

# QUILW



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: Late winter planning for spring planting

#### In this issue:

*The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department has proposed issuing 180 moose hunting permits in Vermont's Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) E in the northeastern corner of the state in a continued effort to reduce the impact of winter ticks on moose in that area, **Page 5***

*This time of year, shed hunters get excited about hitting the hills looking for antlers dropped by Idaho's big game animals. However, it is important to remember that those who are not legal Idaho residents are now required to purchase a nonresident Idaho license for hunting big game in order to legally pick-up antlers in Idaho. **Page 16***

*January has been very cold and has brought virtually no snow to (IDAHO) Valley County, which has been great for ice conditions on Lake Cascade but has created issues for unauthorized use of Bureau of Reclamation land surrounding the reservoir, **Page 22***



**By Craig Alderman** — As the temperatures wrangle from -12 and 7 inches of snow to 73 in a few hours, spring may be on the horizon, with mud season immediately jumping in. So, what should we be doing? I'll give you a glimpse of what our planning and efforts are.

We are heavy into repair and service, from tractors, ATVs, RTVs, bush hogs, plows and harrows to sprayers and planters. All of them need TLC:

welding, parts and a good grease job. This is also when you had better check and replenish inventories of your tools and supplies prior to beginning. Why?

*All of the efforts in repair and maintenance will save exceptionally valuable time in the field.* The one thing that is hard or nearly impossible to replace is lost time over a broken anything when you are also fighting the weather.

It does not matter if you are a hunter with a lease giving you permission to plant and take care of the land or a 20,000-acre dairy and crop operation. Equipment performance, when you need it, is critical. Check everything over — change oil, fuel and air filters, ensure the battery is fully charged and ready. Tighten or replace all bolts; check tensioners, tires, chains, belts and controls. When things break, it will be at the absolute worst time, and normally that is accompanied by another failure like the barn compressor motor decides to permanently retire. No air supply or air tools until it is replaced. That just happened in the middle of our last snowstorm and deep freeze when the plow frame broke.

Next, get all the planting equipment ready, seeders and spreaders, rollers or cultipackers. Brush out all the PTO shaft couplers before trying to put them on the PTO shaft. Clean all the seed bins and drop hoses, replace if there is any doubt.

Planning and buying the right lime, fertilizer, chemicals and seeds is also critical. Know the best sources for whatever you are planting and know, the prices will be high. *But you had a budget set for all of this, right?*

**Continued on Page 2**

**Continued from Page 1** — We also have invasives we have to use chemicals to eradicate, from sericea lespedeza to thistle, teasel, and honey locust. Hate those trees.

Partner to all this is ensuring all tires are good and ready to roll, which also means checking all trailers for good couplers, all lights working (normally a ground problem), and all wooden beds retreated for another season. Check that you have enough tie downs and they are rated for the weight you are securing.

Of course doing all this, you are ready, but woah, wait until the ground is warm enough for planting normally around 60 degrees here in the Midwest, for solid germination in cold country.

Have the kids create a checklist of all equipment to track, listing when and what was serviced and if parts were involved, how much. Want to scare yourself? Do the same for all the tires on all equipment.

***DO NOT forget to check all fire extinguishers and first aid kits.***

Get ready for spring the right way and enjoy the benefits of your work without going into too many panic modes. Mud season will be over soon, with a few more winter days thrown in so use the time wisely.

Catch you across the creek.

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

## Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies applauds intro of excise tax legislation

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (Association) applauds House introduction of the *Sporting Goods Excise Tax Modernization Act* ([H.R. 1494](#)), which would close a significant gap in the collection of taxes for the Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration Trust Funds. The bipartisan legislation was introduced by Representatives Panetta (D-CA) and Moore (R-UT) to make online marketplaces accountable for collection of the excise tax on archery and angling equipment sold directly to consumers from outside of the U.S. by online vendors.

“We thank Representatives Moore and Panetta for their leadership to restore the integrity of our nation’s conservation investments,” said Riley Peck, Director of the Division of Wildlife Resources for the Utah Department of Natural Resources. “In Utah, we are fortunate to have almost 200 Wildlife Management Areas across more than 500,000 acres that our agency is entrusted to manage. Keeping those habitats healthy, accessible, and full of abundant fish and wildlife requires us to make every dollar count.”

Archery and sportfishing manufacturers proudly contribute tens of millions of dollars annually to the [American System of Conservation Funding](#) through the collection of excise taxes under the Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration Programs, providing dedicated funding to state agencies for fish and wildlife conservation. But online sales from foreign companies avoid the traditional method of excise tax collection, placing an unrealistic administrative burden on the individual consumer.

“Continuing our legacy of conservation simply would not be possible without these excise taxes funding the work of state fish and wildlife agencies,” said Judith Camuso, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and President of the Association. “We owe it to our natural resources, our hunters and anglers, and industry partners to protect American businesses from being undercut by foreign manufacturers that do not pay the excise tax on sporting goods.”

The bill would follow through on the [recent recommendations from the Government Accountability Office](#) by making online marketplace facilitators accountable for the collection of excise taxes on these products. The Association urges unanimous passage of this legislation and also thanks original cosponsors for their support.



# Northeast Montana CWD cases on the rise

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) prevalence is increasing in most of northeast Montana, as is the spread of the disease across the landscape.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks recently tallied [results of CWD samples taken during the 2024 big game season](#).

CWD was first detected in northeast Montana in 2018. Annual sampling of hunter-harvested animals, show the prevalence continues to increase, especially in mule deer.

“Region-wide, CWD prevalence in adult mule deer has increased from around 3 percent of the 2018-19 samples to almost 18 percent of 2024 samples,” said Scott Hemmer, Havre-area biologist, who helps keep tabs on CWD in the region.

“Prevalence is more pronounced for mule deer in the northern hunting districts that border Canada.”

CWD likely first reached northern Montana from deer populations in Saskatchewan and Alberta, which have had CWD for more than a decade.

Following the latest sampling efforts in 2024, northern hunting district (HD) 600 has a prevalence rate of 28 percent for adult mule deer. HD 670, in the north-central area of the region, shows a prevalence of 34 percent, and HD 640, on the eastern end of the region, has overall prevalence rates in mule deer of 30 percent. Prevalence in mule deer bucks is even higher.

