

QUWF



Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation

Making a Difference for Wildlife and Clean Streams, One Acre, One Stream, at a Time

THE HABITAT GUIDE

Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation

Notes from the Dashboard: Rocks cause fires - Careful with very dry conditions!

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*In a unanimous vote this August, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) approved the reinstatement of a regulated black bear hunting season—the first in the state since 2015, **Page 3***

*With dove season right around the corner and waterfowl season on the horizon, now's the time to make sure the areas you plan to hunt don't fall under the legal definition of baiting, particularly in agricultural fields, **Page 18***

*Oklahoma's fourth case of a wild deer infected with Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was confirmed this month in the Oklahoma Panhandle. The white-tailed deer was located in Texas County after a landowner reported the animal behaving abnormally, **Page 20***



By Craig Alderman — Here in the Midwest, we are still in the throes of very dry and hot conditions. Nearly a month now with no measurable rain and still hot conditions, 90 or above. Our electric bill (AC) saw levels that are the highest since we built 20 years ago.

The ground is like a concrete parking lot, and if we get a significant rain, it will run off causing flash flooding which brings a list of dangerous conditions.

We have lost roads, creek crossings, culverts, and trees with extreme flooding which comes very quickly with heavy downpours.

Here at the QUWF office, some of our access roads

have lost a foot or more of surface aggregate and developed many very deep gullies from the flash runoff locations. I scramble to get in new culverts, then repair roads and build up road grades.

The conditions for fire are very high, a neighbor hit a rock with the bush hog this week, it caused several sparks and ignited his field. Luckily, he carries a fire extinguisher on the tractor (Do you?) and put out the fire rather quickly. He also carries a GMRS radio to stay in touch with the base unit in his farm home, monitored by his wife. Bush hogging pastures and fields is heavy this time of year so be watchful of the rock sparks that can cause instant fires. Even haying rakes and bailers can find a way to spark.



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Continued on Page 2 — Same with chain saws as the weather gets cooler, they spark often, especially cutting up downed logs and limbs and catching the inevitable unseen rock or piece of barbed wire. Carry a fire extinguisher in all your tractors, UTVs and RTVs, just in case. Get the ones that are labeled “refillable.”

Be safe out there during dry conditions, stay alert and watchful.

Catch you across the (dry) creek.

Craig Alderman is the Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation executive director.

Two St. Maries men charged for unlawful take

Editor’s Note: People like this help destroy the credibility of the sport and good hunters. Be vigilant and know how to report poaching in any state!

Thanks to a tip submitted through Fish and Game’s Citizens Against Poaching hotline about two suspicious deer heads, an investigation ensued that led to charges being filed.

Two Saint Maries men were charged on June 27 with 8 felonies related to the alleged unlawful take of seven mature white-tailed deer bucks. The investigation was conducted by Idaho Fish and Game conservation officers in the Panhandle Region and resulted in documentation of 56 wildlife violations.

Alleged violations were reviewed and final felony charges filed by the Kootenai County Prosecutor’s Office.

It is alleged that all seven deer were illegally killed during Nov. 2024, and five of the seven deer were killed in a single 24-hour period. Three of the bucks were classified as trophy white-tailed deer, which carries higher penalties than a non-trophy classification.

All deer were taken outside of legal shootings hours, and the meat from three deer was left to waste.



Because the case remains open with only charges filed against the defendants, more information is not available at this time. Additional details will be released upon conclusion of the case.

Fish and Game thanks the public for being diligent in reporting potential wildlife crimes and helping to preserve, protect, perpetuate and manage the incredible fish and wildlife to which Idaho is home.

Anyone who observes or has information about any wildlife crime is encouraged to call the [Citizen Against Poaching](https://www.idahofishandgame.com/citizen-against-poaching) hotline at 1-(800) 632-5999. Information can also be reported [online](https://www.idahofishandgame.com/citizen-against-poaching).

Citizens Against Poaching monetary rewards are available for individuals who provide credible, detailed information which significantly helps to identify person(s) involved and which leads to any relevant charges for a wildlife crime.

Information about potential wildlife crimes can also be reported to the [Panhandle Regional Office](https://www.idahofishandgame.com/panhandle-regional-office) at (208) 769-1414.



Florida reinstates black bear hunt

In a unanimous vote this August, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) approved the reinstatement of a regulated black bear hunting season—the first in the state since 2015. For those of us who champion science-based conservation and ethical hunting, this decision marks a significant return to proven wildlife management practices grounded in sustainability and stewardship.

As North America’s leading bowhunting conservation organization, Pope & Young supports wildlife management rooted in data, ecology, and respect for the species we pursue. Florida’s move to reintroduce limited black bear hunting is not about recreation alone—it’s about responsible population control, long-term habitat protection, and preserving the integrity of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

Florida’s black bear population has seen a remarkable recovery over the past several decades. Once listed as a threatened species in the state, bears rebounded thanks to targeted conservation efforts, protected habitat, and limited human intervention. Today, the statewide population is estimated at over 4,000 bears—a conservation success by any standard.

“We are pleased to see Florida announce a season basing their management efforts on scientific data and not uninformed emotion,” stated Justin Spring, Pope and Young Executive Director. “Black bears are a very charismatic species that evokes a fair amount of emotion. A respect for the species and its habits is a shared value between hunter and non. We are confident this season will address the needs of the bears and citizens of Florida in the best possible manner.”

