

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: Hang on!

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For all your chapter needs, please call Leslie Casanova [direct](mailto:direct@sportsmaninsurance.com) at Sportsman Insurance Agency at 1-800-925-7767.

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By Craig Alderman — Things are swirling and changing fast. Looking into the government agencies, DOGE is uncovering waste and abuse like never before, billions of dollars in fact. Why should you pay attention?

Major conservation programs like the Farm Bill have yet to be examined under the USDA through DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency).

Will they find fraud, abuse and misuse? I firmly

believe they will, and it will rattle more than a few agencies, NGO's and people, as it should.

Example; The USFS spent a billion dollars on a survey per year of the national parks that they never used the data for anything, and still don't. Truly examining these agencies has never been completed, and there are many who liked their private access to the golden goose, *our taxes, yours and mine.*

You can see each day what has been discovered on the DOGE.gov website, and it amazes anyone who follows it. Remember DOGE DOES NOT make changes, reductions or have the authority to. They report to the respective secretary or the President who makes the decision.

We all knew there was waste but the amount and number of them is mind blowing based on the posted reports. NGO abuse was a key factor for politicians in many agencies and departments. Opinions say it will be the same for AG programs

For us in conservation of wildlife habitat and populations, based on agricultural ownership for the most part, it may change the management structure and underlying financing of that structure of the agencies we use. However, as to the actual programs needed by landowners, I do not believe it will ultimately reduce that support and may increase it by removing bureaucratic abuse and self-protection.

Farmers and ranchers know better than the majority of our country, how to manage with the least to attain the most, fighting weather as well. Now it's time for the government to do the same.

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

Take hunter ed now, hunt turkeys this spring

Editor's Note: This is a great suggestion for all states, getting our youth to hunter education is an awesome plan.

Turkey hunting is fun and exciting and shares a lot of attributes with big game hunting

If you're thinking about taking hunter education before fall hunting season, get a head start with a spring course and take advantage of spring turkey hunts. Idaho Fish and Game offers many options to get your hunter education certification and join the thousands of hunters who take to the fields and woods each year to pursue the state's famous game animals.

While deer and elk garner most of the attention, and people associate those with fall, spring turkey hunts are a great way to start your hunting adventures, and also a low-stress and fun way to introduce people to hunting.

Spring hunter education courses are starting starting now

There are a few ways to get hunter education certification. First, is the traditional classroom course. An experienced hunter education instructor leads students in a classroom setting, and they can interact with their instructor and get hands-on training in safe firearms handling. These courses require about 12-13 hours of class time.

Aspiring hunters also have the option of taking a self-guided online course where they can work at their own pace. It's convenient because you're not stuck to a certain time schedule, but the tradeoff is you lose the person-to-person interaction with an experienced hunter and instructor. The length of time varies, but expect about 10 to 12 hours total to complete the online course.



There's also a hybrid course option for those seeking hands-on firearm experience who don't have time for a traditional course. (Only offered in the Southwest Region.)

Now about those turkeys

Hunter education is a critical and important step in becoming a hunter, but the ultimate goal is to go hunting, which brings us back to turkeys.

Turkeys are a great opportunity for a first hunt for several reasons.

First, they're available in most areas of the state, and all you need to hunt them is a hunting license, turkey tag, shotgun, some camo (or a blind) and a few calls.

Turkeys hunting is obviously bird hunting, but it shares a lot of aspects with deer and elk hunting. You're scouting, spotting, and after you locate them, trying to call them within gun or bow range. It gives you the opportunity to get outside during a great time of year when wildlife is coming alive and tom turkeys start gobbling as the spring mating season gets underway.

It's vocal and exciting, and the general turkey hunting season is typically more than a month. To see season dates, go to the [Upland, Furbearer and Turkey Season and Rules booklet](#).

Be ready for fall hunts

Yeah, we know people are busy, and it's easy to put things off until the last minute. We do it too.

But taking hunter education in the spring not only gets that out of the way, it gives you the opportunity to get outdoors and practice some of the things you learned, and that will make you even more prepared for the fall.

ND Game and Fish offers wildlife food plot seed

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department is once again offering free seed for the 2025 growing season to landowners interested in planting wildlife food plots for pheasants.

Rather than a traditional corn or sunflower food plot, Game and Fish is offering a seed mix that provides increased plant diversity, including flowering plants from spring through fall, which will attract insects, the major diet component of pheasant chicks. Additionally, the mix will provide needed cover during spring and summer, as well as a winter food source. Other wildlife species will also benefit from this mix.

Most Game and Fish food plots are part of the department's Private Land Open To Sportsmen program, but [this food plot campaign](#) does not require a PLOTS contract. Participating landowners are encouraged to allow reasonable public access, which could mean simply providing permission to hunters from time to time, putting up "Ask Before You Enter" signs around the area, or not posting the surrounding land. Additionally, participating landowners cannot charge a fee for hunting.

The department will provide enough seed to cover up to a maximum 5-acre planting at no cost to the landowner.

Landowners interested in receiving the seed must [sign up online](#) by April 4. Seed will be available in May at Game and Fish offices in Bismarck, Jamestown, Devils Lake, Harvey, Dickinson, Williston and Riverdale.

Game and Fish private land biologists can provide technical assistance on food plot location and site preparation.

Landowners interested in additional financial incentives may be considered for the PLOTS program as well. More information is available by [contacting a private land biologist](#) at any Game and Fish office, or email ndgf@nd.gov.



