

Duck population up from last season

■ The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates waterfowl numbers to be at a 40-year high.

By DAVID DIEHL
Staff writer

With duck population numbers the highest they've been in more than 40 years, hunters and outdoorsmen appear to have a grand season of waterfowl hunting ahead of them.

estimates this year's fall flight of ducks at 105 million — up 25 percent from last year's figure of 84 million. The total also transcends 1997's record mark of 92 million ducks.

Mike Vrtiska, Waterfowl Program Manager for Nebraska Game and Parks, said numbers that good haven't been around in a long time.

"That's the best we've seen since 1955," Vrtiska said.

Todd Frohloff, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln wildlife major and avid hunter, welcomed this year's burst of growth.

"I know they are increasing in numbers," he said. "But I didn't know it

was that much."

The duck season begins Oct. 2, along with that of dark geese. Light geese season begins a week later.

Although the Fish and Wildlife's assessment accounts only for ducks, Vrtiska said the goose hunting season should be comparable to last year.

Last winter the goose hunting was pretty good, Vrtiska said, for both Canadian and snow geese, with the late winter season seeing 109,000 snow geese harvested.

Frohloff said he had quite a bit of success this past winter with snow geese.

"I know last year for snow geese,

they had the highest population in centuries," he said.

Vrtiska said there hasn't been a decrease of any kind in the goose population and called the production of Canadian geese "fair to very good."

The outlook for the upland game season that begins Oct. 30 for quail and pheasant isn't quite as bright.

Upland Game Director Scott Taylor said the forecast is about the same as last year — below average.

Taylor said the low numbers and reproduction are in direct relation to the weather.

"We've had several fairly wet springs in a row," Taylor said.



"Generally, wet springs aren't too conducive for good reproduction."

Vrtiska reminds people wishing to hunt ducks, geese, dove and select other game to register for the Game and Parks' Harvest Information Program to assist the department in calculating how many birds were killed and making population estimates.

All hunting information can be found at Nebraska Game and Parks' Web site at: www.ngpc.state.ne.us.

Last-second woes continue for Bears

By JOSHUA CAMENZIND
Staff writer

Baylor Coach Kevin Steele found himself in a familiar situation as his Bears let yet another game slip through their grasp.

BU is now 0-2 in the Steele era and is looking for a way to win the close game.

In their season opener against Boston College, the Bears took the Eagles to overtime, just to see an extra point miss wide left for a 30-29 loss.

On Saturday, Baylor held a three-point lead with four seconds to go on the UNLV 8-yard line. Again, the Bears found a way to lose on the last play of the game for the second-straight week.

Instead of kneeling down and taking the victory, Steele decided to run the ball with Darrell Bush and try to score again to boost team morale. Bush fumbled the ball and Runnin' Rebel defensive back Kevin Thomas scooped it up and took it 99 yards for a touchdown and a 27-24 UNLV win.

"The point is that we are trying to create a situation where we are getting more aggressive," Steele said. "An attitudinal thing where we know that we can line up and score when we need to."

Steele, a former assistant at Nebraska and former assistant in the NFL with the Carolina Panthers, brought high hopes to Waco, Texas, when he was hired. He has the Bears playing good football, but the 0-2 start is not reflective of that in the world of wins and losses.

"Everybody is probably wanting to know what I was thinking," Steele said. "It was a mistake, and I regret it for Baylor and for the kids."

The decision not to take a knee was one of the main topics of discussion during the Big 12 Teleconference on Monday morning.

Oklahoma Coach Bob Stoops, whose Sooners are the Bears' next

"I had one coach tell me that I had a better chance of winning the Texas lottery than I did of that ever happening."

KEVIN STEELE
Baylor head coach

opponent, believes that it was a tough call to make.

"Sometimes fluky things or freaky things can happen," Stoops said. "Certainly I am sure people will take notice of it and make sure they are a little more cautious on some of the things they do."

Advice and calls of support were abundant for the first-year head coach.

"I had one coach tell me that I had a better chance of winning the Texas lottery than I did of that ever happening," Steele said. "But hindsight is 20-20."

The call received many different reactions, Steele said.

"The nicest comment was, 'I love you' from my wife — and I think she is the only one that said that, too," Steele said. "The people that attack you after something like that are the same people that attacked Coach (Tom) Osborne — when he was 12 and one — for the one he lost. People with that kind of attitude are going to attack anything that moves."

But Steele said he is very confident that his team will rebound from this adversity.

"How are you as a father when you look at your own kids and you know what they are feeling by looking in their eyes and seeing their expressions?" Steele said. "Because I have looked them in the eyes, and I know what kind of people they are."

Nebraska aims for national title

■ With a solid core of returning bowlers, the Huskers are optimistic about their season.

By ROB PETZOLD
Staff writer

As the Nebraska women's bowling team prepares to defend its national title, Coach Bill Straub isn't worried.

"I feel very strongly that our team will be in the hunt with four other teams at the end of the season to compete for the national championship," said Straub, who is entering his 16th year as NU's bowling coach. "I feel real confident about going into the season."

The Cornhuskers have an abundance of returning players, along with a handful of talented newcomers.

