

2014 - 2015 Hunting Booklet



2014-15 Hunting Seasons and Bag Limits

These are the seasons and bag limits for most hunting and trapping seasons from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015.

SQUIRRELS, Red, Gray, Black and Fox (Combined): Special season for eligible junior hunters, with or without required license, and mentored youth – Oct. 11-17 (6 daily, 18 in possession limit after first day).

SQUIRRELS, Red, Gray, Black and Fox (Combined): Oct. 18-Nov. 29; Dec. 15-24 and Dec. 26-Feb. 21 (6 daily, 18 possession).

RUFFED GROUSE: Oct. 18–Nov. 29, Dec. 15-24 and Dec. 26-Jan. 24 (2 daily, 6 possession).

RABBIT (Cottontail) Special season for eligible junior hunters, with or without required license: Oct. 11-18 (4 daily, 12 possession).

RABBIT (Cottontail): Oct. 25-Nov. 29, Dec. 15-24 and Dec. 26-Feb. 21 (4 daily, 12 possession).

PHEASANT: Special season for eligible junior hunters, with or without required license – Oct. 11-18 (2 daily, 6 in possession). Male pheasants only in WMUs 2A, 2C, 4C, 4E, 5A and 5B. Male and female pheasants may be taken in all other WMUs. There is no open season for the taking of pheasants in any Wild Pheasant Recovery Areas in any WMU.

PHEASANT: Male only in WMUs 2A, 2C, 4C, 4E, 5A and 5B. Male and female may be taken in all other WMUs – Oct. 25-Nov. 29, Dec. 15-24 and Dec. 26-Feb. 21 (2 daily, 6 in possession). There is no open season for the taking of pheasants in any Wild Pheasant Recovery Areas in any WMU.

PHEASANT: Male or Female combined in WMUs 1A, 1B, 2B, 2D, 2E, 2F, 2G, 2H, 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 4A, 4B, 4D, 5C and 5D – Oct. 25-Nov. 29, Dec. 15-24 and Dec. 26-Feb. 21 (2 daily, 6 in possession). There is no open season for the taking of pheasants in any Wild Pheasant Recovery Area in any WMU.

BOBWHITE QUAIL: Oct. 25-Nov. 29 (4 daily, 12 possession). (Closed in WMUs 4A, 4B, 5A, 5B, 5C and 5D.)

HARES (SNOWSHOE RABBITS) OR VARYING HARES: Dec. 26–Jan. 1, in all WMUs except WMUs 3B, 3C and 3D, where the season will run from Dec. 26-29 (1 daily, 3 possession).

WOODCHUCKS (GROUNDHOGS): No closed season, except on Sundays and during the regular firearms deer seasons. No limit.

PORCUPINES: Sept. 1-March 31, except during overlap with the regular firearms deer season. Daily limit of three, season limit of 10.

CROWS: July 4-April 5, on Friday, Saturday and Sunday only. No limit.

STARLINGS AND ENGLISH SPARROWS: No closed season, except during the antlered and antlerless deer season. No limit.

EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE: Season dates shall run concurrently with mourning dove season. Shall be counted as part of the aggregate daily limits for mourning dove season.

WILD TURKEY (Male or Female): WMU 1B– Nov. 1-8 and Nov. 27-29; WMU 2B (Shotgun and bow and arrow) – Nov. 1-21 and Nov. 27-29; WMUs 1A, 2A, 2D, 2F, 2G, 2H, 3A, 3B and 3C – Nov. 1-15 and Nov. 27-29; WMUs 2C, 2E, 3D, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D and 4E – Nov. 1-21 and Nov. 27-29; WMU 5A – Nov. 6-8; WMUs 5B, 5C and 5D – CLOSED TO FALL TURKEY HUNTING.

SPRING GOBBLER (Bearded bird only): Special season for eligible junior hunters, with required license, and mentored youth– April 25, 2015. Only 1 spring gobbler may be taken during this hunt.

SPRING GOBBLER (Bearded bird only): May 2-30, 2015. Daily limit 1, season limit 2. (Second spring gobbler may be only taken by persons who possess a valid special wild turkey license.) From May 2-16, legal hunting hours are one-half hour before sunrise until noon; from May 18-30, legal hunting hours are one-half hour before sunrise until one-half hour after sunset.

BLACK BEAR (Statewide) Archery: Nov. 17-21. Only 1 bear may be taken during the license year.

BLACK BEAR (Statewide): Nov. 22-26. Only 1 bear may be taken during the license year.

BLACK BEAR (WMUs 2C, 4B, 4C, 4D and 4E): Dec. 3-6. Only 1 bear may be taken during the license year.

BLACK BEAR (WMUs 2B, 5B, 5C and 5D): Dec. 1-13. Only 1 bear may be taken during the license year.

BLACK BEAR (WMUs 3A, 3B, 3C and 3D): Dec. 1-6. Only 1 bear may be taken during the license year.

BLACK BEAR (WMUs 2B, 5C and 5D) archery: Sept. 20-Nov. 15. Only 1 bear may be taken during the license year.

BLACK BEAR (WMU 5B) archery: Oct. 4-Nov. 15. Only 1 bear may be taken during the license year.

BLACK BEAR (WMUs 2B, 5B, 5C and 5D) muzzleloader: Oct. 18-25. Only 1 bear may be taken during the license year.

BLACK BEAR (WMUs 2B, 5B, 5C and 5D) special firearms: Oct. 23-25, for junior and senior license holders, disabled hunters with a permit to use a vehicle as a blind and resident active duty military.

ELK (Antlered or Antlerless): Nov. 3-8. Only one elk may be taken during the license year.

ELK, EXTENDED (Antlered and Antlerless): Nov. 10-15. Only one elk may be taken during the license year. Eligible elk license recipients who haven't harvested an elk by Nov. 8, in designated areas.

DEER, ARCHERY (Antlerless Only) WMUs 2B, 5C and 5D: Sept. 20-Oct. 3, and Nov. 17-29. One antlerless deer with each required antlerless license.

DEER, ARCHERY (Antlered and Antlerless) WMUs 2B, 5C and 5D: Jan. 12-24. One antlered deer per hunting license year. One antlerless deer with each required antlerless license.