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.



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Avian influenza continues to affect IN wild birds

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) continues to detect highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in wild birds throughout Indiana and has currently detected the H5NI virus in 30 counties. HPAI is also suspected in an additional 32 counties based on reports involving the deaths of raptors, cranes, and waterfowl.

Counties where avian influenza has been detected in wild birds currently are Adams, Allen, Bartholomew, Benton, Boone, Clinton, Decatur, Gibson, Greene, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Henry, Huntington, Jackson, Jasper, Lake, LaPorte, Marion, Newton, Pike, Porter, Randolph, Ripley, Shelby, Starke, Tippecanoe, Union, Vanderburgh, and Vermillion.

HPAI is a disease caused by an influenza virus that usually spreads among birds. It is common in wild birds, especially waterfowl, shorebirds, and raptors. Notably, more than 1,500 sandhill cranes have been affected by the virus since January, resulting in a large number of sandhill crane deaths in Greene, Jackson, Jasper, LaPorte, Newton, Starke, and Union counties.

If you find sick or dead wild birds, please report them at on.in.gov/sick-wildlife.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the public health risk for HPAI is low.

However, it is possible for humans to contract HPAI. People who have close contact with infected animals or their environments, such as poultry farm workers or wildlife rehabilitators, are at higher risk.

Members of the public should avoid contact with sick waterfowl and other sick wildlife whenever possible. However, if it is necessary to remove a carcass, safely dispose of it by wearing a mask and disposable gloves to double bag any carcasses and place them in a secure trash container. Wash hands immediately after with soap and warm water. Alternatively, a wildlife control operator can be hired to remove carcasses.

A list of wildlife control operators can be [found here](#). DNR does not offer carcass removal services.

DNR continues to monitor avian influenza in affected species throughout the state.

For more information on HPAI, visit on.IN.gov/avian-flu



Apply for F&G Commission grants until April 15

Program provides funding for nonprofit groups' projects that enhance fish, wildlife and recreation opportunities

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission's Community Challenge Grant program is open for applications March 1 through April 15. Grants provide competitive funding for officially recognized nonprofit organizations to implement projects that are broadly supported by the local sporting community and enhance fish and wildlife habitat, populations or associated recreational opportunities.

The Commission Community Challenge Grant program consists of two different awards:

- **Regional Grants:** Projects that benefit a local or regional scale are eligible for up to \$10,000 made available through each Fish and Game Region.
- **Statewide Grants:** Projects that benefit the state or multiple regions are eligible for up to \$30,000 made available for the entire state.

Who may apply?

Groups eligible for Community Challenge Grant money include any officially recognized nonprofit (e.g. 501(c)(3)), business (having a state/federal tax ID



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Continued from Page 5 — number), corporation, or recognized regional/state/national sporting organization (such as Ducks Unlimited, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, etc.).

Private individuals are not eligible for grant funding. Applicants must be willing to provide match, either money, or in-kind support.

When to apply; when grants are awarded

Grant applications will be accepted from March 1 through April 15 with grant awards announced during the July Fish and Game Commission meeting.

Where to apply

- Grant applications for statewide grants should be sent to the headquarters office and care of Deputy Director Amber Worthington at P.O. Box 25, Boise, ID, 83707.
- Regional grants should be mailed to the corresponding [Regional Fish and Game offices](#).

How to apply

Submit a proposal letter that includes the following information:

- Applicant name – name of the organization and a brief description (or website link) describing the mission of the organization.
- Amount of funding requested.
- Need – a description of the need for the project and how it will benefit fish, wildlife, and/or associated recreation.
- Project details – a description of the actions that will be taken to complete the project.
- Budget details – a description of how the budget will be used, with anticipated line-item expenditures. Include description of match, whether it be cash or in-kind support.
- Project closeout – a description of when the project will be completed and a completion report submitted.

Grant Application Evaluation Criteria

A panel consisting of Fish and Game Commission members and staff will evaluate applications and rank them based on the following criteria:

- Project supports fish and wildlife-based recreation, including hunting, fishing, or trapping
- Project addresses a high-priority regional or statewide management need;
- Longevity of the project (how long will benefits last);
- Number of fish or wildlife species benefited;
- Project has a high likelihood of completion and successfully addressing the need;
- Project has strong community and/or sporting group(s) support;
- Budget is realistic and includes necessary match. There is no minimum match requirement, but consideration will be given to the level of match being contributed. Match can be in the form of money or in-kind support.
- Project is consistent with the Idaho Fish and Game mission to preserve, protect perpetuate, and manage the fish and wildlife of Idaho and to provide continued supplies for hunting, fishing, and trapping.



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2025 nest predator bounty program begins for youths

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) kicks off the seventh year of the Nest Predator Bounty Program as South Dakota youth under the age of 18 can begin harvesting nest predators for submission on March 1.

The program will open to all South Dakota residents April 1. Tails from raccoon, striped skunk, badger, red fox, and opossum will be eligible for \$10 per-tail payments with a maximum total payout of \$500,000. Tails must have been harvested during the open period to be eligible for submission.

“This program continues to get youth outside and involved in wildlife management,” said Kevin Robling, GFP Department Secretary. “With Spring right around the corner, this is the perfect opportunity to get out and enjoy the great outdoors.”

The 2023 and 2024 programs saw steady participation among youth under the age of 18, which composed 46% of the total participants.