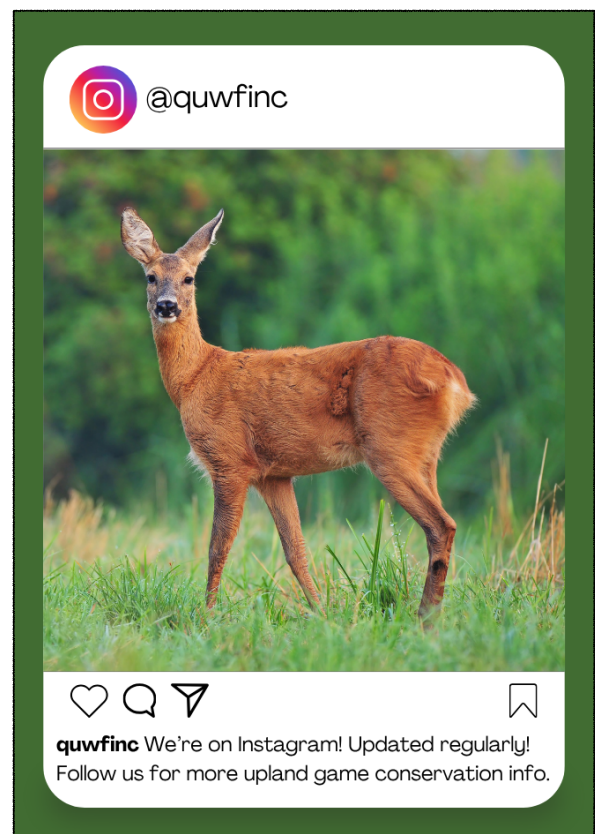
However, success brings new challenges. Rather than allow nature to self-correct through starvation, disease, or unchecked conflict, the FWC has chosen a proactive, balanced path. The approved 23-day hunting season—beginning in December 2025—will operate under strict quotas, methods, and regional limits designed to ensure that only a small, sustainable portion of the population is harvested. Only 187 permits will be issued across four Bear Management Units (BMUs), with harvest restricted to male bears only to protect reproductive sustainability.

This decision was not made lightly, nor was it driven by politics or pressure. It followed years of biological assessments, population studies, and public feedback. Florida’s 2019 Black Bear Management Plan, developed in collaboration with wildlife scientists, outlines the state’s framework for balancing species health with human coexistence. This plan remains the foundation for all bear-related policies in the state.

The FWC’s latest move reflects a return to the core values

of modern conservation:

- Harvest only when populations can support it.
- Use science to set limits, not sentiment.
- Manage wildlife as a public trust resource for current and future generations.





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Hunters urged to be cautious of potential fire hazards

Editor’s Note: All states with very dry conditions require hunters and landowners to be careful with fires or accidental fires. Sparks from bush hogs, mowers and equipment can be as dangerous as any match.

It takes just one spark to ignite a wildfire. With several harvest seasons opening Sept. 1, including dove, grouse and archery deer, hunters are reminded to act responsibly in the field and to do their part to prevent wildfires.

Though drought conditions have been reduced in eastern and central Nebraska due to recent rains, most of the western third of the state remains dry. Most of the Panhandle is experiencing moderate drought conditions, according to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln drought monitor.

Driving vehicles or parking on dry, tall grass is a primary threat. Grass can ignite within seconds of contacting a hot surface, such as a vehicle’s exhaust and catalytic converter systems.

With that in mind, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission urges hunters to take the following precautions to avoid the risk of wildfire:

- Check with state or local authorities for any fire restrictions.
- Restrict driving to established roads and trails.
- Avoid parking vehicles in tall vegetation.
- Restrict the use of campfires.
- Dispose of cigarettes and other flammable objects appropriately.
- Ensure your vehicle, trailers and other equipment are well-maintained.
- Make sure no chains are dragging from your vehicle.
- In the morning, before driving and while the exhaust/catalytic converter system is cool, inspect it to ensure no debris is clinging to it.
- Carry a fire extinguisher and shovel in the vehicle.



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What hunters should know for Utah deer, elk hunts

Editor's Note: Though issued by Utah, the basic practices and skills required to hunt and harvest large game apply to most all states given the terrain considerations. Being prepared and checking all equipment, practicing techniques and accuracy, will mean the difference of success or failure at the critical moment. Emergency safety, first aid products and communications have to be part of the planning. Severe weather changes are unpredictable, be prepared! Cell phones may not get service, satellite radios will, GMRS 50-watt radios may work good among groups working from a base camp to those field groups, especially when installed in RTVs/UTVs.

If you are going to hunt deer or elk in Utah this fall, here is some important information and tips that will be helpful when planning and preparing for your hunt.

Hunt dates

- The general-season archery buck deer hunt and the general-season archery spike and any-bull elk hunts are the first big game hunts of Utah's fall season, and they all begin Saturday, Aug. 16.
- The early-season hunt for the general-season any legal weapon any-bull elk hunt will be held Oct. 4-10, and the late-season hunt will be held Oct. 11-17.

Continued on Page 7

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Continued from Page 6 —

- The general-season any legal weapon spike-bull elk hunt will be held Oct. 4-16.
- The general-season any legal weapon buck deer hunt runs from Oct. 18-26.
- The general-season muzzleloader elk hunt will be held Oct. 29 to Nov. 6.
- For all the general-season hunt dates, see page 7 of the [2025 Utah Big Game Field Regulations guidebook](#).

Deer hunts

The deer hunting this fall will vary, depending on which areas of the state people are hunting. The deer populations in Cache, Weber, Summit and Morgan counties are still recovering from the severe winter conditions and lower survival rates from the record-breaking winter in 2022-23. The deer herds in these

areas are showing signs of recovery, but deer numbers are still below long-term averages. Hunters can expect to see slightly below-average numbers of primarily younger age class bucks this fall in northern Utah.

Deer populations in southern Utah were not negatively impacted by the hard winter of 2022-23, and favorable conditions the past several winters have resulted in above-average deer survival rates. Hot and dry conditions this year will have deer staying close to water sources and moving less during the heat of the day. With some luck, hunters in those parts of the state have the potential of locating good numbers of younger bucks, as well as some older bucks in their hunting units.

“During our [big game captures this last winter](#), adult deer across the state were in average to above-average nutritional condition,” Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Big Game Coordinator Dax Mangus said. “6-month-old fawn weights were very good, with several fawns that were captured in December weighing over 100 pounds. While these numbers are encouraging, dry conditions this spring and summer have resulted in less forage available for deer to put on weight. We’re happy to see many deer using our habitat improvement project areas, and we’re hoping for some late-season monsoon rains to improve range conditions before winter sets in.”