“This increase is rather concerning, as we had early management objectives to keep prevalence rates below 5 percent in the population,” Hemmer said. “Other western states have reported deer population declines correlated with CWD prevalence surpassing 20 to 40 percent in a population.”

CWD in whitetail deer in northeast Montana hasn’t been as high as in mule deer, but whitetails also show prevalence increasing across the region in most districts.

“In adult whitetail deer, the CWD prevalence trend has been slower and more sporadic, from 0 percent in 2018-2019 samples in the region, to around 4 percent in 2024,” Hemmer said. “The lower prevalence rate in whitetails could be due to a variety of factors, but one that may contribute is that whitetails are more common along the Milk and Missouri Rivers, which are 40 to 50 miles from the Canadian border.”

Detection of CWD in Region 6 continues to spread as well.

This hunting season, CWD was detected for the first time in HD 620 in central Phillips County, with two positive cases. Every year, FWP staff see CWD spread both to new hunting districts and to new areas within hunting districts in northeast Montana.

In addition, for the first time, CWD was detected in a whitetail deer in HD 650, which is in McCone County.

Only two hunting districts in northeast Montana have yet to have a CWD detection: HD 621, which is in southern Phillips County, and HD 652, which is a permit-only area for mule deer buck hunting in McCone County along Fort Peck Reservoir. The absence of a detection doesn’t mean that CWD is not in these hunting districts, as fewer samples have come from these areas.

## Managing CWD in the future

For the latest information on CWD, including detection maps, disease information and information on how to get your animal sampled please go to [fwp.mt.gov/cwd](http://fwp.mt.gov/cwd).



**QUWF has four landowner coops: The Grouse Coop and the Niangua Coop in Missouri, and the Catskill Mountains Wildlife and Oregon Joint Wildlife coops.**

**Interested in forming a coop?**

**Email Craig Alderman at [admin@quwf.net](mailto:admin@quwf.net).**

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## VT Fish and Wildlife proposes moose permit allocation

**MONTPELIER, VT** — The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department has proposed issuing 180 moose hunting permits in Vermont’s Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) E in the northeastern corner of the state in a continued effort to reduce the impact of winter ticks on moose in that area. No permits are recommended for the rest of the state. This is the same permit allocation that was approved by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board in 2024 and 2023.

The proposal was given initial approval by the Fish and Wildlife Board at its February 19 meeting and is now available for public comment.

The goal of the department’s 2025 moose harvest recommendation is to improve the health of moose in WMU-E by reducing the number of moose and thereby reducing the abundance and impact of winter ticks.

“Moose are abundant in WMU-E with significantly higher population density than in any other part of the state,” said Nick Fortin, Vermont Fish and Wildlife’s moose project leader. “The higher moose density supports high numbers of winter ticks which negatively impact moose health and survival.”



Ongoing monitoring of moose health in WMU-E shows the population continues to be

negatively impacted by

winter ticks. Birth rates are low, and many calves do not survive their first winter.

“Research has shown that lower moose densities support relatively few winter ticks that do not impact moose populations,” said Fortin. “Reducing moose density decreases the number of available hosts which in turn decreases the number of winter ticks on the landscape.”

The department would issue 80 either-sex moose hunting permits and 100 antlerless moose permits in WMU-E for the moose seasons this October. This is expected to result in a harvest of about 86 moose, or about 10 percent of the moose population in WMU-E.

“This permit recommendation represents a continued attempt to address winter tick impacts on moose in WMU-E,” added Fortin. “Given the poor health of the moose population in that area and a clearly identified cause, we need to take action to address this issue. Without intervention to reduce the moose population, high tick loads will continue to impact the health of moose in that region for many years.”

“Department staff, including lead moose biologist Nick Fortin and Research Manager Dr. Katherina Gieder, brought incredible scientific expertise to this recommendation,” said Interim Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Andrea Shortsleeve. “The proposal our board vetted and approved was informed by years of field research and sophisticated statistical analyses that have been featured in peer reviewed publications alongside results from sister efforts in Maine and New Hampshire.”

The [2025 Moose Harvest Recommendation](#) and information about the moose study are available on Vermont Fish and Wildlife’s website. From the Home page, click on Hunt and then Moose.

# Activities and giveaways at Rack Madness

Participating in this year's Rack Madness could land you a great prize. Two lucky participants will win a lifetime combination hunting and fishing license, and drawings and giveaways for other prizes will take place throughout the day. It all starts with registering for the event!

This event will be held from 1-6 p.m. March 5 at the Wildlife Department headquarters at [1801 N. Lincoln Blvd.](#) in Oklahoma City. This family-friendly event welcomes anyone to bring their deer/elk antlers, antelope horns or bear skulls for professional scoring by ODWC personnel. In addition to scoring and prizes, there will also be activities taking place throughout the day.

## Registration and Requirements

Participants should pre-register online at [GoOutdoorsOklahoma](#). Scoring will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis. There is a two-item scoring limit per participant. Antlers must both be attached to the skull plate, whether mounted or unmounted. In addition to white-tailed and mule deer antlers, scoring will be available for elk antlers, antelope horns and bear skulls. Harvest must have occurred in Oklahoma.

## Lifetime License Giveaways and Other Prizes

Register to get your deer, elk, antelope, or bear scored and you could win a lifetime combination hunting and fishing license donated by the [Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation](#).

To help recognize "hunters in the know take a doe," the [Oklahoma State Game Warden Association](#) is also giving away a lifetime combination hunting and fishing license to one lucky person who harvested a doe during the 2024-2025 deer season. Visit the Game Thief Trailer in the front of the building and see the Game Wardens to put your name in for this lifetime drawing.

The winners of the lifetimes must be eligible to hold a lifetime license and will have the option to transfer the prize to someone else who is eligible. The lifetime drawings will take place at 5:45 p.m. and participants do not have to be present to win. Anyone who checks in at the event after 5:30 p.m. will not be eligible to participate in the drawing.