Tails eligible for submission can be harvested via trapping or hunting. Participants need a hunting, furbearer, or fishing license to be eligible to participate in the bounty program.

Landowners harvesting nest predators for the program on their own land and youth under 18 are exempt from this license requirement.

GFP will also once again offer a weekly youth trap giveaway.

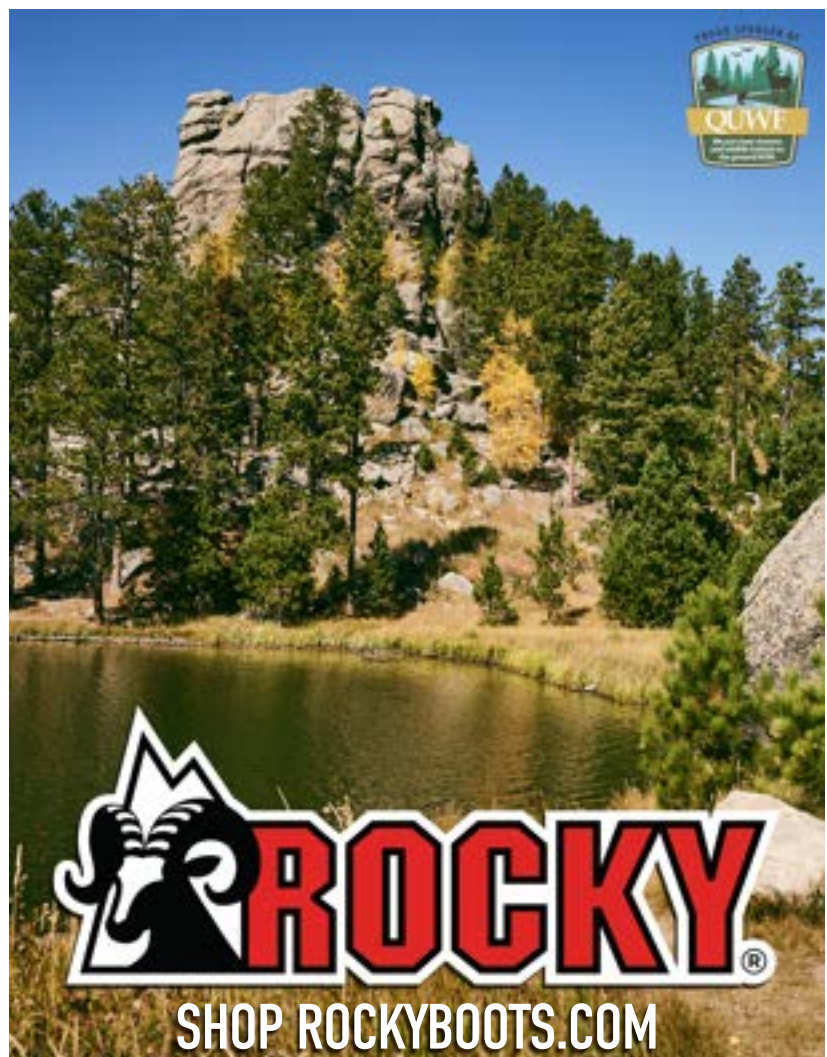
One participating youth under the age of 18 will be drawn weekly to receive a raccoon trapping starter kit, trapping handbook, a knife, and a write-up explaining Benton Howe’s love for the outdoors.

All participating youth will also be given the National Trapper's Association Trapping Handbook as well.

“Trapping is tradition in South Dakota, and this is a great way for the next generation of trappers to learn more about this activity and wildlife management,” concluded Robling. “We’re excited to build on the success of this program, and the fantastic pheasant season we had last year.”

Complete program details as well as dates, times, and locations for tail submissions can be found on the [GFP website](#).

For bounty submissions outside of the listed office locations and times, please [contact your local wildlife conservation officer or wildlife damage specialist](#).



New CWD cases detected in elk hunt area, feedground

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department has reported two new cases of chronic wasting disease: Elk Hunt Area 62 in the Cody Region and on the Horse Creek Feedground, which is located in Elk Hunt Area 84 in the Jackson Region.

Elk Hunt Area 62 is bordered by CWD-positive Elk Hunt Area 67 and overlaps several CWD-positive mule deer hunt areas.

Horse Creek Feedground is the fourth feedground in the state to have confirmed positive for CWD among elk. Elk Hunt Area 84, which had previously tested positive for CWD, is bordered by Elk Hunt Area 87 which is also CWD-positive.

CWD is a fatal neurological disease that affects deer, elk and moose. Continued monitoring of CWD over time is important to help Game and Fish

understand the potential impacts of the disease and evaluate future management actions. Game and Fish personnel will continue to monitor feedgrounds for elk displaying signs of CWD.

Game and Fish operates 21 feedgrounds in northwest Wyoming, where supplemental winter feeding has occurred for more than a century. The discovery of CWD on feedgrounds in 2025 was anticipated as the disease has continued to spread across the state throughout deer, elk and moose hunt areas.

For more information on CWD testing, transmission, carcass transportation and disposal regulations, visit the [CWD webpage](#). To stay updated on feedground management efforts, visit the [feedground webpage](#).



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Natural fish kills may be common during spring thaw

As ice and snow cover melt on Michigan lakes this spring, you may see dead fish or other aquatic animals. Given the return to a more “normal” Michigan winter this year — with more cold days and near-average snowfall across the state — you may notice more dead fish than you have in the past few years. While such sights can be startling, the Department of Natural Resources reminds everyone that it is normal for winter conditions to cause some mortality of fish and other creatures such as turtles, frogs, toads and crayfish.