Elk hunts

The current [Utah Statewide Elk Management Plan](#) includes an objective to have almost 80,000 elk across Utah. There are currently an estimated 82,140 elk in the state, so elk populations are slightly above objective statewide.



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Continued from Page 7 — Anyone who wants to hunt elk in Utah this year should note that there are still unlimited over-the-counter late-season any legal weapon any-bull permits available.

In addition to those permits, there are many opportunities for youth to hunt elk. Utah offers unlimited general-season youth bull elk permits, which allow youth to hunt all of the general-season archery, general-season any weapon and general-season muzzleloader dates on both general spike-only and any bull units. (Youth hunters must follow spike-only antler regulations on spike units.) People interested in buying these permits can purchase them [online](#), at [a DWR office](#) or from any [available license agent](#).

“The ability for hunters to get in the field pursuing big game regularly is a high priority for hunters and the DWR,” Mangus said. “This is especially important for our younger hunters, and we are excited about the multiple season dates and extensive unit locations offered to youth hunters with the general-season youth elk permit. We hope parents and families take advantage of the long, flexible season dates to work around busy schedules and get out in the field with their youth hunters to make lasting memories.”

GENERAL TIPS

Do your research before heading out, know the laws and scout the area in advance

It is a good idea to visit [the Utah Hunt Planner](#) before heading out into the field. This great online resource includes notes from the biologists who manage the various hunting units across the state, as well as general information about the units and safety and weather items. You can see information about the number of bucks on the units, compared to the number of does. You’ll also find maps that show the units’ boundaries, which land is public and private, and the various types of deer habitat on the unit.

“Hunters who have scouted their hunting units and spent time locating animals before the hunt begins are typically more successful at finding and harvesting an animal during their hunt,” Mangus said. “Spend time scouting, and if you haven’t, consider planning multiple hunting trips during the hunting season. Treat your early hunting dates in the season as hunting and scouting, and try to cover lots of ground to locate animals.”

As a reminder, there are [a few changes to big game hunting](#) this year. Here are some of the new laws to be aware of:

- **Updates to mandatory harvest reporting deadlines:** Big game hunters are required to submit their harvest reports within 30 days of their hunting season ending or by Feb. 15 at the latest.
- **Youth hunts:** Youth with a restricted rifle permit are now allowed to hunt all the applicable general-season hunts on their unit. Youth who obtain an any-legal-weapon permit on a general-season deer unit may hunt all the general seasons on that unit, so this update provides a similar opportunity for youth. Youth will still be required to follow any additional weapons restrictions on that unit. (For example, restricted muzzleloader regulations would apply during the muzzleloader season.)

For information about all the new changes and laws for hunting big game this fall, hunters should check the [2025 Utah Big Game Field Regulations Guidebook](#).

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Continued from Page 8 — Whether you are archery hunting or using firearms, it’s a good idea to practice regularly with your equipment so you are familiar with it and have the skills needed to hit your target.

“Making responsible and ethical shots is an important part of using our wildlife resources wisely,” Mangus said.

Locating animals

Locating animals at a distance with binoculars and spotting scopes can save hunters lots of time and miles. In addition to using optics during prime times for animal movement, hiking to look for fresh tracks and scat can help hunters dial-in to where they want to spend time hunting. Often, an animal’s patterns, movements and distribution can change due to hot and dry conditions, precipitation, fires, increased human traffic in an area and other factors. Spending time in the field and being willing to adapt to changing conditions are essential to being successful.

“Hunters who cover more ground and find sources of food, water and/or cover being used by big game are more likely to be successful during their hunt,” Mangus said. “Don’t be afraid to move and explore within your unit, especially if you are not seeing what you’re looking for. Being adaptable and willing to make adjustments can make all the difference.”

Hunt away from the road

If you are hoping to harvest a deer or elk this fall, make sure you are hunting in areas away from the road.

“Elk are smart and know how to avoid hunting pressure. They avoid roads, so especially when you are hunting elk, get off the road,” Mangus said. “Get out and do some hiking and scouting to find where the animals are.”

Look for rugged terrain

When it comes to deer, mature bucks and does are not usually together during the August archery hunts. So if you are seeing a lot of does in an area, it’s a sign that you should probably move to a different spot. Does have to care for their fawns, so they typically prefer areas where there is a lot of water and the terrain is more gentle, like in rolling aspen groves.

“Bucks will gather in small herds or ‘bachelor groups,’ and they like more rugged mountain terrain,” Mangus said. “So, if you are looking for a bigger buck, look for terrain that is harder to access.”

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We put clean streams and wildlife habitat on the ground NOW.

Continued from Page 9 — It’s been said that “an elk will hear you three times, they will see you twice, but they will only smell you once!” It’s critical that archery hunters know the direction of the wind. That way, you can make adjustments and prevent your scent from reaching the animals before you get within range. As the sun heats the ground, the wind direction changes. For example, wind almost always blows up canyons in the morning and down canyons in the afternoon.

To know the direction the wind is blowing, you can buy an inexpensive item called a wind or breeze checker. Releasing powder from the checker will let you know the direction the wind is blowing. Once you’ve determined the direction of the wind, approach the deer with that direction (and likely wind shifts) in mind to decrease the chances of your scent blowing the stalk.

Be prepared for the weather and possible emergencies

You should also be prepared for any weather and should always have a first-aid kit and plenty of water. The weather in Utah’s mountains can change very quickly and go from sunny to snowing in a matter of minutes, so you need to be prepared with adequate clothing and supplies.

“We urge hunters to remember the safety basics of hunting with a partner and always make sure someone knows where you are and when you will return,” Mangus said. “You can’t always rely on cell phones as they may not have reception in the backcountry during your hunt.”

Use binoculars and be stealthy

Having success during the archery hunt requires stealth and patience. For example, if you’re going to use a spot-and-stalk method, don’t just walk through the woods, hoping to find a deer without spooking it. Instead, spend time looking through binoculars at an area to find deer and locate where they’re bedding.