DEER, ARCHERY (Antlered and Antlerless) Statewide: Oct. 4-Nov. 15 and Dec. 26-Jan. 10. One antlered deer per hunting license year. One antlerless deer with each required antlerless license.

DEER (Antlered and Antlerless) WMUs 1A, 1B, 2B, 3A, 3D, 5A, 5B, 5C and 5D: Dec. 1-13. One antlered deer per hunting license year. An antlerless deer with each required antlerless license.

DEER (Antlered Only) WMUs 2A, 2C, 2D, 2E, 2F, 2G, 2H, 3B, 3C, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D and 4E: Dec. 1-5. One antlered deer per hunting license year. (Holders of valid DMAP antlerless deer permits may harvest antlerless deer on DMAP properties during this period.)

DEER (Antlered and Antlerless) WMUs 2A, 2C, 2D, 2E, 2F, 2G, 2H, 3B, 3C, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D and 4E: Dec. 6-13. One antlered deer per hunting license year. An antlerless deer with each required antlerless license.

DEER, ANTLERLESS (Statewide): Oct. 23-25. Junior and Senior License Holders, Disabled Person Permit (to use a vehicle) Holders, and Pennsylvania residents serving on active duty in

U.S. Armed Services or in the U.S. Coast Guard only, with required antlerless license. Also included are persons who have reached or will reach their 65th birthday in the year of the application for a license and hold a valid adult license, or qualify for license and fee exemptions under section 2706. One antlerless deer with each required antlerless license.

DEER, ANTLERLESS MUZZLELOADER (Statewide): Oct. 18-25. An antlerless deer with each required antlerless license.

DEER, ANTLERED OR ANTLERLESS FLINTLOCK (Statewide): Dec. 26-Jan. 10. One antlered deer per hunting license year, or one antlerless deer and an additional antlerless deer with each required antlerless license.

DEER, ANTLERED OR ANTLERLESS FLINTLOCK (WMUs 2B, 5C and 5D): Dec. 26-Jan. 24. One antlered deer per hunting license year, or one antlerless deer and an additional antlerless deer with each required antlerless license.

DEER, ANTLERLESS EXTENDED REGULAR FIREARMS: (Allegheny, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties): Dec. 26-Jan. 24. An antlerless deer with each required antlerless license.

DEER, ANTLERLESS (Military Bases): Hunting permitted on days established by the U.S. Department of the Army at Letterkenny Army Depot, Franklin County; New Cumberland Army Depot, York County; and Fort Detrick, Raven Rock Site, Adams County. An antlerless deer with each required antlerless license.

2014-15 FURBEARER HUNTING SEASONS

COYOTES: No closed season. Unlimited. Outside of any big game season (deer, bear, elk and turkey), coyotes may be taken with a hunting license or a furtaker license, and without wearing orange. During any big game season, coyotes may be taken while lawfully hunting big game or with a furtaker license.

RACCOONS and FOXES: Oct. 25–Feb. 21, unlimited.

OPOSSUM, STRIPED SKUNKS and WEASELS: No closed season, except Sundays. No limits.

BOBCAT (WMUs 2A, 2C, 2E, 2F, 2G, 2H, 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 4A, 4C, 4D and 4E): Jan. 20-Feb. 10. One bobcat per license year, but all licensed furtakers may obtain one permit.

2014-15 TRAPPING SEASONS

MINKS and MUSKRATS: Nov. 22–Jan. 11. Unlimited.

COYOTES, FOXES, OPOSSUMS, RACCOONS, STRIPED SKUNKS and WEASELS: Oct. 26–Feb. 22.
No limit.

COYOTES and FOXES (Statewide) Cable Restraints: Dec. 26-Feb. 22. No limit. Participants must pass cable restraint certification course.

BEAVERS (Statewide): Dec. 26–March 31 (Limits vary depending on WMU).

BOBCATS (WMUs 2A, 2C, 2E, 2F, 2G, 2H, 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 4A, 4C, 4D and 4E): Dec. 20-Jan. 11.

One bobcat per license year, and all licensed furtakers may obtain one permit.

FISHERS (WMUs 1B, 2C, 2D, 2E, 2F, 2G, 2H, 3A, 3B, 3C 3D, 4D and 4E): Dec. 20-25. One fisher per license year, and all licensed furtakers may obtain one permit.