There will also be hourly drawings for prizes during the event including items from the Go Outdoors Oklahoma shop!

## Can't Make it to Rack Madness?

If you are unable to attend the event you can still get your rack scored. Click the link below to find the contact information for an official scorer near you.



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## NSSF commends second amendment protection act intros

WASHINGTON, D.C. — NSSF®, The Firearm Industry Trade Association, commends the introduction of the Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act in the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate. U.S. Rep. Mike Bost(R-Ill.), Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, along with Rep. Morgan Luttrell (R-Texas), introduced [H.R. 1041](#), and Sen. John Kennedy (R-La.), along with Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, introduced [S. 478](#). The two pieces of legislation would ensure that no Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) bureaucrat can strip a veteran with a fiduciary of their rights to keep and bear arms without a judge or court ruling first that the veteran is a danger to themselves or their community.

Chairman Bost’s bill has 40 cosponsors. Sen. Kennedy’s legislation has 15 cosponsors.

“This legislation will ensure that veterans are not improperly added as a prohibited person on the FBI’s National Instant Criminal Background Check System simply because they need assistance with financial matters. Needing a fiduciary alone does not disqualify a veteran from legally purchasing a firearm at retail,” said Lawrence G. Keane, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, NSSF. “We owe our freedoms to veterans who fought to preserve all our rights. Congress should ensure that veterans’ Second Amendment rights are protected when it comes to the Department of Veterans Affairs. NSSF is grateful for the leadership and advocacy of Chairman Bost, Senator Kennedy and Senator Moran, on behalf of veterans.”

NSSF has been a [longtime advocate](#) to fix this bureaucratic oversight that has resulted in veterans’ names being submitted to the FBI’s National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) because they are in need of a fiduciary, or someone to assist with their finances. Needing a fiduciary is not a prohibiting factor to deny any individual the ability to legally purchase or possess a firearm. No one – much less a law-abiding veteran – should have their ability to lawfully acquire a firearm at retail – without Due Process.

This issue of veterans’ names being submitted to FBI NICS as prohibited individuals was suspended in the [FY 2024 MilCon/VA Appropriations bill and subsequent two continuing resolutions](#). However, that is a temporary fix that will expire on March 14, 2025. This legislation, introduced both in the House and Senate, would resolve this bureaucratic oversight by protecting the Second Amendment rights of veterans who have served their nation to defend those rights for all.



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# North Dakota reports CWD test results

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department tested 1,456 animals for chronic wasting disease during the 2024 sampling season. Game and Fish confirmed 17 deer tested positive for CWD, 15 of which were taken by hunters and two were clinical deer confirmed through diagnostic examination.

Positive cases came from units 3A1 (seven mule deer), 3E1 (one mule deer), 3E2 (one mule deer), 3F2 (four mule deer and two whitetails), 3B2 (one mule deer) and 3B3 (one whitetail). CWD was not previously detected in units 3B2 or 3B3.

Sampling efforts fell short of the 10% goal in units where CWD surveillance was concentrated.

Game and Fish will use its 2024 surveillance data to guide CWD management moving forward. Regulations related to CWD are set annually by proclamation.

CWD is a fatal disease of deer, moose and elk that remains on the landscape and can cause long-term population impacts as infection rates climb.

[More information about CWD](http://gf.nd.gov/cwd) can be found by visiting the department’s website, [gf.nd.gov/cwd](http://gf.nd.gov/cwd).



# Court blocks Maine’s 72-hour waiting law

NSSF®, The Firearm Industry Trade Association, lauds the decision by the U.S. District Court for the District of Maine to [grant](#) a preliminary injunction of the state’s 72-hour waiting period law handed down today. The law, passed in 2024, required firearm retailers to delay delivery to a law-abiding citizen of lawfully-sold firearms for three days after an FBI National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) verification allows a transaction to proceed. The challenge to the law is supported by NSSF.

“This decision by the court is an affirmation that unconstitutional delays on the free exercise of rights are not in compliance with Second Amendment rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution,” said Lawrence G. Keane, NSSF Senior Vice President and General Counsel. “Rights delayed are rights denied. The decision to enjoin this law while it is challenged in court ensures that law-abiding Mainers are not encumbered and deprived of their rights to keep and bear arms after they have proven they are not prohibited from legally possessing a firearm.”

The court rejected Maine Attorney General Aaron Frey’s argument that the Second Amendment does not protect the right to acquire a firearm as “interpretative jui jitsu that would make Kafka blush,” and which the “Supreme Court would view with great skepticism.”

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**Continued from Page 8** — The lawsuit against Maine’s Attorney General Frey was filed by several individuals, federally licensed firearm dealers (FFLs) and an organization that provides firearm training. One of the plaintiffs is a domestic-abuse survivor and certified firearm instructor who offers self-defense classes to victims and survivors. Maine’s 72-hour waiting period law prevents the women she assists from adequately defending themselves against abusive partners who pose a credible and imminent threat to their physical safety, as it forces them to wait three days to secure a firearm even when they have passed the NICS background check. Likewise, another plaintiff—a federally licensed firearm dealer—has been forced to delay sales to qualified individuals with time-sensitive needs, including a single woman who was being stalked and a married couple whose home was burglarized. These stories are emblematic of the countless number of individuals whose rights have been denied and whose safety has been put in jeopardy due to Maine’s 72-hour waiting period.

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NSSF supported the plaintiffs who brought the challenge to the law that passed in the wake of the tragic and senseless murders in Lewiston, Maine. State lawmakers, and Maine Gov. Janet Mills, passed and enacted the law under pressure by gun control groups to “do something.” The law they crafted does little to improve public safety and only denies the Constitutional rights of those who obey the law. A commission studied the tragic murders and **concluded** that multi-agency failures, including by the U.S. Army Reserve and local law enforcement, were to blame for the threat posed by the murderer.

## North Dakota spring light goose conservation order

North Dakota’s [spring light goose conservation order](#) opens Feb. 15 and continues through May 11.

Residents must have a 2024-25 (valid through March 31) or 2025-26 (required April 1) combination license; or a small game, and general game and habitat license. Resident youth under age 16 only need the general game and habitat license. The 2025-26 license is available for purchase beginning March 15.