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QUWF welcomes All veterans. All the time.

The Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation was formed to focus on and help veteran landowners, veteran sportsmen, and all veterans who are interested in the great outdoors.

QUWF staff will help all veterans find and get benefit assistance through the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) or other resources.

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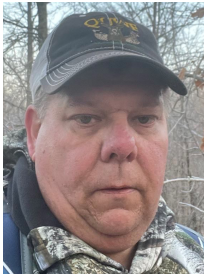
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Notes from the Road:

Landowners continue to play key role in battle against invasive plant species



By Nick Prough — At QUWF, we work with private landowners daily to help them improve their wildlife habitat as well as improve their farms/ranches across the landscape for a wide variety of species. Over the past several years, fighting invasive plant species has become an ever-increasing portion of that technical assistance (TA) with private landowners as they continue to battle the ongoing invasion of invasive plant species across the country's landscape.

In a social media post from QUWF, I was quoted as saying “If you haven’t been out fighting invasive plant species in the fields, pastures and right-of-way’s the past several years then you are probably way behind the curve.” This is most definitely true this past summer as I have seen this portion of landowner TA truly triple or even quadruple in call volume and landowner assistance requests over the past several years. Some of this can be attributed to the multi-year drought patterns we have seen in many midwestern states over the past several years where many invasive plant species seem to thrive and expand during extreme drought conditions. Then following a wet season like this current year those invasive plants continue to thrive further.

However, this expansion is also attributable to the lack of control on many tracts of land and it is very easy to see once you start recognize the invasive species you have in your area and start to look for them in your local area while you are out and about in your daily travels. I have had tons of landowners comment to me the past several years just how expansive the invasive plants such as teasel, johnsongrass, sericea lespedeza, and other invasives are once they started to look for them not only on their own lands but along the highways and roads across their county as well as on many of their adjoining neighboring properties.

“They are literally everywhere, Nick,” stated one landowner, “It’s almost impossible to drive 5 minutes and not see one of those 3 invasives in any direction from my farm, and usually you see all 3.” That is unfortunately the case in many counties and states across our country's current landscape and unless everyone begins to fight the same invasive battle at the same time on every possible treatable acre that they can find to do control and spraying on then that case will continue. In addition to these “Dirty 3” that I tend to term them as, many invasive tree species such as honey locust, Bradford pear and autumn olive continue to plague landowners’ properties as well as state highway department of transportation agencies highway rights-of-way. Many public land agencies such as state game and fish agencies, state and county parks agencies, also continue to fight these invasive species on the lands they manage as well. If we all continue to work on our side of the fence then we can come together with a much-improved landscape in which invading species of undesirable plants are much more limited and controlled and not becoming the dominate plant species we see in our daily travels both on the farm and in between farms.

We all have to row in the same direction at the same speed to truly get a handle on these invasive plant species, if just a hand full of landowners work on this, we may feel like we are winning a local battle on a select few but the larger war will remain very much out of reach and once again those pesky invasives will be knocking and creeping in at the fence line of even those “islands of landowners which did try to control them the first time.”

As QUWF chief biologist, I for one have been working very closely with local and regional MODOT staff over the past several years which are tasked with the daunting task of controlling these pesky invasives on the thousands of miles of highway right-of ways across the state by contacting them and assisting them in their ongoing efforts in any way we can as well as helping them in locating high density invasive species problem areas. These are often scattered on large and small highways both in and around many of our existing quality landowner wildlife habitat projects or in focal areas such as quail habitat priority landscapes. We have all worked way to hard of many years on these priority habitats with landowners to let the invasives get a strong foothold to overtake and degrade these quality habitats.

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Continued from Page 10 — Then, after they've bedded down, plan your stalk, remaining quiet and doing all you can to approach the deer at an angle that keeps your scent from reaching them.

“Stealth and knowing the wind direction are more important for archery hunters than for rifle hunters, as archery hunters need to get closer to the animal to be effective,” Mangus said. “It all depends on the hunter and their skill level, and equipment, but typically, most bows have sights that allow for shooting at 60 yards or less. And, typically, the accuracy of most rifles or shooters starts to decline significantly between 300-400 yards. I recommend not trying to ‘overshoot’ your equipment or experience. Stick with a distance where you have practiced and are comfortable. You should also always know what is beyond your target before taking a shot.”

Keep the meat cool

In hot temperatures (especially during the archery hunt), meat from harvested animals can spoil quickly. It's important to get the meat cooled down as soon as possible after harvesting the animal. Removing the hide from the meat and removing the meat from the bone will help. After that, use game bags to keep the meat clean and you can use an iced cooler to lower the temperature of the meat in transport.

“Dry ice can be used to cool the meat quickly and keep it cool for a prolonged period,” Mangus said. “You want to keep the meat as cool as possible until you can get it processed and into your freezer.”

“Hunting should be fun, and you should enjoy it. It's a great time to see Utah's amazing wildlife and to make memories with your family and friends. Get outdoors this fall and have an adventure or two in our beautiful state.”

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Iowa: New deer tag option available for disabled vets

Tags for the 2025-26 deer season went on sale Aug. 15, and new this year, is a disabled veterans deer tag, that was signed into law during the last legislative session.

To qualify for the new tag, hunters must be a resident of Iowa and have served in the armed forces of the United States on federal active duty and were disabled during their military service (service connected disability). Hunters will be issued one any deer tag valid or any established firearm season, if eligible. The fee is \$33, and hunters are required to use the method of take for the season hunted.

Applicants will need to provide a copy of DD214 or higher, a copy of current letter provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs which indicates they are entitled to a service connected disability rating, and a copy of Hunter Safety Certificate, if required or not already on the customer’s account, and submit the Iowa Resident Disabled Veterans Lifetime Licenses and Tags application, available online at <https://www.iowadnr.gov/things-do/hunting-trapping/hunting-licenses>.

Those who already have a service related disability application on file do not need to submit and new application to qualify for this new license. Currently, around 20,000 Iowans have designation. Once application has been processed, they may purchase a deer license online or at any vendor that sells Iowa hunting and fishing licenses.