NU will also have an advantage with the conference tournament being

played in Lincoln on Nov. 24-27.

"My goal is to have our team in a good position by Thanksgiving," Straub said.

The only major roster loss the Huskers suffered was four-time All-American Jen Doherty.

This year, Straub said, Nebraska will follow the leadership of senior All-American Kim Claus and sophomore Diandra Hyman.

Claus, who comes from Mesquite, Texas, had only positive things to say about this year's squad.

"I definitely agree with Coach Straub that our team will be in the hunt to win another title," Claus said. "The only thing I would like to see from our team is to win more tournaments and click faster than we did last year."

Hyman, from Dyer, Ind., is also pumped to begin the season.

"Our team are real fighters," Hyman said. "Bowling was the reason I picked Nebraska."

Though only officially sanctioned by the NCAA last year, the Huskers

have won four national titles in the 1990s. Hyman said she was a bit disturbed by the lack of attention the team has received.

"We work really hard as a team," Hyman said, "and along with the academic load, I really feel we are not appreciated compared to other athletic programs at NU."

According to Claus, however, there has been some awareness of the team's success.

"More students have noticed our success since we became sanctioned by the NCAA," Claus said.

Hyman, who was a member of the U.S. National team, returned from the tournament with four gold medals. She is also an All-American Team U.S.A. member.

But Hyman's achievements do not overshadow her commitment to her teammates.

"My main purpose in competing at NU is to do what's best for the team," Hyman said. "Team accomplishments take priority over individual achievements."

Big 12 Notebook

As a conference, the Big 12 went 9-1 last week, outscoring opponents 430-130. Kansas and Oklahoma both beat Division I-AA opponents on Saturday. Strength of schedule was one of the main topics on the weekly Big 12 Teleconference on Monday.

Most coaches agreed that schedules should be determined by schools only and mandates should not be set to schedule tougher teams.

"I think each program knows what they feel is best for their program and ought to be able to do that," Oklahoma Coach Bob Stoops said. "There are enough restrictions within the conference."

Kansas State Coach Bill Snyder agreed that there should not be schedule restrictions.

"I would not be in favor," Snyder said, "regardless of how it was structured. You know, if it said everybody had to play kindergarten schools I would not be in favor of the conference mandating scheduling procedures."

Nebraska climbed one spot in the

Hole-in-one highlights day for NU

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a lot of effort into her game, and she's made a lot of improvements."

Roux was the second-place finisher for the Huskers, with a 149.

"I could have played a lot better, but my hole-in-one helped to bring me back into a pretty decent (first) round," Roux said.

Senior Elizabeth Bahensky shot a 153 for third place on the Husker squad, followed by sophomore Carla Fogelberg with a 159. Freshman Amanda Krane rounded out the start-

ing five, scoring a 161. The last 18 holes of the tournament remain for today. Krapfl said to win, the Huskers need to keep playing like they have been playing.

Iowa State is 2-0 for the first time since 1985 after Saturday's win over in-state rival Iowa. The 17-10 win marked the second year in a row in which the Cyclones have topped the Hawkeyes. ISU Coach Dan McCarney is happy with his teams' start.

"I am extremely happy with the win on Saturday over Iowa," McCarney said. "It is good for our team, good for our fans. We had the largest home crowd we have had in years and a very positive experience for all of us here in the football program."

Kansas State defensive end Darren Howard was named the Big 12 defensive player of the week. Howard led the Wildcat defense to a 40-0 shutout of Temple on Saturday. The senior had two forced fumbles, a quarterback sack and an interception, which he returned 22 yards for a touchdown.

ing five, scoring a 161.

The last 18 holes of the tournament remain for today. Krapfl said to win, the Huskers need to keep playing like they have been playing.

"We just need to continue to play the golf course and not worry about what Oklahoma State does," Krapfl said. "I think (today's) going to be a really important round for our season. If we can come out and play another good round, I think it will give these guys the final statement that they are ready to compete with the best teams in the country."

Walker set to return to action on Saturday

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Walker said the team had considered the option of redshirting if his rehabilitation didn't go according to plan. The third week of the season was to be the measuring stick for Walker's ability to move around the field, he said.

So far, so good.

"I feel that tomorrow I could go out and do everything," Walker said. "It's going to take time to get back to the top of my game, but I'm good enough to play right now."

While Walker has returned, left cornerback Erwin Swiney did not work out on Monday and probably won't "for some time," Solich said. Swiney, who has been suffering a groin injury similar to that suffered by DeAngelo Evans in 1997, had tried to practice last week, but did not respond well.

Notes:

Solich deflected any questions regarding the quarterback race, opting to discuss the matter today at the weekly press conference.

Colorado quarterback Mike Moschetti was named the offensive player of the week after leading the Buffaloes to a 63-35 win over San Jose State. Moschetti passed for a school-record 457 yards, completing 25 of 32 passes. He also had 499 yards of total offense, another CU record.

Oklahoma State kicker Tim Sydnes was named the league's special teams player of the week. Sydnes was 5-for-5 on extra points attempts and had field goals of 46, 35 and 25 yards.

Notebook compiled by staff writer Joshua Camenzind.

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