



How can I become a better hunter?

Hunter Kirkpatrick

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Introduction

Is there a relationship between the location of a hunt in the Juneau area and the number of ducks taken? I hypothesized that the Dike Trail would be the most productive. I thought it would be the best because in the past it was a very good place to hunt. I was interested in this question to better my knowledge of duck hunting and to be a more successful hunter in the future. There are many different spots to duck hunt in the Juneau area and several different possible hunting techniques. The results of this study will help me choose a location to duck hunt under given weather conditions, time of day, and the hunt type.



Fig. 1 This is Hunter at a study site in Admiralty Cove.

Results

Based on the results I got from my studies, if you have a good combination of technique, weather, and location you can have a very successful hunt. The graphs help tell you that if you stay down in a blind during the night flight, or evening when it is cloudy, no matter where you are you will probably have success. Although if you are in areas such as Admiralty Cove it will most likely be incredibly hunting if you're a good shot.

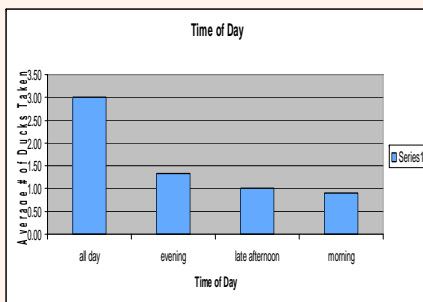
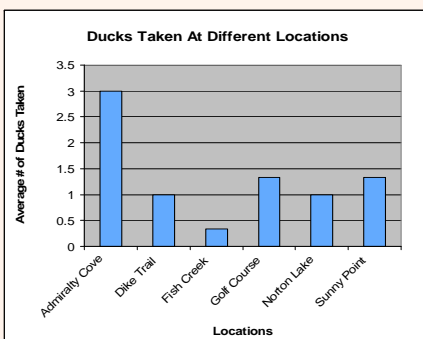


Fig. 4 & 5 Graphs showing relationship between Location and ducks taken and Time of Day and ducks taken.

Date	Location	Hunt Type	Start Time	End Time	Relative Time	Weather	Wind Direction	Temp	Ducks taken	# ducks taken	Species of ducks taken	Shoveler Caught	Best site	# of Ducks per Site
11/19/2003	Fish Creek	blind	2:00	4:30	late afternoon	partly cloudy	none	42	1	100%	yes	18	1	
11/21/2003	Norton Lake	blind/walk	3:30	6:00	late afternoon	partly cloudy	none	42	0	0%	yes	18	0	
10/24/2003	Dike Trail	blind/walk	2:00	3:30	morning	partly cloudy	none	45	1	100%	yes	12	1	
10/16/2003	Dike Trail	blind/walk	2:00	3:30	morning	partly cloudy	none	35	0	0%	yes	12	0	
10/21/2003	Fish Creek	blind	2:00	3:30	morning	partly cloudy	none	39	1	100%	yes	14	1	
10/14/2003	Admiralty Cove	blind/walk	4:00	5:30	evening	partly cloudy	none	45	0	0%	yes	14	0	
10/17/2003	Admiralty Cove	blind	2:30	3:30	morning	partly cloudy	none	41	2	100%	yes	14	2	
8/11/2003	Admiralty Cove	blind	3:30	11:30	morning	partly cloudy	none	45	2	100%	yes	12	2	
8/14/2003	Admiralty Cove	blind	4:00	8:00	AM	partly cloudy	none	41	2	100%	yes	12	2	
8/17/2003	Admiralty Cove	blind	6:00	8:00	AM	partly cloudy	none	50	1	100%	yes	12	1	
8/20/2003	Admiralty Cove	blind	4:00	8:00	AM	partly cloudy	none	41	1	100%	yes	12	1	
10/12/2003	Admiralty Cove	blind	1:30	3:00	PM	partly cloudy	none	43	2	100%	yes	14	2	
10/23/2003	Admiralty Cove	blind	1:30	3:00	PM	partly cloudy	none	41	2	100%	yes	14	2	
10/4/2003	Dike Trail	blind/walk	7:00	12:30	PM	partly cloudy	none	45	2	100%	yes	12	2	
9/28/2003	Norton Lake	blind	2:00	4:00	PM	partly cloudy	none	45	2	100%	yes	14	2	
12/18/2003	Fish Creek	blind	8:15	10:00	PM	partly cloudy	none	30	0	0%	yes	12	0	
14/14/2004	Fish Creek	blind	8:15	10:00	PM	partly cloudy	none	30	0	0%	yes	12	0	