Nonresidents need a 2025 spring light goose conservation order license. The cost is \$50 and valid statewide. Nonresidents who hunt in spring remain eligible to buy a fall season license. The spring license does not count against the 14-day fall waterfowl hunting season regulation.

In addition, nonresident youth under 16 can purchase a license at the resident fee.

A federal duck stamp is not required for either residents or nonresidents.

[Resident and nonresident licenses](#) are available online at the North Dakota Game and Fish Department website, [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov).

Hunters must register annually with the Harvest Information Program prior to hunting in each state. The HIP number obtained for North Dakota’s spring conservation order is also valid for North Dakota’s fall hunting season. The number can be obtained online on the Game and Fish website.

The spring conservation order is only open to light geese – snows, blues and Ross’s. Species identification is important because white-fronted and Canada geese travel with light geese. The conservation order is closed to whitefronts, Canada geese, swans and all other migratory birds.

For more information on regulations refer to the [2025 Spring Light Goose Hunting Regulations](#).



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 Federation on Instagram  
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# Browning introduces LPC series battery packs

Browning Trail Cameras is proud to announce the launch of its innovative LPC Series Rechargeable Lithium-Ion Battery Packs, designed to provide unmatched power, convenience, and eco-conscious performance for trail camera enthusiasts. Featuring three versatile models—LPC-1, LPC-2, and LPC-3—these battery packs revolutionize the way users power their trail cameras in the field.

## Efficient Power for Every Adventure

The LPC Series eliminates the need for disposable AA batteries, offering an **impressive 30% increase in battery life** to keep your cameras running longer. Whether you're monitoring game or securing remote property, these lithium-ion packs ensure uninterrupted performance, so you never miss a critical moment.

Each battery pack is engineered for easy swapping in the field and comes equipped with a **USB-C charging cable** for fast, hassle-free recharging. The LPC Series provides a seamless power solution, enhancing the performance of your compatible Browning trail cameras while reducing environmental impact.

## Tailored Compatibility for Every Model

- **LPC-1:** Designed for BCT-PSMX, BTC-PSMXHD, BTC-PSMHD, BTC-PSMHD-AI, BTC-PSMHD40, and all BTC-PSMHDS series cameras.
- **LPC-2:** Optimized for BTC-5FHD, BTC-6FHD, BTC-5FHDR, BTC-5FHDR40, and BTC-6FHDR models.
- **LPC-3:** Perfectly suited for BTC-VPHD, BTC-VPHD-AI, BTC-VPHD-L, BTC-7E-HP5, and BTC-8E-HP5 cameras.

## Why Choose the LPC Series?

- **Extended Battery Life:** Up to 30% longer camera operation per charge.
- **Convenient Charging:** USB-C compatibility for quick, reliable recharging.
- **Field-Ready Design:** Easy-to-swap packs for minimal downtime.
- **Eco-Friendly Solution:** Reduce battery waste while maximizing performance.



## Elevate Your Trail Camera Experience

Whether you're a dedicated wildlife tracker, land manager, or outdoor enthusiast, the LPC Series Rechargeable Lithium-Ion Battery Packs deliver the reliable power you need to capture every moment. Say goodbye to disposable batteries and hello to the future of trail camera energy solutions.

## Availability and Pre-Order Information

The LPC Series Rechargeable Lithium-Ion Battery Packs are not yet in stock, but their highly anticipated availability will be announced soon. To ensure you're among the first to experience these game-changing power solutions, contact your Browning Trail Cameras representative or local dealer to reserve your spot on the pre-order list.

## About Browning Trail Cameras

Browning Trail Cameras represents the pinnacle of outdoor technology, delivering trail cameras designed by a team of hunters and outdoor enthusiasts committed to pushing the boundaries of performance and reliability.

With a focus on craftsmanship, durability, and precision, all Browning Trail Cameras products are manufactured using the highest-quality materials and backed by a comprehensive One-Year Warranty. This commitment to excellence ensures reliability from a brand trusted by outdoor enthusiasts worldwide.

# Notes from the Road:

## No habitat project is too big or too small



**By Nick Prough** — First off, I want to comment a bit on the question that is often asked by many different landowners — Is my habitat project too small to do any good or is my project just too big to accomplish? And my simple answer is always NO.

Habitat projects for wildlife come in all shapes, sizes and costs, as well as in scope and scale of the project that you are going to be undertaking. Probably one of the most important guiding principles that I often tell landowners, including one just this past week who has seen tremendous results from his working on the “Big 3 Habitat Efforts” for the past couple years, is — even if you just pick a couple of acres to work on at a time and really focus your efforts into creating quality habitat that the wildlife species you are managing for are truly needing and utilizing, then the project can and will often have excellent results that many times can be seen quite quickly on the tracts of land you are managing.

I say this because landowners all have different circumstances for which they can manage the property they own or manage. Many times, the amount of time is limiting, or the available acres, or their budget or a whole host of other competing land uses for that particular farm or tract of land. I always say start small and accomplish your goals for that project, and then expand from there to the next step/level.

This seems to be a time tested and proven method for hundreds of habitat projects I have been involved in over the years with landowners across the country. Many landowners may only have a 40-acre tract they are managing, while others may have 400 or even 4,000 acres, but while the scale of the total project may change, you really truly only work on one acre at a time.

This also ties in nicely with the fact that wildlife generally is concerned with the current acre they are inhabiting or the next acre they are headed towards. Does the acre they are using have all the food, water and cover they are requiring at that time of year? If your answer is no, then you that simply have a habitat area you can concentrate on in order to help turn that answer to yes after your habitat modifications are put in place. If you continue to modify the scale of your project and keep this in mind as your project goals and objectives continue to evolve along the way, then you are well on your way to a very successful habitat project no-matter what the scale of the habitat project is or the species you are managing for is.

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 Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation chief wildlife biologist and landowner liaison.*



# Ohio's final 2024-25 deer hunting season report

Hunters across Ohio checked 238,137 white-tailed deer during the 2024-25 hunting season that concluded on Sunday, Feb. 2, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife. The final total, the fourth highest number of deer taken on record, represents all deer bagged during archery, gun, muzzleloader, and youth seasons since Sept. 14, 2024.