“Winterkill is the most common type of fish kill,” said Aaron Switzer, DNR Fish Production Program manager. “It can be particularly common in shallow lakes, ponds, streams and canals during seasonal changes. It’s a natural phenomenon, and these kills are localized. They typically do not affect the overall health of fish populations or fishing quality.”

Shallow lakes with a large amount of aquatic vegetation and soft bottoms are more prone to winterkill, particularly when a deep snowpack reduces sunlight for the plants. Canals in urban areas also are quite susceptible, due to the large amounts of nutrient runoff and pollution from roads, lawns and septic systems that flow into these areas, especially after large storm events.



Fish also may be affected by rapid changes in water temperature due to unseasonably warm or rapidly warming temperatures, leading to stress and, sometimes, mortality.

Fish can become easily stressed in winter due to low energy reserves because feeding is at a minimum in winter. They are then less able to handle low oxygen and temperature swings. That could be the case this year with the record or near-record cold temperatures and large snowfalls Michigan experienced, and potential rapid warming in the coming months.

Fish and all forms of aquatic life need dissolved oxygen to survive. When ice and snow cover reduce the daylight that reaches the water depths, aquatic plants stop producing oxygen, and many die. Bacteria use the remaining oxygen in the water to decompose the dead plants and other organic materials on the lake bottom. With available oxygen reduced, more aquatic animals die and start to break down, speeding up the rate that oxygen is used for decomposition. This further decreases dissolved oxygen levels in the water, creating a cycle of increased winterkill.

Fish and other aquatic life that die in late winter may not be noticed until well after the ice leaves lakes, as the cold water may temporarily preserve them.

“If you see dead fish as a result of winterkill, the fish may appear fuzzy. This is because of secondary infection by fungus, but the fungus was not the cause of death,” said Switzer. “The fish actually suffocated from a lack of dissolved oxygen from decaying plants and dead aquatic animals under the ice.”

Find QUWF Online!

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

Delta Waterfowl expands predator management

Editor's Note: Finally, the research is there, predators are a significant problem in many nesting birds. It is not a "habitat and food source" problem, nor is it a weather cycle.

The Duck Hunters Organization begins annual field work at 50 sites in advance of nesting season

As the prairie pothole region's breeding grounds thaw, Delta Waterfowl's Predator Management trappers have begun work to increase duck production and boost the hatch in the PPR, an area known as "The Duck Factory" because of its importance to continental duck populations.

Delta is operating a program-record 50 sites during the 2025 breeding season, strategically placed in five key PPR jurisdictions for breeding ducks: Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

"Our goal of starting in mid-March is to set the table for ducks when they return to start nesting," said Mike Buxton, waterfowl programs director for Delta Waterfowl. "Our program seasonally restores the predator/prey balance ahead of and during the nesting season to give nesting hens the best opportunity to hatch a successful nest."

Delta's trappers will find variable conditions across the PPR as they begin their work. Buxton said the Dakotas are relatively snow-free, while the Canadian prairie has received more snowfall this winter. Manitoba wetlands are in the best shape of the three Canadian provinces.

"A lot of areas in Saskatchewan and Alberta received decent amounts of snow this winter, but wetlands there started in such a deficit from the long-term drought. It'll help, but it's likely not enough to pull them into excellent breeding conditions," Buxton said.

The goal of Delta's Predator Management Program is to boost nest success—the percentage of nesting hens that hatch eggs. Nest success is the driver of continental duck populations.

Biologists agree that nest success of 15 percent to 20 percent is necessary just to maintain the existing waterfowl population. In many key areas of the prairie, nest success is abysmal, often less than 10 percent.

"We're working in areas with 60 to 80 or even 100 nesting pairs of ducks per square mile, because that's where we see the most return on our trapping investment," Buxton said. "We take areas that should be producing a lot of ducks based on pair numbers and we maximize the production. We're applying Predator Management in areas where duck production is not reaching its potential."

Raccoons and skunks, duck nest predators that were uncommon or absent across much of the prairie prior to the 1950s, have become overly abundant in many areas because of changes in land use and agriculture. The effects have been devastating for ducks. Studies have shown that up to 90 percent of the failed nests are destroyed by predators.

"The altered landscape has created an imbalance between waterfowl and predators," said Joel Brice, Delta's chief conservation officer. "We focus Predator Management on areas where the predator/prey balance is misaligned. The result is that more ducks will hatch, and more ducks will fly south."

Delta continues to build up the organization's highly effective Predator Management Program to deliver on the Million Duck Campaign, a transformational \$250 million fundraising initiative with a goal to add 1 million ducks to every fall flight.

"Delta Waterfowl continues to increase its impact for ducks and duck hunters," Brice said.

"Expanding Predator Management and Delta's Duck Production programs will put more ducks into the fall flight every year."



Notes from the Road:

It's spring habitat season



By Nick Prough — I want to follow up with last month's article regarding if any habitat project was too big or too small — which we all know the answer is NO.

With a quick reminder that as the temperatures start to warm up with spring the next few days and weeks, and as we drag our 3-4 winter jackets and coats out of the back seats of our trucks and replace it with Repel Bug spray cans and water bottles, it is definitely time to start the spring habitat season! (Yes, I did that yesterday afternoon myself, and for those of you that haven't been out in field a lot already this year, yes, ticks have emerged already).