This disabled veteran tag has different requirements and application than that of the established severely disabled deer hunter season. For more information, go to <https://www.iowadnr.gov/things-do/hunting-trapping/hunting-licenses>.



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Iowa pheasant population looks good

Iowa’s annual pheasant survey began Aug. 1, and with all the weather indicators pointing in a positive direction, hunters are eager to see the results.

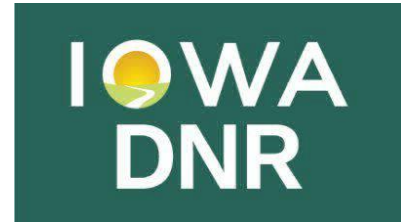
The statewide survey is conducted by Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff between Aug. 1-15, who drive 225, 30-mile routes on gravel roads at dawn on mornings with heavy dew. Hen pheasants will move their broods to the edge of the gravel road to dry off before they begin feeding, which makes them easier to count.

In June the DNR issued its annual prediction for the roadside counts, which uses a weather model based on the snowfall, rainfall and temperatures from the past winter and spring. The model provides a best guess at what the counts might look like, and it is predicting numbers to be likely higher than last year.

“Our 100th season of pheasant hunting could be a very good year,” said Todd Bogenschutz, upland wildlife biologist with the Iowa DNR.

But the best indicator for the fall season is the August roadside survey that counts actual pheasants seen along more than 6,000 miles of rural, gravel roads.

The August roadside survey has been conducted over the same routes since 1962. In addition to pheasants and quail, the survey collects data on partridge, cottontails and jackrabbits. Results will be posted online at www.iowadnr.gov/pheasantsurvey in early September. Iowa’s pheasant season begins Oct. 25.



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Immediate Action Required:

- **To prevent the possibility of serious personal injury or life-threatening situations, immediately cease use of the un-single barrel for All-American Trap Combo shotguns with the affected serial number ranges identified above.**
- You may continue to safely use the over/under barrel included with your shotgun.

CZ-USA's Commitment to Safety and Excellence:

CZ-USA will inspect your un-single barrel and, if a defect is found, replace your affected barrel **free of charge**. As part of our commitment to your satisfaction, we will conduct a complete factory inspection of your entire shotgun, including both the un-single and over/under barrels, to ensure all components meet our exacting quality standards.

Important Shipping Instructions:

- Owners will need to ship the entire shotgun, including both barrels, back to CZ-USA for repair. This is necessary so we can ensure everything is fit properly and in working order.
- CZ-USA will handle all necessary shipping and repairs at no cost to you.

Next Steps for Owners:

- Owners should immediately fill out our warranty repair request form online at: <https://www.czfirearms.com/en-us/warranty>
- Contact CZ-USA Customer Service at 913-321-1811 or toll-free at 1-800-955-4486 if any assistance is needed for the return of your firearm.
- Due to increased repair activity related to this recall, turnaround times may exceed our standard service duration. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we ensure every firearm meets our strict safety and quality standards.

We sincerely apologize for this inconvenience, and thank you for your prompt attention to this safety recall.

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Chalk one up for science-based conservation

By Nephi Cole — Chalk one up for science-based conservation. Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) unanimously approved bear hunting, ending a 10-year ban on hunting as a wildlife management tool. Florida was one of only six states that didn't have a bear season.

“Hunting allows the FWC to start managing population growth rates for the Bear Management Units, or BMUs, with the largest bear subpopulations,” Florida FWC [posted to their website](#). “Slowing population growth will help balance population numbers with suitable habitat, and hunting is an important and effective tool that is used to manage wildlife populations across the world.”

That's a win for conservation, bears and hunters. After all, conservation means ensuring the natural resources in the country are available for the next generation of Americans – including hunters. Florida FWC recognized that the state's bear population was growing at a rate that would have spelled disaster for the bears' future.

“While we have enough suitable bear habitat to support our current bear population levels, if the four largest subpopulations continue to grow at current rates, we will not have enough habitat at some point in the future,” Florida FWC [wrote on their site](#). “The FWC would not want to wait to implement management actions until that occurs because that could result in dramatic swings in the population and risk overall chances of survival for the long-term. Early action would allow the agency to monitor conditions and adaptively manage the population so it never reaches that risk level.”

Florida FWC held a series of public meetings on bear hunting. The feedback collected from those meetings was taken to the Commission in May and approval for a bear hunting season came at their August meeting.

NSSF has long-supported science-based evidence to drive wildlife management decisions. Public conservation policy decisions must be based on the best science available, and the science of wildlife management is based on managing wildlife populations.

Bears are Back

For Florida, the [black bear population](#) is estimated to be over 4,000 versus a few hundred back in the 1970s. Now that they're healthy and vibrant, Florida's commissioners see that it's time to use hunting as a wildlife management tool.