Fig. 6 Table of raw data entered into Microsoft Excel

Materials and methods

- Shotgun (16 Gauge and 12 Gauge)
- Garmin "Trek" GPS unit
- Wetlands Cammouflage rain gear/parka
- Data sheets
- Binoculars

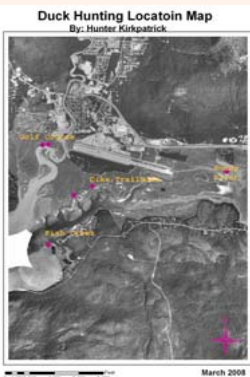
Fig. 2. This is a study site near the Golf Course. This spot was very successful



While hunting for my study I collected data on weather conditions, the hunting technique I used, time of day, location of the hunt, and the number and species of any ducks taken. At each location I hunted three times.

I classified weather as, rain, wind/rain, sunny, overcast, snow, and partly cloudy. Each hunt I classified different types of hunts as, Blind/walk, and blind. I organized the time of day into general times such as all day hunts, mornings, late afternoon, and evenings. I had six different hunting locations where I collected data. They were the Dike Trail, the Golf Course, Norton Lake (in Dredge Lakes area), Sunny Point, Fish Creek, & Admiralty Cove (on Admiralty Island).

Fig. 3. This is a map of most of the specific locations that I hunted in the Juneau area.



Results (continued)

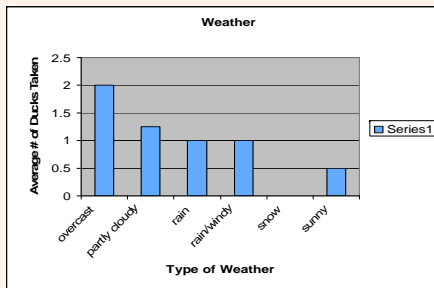


Fig. 7 Overcast of cloudy conditions were the best to hunt in.



Fig. 8 To sit in a blind was the best method.

- During days where the weather was just overcast were the most successful.
- This graph shows that all day hunts were about 50 percent more successful than evening hunts.
- Sitting in a blind without getting up proved to be the best method to hunt, but if you get up to walk around trying to find the ducks it is not that much worse. The only disadvantage is you could end up just getting the ducks frightened which is instinct and they will relocate.
- In the location graph I think it is safe to conclude that Admiralty Cove is obviously the best location that I hunted, although I is very remote and one thing I notice is I gets over hunted very easily. Which says that Sunny Point and the Golf Course is easier, yet still a very effective area to hunt.

Conclusion

Is there a relationship between the location of a duck hunt in the Juneau area and the number of ducks taken? My hypothesis based on past experiences was that the Dike trail would be the most productive. My data did not support this hypothesis. My study suggested that in the Juneau area the best locations were the Golf Course and Sunny Point. Every year the ducks probably find a new place that they like to be. It is most likely due to hunting pressure and the availability of better food sources.

Although this study helped me identify better locations for hunting, I have several concerns about the scientific validity of my data. First, my study was designed to find the best location, however I did not control several of the variables that could effect the outcome.

Conclusion (continued)

I have already learned a lot about the topic that I studied. If I wanted to do a true experiment I should have just focused on one thing. For instance, I could have hunted at the same place the whole year to focus on what are the best weather conditions for hunting. The problem with a study with a more limited focus is that it would not be a very fun hunting season. Another limitation of my study is that in the location graph, Sunny Point was one of the best hunting spots. I believe a significant factor for these results is because that is where I hunted on opening day. Opening day is generally the best day of the year. After that, the Sunny point location was not very good. The problem is that every where it is just as good so it raised the average of ducks taken by a lot. Things such as this have changed my outcome.

There are other things that I would have to disagree with such as the results shown in the weather graph. From my own observations in the past I saw that hunting in snow was very good. However, the reason it does not show in the graph is that by the end of the season the duck have most likely already started their migration south. I did notice that by the end of the season not very many ducks remained in Juneau. Another thing I observed is as it gets closer to the seasons end a lot of geese start showing up as they pass through going south. The reason the graphs do not reflect that is simply that I was not able to harvest any.

I do realize that my study was not very scientific because it was not a true experiment. If I was to expand on this topic in the future I would probably limit the experiment to only two variables and attempted to control more of the variables that could affect the success of a duck hunt.

I learned a lot of information that will help me while I am out in the field. Also I think this information will help other people that are just starting to hunt be able to learn what to look for to have a success right off the bat.



Fig. 9 This is me with a Blue Bill (Lesser Scauter).

Acknowledgments

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For further information

For more information on this project please feel free to contact me at Bernie@sci.net or call to 463-1899 ext 253

<http://www.jsd.k12.ak.us/>