2014-15 FALCONRY SEASONS

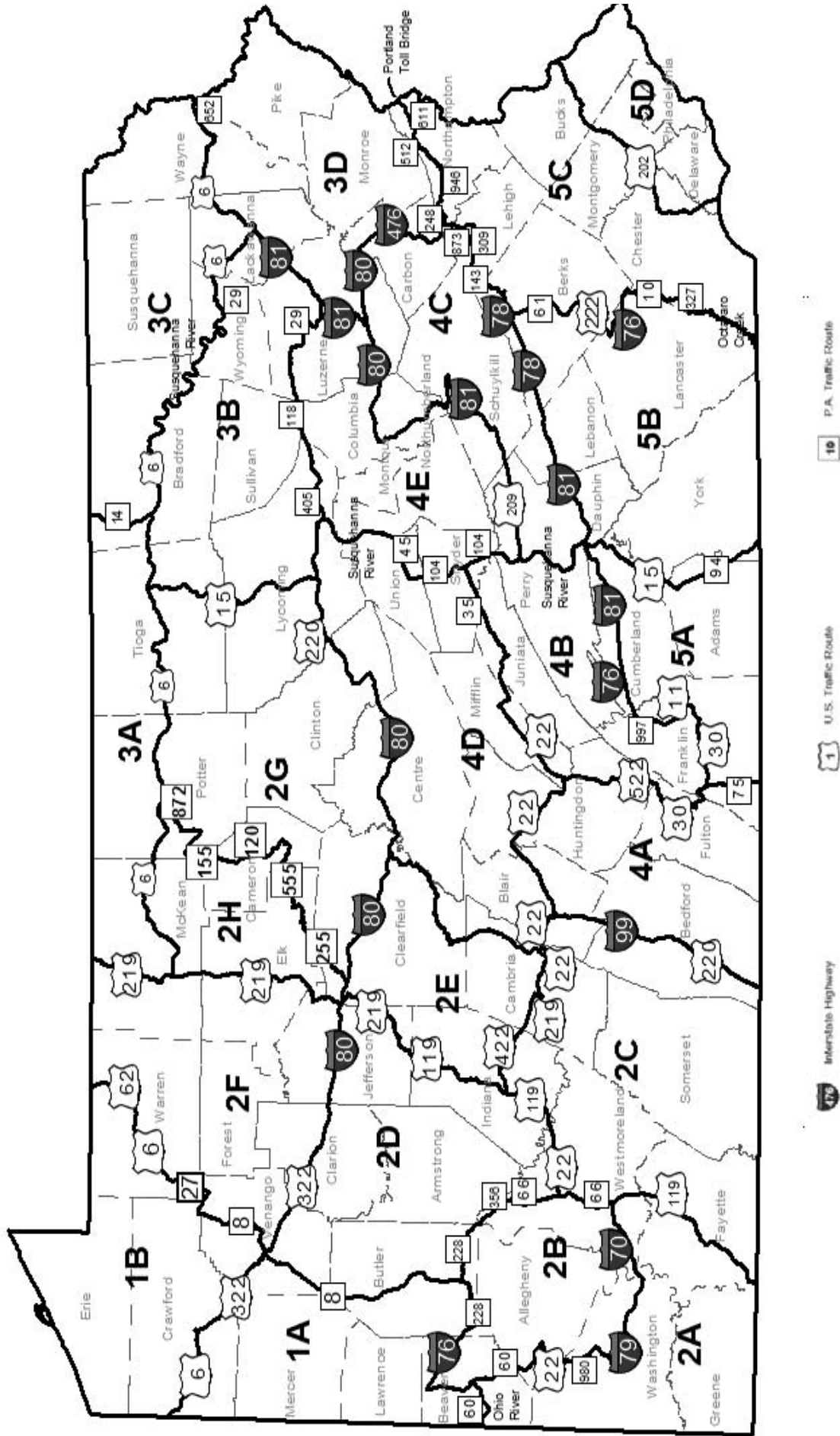
SQUIRRELS (combined), BOBWHITE QUAIL, RUFFED GROUSE, COTTONTAIL RABBITS,

SNOWSHOE OR VARYING HARES, RINGNECK PHEASANTS (Male or Female combined): Sept. 1-
March 31. Daily and Field Possession limits vary. (Migratory game bird seasons and bag limits for
falconers will be set in accordance with federal regulations in August.)

No open season on other wild birds or mammals.

Waterfowl and Migratory Game Bird seasons to be established in accordance with federal regulations this
summer.

Wildlife Management Units



The former WMU 2G was split into two WMUs beginning with the 2013-2014 season. A boundary description for the new EMU, 2H, follows: 2H: From Lantz Corners, US Rt. 6 east to Coudersport. South on Rt. 872 to Austin. Northwest to Rt. 607 to Keating Summit, and then south on Rt. 155 to Rt. 120. Follow Rt. 120 south to Driftwood, and then west on Rt. 555 to Rt. 255 in Weedville. South on Rt. 255 to I-80. West on I-80 to US Rt. 219 near DuBois. North US Rt. 219 to Rt. 6 at Lantz Corners.

Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners

The Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners is comprised of eight board members, each selected by the Governor, and confirmed by majority vote of the state Senate. Title 34, the law that governs the Board, requires that each member be a citizen of the Commonwealth, and well informed about wildlife conservation and restoration. Commissioners are appointed from various geographical districts of the state to ensure uniform representation for all residents. These districts are not the same as Game Commission agency regions.

Game Commissioners individually hold office for terms of eight years, but may remain seated for an additional six months if no successor is named. Commissioners receive no compensation for their services, but may be reimbursed for travel expenses.

Commissioners function as a board of directors, establishing policy for the agency. They are not agency employees. Although they are selected by district, they represent all Pennsylvanians and the state's 467 species of wild birds and mammals. The current Commissioners and their hometowns follow. Click on their names for more biographical information.



Robert W. Schlemmer, President

District 2: Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Washington and Westmoreland counties

Term: June 16, 2009 to May 16, 2017

Hometown: Export



David J. Putnam, Vice-President

District 3: Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Jefferson, McKean, and Potter counties

Term: May 5, 2009 to May 5, 2017

Hometown: Centre Hall



Brian H. Hoover, Secretary

District 8: Schuylkill, Berks, Chester, Northampton, Lehigh, Bucks, Montgomery, Philadelphia and Delaware counties

Term: June 25, 2012 to June 25, 2020

Hometown: Glenolden



Ralph A. Martone, Commissioner

District 1: Erie, Crawford, Mercer, Lawrence, Venango, Butler, Warren, Forest and Clarion counties

Term: July 15, 2009 to October 16, 2014

Hometown: New Castle



Timothy S. Layton, Commissioner

District 4: Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon and Somerset counties

Term: June 29, 2013 to June 29, 2021

Hometown: Windber



Charles E. Fox, Commissioner

District 5: Bradford, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Sullivan, Tioga, and Union counties

Term: October 15, 2012 to October 15, 2020

Hometown: Troy



Ronald A. Weaner, Commissioner

District 6: Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry, Snyder and York counties

Term: June 3, 2008 to June 3, 2016

Hometown: Biglerville



Jay Delaney, Jr., Commissioner

District 7: Carbon, Luzerne, Lackawanna, Monroe, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne and Wyoming counties

Term: April 17, 2007 to April 17, 2015

Hometown: Wilkes-Barre

The Board of Game Commissioners holds quarterly meetings, generally in January, April, June and October, and at other necessary times, if necessary. By law, it is the duty of the commission to protect, propagate, manage and preserve the game or wildlife of Pennsylvania. Specific duties include:

- Fix seasons, bag limits and hunting hours;
- Remove protection, declare an open season, or change or close a season;
- Revise bag limits;
- Define geographic limitations for hunting;
- Limit the number of hunters or trappers in an area;
- Prescribe methods of hunting and trapping;
- Govern the use of calls for taking game or furbearers;
- Prohibit the possession, importation, exportation, or release of animals considered harmful to the state;
- Revise the state classification of any wild bird or mammal, such as threatened or endangered;
- Manage and develop state game lands and private lands under public access programs;
- Collect data and preserve statistics about wildlife;
- Select an agency Executive Director; and
- Serve the interests of sportsmen and sportswomen by preserving and promoting recreational hunting and trapping by providing adequate opportunity to hunt or trap out wildlife resources.

