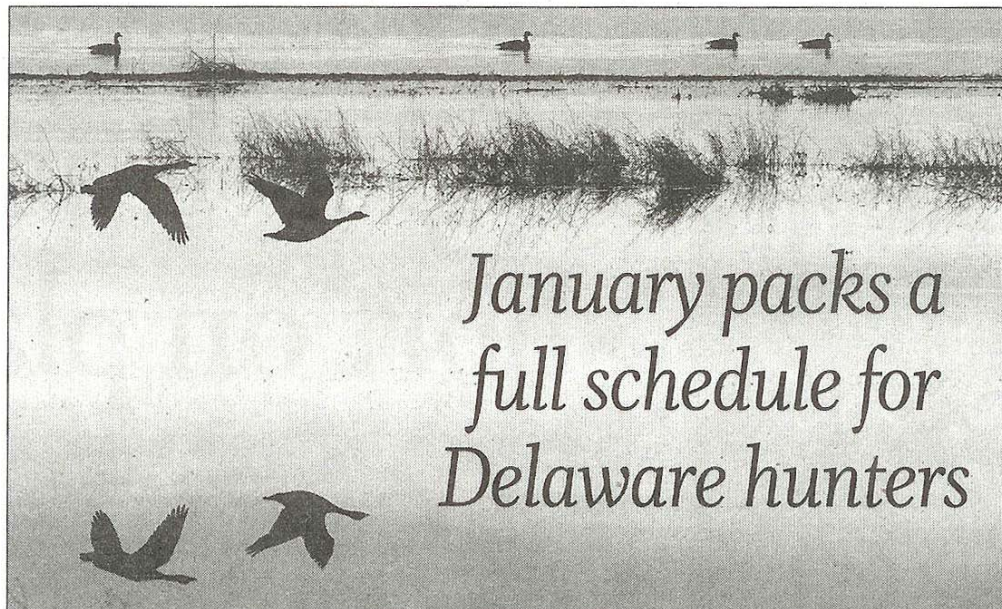


The News Journal



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Canada geese are among Delaware's various species open for hunting in January.

While many struggle to come up with meaningful and attainable New Year's resolutions by today, I have other decisions on my mind.

As a hunter who enjoys pursuing the varied game species in Delaware, I view January as the month that presents the most hunting opportunities. With multiple big game, small game and waterfowl hunting seasons open throughout the month, it requires creative scheduling, careful planning, and shrewd decision-making to take advantage of January's hunting opportunities.

One of my main passions is deer hunting, especially with a bow. Delaware's archery deer season runs through Jan. 31, plus three additional deer seasons are open this month. The January handgun season is open Jan. 3-10, the January shotgun season is open Jan. 17-24, and the January muzzle-loader season is open Jan. 24-31. For the deer hunter who wants to add venison to the freezer, this month provides ample opportunities.

Granted, as a diehard deer hunter, I could schedule deer hunts for every day (except

Sundays) in January. However, daily deer hunts would come at the expense of passing up hunts for other freezer stock.

While I like to say that I am born to hunt, the "nature vs. nurture" argument can easily be made. However, the same is not true for Gus, my Hungarian



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Vizsla pointing dog, who truly was born to hunt. With this in mind, I owe it to him to also pursue small game this month.

Squirrel, quail, and pheasant seasons run through Feb. 7, and rabbit season runs through Feb. 15. Therefore, I must artfully schedule some small game hunts on my January calendar.

Then I realize that I absolutely must allocate time for hunting waterfowl, as well. With Delaware perfectly situated in the Atlantic Flyway between the Chesapeake and Delaware Bays, the state is regarded as one of the best water-

fowl hunting locations in the eastern United States.

Delaware's plethora of water features and agricultural fields offer waterfowlers a duck and goose hunting paradise, so I do not want to miss out on some chances of adding ducks, Canada geese and snow geese to my freezer. Duck season is open through Jan. 24 and Canada goose through Jan. 26. Additionally, daily snow goose hunting is open through Jan. 24, and Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday snow goose hunting is open Jan. 26 through March 9.

With so many hunting opportunities available this month, it's difficult to decide where to devote my time. However, it's not difficult to quickly discern that Delaware hunting seasons begin to wind down over the upcoming weeks. Therefore, it's important for all of us to hunt as much as possible before the long offseason begins.

Steven Kendus' Hunter's Journal appears monthly in The News Journal. Kendus is the author of "Hunting The First State: A Guide to Delaware Hunting." Follow his blog at www.eastcoasthunting.blogspot.com. Contact him at skendus@HuntingTheFirstState.com.