This time of year, everyone gets even busier as the weather warms with outdoor activities; yes, you probably all have cleaning your gutters and downspouts out before the spring rains on the to-do list, and we will all be mowing grass before too long as well.

With all these outdoor tasks we have to remember to get out to our back 40 acres or our favorite landowner tract and mark something off your habitat list as well. I can always tell by the volume of calls coming in as the temperatures begin to warm that many of you thought about some specific habitat projects you could do while you were stuck inside on many a cold snowy day. Well, now spring habitat season is upon us, so just as I was out in the barn last night sharpening a chainsaw chain and grabbing my edge-feathering and safety gear off the shelves, we need to utilize the spring season to get out in the field and knock out one or two of those habitat projects off our list.

Here are just a few reminders of the many different habitat practices that are very popular during the spring season that you may or may not have on your own habitat project list or may want to tackle yourself this spring season.

Edge-feathering or “chop and drop” methods with a chainsaw are a very common spring project that many landowners ask about this time of year, especially once they get further back on a tract of land and see all the wind damage and blown down trees and limbs that have been knocked down by the many intense wind storms that we have had the past several months in many parts of the country. Use those damaged trees to your advantage as you already have a starting point to begin your edge-feathering project at that blown down tree point.

Use any available equipment — a tractor with a bucket, a skid steer with a clipper, or the old fashion UTV or truck with a log chain — to carefully drag and position that downed tree or limbs into a “wind row” on the edge of the field. Even better on the edge of your field border or buffer on that edge of the field if it already exists. This escape cover is not only vital for the winter thermal protection but for escape from predators and other summer heat thermal issues as well. These can be done in a relatively short time manner by adding some additional wind row areas of more non desirable trees to the edge-feathered area until you feel like that area has sufficient cover for the quail, turkeys and other upland wildlife to utilize for cover throughout the year.

I have been working on these edge-feathered areas over 30 years of my career in the field and I can tell you they pay many dividends over many years for all kinds of wildlife species. After doing this technique on countless habitat projects I generally like to have these edge-feathered areas be about 25-50 yards long by about 10-15 yards wide, that seems to on average work out best for most sites and be utilized year-round.

Once you have one area completed look for another area to begin your next edge-feathering project on the next field or area of the land you are working on. Before long, you will have provided a ton of valuable escape and thermal cover for all sorts of wildlife species in a relatively short amount of time.

Another quick spring habitat practice is vegetation management or vegetation control as in most cases the spring green up you see early in March is most often a cool season grasses such as fescue that you can use a glyphosate herbicide such as Roundup to spray and set back those dense less wildlife friendly grasses and

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Continued from Page 11 — allow some early successional plants and forbs to come into that edge or area you are working on. As always, follow the label recommendations for the chemical you are using, but this is a very useful technique that I often recommend to landowners and do almost every spring myself as well in and around the earlier mentioned edge-feathered areas allowing the more wildlife friendly forbs and other early successional plants that quail, turkeys and other wildlife desire to come up in and around that newly created habitat. This can turn a regular edge-feathered good habitat site into a great wildlife habitat site by combining these two practices into one site.

Last, but certainly not least, everyone thinks of spring time as planting season and although many landowners don't generally plant as many "food plots" per say and many did back a decade ago quite a few landowners still utilize brood habitat or deer food plots every spring and this is an excellent way to add yet a 3rd component to the same edge-feathered and early successional habitat area that had some early successional spraying that I mentioned above also completed nearby.

You can take a small area and strip plant some green browse such as clover or other green browse you prefer and allow that area to be multi-species browse and bugging area for broods of quail and turkeys later in the year. This doesn't have to be a large field and quite to the contrary can be done in just thin strip areas along the edges of your other practices you completed. This can be a real game changer for habitat management when you combine all 3 of these practices in a habitat management area together. I will cover this more in-depth in future articles, but this can be another great habitat practice for your upcoming spring habitat season. I have multiple landowners making huge gains in their lands goals and objectives and seeing significant increases in their local quail and turkey populations on their farms, especially when combined with some nest predator control methods.

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.

Henry commits 100 percent of ops to Wisconsin

RICE LAKE, Wis. — Henry Repeating Arms, one of America's leading firearm manufacturers, is announcing a firm commitment to establishing 100% of its manufacturing operations in the state of Wisconsin. The commitment includes transferring all of its Bayonne, New Jersey manufacturing operations to its newly expanded state-of-the-art headquarters in Rice Lake, Wisconsin, and two additional facilities in nearby Ladysmith, Wisconsin. The company is also closing on a third Ladysmith facility in mid-summer 2025. This strategic transition accommodates the need for increased production capacity and better supports the company's future growth driven by innovative firearms design.

Planting its flag firmly in the state of Wisconsin solidifies Henry Repeating Arms' commitment to American craftsmanship in the heart of the Midwest and underscores the company's relentless pursuit of enhancing the quality of its offerings, leading the industry in both aesthetic and functional design engineering, and delivering unmatched value to its growing customer base.

"We are putting all of our eggs in one basket, the Wisconsin basket, because it makes us more efficient, more productive, and allows for more collaboration amongst our design and engineering teams, all while sustaining and enhancing Henry's solid reputation for quality," said Anthony Imperato, Founder and CEO of Henry Repeating Arms. "With about 400,000 square feet of cutting-edge manufacturing operations in four facilities within minutes of each other, Henry Repeating Arms is well positioned for its next chapter."