The Board of Game Commissioners works hand-in-hand with the Executive Director and agency staff to ensure that all wild birds and mammals, and their habitats are managed for current and future generations.

Contact Us

Send Us An Email

E-Mail Comments and Suggestions to the Game Commission: pgccomments@pa.gov. Although we can't respond to every question or comment, we do our best to answer and carefully review all the e-mails we receive.

State Headquarters

PA Game Commission

2001 Elmerton Avenue
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797

To contact the Game Commission Harrisburg headquarters by phone call 717-787-4250. If you know your party's 4-digit extension enter it next. If you know your party's last name enter the first four letters of the last name.

1 For information about hunting licenses and to reach the Bureau of Administration press 1.

2 For special permits, revocation information and the Bureau of Wildlife Protection press 2.

4 For Game News, Hunter Education and the Bureau of Information and Education press 4.

5 For the Bureau of Wildlife Management and Pheasant Propagation press 5.

6 For the Bureau of Wildlife Habitat Management press 6.

7 For the Bureau of Automated Technology press 7.

8 For the Training School and Executive Office press 8.

0 To reach the operator press zero.

Region Offices

Northwest Region

Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, Warren counties

Post Office Box 31

Franklin, PA 16323

Phone: 814-432-3187, 814-432-3188

Southwest Region

Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington, Westmoreland counties

4820 Route 711

Bolivar, PA 15923

Phone: 724-238-9523, 724-238-9524

Northcentral Region

Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Lycoming, McKean, Potter, Tioga, Union counties

Post Office Box 5038

Jersey Shore, PA 17740-5038

Phone: 570-398-4744, 570-398-4745

Southcentral Region

Adams, Bedford, Blair, Cumberland, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Mifflin, Perry, Snyder, York counties

8627 William Penn Highway

Huntingdon, PA 16652

Phone: 814-643-1831, 814-643-9635

Northeast Region

Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Montour, Northumberland, Pike, Sullivan, Susquehanna,
Wayne, Wyoming counties
3917 Memorial Highway
Dallas, PA 18612-0220
Phone: 570-675-1143, 570-675-1144

Southeast Region

Berks, Bucks, Chester, Dauphin, Delaware, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Philadelphia,
Schuylkill counties
253 Snyder Road
Reading, PA 19605
Phone: 610-926-3136, 610-926-3137

Pennsylvania Automated License System (PALS) Summary

2014-2015 Hunting License Information

On June 9, the Pennsylvania Automated License System (PALS) will be activated fully for the sale of 2014 hunting licenses. This new automated licensing system is a joint project with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and our contractor, Active Outdoors.

All hunting licenses will be issued through PALS. Pre-printed, paper licenses no longer will be used. The new automated system provides licensing options that hunters have not had previously. A summary of the basic changes follows.

- **Customer Identification Number (CID):** If you already have purchased a hunting or fishing license through PALS, you were assigned a CID number which was printed on your license. Please use this number when applying for a license through PALS since this will identify you in the database and speed the license issuance process. If you have never purchased a license through PALS, you will need to provide your social security number when applying. This is a one-time only requirement, and will not be needed again unless you don't have or can't remember your CID. PALS provides more licensing options for and greater convenience, customer service and equal opportunity to all hunters. PALS provides improved information security to issuing agents and the Game Commission. As well as streamlined financial reporting and accountability and immediate and greater access to data. It's simply a better, more efficient and contemporary way to sell licenses.
- **Senior Lifetime License Holders:** If you are a resident senior lifetime hunting or combination license holder, and have not purchased or renewed your license through PALS, you will need to provide your social security number (SSN) when applying. This is a one-time only requirement, and will not be needed again, unless you don't have or can't remember your CID. Senior lifetime license ID cards are no longer required since PALS will recognize your record through your SSN or CID. You will still need to provide proof of residency when you renew your license, usually done through a valid PA driver's license.
- **Carcass Tags:** The big game tags that come with the license have two perforated holes in the center. These will be used with a string or twist tie to attach the tag to the carcass.
- **Harvest Reporting:** There are 3 methods of harvest reporting available to hunters and trappers. The first method may be accessed through this website. When the PGC is accepting harvest reports there will be a **"Report Your Harvest"** button in the upper right corner of each page on our website. This method is the easiest to use and provides the Commission with the most reliable data. Sportsmen will be provided with a receipt page at the end of the harvest reporting routine which they should print for their records.

Secondly, harvest reports may be filed using our Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. By calling toll free 1-855-PAHUNT1 (1-855-724-8681) sportsmen can report their harvests from any touchtone phone using the phone's numeric keypad and spoken responses. We ask that callers speak clearly and distinctly when speaking responses. Callers will receive a confirmation number for each harvest reported which they should record for their records.

Lastly, harvest reports may be submitted using the traditional paper harvest report card. While harvest report cards are no longer issued with hunting and trapping licenses, generic cards may be found in the hunting and trapping digest and are postage paid.

- **Please note** – when using any of these methods to report a harvest you will need your CID (Customer Identification Number), the Tag Number of the license or permit used, and the species specific information for each harvest you are reporting. Website and IVR harvest reports may be used for deer, wild turkey, bobcat and fisher reporting, while paper harvest cards may only be used to report deer and wild turkey harvests. If you are reporting a bobcat or fisher harvest and do not want to use the website or IVR systems, you will have to call one of the Commission's regional offices.
- **Display:** Licenses are no longer required to be displayed on an outer garment. If you are checked by a wildlife conservation officer or the landowner while afield, you must have all applicable hunting and furtaker licenses on your person, along with positive ID to confirm identification and residency.
- **Antlerless Deer Licenses:** Hunters will mail their applications directly to a County Treasurer of their choice, not the Game Commission. County Treasurers can issue antlerless deer licenses for any wildlife management unit (WMU), not just those their county is a part of. Hunters may use the application panel that comes with the license or the forms contained in the Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations. Either type of application is valid. Hunters may select their first, second and third WMU preferences on the application. That way, if the first WMU of choice is sold out, the Treasurer can issue a license for the second or third WMU preference based on license availability. Official application envelopes are pink in color and still available through all hunting license issuing agents. PALS automatically tracks allocations and monitors personal license limits so that hunters are not issued more licenses than they are entitled at any given point. Please refer to the Digest of Hunting and Trapping Regulations and the "Antlerless Deer License" section elsewhere on this website for details on the application schedule and process.
- **License/Permit Availability:** Commercial issuing agents and County Treasurers are now able to offer more specialized licenses and permits through PALS that were not available at their locations in the past. These specialized licenses include the resident senior lifetime license categories (hunting, furtaker, combination and combo upgrades), disabled veteran lifetime renewals, resident landowner reduced-fee hunting licenses, special spring gobbler licenses, bobcat, fisher permits and reduced fee military licenses. In June, DMAP harvest permits also will be available for sale through any issuing agent.

