

Water level management for the special September teal season.

Water levels may be highly variable prior to this year's upcoming teal season. The primary factor is weather and the types of water source individual wetlands rely on. Natural basins rely entirely on rainfall and many oxbow wetlands are connected via subsoil directly to the river level. With wetlands where we impound or divert water, late summer rainfall is required for ample flows. Water levels in wetlands may be low or only some pools will be flooded.



Photo by Lowell Washburn



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With moist soil management, late August is often too early in the season to fill with water. Depending on the vegetation, flooding an area too early and killing plants before the seeds mature would greatly reduce the production of food required to attract and hold migrating ducks in October and November.

Some areas will be able to handle shallow water, which is perfect for teal, but not as deep as hunters may be used to during the regular duck season.

Cost is a factor when the water source is gathered from pumping. Evaporation and plant transpiration are greater in warm weather and make pumping much less efficient. That money to pump is better used during October and November.



And finally some areas are restricted by dates when water may be diverted, stored or pumped and discharged, as well as flow minimums on rivers.

All of these constraints emphasize the need for preseason scouting to see what conditions are like, where the birds are, and what gear will be required. A summary of waterfowl management areas will be posted prior to the season at



Photo by Lowell Washburn

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/Hunting/MigratoryGameBirds/WetlandHabitatConditions.aspx>