nebraska gymnast Larry Gerard is too old to stack building blocks.

But as an architecture major, he says he appreciates how his participation in the approaching Pan-American Games Trials will reinforce the foundation of his gymnastics career.

Gerard will be one of 20 gymnasts competing in the trials in Chicago Friday and Saturday for seven berths on the Pan American team bound for Mexico City Oct. 13.

"A good performance in the Trials could serve as a building block for future success in international competition next summer and Olympic qualifying meets in 1976," said Francis Allen, UNL's gymnastics coach.

He's impressive

"It's all going to help him in the long run," he said. "If he gets in the top 10, they'll know he's a good gymnast. Everybody's impressed with him."

Gerard, a sophomore and Lincoln Southeast graduate, said the experience and prestige gained by competing in the trials and, if successful, the Pan American Games, will benefit him.

"I will try out for the Olympic Games," he said. "This is sort of my middle meet." Prestige in international meets is "pretty important," Gerard said, because if a small error is made "and if they know you they won't deduct as much."

The trials are foremost in Gerard's mind now, however, he said. He was fourth in the Big 8 in the all-around last year and 14th at the NCAA meet. An all-arounder performs all six gymnastic events.

Gerard said his chances of making the team are "real good," although most of the

13 who beat him at the NCAA meet will be in Chicago.

Confident

"I'm just confident. If I hit all my sets (routines) I probably could win the meet, but everybody is probably saying the same thing," he said. "It's all consistency and just how bad you want it."

Gerard said his preparation for the meet has gone well.

"I'm ready. Yesterday I did a set on every event and I hit every one," he said. "I've had real good workouts."

Gerard qualified for the Trials by finishing seventh in the U.S. Gymnastics Federation meet this summer. By maintaining that position, he would qualify for the games.

Because he finished in the top 10, he also will have the opportunity to represent the United States in international competition next summer.

Gerard contributed to UNL's fifth-place finish in the NCAA meet last year and he said the competition at the Trials will be at about the same level.

Not pressured

He said he isn't affected much by the pressure of a big meet.

"I'm going to go into the meet and do my routines and that's it. You just do one event at a time and don't worry about if you're ahead or behind of anybody," he said.

Gerard's chances of making the team may be aided by the absence of two notable competitors. Allen said Iowa State's Mark Graham, defending Big 8 all-around champion, and Wayne Young from Brigham Young, last year's NCAA champion, are injured.

sports shorts

Any women interested in trying out for the UNL intercollegiate women's swim team are asked to attend an organizational meeting, Oct. 1 at 7 p.m. at Women's P.E. Bldg. at the pool. Coach Pat Sullivan said last year's team members should attend.

The two major wire-service football polls both have the UNL football team ranked fourth this week.

The Huskers move up in both the Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI) polls after a 45-0 win over Indiana Saturday. Big 8 rivals Oklahoma and Missouri are ranked first and fifth respectively in both polls. Oklahoma State is ranked 17th in the AP and 13th in the UPI, Colorado is ranked 17th with Arizona in the UPI.

Missouri dropped a notch in the ratings after defeating Illinois 30-20 Saturday.

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