BOARD APPROVES PROGRAMS, CHANGES REGULATIONS AT EVENTFUL MEETING

More to meeting than approval of hunting seasons and bag limits.

The Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners on Tuesday met at its second quarterly meeting for 2014. Among other things, the board approved the hunting and trapping seasons, and set the allocations for antlerless deer licenses and elk licenses for the 2014-15 license year.

A full list of seasons and bag limits is available in a separate news release.

Below is a summary of other action from the meeting.

MENTORED ADULT PROGRAM APPROVED

Program offers three-year opportunity to hunt antlerless deer, other species.

The Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners on Tuesday approved a mentor-based program for first-time hunters 18 years old and older.

Since 2006, the Game Commission has offered its Mentored Youth Hunting Program, which enables children under the age of 12 to obtain a permit and legally harvest select game species under the close supervision of a properly licensed adult mentor.

The new Mentored Adult Hunting Program would follow a similar model, and aims to add to the ranks of hunters.

Adults obtaining a permit through the program would be able to take part in hunting activities without first needing to take the basic Hunter-Trapper Education course.

This would be a limited-term opportunity available to adults. Under the program, a mentored adult could purchase a permit for no more than three consecutive license years, at the end of which he or she would have to take a basic Hunter-Trapper Education course and purchase an adult hunting license.

There isn't a cost break between the resident mentored adult permit and the adult general hunting license " each is to cost \$20.70. Nonresident mentored adults also would pay the same amount as those nonresident license holders " \$101.70.

There would be many more hunting opportunities available with the purchase of a general hunting license, too.

Mentored adults would be able to hunt only squirrels, ruffed grouse, rabbits, pheasants, bobwhite quail, hares, porcupines, woodchucks, crows, coyotes, antlerless deer and wild turkeys. Other species may not be hunted or harvested by mentored adults.

Mentored adults would need to hunt within eyesight of their adult mentor, and at a proximity close enough for verbal instruction and guidance to be easily understood. The adult mentor would need to transfer a tag to the mentored adult for any big-game harvest.

Mentored adults cannot harvest antlered deer. Antlerless deer could be taken by using a proper, transferred antlerless license or Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) permit. Antlerless licenses are valid within the wildlife-management unit for which they were issued. DMAP permits are valid on the specific properties for which they were issued.

Only one antlerless license and one DMAP permit could be transferred to a mentored adult during a given license year,

The commissioners said creation of a Mentored Adult Hunting Program follows much study on how to apply the successes of the Mentored Youth Hunting Program to nonhunting adults, too.

REGULATION TO ACCOMMODATE LARGER BEAVER TRAPS, BROADHEADS

Body-gripping traps measuring 10 by 12 inches, 3 1/4 -inch broadheads to be allowed.

The Board of Game Commissioners on Tuesday approved measures that permit use of a widely available size of body-gripping trap, as well as longer broadheads than previously were permitted.

With the changes, the maximum size for lawfully set body-gripping traps will be 10 inches tall by 12 inches wide. At present, no body-gripping traps larger than 10 inches by 10 inches can be set.

The change will take effect with the start of the 2014-15 hunting and trapping seasons.

Game Commission staff had called the change “nominal,” and said it won’t have a negative impact on wildlife.

Before adopting the change, commissioners made one amendment to the proposal, which initially included language that 10- by 12-inch body-gripping traps have a single, offset trigger.

The board removed the language related to an offset trigger, noting that offset triggers can compromise beaver trapping success because the traps often won’t catch smaller beavers as effectively.

Game Commission staff also reported that expanding the length of permitted broadheads from 3 to 3¼ inches will not have a negative effect on wildlife. The change will accommodate certain handmade and commercially available products.

BOARD FINALIZES REMOVAL OF ELK-HUNTING RESTRICTION ALONG ROUTE 555

Staff and field officers believe safety zone no longer needed.

In 2004, the Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners created a 150-yard safety zone for elk along the Route 555 corridor, from Weedville to Hicks Run in Elk County.

The safety zone was introduced to address problems with road hunting and the killing of highly visible elk in yards and public places.

Staff recommended the change with the support of local wildlife conservation officers, who believe the specially designated safety zone no longer is needed, and that some of the animals from the area can be harvested legally and ethically within 150 yards of the road.

Commissioners approved the change, pointing out it was recommended by regional staff.

BAITING PERMIT APPROVED FOR SOUTHEAST SPECIAL REGS AREA

Board says measure addresses specific problem in highly populated area.

The Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners on Tuesday gave specific approval to creating a permit that will allow private-property owners in the southeastern Pennsylvania special regulations area limited opportunities to use bait while deer hunting.

Baiting already is allowed in the special regulations area on properties enrolled in the agency’s Deer Depredation Program, commonly called the “Red Tag” program.

Through the use of permitted baiting, commissioners hope to achieve higher deer harvests in an area where there’s high potential for human-deer conflicts, and where hunting access is extremely limited.

Baiting will be limited to shelled corn and protein pellet supplements, not to exceed five gallons per site, and distributed through automatic mechanical feeders set to dispense bait up to three times a day during legal hunting hours.

There will be no cost for the permit, commissioners said. And a landowner or authorized land agent can apply for a permit.

The provisions are set to become effective in July.