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Continued from Page 12 — “This transition allows us to double down on what we do best—making world-class rifles, shotguns, and revolvers right here in the heart of America,” said Andrew Wickstrom, President of Henry Repeating Arms. “Our Wisconsin operations have been essential to our success for a long time, and now it is the cornerstone of our bright future.”

Henry Repeating Arms has played a principal role in the increased consumer demand for American-made lever action rifles, a platform the company has been committed to since its founding. As the company introduces new, innovative lever-action rifles and expands into other segments, its increased capacity in Wisconsin accelerates speed to market, streamlines distribution, and enhances quality control to effectively meet the needs of today’s and tomorrow’s firearm enthusiasts, competitors, hunters, and collectors.

Bears are waking up, Vermonters should act now

Editor’s Note: This is a good model to follow in any state or area where bear are present. Be mindful of their presence and understand their wondering nature. They require huge territories and as this article states, they are becoming accustomed to humans and finding food in and around homes. NEVER feed them! That is a dangerous trend for the bear and the people living in their territory.

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department has begun to receive reports of bears coming out of their dens and is urging Vermonters to remove their birdfeeders and take additional steps now to prevent conflicts with bears over the spring and summer.

“Do not wait to take down your birdfeeders and bearproof your yard until a bear comes to visit,” said Jaclyn Comeau, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department’s Bear Biologist. “You need to act now to head off bear conflicts over the spring and summer, even if you have never had a bear visit your property before.”

Bear incidents have [been on the rise](#) over the past several years. Officials believe this trend is a result of Vermont’s healthy black bear population learning to associate people and food over multiple generations. Even with a steady increase in the number bears harvested by hunters in recent years—[including a record harvest in 2024](#)—Vermont’s bear population has been stable over the past two decades and [shows signs of growth](#) over the past five years.



Shorter winters also mean that bears are emerging from their dens earlier in the spring. In recent years bear activity has begun in mid-March. This is roughly two weeks earlier than what is traditionally considered the start of “bear-aware season” in northern New England.

“Preventing bears from having access to human-related foods is key to successful coexistence with these long-lived and intelligent animals,” said Comeau. “Bears can be found in every corner of Vermont other than the Champlain islands. Put bluntly, most Vermonters live in bear country.”

The department asks Vermonters to take the following proactive steps for coexisting with bears:

- Take down birdfeeders between mid-March and December.
- Store garbage in bear-resistant containers or structures, trash cans alone are not enough.
- Follow the steps on our web page for [composting in bear country](#).
- Use [electric fences](#) to keep chickens and honeybees safe.
- Request a bear-resistant dumpster from your waste hauler.
- Feed your pets indoors.
- Never feed bears, [it is illegal](#).

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Continued from Page 13 — “Deep snow may delay some bears from emerging from winter dens until April, but mid-March is the time for Vermonters to prepare for the early risers by taking down our birdfeeders, making sure garbage is secure, and protecting backyard chickens and bees with an electric fence,” said Comeau. “This will help teach bears that our yards and neighborhoods are not good places to search for food, but it will only work if everyone does their part.” Taking these precautions will also help reduce the chance of attracting other wildlife species such as raccoons, skunks and rodents.

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department also asks Vermonters to submit reports of bears engaging in potentially dangerous behavior like targeting birdfeeders and garbage, feeding on crops or livestock, or investigating campgrounds. Reports can be submitted on the department’s [Living with Black Bears web page](#). The data help biologists keep track of bear incidents and provide early interventions to head off conflicts.

“At the end of the day, purposely feeding a bear is not just bad for the bear,” said Comeau. “It is also dangerous for you, it causes problems for your neighbors, and it is illegal. If bears are finding food on your property, it is your responsibility to remove that attractant and report a problem before the situation gets worse.”

Controlled burns: The devil in the flames

By Craig Alderman — Having been involved in private lands controlled burns (CB) for conservation for many, many years, the landscape has changed. There is no question how important CB is for wildlife — it limits/removes built up fuel on the ground, promotes fresh growth of wildflowers and native grasses, controls brush and shrubs. Even cattle and turkey, a few days after a burn, will head for the burn area where the fresh growth is popping up.

Burning was a standard for most farmers here in the Midwest; in fact, March and April were lit up with local fires for all the reasons above until the late ‘80s. Then the change began.

Fire became a socially hard sell with less farmers doing it and using modern AG planting techniques. The huge, well-televised, larger wildfires of the west, still in a crisis stage today, caused insurance companies to literally cancel all policies in fire exposed states from California, Hawaii, Oklahoma, Nebraska and more. Hundreds of thousands of homes, businesses, schools and whole communities are being destroyed by out of control fire, wind driven. It is fast, 70 to 80 MPH, so fast it cannot be stopped and takes everything in its path until the wind stops or it rains. Crown fires, those that get fuel from the tops of trees, spread fire even faster with just a little wind and tend to burn very hot.

Insurance companies today that will insure private land conservation “controlled burns” are two — that’s right just two. One we have worked with for 28 years with a successful record always using a burn plan written and executed by a Burn Boss. Having personally worked on numerous fires equipped with average training from state agencies and some private courses, I absolutely respect the men and women who fight fires. It can be, very quickly, an uncontrollable and exceptionally dangerous force of nature. It has destroyed every form of man-made structures, cities, towns and all vehicles sparing nothing if wind driven.

