

## THE TOP TWENTY PERCENT

Madduck.org does not subscribe to the belief that the mark of success is measured by the number of ducks in the bag. There are, after all, other considerations such as species and sex.

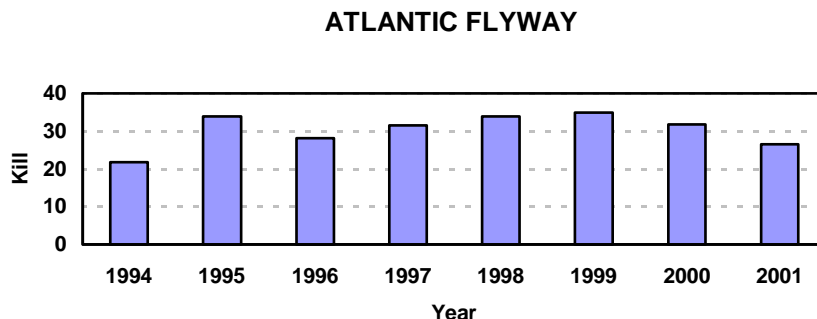
A bag of four drake mallards certainly is preferable – and more highly prized – than a bag of, say, two hen gadwalls, a drake widgeon and three green-winged teal (of which two are hens and one a drake.)

Nevertheless, numbers are important as a measure of skill. They allow you to crudely compare your skills with those of others. A rule-of-thumb – confirmed by waterfowl surveys – is that 20 percent of the hunters kill 80 percent of the ducks. These percentages may change a few points annually, but remain reasonable over the long term.

Recently, while examining the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service harvest data for other research, we found reason to compile the kill for the top 20 percent by flyway. And we thought we'd share the results with you. It should tell you how you stack up against the top 20 percent in your flyway.

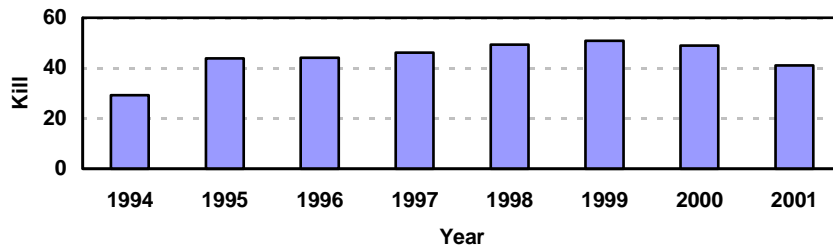
Keep in mind that many in the Top Twenty fire at anything that flies over their decoys. These are not particularly skilled hunters one might wish to emulate. Therefore, your comparison should be tempered with wisdom. A few good ducks are preferable to many poor ones.

By flyway, the average annual kill for each hunter in the Top Twenty percent are:



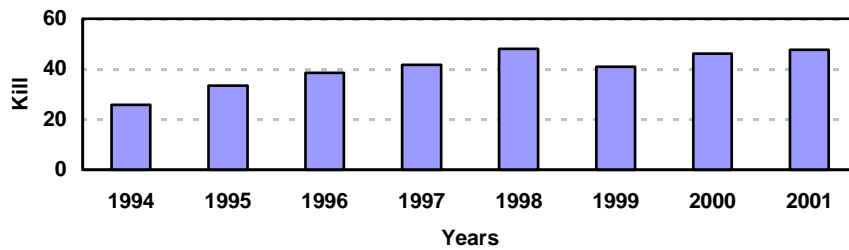
As you can see, the average annual kill in the Atlantic Flyway ranged from a low of 21.7 ducks per season in 1994 to a high of 34.9 ducks in 1999.

### MISSISSIPPI FLYWAY



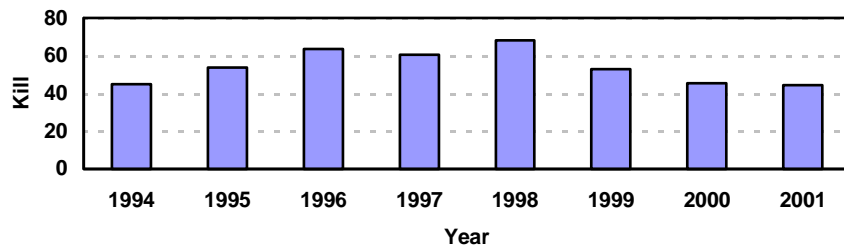
In the Mississippi Flyway, the average annual bag of the Top Twenty percent shooters ranged from a low of 29.3 in 1994 to a peak of 50.9 in 1999.

### CENTRAL FLYWAY



The average annual bags of the Top Twenty percent of hunters in this interior flyway ranged from a low of 25.9 in 1994 to a high of 48.2 in 1998.

### PACIFIC FLYWAY



In the Pacific Flyway, the Top Twenty percent shooters averaged 68 ducks in the bag for the 1998 season – the highest average annual bag of any flyway. The low was 44.4 in 2001.

The annual kill over the years 1994-2001, in descending order, found the Pacific Flyway with the highest average seasonal total of 54.2 ducks per Top Twenty hunter, followed by the Mississippi Flyway, 44.2 ducks per hunter; Central Flyway, 40.3, and Atlantic Flyway, 30.3.

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If we take care of the ducks, the ducks will take care of us.

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