Rich Palmer, who heads the Game Commission’s Bureau of Wildlife Protection, said the permit applies only to deer hunting and that a general prohibition on baiting other wildlife remains in place in the special regulations area and elsewhere statewide, unless specifically excepted.

PENNSYLVANIA ACHIEVES SAFE-HUNTING MILESTONE
Report shows record-low number of hunting-related shooting incidents in 2013.

For the second year in a row, Pennsylvania hunters have rewritten history in regard to safe hunting.

According to a newly released report from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, there were 27 hunting-related shooting incidents (HRSIs) in 2013. That total not only represents a decrease from the previous year, it's a record low.

The Game Commission has been tracking HRSIs since 1915, and there never before had been fewer than 33 incidents reported in a year. Decades ago, hundreds of incidents occurred each year.

Requirements for hunters to wear orange in many seasons and ongoing hunter-education efforts are essential to the upward safety trend, the report states.

In 2013, 40,971 students received their Basic Hunter-Trapper Education certification in Pennsylvania.

Game Commission Executive Director R. Matthew Hough said the latest report is something about which those student graduates, their volunteer hunter-education instructors and the hunting public at large all can be proud.

"There's still work to do," Hough said. "Even one incident is too many and, as the record shows, we do not take hunter safety lightly. That said, we continue to be encouraged by record-low numbers of incidents and the continuing trend of safer hunting in Pennsylvania."•

In Pennsylvania, hunting-related shooting incidents have declined by nearly 80 percent since hunter-education training began in 1959.

The latest numbers build upon the previous year, during which 33 incidents were reported, tying the previous record-low.

Two of the 27 incidents reported in 2013 were fatal. Except for 2012 — the first year without a single reported fatality related to gun handling in hunting and trapping in Pennsylvania — at least one fatality has been reported each year. The number of fatal incidents has declined sharply over the years.

In 2013, nine of the 27 incidents with an identified offender resulted from individuals with 10 or fewer years of hunting experience.

It is important to note, however, that no incidents during 2013 involved youth participating in the Mentored Youth Hunting Program — a program whereby hunters under the age of 12 are permitted to harvest certain wildlife species, if they are accompanied by a licensed adult. Nearly 34,000 Mentored Youth Permits were issued during this timeframe.

In its annual reports on HRSIs, the Game Commission establishes an incident rate by computing the number of accidents per 100,000 participants. The 2.85 incident rate reported for 2013 is 20 percent lower than the 2012 rate of 3.52.

An analysis of offender ages revealed individuals ages 16 and younger had an incident rate of 3.26 per 100,000 participants.

The leading causes of hunting-related shooting incidents in 2013 were unintentional discharge and a victim being in the line of fire, each accounting for one-third of the total. It should be noted that incidents resulting from a sporting arm carried in a dangerous position decreased substantially from the previous year (Two incidents in 2013 compared to eight in 2012).

Game Commissioner Timothy Layton, of Windber, said hunter education is instrumental in reducing the number of HRSIs. He thanked the dedicated corps of 2,280 volunteer instructors for the crucial role they play, and the hunters in the field for continuing to put safety first.

"If there's one thing these numbers make clear it's that hunting in Pennsylvania is safe and getting safer," said Layton, who chairs the commissioners' Information & Education committee. "As hunters, I'm sure we all can appreciate how far we've come and look forward to many more safe seasons ahead."•

THIRD CWD MANAGEMENT AREA ESTABLISHED

Disease was detected at a captive deer facility in Jefferson County.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission has established a third Disease Management Area in response to chronic wasting disease being detected recently in Jefferson County.

Disease Management Area 3 (DMA 3) encompasses about 350 square miles in Jefferson and Clearfield counties, and also includes a small sliver of Indiana County.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture announced early in April that chronic wasting disease (CWD) was detected at a domestic deer facility in Jefferson County, and both that facility and another associated with the same CWD-positive deer were placed under quarantine.

The state Department of Agriculture oversees all domestic deer operations in Pennsylvania, while the Game Commission is responsible for managing and protecting free-ranging wildlife and their habitats.

Pennsylvania's CWD response plan calls for the Game Commission to monitor the prevalence of CWD where it has been detected, and slow the spread of the disease where it exists in the wild. At this time, CWD has not been detected in any free-ranging deer within or near DMA 3.

DMA 3 forms its northern border along Interstate 80. The western and southern boundaries follow state Route 36. And U.S. Routes 219 and 322 form the eastern border.

A map depicting DMA 3 is available on the CWD page of the Pennsylvania Game Commission's website, www.pgc.state.pa.us.

Special rules regarding the hunting and feeding of deer and other cervids, as well as the possession, transport and importation of cervid parts apply within all DMAs.

Hunters within the DMA cannot remove from the DMA any cervid parts with a high risk of transmitting CWD. The head (including the brain, tonsils, eyes and lymph nodes) and the spinal cord/backbone are among the list of high-risk parts that cannot be removed from the DMA.

The possession and removal of vehicular-killed cervids, or parts there from, is prohibited from areas within the DMA to locations outside the DMA.

The Game Commission may designate approved locations outside DMAs for the receipt of high-risk parts.

Processed meat can be removed from the DMA, as long as the backbone is not present. Finished taxidermy mounts also can be removed from the DMA, as can antlers attached to a skull plate, as long as no visible brain matter or spinal cord material is present.

A complete list of high-risk and non-high-risk cervid parts is provided later in this news release, and appears also on the CWD page of the Game Commission's website.

Hunters also should know that the use or field possession of any urine-based cervid attractant is prohibited within any DMA.

The direct or indirect feeding of any free-ranging wild cervids also is prohibited within the DMA, as is the rehabilitation and movement of live cervids.

Pennsylvania's Disease Management Areas

As its name indicates, DMA 3 is Pennsylvania's third Disease Management Area.

DMA 1 encompasses about 600 square miles in York and Adams counties. It was established in 2012 after CWD was detected at a domestic deer facility, and in two years of testing, no positive CWD cases have been confirmed among free-ranging deer within DMA 1.

DMA 2 was expanded in recent weeks following the detection of CWD in two additional free-ranging deer killed in Bedford County in late 2013. A CWD-positive deer killed in Maryland, just south of this DMA, also influenced the expansion of DMA 2.