In 2023-24, deer hunters checked 213,927 deer. The three-year average (2021 to 2023) is 207,295.

Since the deer season opened, Ohio hunters added approximately 12 million pounds of venison to dinner tables and freezers. A deer can yield 50 pounds of nutritious meat for hunters to share with friends and families or donate to food banks around Ohio.

## Historic deer hunting totals

The number of deer bagged in 2024-25 is the highest since 2010-11. Ohio's five highest deer season totals:

- 2009-10: 260,442
- 2008-09: 251,299
- 2010-11: 238,683
- 2024-25: 238,137
- 2006-07: 236,676

## Ohio's 2024-25 deer checked, by individual season

- Archery: 106,269
- Weeklong and two-day gun seasons: 104,565
- Four-day muzzleloader season: 13,476
- Two-day youth season: 10,449
- Controlled firearm hunts: 3,378

## Top 10 counties

1. Coshocton: 8,196 (Last season, Coshocton County also led the state with 7,740 deer checked.)
2. Tuscarawas: 7,373
3. Knox: 6,730
4. Muskingum: 6,269
5. Ashtabula: 6,042
6. Guernsey: 5,762
7. Carroll: 5,759
8. Licking: 5,754
9. Holmes: 5,684
10. Richland: 5,028

## Most popular hunting implements

- Crossbow: 78,254 (33%)
- Straight-walled cartridge rifle: 77,027 (32%)
- Shotgun: 34,338 (14%)
- Vertical bow: 30,839 (13%)
- Muzzleloader: 17,092 (7%)
- Handgun: 587 (less than 1%)

## Deer type checked this season

- Does: 115,683 (49%)
- Antlered bucks: 97,618 (41%)
- Button bucks: 21,689 (9%)
- Bucks with shed antlers or antlers shorter than 3 inches: 3,147 (1%)



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**Continued from Page 12 — Permit sales**

Ohio hunters were issued 431,660 deer permits across all hunting seasons. Hunters from all 50 U.S. states purchased nonresident hunting licenses for use during the 2024-25 seasons, many of them for deer. States with the highest nonresident license sales include:

- Pennsylvania (7,898)
- Michigan (5,205)
- West Virginia (3,625)
- North Carolina (3,287)
- New York (3,170)

## The Bassmaster Classic returns to Knoxville in '26

**BIRMINGHAM, Ala.** — The Super Bowl of Bass Fishing is making its way back to one of the most electrifying destinations in the sport. B.A.S.S. officials announced today that the 2026 Bass Pro Shops Bassmaster Classic presented by Under Armour will return to Knoxville, Tenn., for the third time on March 13-15, 2026.

With competition set on the Tennessee River's Fort Loudoun and Tellico lakes, daily weigh-ins will take place at the University of Tennessee's Thompson-Boling Arena at Food City Center in downtown Knoxville. The Bassmaster Classic Outdoors Expo presented by GSM Outdoors, featuring more than 200 exhibitors, will be held at the Knoxville Convention Center and World's Fair Exhibition Hall, offering over 250,000 square feet of event space. [Visit Knoxville](#) will once again serve as the event's host.



“We are thrilled to return to the site of two of our most successful Classics in history,” said B.A.S.S. CEO Chase Anderson. “East Tennessee fully embraces the Classic for what it truly is — a celebration of the sport of bass fishing. The fan experience in Knoxville is second to none, with all event venues within walking distance. With our ever-growing global fanbase, we expect the 2026 Classic to be even bigger and more exciting.”

The 2026 Bassmaster Classic will feature 58 of the world's top bass anglers, who will earn their spots through the [Bassmaster Elite Series](#), [St. Croix Bassmaster Opens presented by SEVIN](#), [Mercury B.A.S.S. Nation Championship presented by Lowrance](#), [Bassmaster College Classic Bracket presented by Lew's](#) and the [Bass Pro Shops Bassmaster Team Championship](#). These elite competitors will battle for a \$300,000 first-place prize and a total purse of over \$850,000.

Knoxville has become a premier destination for the Bassmaster Classic, drawing record-breaking crowds and delivering significant economic benefits.

“This will be the third Bassmaster Classic we bring to Knoxville, which speaks to the perfect combination of our strong partnership and the exceptional experience our city provides,” said Chad Culver, senior director of the Visit Knoxville Sports Commission and Convention Sales.

The [2023 Bassmaster Classic](#) set a new [attendance record](#) with 163,914 fans, generating an [economic impact](#) of \$35.5 million for Knoxville and east Tennessee. Additionally, the event generated \$2.85 million in state and local tax revenue, with attendees booking 31,525 hotel room nights across Knox County. The Classic also supported 12,698 jobs throughout the event. The Classic celebration continued when B.A.S.S. was honored as the Best Professional Event at the [2023 SportsTravel Awards](#).

**Continued on Page 14**

**Continued from Page 13** — “Knoxville shines during major events like the Bassmaster Classic,” said Kim Bumpas, president of Visit Knoxville. “Both the anglers and fans enjoy an unmatched experience, from the Tennessee River to the world-class venues hosting events throughout Classic weekend. We are excited to welcome everyone back in 2026.”

Fort Loudoun and Tellico lakes, covering approximately 30,000 acres, will once again provide anglers with a dynamic and competitive fishery. Competitors will also have access to waters upstream from Fort Loudoun Dam, extending to the Interstate 40 bridge on the Holston River and the Highway 168 bridge on the French Broad River.

Elite Series angler [Jeff Gustafson](#) knows the potential of these waters well. In 2023, he secured victory at the Bassmaster Classic by landing 42 pounds, 7 ounces of bass, becoming the first Canadian angler to win the championship and taking home the coveted Ray Scott Trophy and the \$300,000 prize.

Daily takeoffs will take place at [Volunteer Landing](#), where more than 15,000 fans gathered in 2023 to watch the world’s best bass anglers embark on their quest for Classic glory.