The expert of the fire planning and execution is called a Burn Boss, a position that takes years of study, fire experience and skill, finally certified by a fire agency. He or she takes responsibility of the burn. The two insurance companies left require every CB to have a formal and written Burn Plan, prepared by, signed and executed by these highly trained fire experts. These plans are then reviewed by the insurance companies for underwriting, either approved or denied.



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Continued from Page 14 — The plan sets criteria for the burn, winds, humidity, local conditions, manpower needed, equipment and water on site for a very specific time. Photos and drawings are a must. If the conditions are not met, no burn, no excuses.

Private landowners in some states take online courses to help them learn skills to assist in fire control on their land, and then it may provide a more limited liability *to try and get burn insurance* but it in no way provides the training of a Burn Boss, and they cannot write or sign the plan as the Burn Boss. Second, these courses are not intended to provide liability releases to those landowners who set fire to their lands and it burns out of control to the neighbors. The liability is huge if it gets out of control.

In some states this year, local Law Enforcement is now citing violations to landowners whose fire burns fences, hay fields or structures. Here in MO last week a controlled burn got out of control with high winds coming up and it literally burned down a local community. Those in the community now want to go after the CB individual, private or state.

You can only imagine the toll on insurance companies for out-of-control fire that destroys entire communities, houses, schools and businesses. If you start a fire that burns down your house or barns, your home owners insurance will not cover it.

Be careful with any burn on your property. The option to hire a company fully insured, with the equipment and trained personnel as you can imagine is very, very expensive. As a private landowner you have the right to set fire to get the results you desire on your own lands. To me as a Forester having worked on many fires, be exceptionally careful and if CB is in your plan do it right or not at all. **Remember, the devil can be in the flames when you least expect it.**

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.

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From the Outdoor Wire: Self-reliance, agency, and resilience

By Paul Markel (Printed in The Outdoor Wire) — We are living in a world where more and more people are waking up to the fact that convenience has a price and that price is dependency. The reality of the world has always been that if you choose to be dependent on outside sources for your sustenance, sooner or later you will find yourself in a position of servitude.

Having embraced that reality, many Americans are looking at ways to be more self-reliant and less dependent on others. Many folks are looking at vegetable gardens as the way to go and that is not a bad thing. But humans need much more than carrots and tomatoes, they need a reliable and clean source of protein to maintain healthy and strong minds and bodies.

Chickens: The Gateway Drug for Self-Reliance

Understanding that a reliable source of protein is critical, many folks are looking at backyard chickens. One of the biggest fallacies that many people will harbor is “If you get some chickens, you get eggs for free.” Ladies and gentlemen, eggs are not *free*. Even if someone gave you a laying hen for free, chickens need to be fed. Every time I go to the ranch store to purchase chicken feed they charge me for it. *The nerve, don't they know eggs are free?*

Yes, it's true that chickens are scavengers and will eat food scraps, bugs, and other things on the ground. It is also true that, if you want eggs to eat, your chickens need to have a ready source of protein in their diet. They need calcium too for strong eggs shells and some kind of grit to help them break down the food they eat. Some of this can come from grazing and chickens will eat every bug they find on the ground. However, if you have a bunch of birds, they are going to clean the area out of bugs quickly. Don't get me wrong, when they are out in the yard scratching, they are getting extra nutrition, but you still need to ensure they have protein.

Additionally, another fallacy people have is that a chicken will lay one egg a day, everyday for her whole life. Again, that is incorrect. Depending on the breed, you can expect a healthy hen, who is not molting or broody, to produce 4 to 5 eggs a week under good conditions. Poor weather conditions, such as thunderstorms, overly hot weather or cold weather with limited sunlight can upset your flock and reduce their eggs production. A good rule of thumb when you factor all of the previous in is to figure out how many eggs you expect to use per day and then double the number of hens.

I know a person whose family goes through five or six eggs a day, so they thought they would get a small backyard chicken coop and buy six hens. Six hens = six eggs a day, right? Nope. Six hens means 3 or 4 a day when all your ladies are feeling good and laying regularly.

If you are planning to buy those cute little chicks from the farm store and raise them to lay eggs, that will work, but it will be about four months from the day you bring them home until they start laying. Yes, you need to buy a special feed for the young ones and they will not be able to go out and graze/scratch for the first month to six weeks. When your juniors do start to lay, their eggs will be small and cute. Some folk call these “fairy eggs”. Two fairy eggs equal about one standard, large egg.

When your flock does get going, they will produce you some of the most healthy food you could possibly consume. As we mentioned earlier, your eggs will not have chemicals or pesticides in them, nor will they have unnatural hormones. Home raised chickens also get sunshine and exercise which have been proven to produce eggs that are higher in Calcium, Lutein, Vitamin A, Vitamin E, and Vitamin D. Not only do farm eggs have less saturated fat and cholesterol but they are higher in Omega-3 fatty acids which are essential for you. Farm fresh eggs are higher in Omega-3 fatty acids because chickens are able to forage for foods that are natural for a chicken to eat and are not found in the diets of caged hens that produce store-bought eggs. Home raised eggs are clean protein.

Caring for God's Creatures

Another reason why chickens are the gateway to self-reliance is that they instill in us and our children a sense of caring for something other than ourselves. Kids should be doing chores. The state of our world has created a situation where people have become hyper-focused upon themselves and forgotten how to care for others or other creatures.