The expansion of DMA 2 also follows procedures set forth in Pennsylvania's CWD response plan.

DMA 2 now includes parts of Bedford, Blair, Huntingdon, Cambria and Fulton counties. It encompasses more than 1,600 square miles and stretches south to the Maryland line.

The new DMA 2 boundary extends east to state routes 829 and 915, and Interstate 70.

The boundaries north of the Pennsylvania Turnpike haven't changed. South of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, the western boundary of DMA 2 is state Route 96.

A map of the expanded DMA 2 is available on the CWD page of the Game Commission's website. A map of the expanded DMA 2 also will be included in the 2014-15 *Pennsylvania Hunting & Trapping Digest* issued to hunters at the time they buy their licenses. The digest, however, will not include a DMA 3 map because the DMA was established after the print deadline for the digest.

Hunters and Pennsylvania residents who want to make sure they're getting the most up-to-date information about CWD in Pennsylvania, existing DMAs and other rules can check the CWD page at the Game Commission's website.

CWD Information

While chronic wasting disease is relatively new to Pennsylvania, it is not a new disease. CWD was discovered in 1967, and it has spread to 22 states and two Canadian provinces. Scientists believe CWD is caused by an agent capable of transforming normal brain proteins into an abnormal form.

CWD affects members of the cervid, or deer family. It is spread from animal to animal by direct and indirect contact.

There currently is no practical way to test live animals for CWD, nor is there an approved vaccine to prevent infection. CWD is a slow-progressing disease and clinical signs do not develop until later stages of disease, often two years or more after infection. Clinical signs include poor posture, lowered head and ears, uncoordinated movement, rough-hair coat, weight loss, increased thirst, excessive drooling, and, ultimately death. Any animals suspected of having CWD should be reported to the Game Commission.

There currently is no scientific evidence that CWD has or can spread to humans, either through contact with infected animals or by eating the meat of infected animals. As a precaution, however, people are advised not to consume meat from animals that test positive for CWD.

During 2013, the Game Commission collected and tested samples from 5,120 deer statewide. Only the two from Bedford County tested positive for CWD. Since 1998, the Game Commission has gathered and submitted more than 48,000 samples from wild deer and elk for CWD testing. A total of five free-ranging deer have tested positive – all of them within DMA 2.

High-risk parts

Cervid parts with a high risk of transmitting chronic wasting disease (CWD) cannot be removed from any disease management area.

Those parts include:

- Head (including brain, tonsils, eyes and lymph nodes);
- Spinal Cord/Backbone (vertebra);
- Spleen;
- Skull plate with attached antlers, if visible brain or spinal cord material is present;
- Cape, if visible brain or spinal cord material is present;
- Upper canine teeth, if root structure or other soft material is present;
- Any object or article containing visible brain or spinal cord material;
- Brain-tanned hide.

Non-high-risk parts

The following parts are not considered to have a high risk of transmitting CWD, and can be removed from a DMA:

- Meat, without the backbone
- Skull plate with attached antlers, if no visible brain or spinal cord material is present;
- Tanned hide or rawhide with no visible brain or spinal cord material present;
- Cape, if no visible brain or spinal cord material is present;
- Upper canine teeth, if no root structure or other soft material is present; and
- Taxidermy mounts, if no visible brain or spinal cord material is present.

NEW HUNTING PERMIT PART OF CWD RESPONSE

Game Commission to issue 13,000 permits for antlerless deer within Disease Management Area 2.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission is enlisting assistance from hunters in an effort to slow the spread of chronic wasting disease.

The Game Commission has developed a permit that can be used to hunt antlerless deer, but can be used only within the boundaries of what is known as Disease Management Area 2 – the lone area of the state where chronic wasting disease has been detected in free-ranging deer.

A total of 13,000 permits will be made available with the intention of reducing the deer population by one deer per square mile in DMA 2.

Responding to a need identified by the Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners, the permits seek to focus hunting pressure inside the Disease Management Area (DMA), where deer numbers must be kept in check to slow the potential spread of chronic wasting disease (CWD). At the same time, the permit system enables the Game Commission to avoid a reduction in the deer herd in the area surrounding DMA 2 “ where CWD has not been detected.

DMA 2 includes parts of Bedford, Blair, Huntingdon, Cambria and Fulton counties. The DMA lies within Wildlife Management Units 4A, 4D and 2C (WMUs 4A, 4D and 2C).

“We hope the creation of this permit will better help to satisfy objectives of addressing the deer population within the DMA and outside it,” said Game Commission Executive Director R. Matthew Hough. “Our appointed Game Commissioners continually seek input from the hunters and trappers in their respective regions, and hunters in WMU 4A “ a large portion of which is within the DMA “ have been requesting an increase in deer numbers.

“While our CWD Management Plan guides us to increase the antlerless deer harvest in areas where CWD has been detected in free-ranging deer, it doesn’t mean we have to decrease the deer population throughout an entire WMU, or as in this case, a number of WMUs,” Hough said. “The permits allow us to more precisely direct hunting pressure into the area that most needs additional deer harvests.”•

There are some differences between the application process for a DMA 2 permit and that for an antlerless license.

Only residents and nonresidents ages 12 and older with valid general hunting licenses may apply for permits. Participants in Mentored Youth and Mentored Adult hunting programs are ineligible to make application, and the permits cannot be transferred to participants in those programs.

Each permit costs \$6.70, and payments must be made by credit card, or check or money order made payable to the ‘Pennsylvania Game Commission.’•

Applications for DMA 2 permits will be accepted in two ways electronically through the Game Commission’s Outdoor Shop, or by mail. The Outdoor Shop can be accessed at www.theoutdoorshop.state.pa.us. Those wishing to send applications by mail can obtain an application form at the Game Commission’s website, the agency’s Harrisburg headquarters or any region office.

The application schedule is similar to that for antlerless deer licenses, however, residents and nonresidents can apply on the same dates in all rounds.

Applications will be accepted beginning July 14. Each eligible applicant may submit one application during this first round, which lasts three weeks.

Beginning Aug. 4, a second round of application begins. Again in the second round, each eligible applicant may submit one application. However, an applicant who did not submit an application during the first round may submit two during the second round.