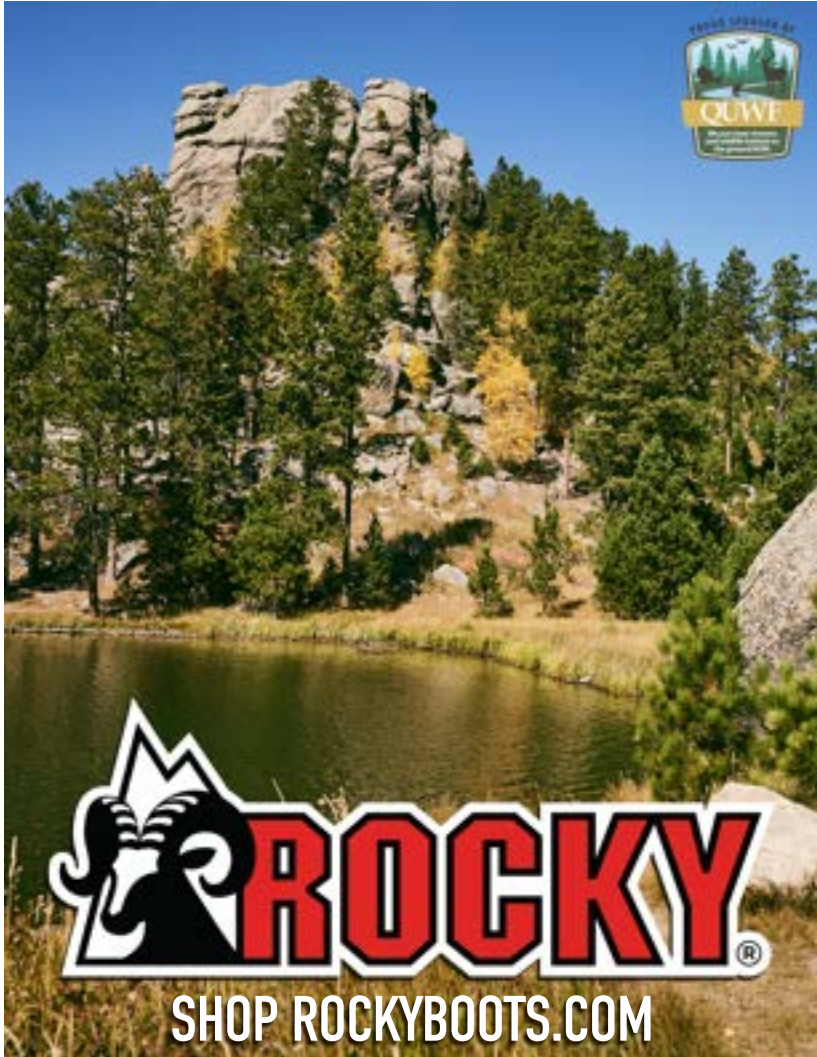
“B.A.S.S. is extremely excited to return to Knoxville for the 2026 Bass Pro Shops Bassmaster Classic presented by Under Armour,” said Chris Bowes, B.A.S.S. vice president of tournaments. “This event should be just as competitive as past Classics on Fort Loudoun and Tellico lakes.

“We expect to see all three black bass species cross the weigh-in scales, and with such a versatile fishery, competitors will be able to play to their strengths,” Bowes added. “One thing that won’t change is the breathtaking backdrop of Knoxville and the convenience of its world-class venues for both anglers and fans.”

For all your chapter 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! Also, any questions concerning banquets and/or vendor programs, please call the QUWF National Office at (417) 345-5960.



**Visit the Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation online! Scan the QR code.**



# AGFC announces temporary WMA closures

**LITTLE ROCK** – Several Arkansas wildlife management areas will be closed temporarily to daytime public access for short periods of time during February and March. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Wildlife Services, in cooperation with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, will be conducting aerial operations to facilitate feral hog control efforts. The flights will be dependent on the weather. Individual WMAs will only be closed to public access for one to two days each to allow for the aerial flights.

Access will not be allowed during ongoing operations to provide public safety. Varying weather and site-specific conditions will not allow for specific dates of the closures. The closure dates allow some flexibility to take advantage of resources over large contiguous tracts of habitat. In the event that access to the WMA is restricted, AGFC and partnering agency staff will be on-site to maintain road and access closures.

The WMAs that will be temporarily closed include: Cut-Off Creek, Seven Devils, Beryl Anthony Lower Ouachita, Freddie Black Choctaw Island, Trusten Holder, George H. Dunklin Jr. Bayou Metso, U of A Pine Tree, Henry Gray Hurricane Lake, Steve N. Wilson Raft Creek, Big Lake and McIlroy Madison County.

The aerial operations are the result of planning and coordination of multiple partners, condensed into several days of actual operations. The AGFC and USDA APHIS would like to thank the public in advance for their patience and understanding while these activities are underway and apologize for any inconvenience related to the operation, AGFC Feral Hog Program Coordinator Ryan Farney said. “These targeted control efforts are essential to reducing feral hog populations and protecting the long-term health and sustainability of our wildlife management areas.”

## 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.

### You are NOT alone.

Veterans who served our country honorably deserve and have earned the right now to enjoy its freedoms and receive the support and benefits they deserve.

We are the **ONLY VETERAN FORMED** and managed national wildlife and conservation organization in the U.S. QUWF and our chapters support veteran businesses as well. Let us know.



## Nonresidents need valid Idaho license to gather antlers

This time of year, shed hunters get excited about hitting the hills looking for antlers dropped by Idaho's big game animals. However, it is important to remember that those who are not legal Idaho residents are now required to purchase a nonresident Idaho license for hunting big game in order to legally pick-up antlers in Idaho. This new rule went into effect on July 1, 2024.

According to Idaho code 36-508, "A nonresident collecting, possessing, or transporting antlers or horns shed from deer, elk, moose, or pronghorn in this state shall be required to first procure a license entitling the nonresident to hunt big game." However, this license requirement does not apply to nonresidents under 12 years of age provided they are accompanied in the field by a nonresident who is the holder of a valid Idaho hunting license for big game or a resident.

