

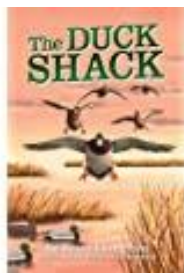
SOUNDSIDE LEARNING

THIS WEEK ON CORE SOUND

COMING UP AT CORE SOUND

- **November 18:** *Gallery of Trees Opening Night*, 7-9 PM
- **December 2:** *Core Sound Chow Down*, 5:30--9:30 PM
- **December 2-4:** *Waterfowl Weekend*

Sound Reading Material For You & Your Child



The Duck Shack

By Kevin Lovegreen

Join Luke, Dad, and Crystal on another Lucky Luke's Hunting Adventure. It's opening morning of duck hunting! The North Star guides them as they head out on the lake in the early hours of morning. The decoys are set. A northwest wind is blowing. Will Luke be ready when the sky fills with the sound of whistling wings? This is sure to be one of the best duck openers ever!

Grade Level: 2-6

Pages: 90

Meet the Redhead

Adult drake Redheads light up the open waters of our coastline. These sociable ducks molt, migrate, and winter in sometimes-huge flocks. Summers find them nesting in reedy ponds of the Great Plains and West. Female and young Redheads are uniformly brown, with the same black-tipped, blue-gray bill as the male. Starting in mid-fall, Redheads can congregate in the sound by the hundreds, if not the thousands.

Redheads, *Aythya americana*, are diving ducks, part of the tribe known as pochards or scaups which feed by diving beneath the surface of the water. Unlike sea ducks that also use their wings to move under water, Redheads use only their feet to propel while foraging. Their diet comes from a wide variety of food sources including seeds, buds and tubers of sub-aquatic plants, larvae, eggs, snails and other aquatic invertebrates.

The adult male has a reddish-brown head and neck, black breast, gray body, black hindquarters, yellowish eye, and blue-gray bill with black tip and white subterminal band. The female is chocolate-brown with a white belly, grayish secondary wings and a dark eye.

Hatchlings are precocial. Born fully covered with down, they leave the nests within a day or two. The mother hens often lead their broods, usually from five to seven young, to nearby deeper marshes to raise them. The mother hen abandons the chicks at around eight weeks old, before they can fly. The ducklings remain flightless for another few weeks. Males usually abandon their mates early in incubation.



Drake Redhead



Hen Redhead

photos from www.allaboutbirds.org

A Hunter's Paradise

Long before surfers and beach goers discovered the beauty of our area, hunters were frequent visitors and serious fans. As early as the 1800s, after the Civil War conflicts and Union camps dispersed from the beaches and locals were free to start new enterprises, ambitious residents began offering visitors "hunting guide services" throughout the Outer Banks. These first guide services were rugged and sparsely used, but nevertheless, locals would earn a nice side business of meeting with newcomers and taking them personally to the best hunting grounds along the sound and maritime forests.

Today's hunters along our coast still find a variety of game, from mammals to birds, although the most popular form both historically and today is waterfowl. Hunters can target nearly thirty different types of species locally and all along the Outer Banks, including Bluebills, Buffleheads, Redheads, Canvasbacks, Widgeon, and Pintail. The Outer Banks is a significant location along the "Atlantic Flyway" national migration route that waterfowl take every year up and down the coastline. With thousands of birds flocking to our region, many hunters are serious duck hunters. It's hard to find a more fruitful and scenic location than the right here!

Of course, there are rules and regulations in place for hunting, and these vary by both types of game and location. The hunting season varies by game but is generally held for anywhere between three weeks and several months in the fall. October and November are the prime hunting season months and are also some of the best times for waterfowl hunting along the coast.

A hunter must have a valid state hunting license, administered by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, before they can hunt. Also, it is important for hunters to learn about the Cape Lookout National Seashore Duck Blind Lottery which grants a limited number of permits to many applicants.

Essentially, there are a few hoops to jump through to hunt in our area, but it is worth the trouble. The reward is access to some of the best hunting grounds on the East Coast in addition to helping the state and federal organizations that oversee the miles of undeveloped land manage the game supply and provide ample hunting for generations to come.



photo from www.recreation.gov



The Duck Hunter's Prayer:

*Lord,
May the sunrise be early. May the skies be gray.
May the wind be cold. May the water be icy.
May the ducks be gullible. May my aim be true.
May my dog be confident and reliable.
But most of all, watch over me. And at the end of the day,
return me safely to my loved ones.*