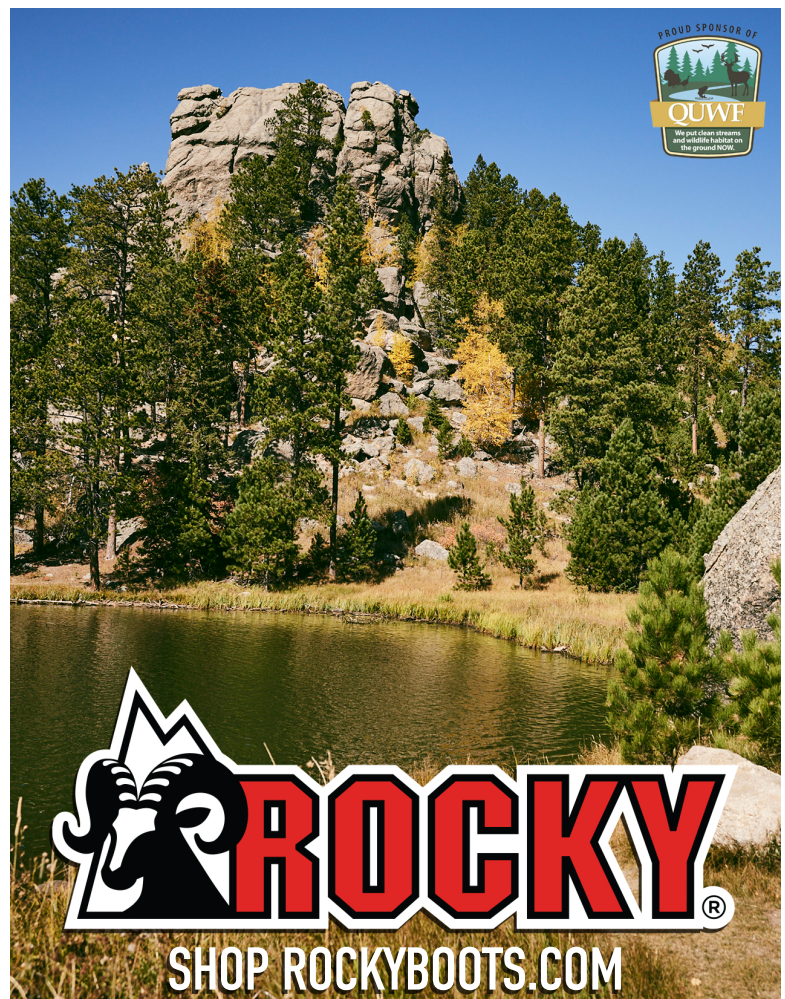
Continued on Page 17

CONTACT US!

For all your Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation chapter insurance needs, please call Leslie Casanova [direct](#) at Sportsman Insurance Agency at 1-800-925-7767. In most cases, Leslie can have your insurance the same day!

Do you have any questions concerning banquets and/or vendor programs? If so, please call the QUWF National Office at (417) 345-5960.

Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation, PO Box 947, Buffalo, MO 65622
Find us online: www.QUWF.net



Continued from Page 16 — They have proposed options that would be sustainable to the overall population and not negatively impact it.

This is exciting news for hunters. Harvesting a bear is goal for which many hunters strive to achieve. In a time where inflation and grocery prices are skyrocketing, being able to provide food that's healthy is the goal of most hunters.

Florida's FWC recognizes that hunting is a critical component to wildlife conservation.

"The efforts of hunters as conservationists over the past 100 years have restored Florida's game populations and enhanced the habitat of numerous wildlife species. No other group has come close to sportsmen in contributing the volunteer hours and funding necessary to make such an impact on wildlife conservation," Florida FWC posted on their website. "Hunting is an integral part of the fabric of Florida's economy and cultural heritage, and it is also an important wildlife management tool."

The firearm industry is invested in perpetuating healthy and sustainable wildlife management and conservation across America. Firearm and ammunition manufacturers have [paid over \\$29 billion](#), when adjusted for inflation, into the Pittman-Robertson excise tax since 1937, which funds wildlife conservation, public land access and public recreational shooting range construction across the country. Florida [received over \\$2.6 million](#) in Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration apportionments, which are funded largely by the Pittman-Robertson excise taxes.

Managed Hunting

It is important to keep in mind that Florida is regulating hunting for bears. The [FWC voted](#) to issue 187 permits across the four BMUs, to be distributed through a random drawing. Those who are 18 and older can pay \$5 (per entry) to enter as many times as they want. Those fees will also be added to Florida's wildlife management operations to ensure healthy bear populations continue to thrive.

"I am proud that Florida is joining the majority of states that manage black bears with regulated hunting," said [Rodney Barreto, Chairman of the FWC](#). "The components of the hunt are conservative and prioritize conservation, with a limited number of permits only being issued in the areas of the state with the largest bear populations."

Anti-Hunting Lawsuit

Anti-hunting groups are already challenging the bear season. Bear Warriors United [filed a lawsuit](#) to block the planned bear hunts, arguing the rule allowing the bear season gives the FWC executive director "unbridled authority to issue permits to kill bears annually without any guidance or scientific facts."

Criticism of the FWC's decision was rebutted, however, by Mark Barton in Bear Hunting Magazine. He pointed out that FWC's research showed about 60 percent of Florida residents supported managed bear hunting and follow science-based evidence to ensure healthy bear populations in the future.

Continued on Page 18



Continued from Page 17 — “The truth is that while it is great that FWC is being fully transparent about their proposal, they shouldn’t have to cater to the general public, their focus should be on operating within the framework of the North American Model of Conservation (NAMC),” Barton wrote. “This model has been integral in the recovery of more than a dozen species in North America that have been near the brink of extinction at some point in time.”

Florida FWC is doing just that. They are following the science and are not being swayed by emotion-based arguments that will only lead to devastating wildlife impacts. This is a win for science-based wildlife conservation.

Nephi Cole is the NSSF Director for Government Relations – State Affairs, Mountain West Region

Check dove fields for bait before heading afield

With dove season right around the corner and waterfowl season on the horizon, now’s the time to make sure the areas you plan to hunt don’t fall under the legal definition of baiting, particularly in agricultural fields.

According to federal regulations, an area is considered baited and illegal to hunt over if salt, grain or other feed has been placed, exposed, deposited, distributed or scattered in such a way as to attract migratory game birds where hunters are attempting to take them. Even after the complete removal of the bait, the area must rest for a minimum of 10 days before being legal to hunt.

Specifically, it is legal to hunt doves:

- where seeds or grains have been scattered (not piled) as a result of a normal agricultural operation or agricultural soil-stabilization practice, including top-sowing or aerial seeding;
- where grain grown on the land is scattered solely as the result of the manipulation (e.g., mowing, flattening, disking) of an agricultural crop;
- over standing crops;
- over standing or manipulated natural vegetation;
- over “hogged down” fields where livestock have fed on standing crops, or
- over feedlots.

Waterfowl regulations are more restrictive than those on dove hunting. Unlike doves, waterfowl hunting is not permitted when unharvested crops are manipulated (rolled or mowed).