**Why this new rule?** The intent is to protect wintering wildlife by reducing overcrowding on the hill among shed hunters, especially during those occasions when neighboring states enact their own shed hunt closures. When neighboring states have an emergency closure, that action can often drive shed hunters to other states like Idaho where shed hunting may still be open, as was the case during the severe winter of 2022/2023. An influx of extra people on the landscape can make wintering wildlife even more vulnerable to increased disturbance—and that's true even during an average winter.

**Didn't Idaho recently ban shed hunting during winter and early spring?** Not exactly. In 2023, the Idaho State Legislature gave the Idaho Fish and Game Commission the *authority* to set emergency shed hunting closures as needed. With significant public support, the Commission temporarily closed shed hunting in Idaho's Southeast and Upper Snake Regions from Jan. 1 through April 14 in 2024. This was to help reduce stress on wintering big game and help eastern Idaho mule deer herds recover following the harsh winter of 2022/2023.

However, this action did not necessarily mean that Idaho would see shed hunting closures like that every year. The Commission agreed to take each year on a case-by-case basis and would address emergency closures based on input from Idaho Fish and Game and the public. For 2025, no shed hunting closure has been proposed for any part of the state because of the generally mild winter conditions Idaho is experiencing.

**Why regulate shed hunting when there are so many other outdoor activities happening this time of year?** It is true that any human activity on the landscape that disturbs wintering big game can be an issue, especially in the late winter and spring when an animal's fat reserves are depleting. That's why Idaho Fish and Game always encourages every outdoor recreationist to reduce wildlife disturbance by giving animals their space.

However, shed hunting by definition is a wildlife-focused activity that can actually drive people toward vulnerable big game, and it is an activity Idaho Fish and Game can regulate as necessary depending on winter severity and animal body conditions.

If you know a nonresident who enjoys shed hunting in Idaho, please remind them of the new license requirement. And, please be sure to check Idaho Fish and Game's website and social media channels for information about future antler gathering closures.

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## SAAMI announces acceptance of new cartridges

The Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute,®Inc., (**SAAMI**®) has announced the acceptance of three new rifle cartridges for SAAMI standardization. SAAMI is the organization at the forefront of promoting firearm safety by creating standards that ensure safety, reliability and interchangeability of firearms, ammunition and components.

Click on the cartridge name to open the introduction package.

**7mm Backcountry** – The 7mm Backcountry (7mm BC) was introduced by **Federal Premium Ammunition** (The Kinetic Group) with a 170-grain bullet traveling at a velocity of 3,000 fps and a Maximum Average Pressure of 80,000 psi.

**25 Creedmoor** – The 25 Creedmoor (25 CM) was introduced by **Hornady Manufacturing Company** with a 134-grain bullet traveling at a velocity of 2,810 fps and a Maximum Average Pressure of 62,000 psi.

**338 Advanced Rifle Cartridge** – The 338 Advanced Rifle Cartridge (338 ARC) was introduced by **Hornady Manufacturing Company** with a 175-grain bullet traveling at a velocity of 2,050 fps and a Maximum Average Pressure of 52,000 psi.

For further information on these new cartridges please visit <https://saami.org/technical-information/cartridge-chamber-drawings/>.



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*Review all products online at [www.alpsbrands.com](http://www.alpsbrands.com)*

# Newly detected CWD positives in northeast PA

**Editor’s Note: KUDO’s to PA to put breeding farms under rules and regulations and confinement.**

The Pennsylvania Game Commission, in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, is announcing two deer have tested positive for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in a new area of Pennsylvania.

The two deer, one hunter-harvested and one from a captive facility, were detected in Luzerne County. Both deer were adult males.

The Luzerne County detections are 40 miles from the nearest wild CWD detection. They will ultimately result in Disease Management Area (DMA) changes later this spring – the details of which will be released following the Game Commission’s Board of Commissioners meeting in April.

The captive deer that tested positive for CWD Dec. 16 was from a breeding deer farm in Luzerne County. Initial positive test results from the Pennsylvania Animal Diagnostic System Laboratory were confirmed in the USDA’s National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa on Dec. 23. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture placed the farm under a quarantine order for five years. The order requires the farm to test any additional deer that die on the farm and not transfer any deer on or off the farm. Any subsequent positive test results will extend the quarantine order requirements and restrictions for another five years.

Pennsylvania deer farms must participate in one of two stringent programs – the Herd Certified Program, or the Herd Monitored Program. The Herd Certified Program meets U.S. Department of Agriculture CWD standards and is required for any cervid farmer wishing to ship deer across state lines. Both programs require proper IDs; record-keeping on all animals moved on or off farms; annual herd inventories; reporting of CWD suspect animals and animals that die, escape or are stolen; maintaining a minimum 8-foot-high fence; obtaining permits to import animals from out-of-state; and other measures to monitor herds for disease. Only farms enrolled in the Herd Certified Program are permitted to move live deer across state lines, with official identification that will aid veterinarians in tracking disease origins in the event remaining deer die and test positive.

Chronic Wasting Disease programs in captive deer are managed by the PA Department of Agriculture and are necessary to help slow the spread of the disease and allow these businesses to operate.

An always-fatal neurological disease caused by a misfolded protein called a prion, CWD is a threat to deer and elk. It’s classified as a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) and is similar to scrapie in sheep, mad cow disease in cattle and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans.

CWD spreads through direct animal-to-animal contact, as well as indirectly through prion-contaminated environments. CWD-infected individuals shed prions through saliva, urine and feces, and infected carcasses contribute to environmental contamination. Once in soil, CWD prions remain infectious for decades. Therefore, feeding deer is strongly discouraged and is illegal within existing DMAs.

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# MA officials provide updated avian flu guidance

*Recommendations aim to support public health, agriculture, and wildlife amid ongoing monitoring efforts*

State environmental and health officials are informing the public that Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 virus, which rarely infects humans, is suspected to be the cause of death in cases of both wild and domestic birds in several Massachusetts municipalities. The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife), the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) are advising the public to refrain from handling birds or other animals that are dead or appear sick and report suspected cases.