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Continued from Page 16 — In my book “[Team Honey Badger: Raising Fearless Kids in a Cowardly World](#)” one of my recommendations is to get kids involved in farm work or at least have them be responsible for the care and feeding of animals. Children need to learn to care for God’s creatures and doing so make them all around better adjusted members of society.

While chickens might be hardy and resilient, they are also the favorite prey of numerous varmints and predators. Foxes, raccoons, coyotes, bobcats, etc. will kill your hens. Skunks, weasels, rats, martins, etc. will raid the nests and steal your hard-earned eggs. If you have active raptors in your area, hawks, falcons, eagles, they will all swoop down and kill your ladies. You must be prepared to protect your ladies, care for them, and keep them safe.

Paul G. Markel is a combat decorated United States Marine veteran.



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Remington announces Beards, Spurs and Savings rebate

Remington Ammunition recently announced its Beards, Spurs, and Savings rebate, which offers consumers the chance to buy Remington Turkey shotshell ammunition and get up to \$100 back. This promotion runs through May 31, 2025.

To take advantage of this rebate, customers must purchase Remington’s Nitro Turkey to receive a \$3.00 rebate per box or Premier Magnum Turkey, Premier Magnum Turkey High Velocity, or Premier TSS to receive \$5 per box back.

A minimum purchase of two (2) boxes is required, with a maximum rebate of \$100.00 per person or household. Valid purchases must be made from March 1 through May 31, 2025. The deadline for submission of this rebate offer is June 30, 2025.

Remington’s unique manufacturing process, used to make its Nitro Turkey loads, yields shot as hard and round as copper-plated shot. This enables them to pattern just as well as copper-plated, buffered loads without the higher cost. Nitro Turkey Loads deliver a full 1 7/8-ounce payload at 1,210 fps and 80-percent pattern densities with outstanding knockdown power at effective ranges.

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Complete information on Remington’s Beards, Spurs and Savings rebate can be found at <https://www.remington.com/remington-country/rebates-and-promotions.html>.



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2025-26 North Dakota licenses needed by April 1

North Dakota anglers, hunters and trappers should note that new licenses are required beginning April 1.

Licenses can be purchased online by visiting the North Dakota Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov. Once the license is processed, hunters and anglers will have the option to print a hard copy and/or download the license to a smart phone or mobile device, which is helpful when asked to show proof while hunting or fishing in rural areas that lack cellular service.

Licenses can also be purchased at more than 80 vendor locations throughout the state. The 2025-26 small game, fishing and furbearer licenses are effective April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026.



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ND 2024 bighorn sheep, moose, elk harvests

Harvest statistics released by the North Dakota Game and Fish Department show overall hunter success during the 2024 season was 100% for bighorn sheep, 92% for moose and 64% for elk.

The department issued six bighorn sheep licenses and auctioned one. All seven hunters harvested a bighorn ram. The department issued 238 moose licenses last year. Of that total, 229 hunters harvested 210 animals – 125 bulls and 85 cows/calves. Harvest for each unit follows:

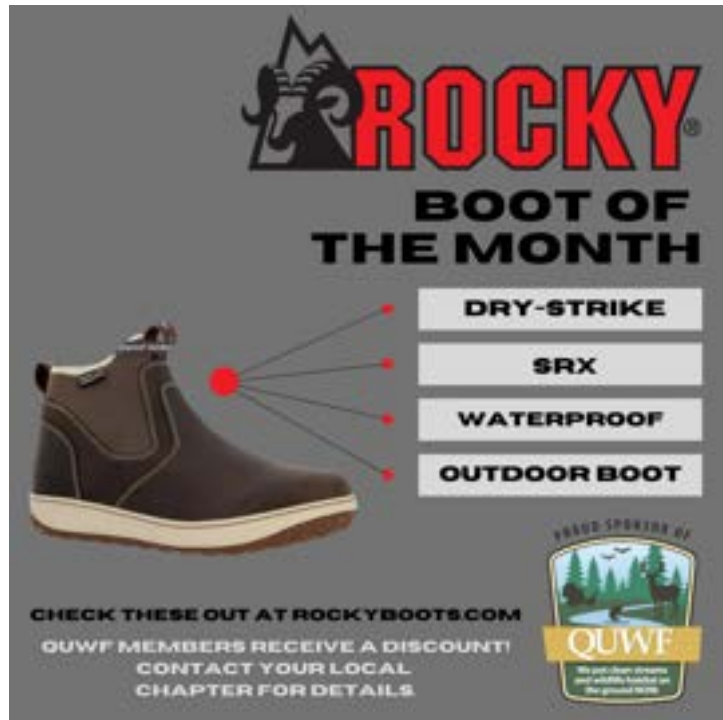
Unit Hunters Bulls Cow/Calf Success Rate

M5	8	5	0	63
M6	10	9	1	100
M8	15	13	1	93
M9	76	33	36	91
M10	78	43	31	95
M11	42	22	16	91

The department issued 905 elk licenses last year. Of that total, 817 hunters harvested 526 elk – 220 bulls and 306 cows/calves. Harvest for each unit follows:

Unit Hunters Bulls Cow/Calf Success Rate

E1E	147	38	36	50
E1W	198	42	91	67
E2	149	37	60	65
E3	285	80	114	68
E4	24	19	1	83
E6	14	4	4	57



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