It is legal to hunt over unharvested crops that were left due to poor quality, insect infestation or were otherwise uneconomical to harvest. However, the plants must not have been manipulated before flooding. This is particularly important for hunters in areas where an occasional Canada goose may make an appearance, especially while dove hunting. Hunters who attempt to take any waterfowl also may not have any lead shot in their possession while hunting, so it’s best to let those birds of opportunity fly by unless you’re only loaded with steel or other nontoxic shot. Hunters should also let those geese pass while dove hunting on a field that has been legally prepared for dove hunting by mowing, disking or other form of manipulation. Those fields may be legal for dove hunting but not for waterfowl hunting.

Top-sowing wheat over a disked field as a cover crop is a common practice that can offer green vegetation for deer and other game animals in winter and attracts doves before the seed germinates. It also falls under normal agricultural practices, as long as the planting rate does not exceed normal agricultural rates for cover crops in Arkansas. In most cases, winter cereals such as wheat and rye should not be broadcast without incorporation into the soil at a rate higher than 60 pounds of seed per acre, and the seed must be evenly distributed with no piles or concentrations evident.



Continued on Page 19

Continued from Page 18 — The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service has established a list of general guidelines for planting rates and dates for all cover crop species that fall within the bounds of normal agricultural practices. A search on their website www.uada.edu or visit to one of their [county offices](#) can guide you through the planting process.

Quite a few hunters who don't have friends or family with agricultural land join in on dove season through pay-to-hunt operations on opening weekend. Hunters visiting a field for the first time on opening weekend still have a responsibility to learn about the field's preparation to protect themselves from fines and penalties:

- **Ask first:** Send a friendly email or text to the landowner to ask if any grain or feed has been on the area for the past 10 days. The response, in writing, can help if there's a problem later.
- **Take a stroll:** Inspect the area before bringing a gun to the field. Any type of grain that was not grown in the field or is unevenly distributed is an indicator of baiting.
- **Look closely:** Pay attention to any spots with unusually heavy concentrations of doves. If the field is freshly plowed, check both the surface and under any loose soil for grain that may have just been turned over.

Dove season is Sept. 6-Oct. 26 and Dec. 8-Jan. 15. Up to 15 mourning doves or white-winged doves may be harvested per person per day. There is no limit on Eurasian collared-doves, but all Eurasian collared-doves must remain fully feathered in the field. In addition to a valid hunting license, dove hunters 16 and older must have a free Arkansas Harvest Information Program registration. Federal and state duck stamps are not required to hunt doves, but are required to hunt waterfowl .



Vermont bear hunting starts in September

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department says bear hunting season starts in September and reminds hunters about the bear hunting regulations.

Vermont has two bear hunting seasons. The early season, which requires a special bear tag, starts September 1 and continues through November 14 with one exception.

Nonresident hunters using dogs cannot start bear hunting until September 15. The late bear season begins November 15 and continues through November 23. A hunter may only take one bear during the year.

In addition to a hunting license, a bear hunter using a bow or crossbow must have a prior or current bow license or a certificate proving completion of a bow hunter education course.

The hunter must field dress the bear before taking it to a reporting station. It is also legal to skin the bear and cut it up in order to carry it out of the woods. Although the bear must be reported within 48 hours, Fish and Wildlife urges doing so quickly to cool the meat. The hunter must also collect and submit a pre-molar tooth from the bear at the time the bear is reported or within 30 days. The tooth provides important data on the age structure and size of the bear population.

Continued on Page 20



Continued from Page 19 — Upon the request of a game warden, a person harvesting a bear is required to return to the kill site with a game warden.

“Bears will be feeding along power lines and in forest openings and old fields where berries and apples can be found as well as in forested beech and oak stands,” said Jaclyn Comeau, Vermont’s bear biologist. “They also are likely to be feeding on standing corn.”

Comeau says with bears being so abundant, this is a great opportunity for hunters who have never hunted bear to do so this year. She says properly prepared bear meat is highly nutritious. The key to successfully securing good meat is to skin the bear as soon as possible and process it immediately if you do not have access to a large cooler.

Comeau asks hunters to refrain from shooting a bear with cubs as well as bears observed in groups as they are usually made up of sows with cubs. “Black bear cubs are dependent on their mother through the following spring. It is important to maintain these family groups,” she added. “We have [tips for identifying sows with cubs](#) on our website.”

A new law now in effect prohibits the sale of paws or internal organs of a black bear.

Vermont Fish & Wildlife urges hunters to download and read the [2025 Black Bear Hunting Guide](#) from its [website](#).

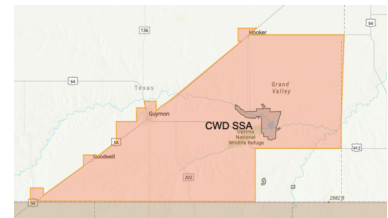
New CWD-positive wild deer confirmed in OK

Oklahoma's fourth case of a wild deer infected with Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was confirmed this month in the Oklahoma Panhandle. The white-tailed deer was located in Texas County after a landowner reported the animal behaving abnormally.

CWD is an always-fatal neurological disease that affects deer, elk, moose, and other members of the cervid family, creating holes in the brain resembling those in sponges.

As part of the state's CWD Response Strategy, the confirmation has prompted the [Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation](#) to expand the existing Selective Surveillance Area (SSA) for chronic wasting disease in Texas County westward and southward. The CWD Response Strategy is a plan jointly produced by the Wildlife Department along with the [Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry](#).

Hunters who harvest a deer within the SSA boundary must comply with specific regulations for handling and moving deer and other cervid parts outside the area. These boundary changes, along with cervid transport rules within an SSA, can be viewed at wildlifedepartment.com/hunting/resources/deer/cwd/ssa. The site also includes information about voluntary testing sites in Oklahoma's three active SSAs. Dispersed across SSAs in northwestern Oklahoma, the testing sites are locations where hunters may choose to leave the head of their harvested deer or elk to be tested for CWD.