Since early 2022, Massachusetts has had recurring incidents of HPAI. In January 2025, an outbreak of HPAI was suspected of causing the death of Canada geese, swans, and other birds in Plymouth. Preliminary positive cases are being reported at other locations across the state. Evidence suggests that HPAI is widespread in Massachusetts and is likely present even in places where there has not been a confirmed positive. State officials are working with partners to test suspected cases and collaborating with municipalities to safely dispose of dead birds.

Both wild and domesticated birds can become infected with HPAI. Raptors, waterfowl, and other aquatic birds are most at risk for infection, although any bird species should be considered susceptible. Birds may be infected with HPAI without showing any signs of illness. Wild mammals, especially those that scavenge on birds, such as foxes, can also become infected.



Continued on Page 21



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**Continued from Page 20 — Report Suspected Cases:**

- **Report Wild Birds:** The public should report observations to MassWildlife of sick or deceased birds if 5 or more birds are found at a single location, using this simple form at [mass.gov/reportbirds](https://mass.gov/reportbirds).
- **Report Domestic Birds:** The public should report sick or dead poultry or other domestic birds by calling MDAR's Division of Animal Health at (617) 626-1795 or through [mass.gov/reportpoultry](https://mass.gov/reportpoultry).

Humans are rarely infected with avian influenza viruses. Humans that have direct contact with animals infected with HPAI are the most at risk of becoming infected. People with questions about the public health impact of HPAI can visit DPH's Avian Influenza [webpage](#) or call the Division of Epidemiology (available 24/7) at 617-983-6800.

**Tips for the Public:**

- **Avoid handling birds and other wildlife:** The public should strictly avoid handling wildlife, especially sick or dead birds or other animals.
- **Keep pets safe:** Dogs and other pets should always be leashed and away from wildlife. Cats are highly susceptible to HPAI and may die from an infection. Cat owners in affected areas should keep their pets indoors to prevent exposure to infected wildlife.
- **Hunting:** While eating wild game meat is generally considered safe, licensed hunters can minimize the risk of wildlife diseases by following [best practices](#) when handling and processing game.

**Tips for Livestock and Poultry Owners:**

Since wild migratory birds are natural carriers for Avian Influenza viruses, including HPAI, preventing wild birds from mixing with or having contact with domestic flocks is essential to disease control and prevention.

- Poultry owners should continue to practice strong biosecurity measures to keep their birds away from wild birds, particularly wild waterfowl, feathers, and droppings.
- Poultry owners with water bodies on their property should take steps to mitigate wild waterfowl from frequenting those areas. Eliminating standing water and preventing domestic birds from having access to ponds, streams, and wetland areas that attract wild waterfowl is critical.
- Avoid unnecessary movement of poultry between locations and be aware of the potential to carry HPAI-contaminated materials onto properties where domestic birds are kept.
- New birds should be completely isolated for at least one month prior to being added to a domestic flock. Birds returning home from fairs or shows should also be isolated from the home flock as if they were new arrivals.
- Limit the number of people that have access to your flock.
- Do not share equipment with other bird owners without thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting between locations.

For more information about HPAI, please visit MDAR's Avian Influenza [webpage](#).



## Idaho enforcing vehicle restrictions at Lake Cascade

**Editor's Note: This is a classic example of irresponsible use of a resource by unauthorized access means. Literally causing damage to the landscape. If you don't know, find out or do not go. Now they are going to ban vehicular access which is normally a snow machine ride in. You can bet it will now be posted for now and next year.**

January has been very cold and has brought virtually no snow to (IDAHO) Valley County, which has been great for ice conditions on Lake Cascade but has created issues for unauthorized use of Bureau of Reclamation land surrounding the reservoir.

Anglers have begun creating a parking area on the Hot Springs Wildlife Management Area along Stonebraker Lane near the Sugarloaf State Park Unit - an area where vehicle use is prohibited by the Bureau of Reclamation's management plan for Lake Cascade ([Lake Cascade Resource Management Plan, 2002](#)).

In the Bureau of Reclamation's management plan, land surrounding Lake Cascade falls into one of three categories: Recreation sites, Conservation Open Space, or Wildlife Management Area. All Bureau of Reclamation recreation sites are managed by Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation for recreational use.

The other two categories primarily serve other purposes, and vehicular use is not permitted in those areas.

The Bureau of Reclamation is officially looking to prohibit further vehicle use on the Hot Springs Wildlife Management Area. Their staff have posted the area as closed to vehicle traffic and has implemented the closure, effective immediately. In addition, the snowmobile access gate immediately adjacent to this location has been closed in order to prevent further unauthorized vehicular use through that gate. These issues have occurred as a direct result of low snow and users traveling where vehicular use is strictly prohibited.

As soon as snow prevents further vehicular travel down Stonebraker Lane, this snowmobile access gate will be re-opened - perhaps that will be after this weekend. In the meantime, Fish and Game will maintain the Access Yes! parking area at the entrance to Stonebraker Lane, and access is allowed at the Sugarloaf Boat Ramp and at the small pullout on Bureau of Reclamation land at the top of the hill until those locations are no longer accessible due to snow. Keep in mind that Stonebraker Lane is not maintained during winter.



*The area highlighted in red is on the Bureau of Reclamation's Hot Springs Wildlife Management Area, and vehicular use is strictly prohibited on this land.*



*Anglers have created an unauthorized parking area on the Wildlife Management Area, where vehicle use is prohibited.*

**Continued on Page 23**

**Continued from Page 22** — Please help promote responsible and appropriate use of this area, by adhering to Bureau of Reclamation rules associated with land use around Lake Cascade. Approved and maintained access areas managed by Idaho Parks and Recreation are located at Blue Heron, Van Wyck, Boulder Creek, and Poison Creek. The Fish and Game Access Yes! location at the entrance to Stonebraker Lane is also a maintained access site.

For more information about winter access on Lake Cascade, please contact the McCall IDFG office – (208) 634-8137, the Lake Cascade State Park office – (208) 382-6544, or the Middle Snake Bureau of Reclamation office – (208) 383-2251.



*Yellow highlighted areas are approved parking areas for winter users on Stonebraker Lane. Be aware that Stonebraker Lane is not maintained in the winter, and typically is not passable after a certain amount of snowfall.*

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