"The Wildlife Department is implementing its response plan to monitor and slow the potential spread of CWD," said Dallas Barber, wildlife biologist over big game for the Wildlife Department. "Our priority is to continue to ensure the health and management of our deer herd in Oklahoma, and the steps in our CWD Response Strategy will help us do that."

The Wildlife Department has conducted CWD monitoring on hunter-harvested deer and elk and road-killed deer since 1999 following the discovery of the disease in a private, commercial elk herd in 1998. The first in-state CWD case in free-ranging deer was confirmed in June 2023 in Texas County. CWD does not affect pronghorn antelope, and natural CWD transmission from wild animals to humans or livestock has never been documented.

Additional human health information relating to CWD is available at <https://www.usgs.gov/centers/nwhc/science/chronic-wasting-disease#publications>. For more information on the disease, hunting regulations, and proper disposal of infected animals, go to <https://www.wildlifedepartment.com/hunting/resources/deer/cwd>.

New product review: Farm and habitat dump trailer

We selected the Woodland Mills Multilander Trailer.

Recently we did research to find the best equipment habitat dump trailer for farm and habitat work to include a dump bed option, at least 2,000-pound capacity, tandem walking beam suspension with high quality construction for years of field work. We chose the Woodland Mills Multilander Trailer (www.Woodlandmills.com).

This was a purchased item so the evaluation is untethered to any type of compensation or trade. If it works as advertised we will tell you, if it doesn't, you will know that too. after nearly 40 years of forestry and field work, I can break just about anything if it is not up to the task.

It can be towed by an ATV, UTV, tractor or truck through the woods with ease. The tandem

walking beam suspension allows traversing very uneven terrain like gullies, creeks with ease. The 360 degree ball hitch also allows the trailer to move/rotate and not strain on the standard 2-inch ball. A unique feature.



Continued on Page 22

THIS ONE SETS ITSELF APART

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- 1. Front Sight
- 2. Slide
- 3. Trigger
- 4. Magazine
- 5. Trigger Guard
- 6. Trigger Spring
- 7. Trigger Pin
- 8. Trigger Pin Spring
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RXm™
SHOP NOW

Continued from Page 21 — Based in Ontario, Canada, (the good guys) with a warehouse in Buffalo, NY., this trailer comes from years of great research from a company whose roots are based on working in the woods and manufacturing Timber Mills for the landowner. Their trailers had to be built tough and well thought out for versatility of use in the woods and on the farm. The manual and easy HD winching system with ramps actually allows the side loading of logs into the trailer, a one-man operation thanks to the fold down sides, stored ramps and movable winch system. It is a well thought out and heavy-duty off-road trailer from the start.

The dump option (adjustable up to 55 degrees incline) with lifting tail gate also allows us to haul gravel and limestone to remote sites for access and egress trail construction, culvert installation, creek crossings and off grid building with endless loads of firewood or logs back to the homestead.

The MultiLander is a perfect fencing trailer, able to haul T-posts, wire, tools, chain saws, fuel and oil, pole saws, coolers, Blackstone Off Road Griddle (nothing like a good field lunch or dinner), fold the sides down and you have a field café. When you are not working, take the whole family out for an off-road field lunch in the café mode.

Another neat option for all deer hunters, the trailer has a fixed position to winch on successful deer hunts right into the trailer, no dragging or lifting required. Braggin rights made easy.

Price of the unit was \$2875.00 with FREE freight delivery and a FREE Cover (Limited promotion).

Full details on the trailer and videos can be found on their web site www.Woodlandmills.com.

We will also begin filming and posting our uses on YouTube and some on Facebook live.



Continued from Page 11 — As I stated above if we continue to attack these pesky invasives on both sides of the fence of not only our adjoining landowner's properties but along our highway and roadside right-of way's then we can finally begin to gain some additional traction on this ongoing invasive battle we face across our landscape.

Keep up all the great work out there that each of you, your landowners, your chapters and conservation partners are doing on crucial wildlife habitat projects, youth field day events, as well as all your other conservation outreach efforts, you are working on in your local communities each and every day, as you are definitely ...

"Making a Difference for Wildlife One Acre at a Time"!

Nick Prough is the QUWF chief wildlife biologist and landowner liaison.

Maryland begins migratory bird hunting seasons

Mourning dove, early resident Canada goose seasons begin Sept. 1

The [Maryland Department of Natural Resources](#) has announced the state's 2025-2026 migratory game bird hunting seasons, the first of which begin Sept. 1.

Bag limits, season dates, and shooting hours can be found in the [2025-2026 Maryland Guide to Hunting and Trapping](#).

"Maryland hunters have been waiting for September with a high degree of anticipation, as fall hunting season begins," said Wildlife and Heritage Director Karina Stonesifer. "Maryland's diverse landscape and abundant public hunting opportunities offer many options for new and experienced hunters."

Unless otherwise noted, official shooting hours begin 30 minutes before sunrise and end at sunset for all early migratory game bird hunting seasons. Season dates are as follows:

Dove, split season

First Season: Sept. 1 – Oct. 18 (note: shooting hours for this segment are noon to sunset). Second Season: Oct. 25 – Nov. 28. Third Season: Dec. 20 – Jan. 9, 2026

Woodcock, split season

First Season: Oct. 25 – Nov. 28. Second Season: Jan. 12 – 28, 2026.

Early resident Canada Goose Season

Eastern zone: Sept. 1–15. Western zone: Sept. 1–25.

For Early Canada goose season, hunters are allowed to use shotguns capable of holding more than three shells. Shooting hours are extended to a half-hour before sunrise to a half-hour after sunset.

Teal, September Season

Sept. 18–27 Shooting hours will be a half-hour before sunrise to sunset. The daily bag limit is six teal.

All migratory bird hunters, including landowners who are license-exempt, must purchase a [Maryland Migratory Game Bird Stamp/Harvest Information Program Permit](#) and possess the printed receipt while hunting. All waterfowl hunters, ages 16 and older, must possess a printed receipt of the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (Federal Duck Stamp). Hunters with questions may contact the department at 410-260-8540.

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