A third round of applications will begin Aug. 18. Eligible applicants may submit an unlimited number of applications during this round, and the round will continue until all permits have been issued.

DMA 2 permits must be used within DMA 2. These antlerless deer permits can be used during any deer season, including the antlered deer season.

Those who are issued DMA 2 permits are required to submit reports, regardless of whether they harvest a deer. Harvests must be reported within 10 days. Nonharvests must be reported by Feb. 5. Those who fail to report as required are subject to criminal prosecution and may be ineligible to apply for permits if the program is continued the following year.

Through their reports, hunters provide valuable data that plays a crucial role in the Game Commission's management of CWD.

Disease Management Area 2

DMA 2 was established in 2013 after three hunter-harvested deer in Blair and Bedford counties tested positive for CWD. The DMA was expanded earlier this year in response to two additional deer killed on highways in Bedford County, and a hunter-harvested deer nearby in Maryland, tested positive.

DMA 2 now extends south to the Maryland border. South of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, the western boundary of DMA 2 is state Route 96. The new boundary extends east to state routes 829 and 915, and Interstate 70. The DMA extends as far north as the intersection of state Route 453 and Interstate 99.

A map of the newly expanded DMA 2 is available on the CWD Information page at the Game Commission's website, www.pgc.state.pa.us. A detailed description of the exact boundary, which includes roads other than those listed, is provided on Page 51 of the 2014-15 *Pennsylvania Hunting & Trapping Digest* issued to hunters at the time they purchase their 2014-15 licenses.

Hunters harvesting deer within any DMA are not permitted to remove from the DMA any deer parts with a high risk of transmitting the disease. There are a few exceptions to this rule, including taking a deer to an approved deer processor or taxidermist outside the DMA, or traveling to an approved laboratory for disease testing.

The use of urine-based deer attractants also is prohibited within any DMA, as is the direct or indirect feeding of deer. A complete list of rules applying to DMAs can be found in a Game Commission executive order, which also is available at the agency's website.

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PENNSYLVANIA'S BALD EAGLES CONTINUE THEIR CLIMB

Mid-year survey boasts record number of nests.

At its midway point, there's already reason to believe 2014 just might go down as the "Year of the Pennsylvania Bald Eagle."

In January, the Pennsylvania Game Commission removed the bald eagle from the state's list of threatened species, capping a 30-year comeback that ranks as one of the great success stories in wildlife-conservation history.

And in the months that followed, more than 3 million viewers joined in the celebration, watching online as three bald eaglets hatched, then developed into birds strong enough to fledge the Pittsburgh nest in which they grew up.

Now, the Pennsylvania Game Commission reports its mid-year inventory of bald-eagle nests yet again boasts a record total.

Each year, just before the Fourth of July, the Game Commission releases a preliminary count of bald-eagle nests statewide. The report serves to celebrate the bald eagle – our national symbol of strength and freedom – as well as the terrific progress the species has made in Pennsylvania since the onset of a reintroduction program in 1983.

So far this year, 254 bald-eagle nests have been documented in Pennsylvania, with nesting eagles present in at least 59 of the state's 67 counties.

The number of nests and the number of counties with nests both are all-time highs for the mid-year report, according to the Game Commission.

Game Commission Executive Director R. Matthew Hough said the report, once again, rewrites that final chapter in the story of the bald eagle's recovery in Pennsylvania. While the report provides only preliminary data, and still more nests will be documented as the year goes on, the results are heart-warming, he said.

"The all-time high numbers illustrate Pennsylvania's bald-eagle population is better than ever," Hough said. "But these are only the ones we know about. There are more.

"Over my career with the Game Commission, I have watched this agency jump-start eagle recovery in 1983, and now I'm seeing the results of all that hard work," Hough said. "I, and I'm sure all Pennsylvanians, are proud of this amazing recovery. More importantly, more of us are seeing eagles than ever before. That never gets old. They're such exciting birds."

Twenty-two of the 254 nests reported so far this year are attributed to adult pairs that have not previously been documented as nesting in Pennsylvania.

That's a significant number given that the total number of nests documented – 254 – is up only slightly compared to the 2013 mid-year report, which totaled 252 nests by July 4. The fact the number of counties with active nests increased from 57 to 59 between the 2013 and 2014 mid-year reports also speaks to potential expansion in the bald-eagle population, said Patti Barber, a biologist with the Game Commission's Endangered and Nongame Birds section.

Barber said that, as bald eagles become more common in Pennsylvania, the challenge to document bald-eagle nests could grow. People who have reported a nest as active in a previous year might not realize they should report back each year to help the Game Commission track the population over time, she said. Also, folks might assume bald eagles they're seeing are associated with long-established nests, as opposed to new pairs setting up territories near established nests, Barber said.

Reports of bald-eagle nests always are appreciated. Perhaps the easiest way to report a nest is to contact the Game Commission through its public comments email address: pgccomments@pa.gov, and use the words "Eagle Nest Information" in the subject field. Reports also can be phoned in to a Game Commission Region



[Get Image](#)

Office or the Harrisburg headquarters.

“This year as much as any really has driven home the fact Pennsylvanians are fascinated with eagles and love watching them,” Barber said. “Eagles attract a lot of attention and understandably so, but that doesn’t mean the Game Commission knows about nests in areas where you’ve been seeing them. So please don’t hesitate to report these sites.”

Each year, bald-eagle nests continue to be reported as the year goes on. In 2013, for instance, the preliminary number of 252 nests ballooned to 273 nests by year’s end. Other years have produced similar results.

But even the running tally is something about which Pennsylvanians can be proud, Barber said.

In 1983, when the Game Commission launched a seven-year reintroduction program, only three bald-eagle pairs were nesting statewide. Today, there are 254 with more remaining to be counted.

“This is one of the greatest wildlife success stories out there, and it’s not over,” Barber said.

“Pennsylvania continues to sustain a healthy and growing bald-eagle population, and the fact eagles are branching out to more areas of the state indicates there are more gains to come.”

Hough noted the enjoyment and excitement that accompanies each bald-eagle sighting. Those qualities, he said, have been evident this year not only in the field, but quantified by the number of people going online each day to watch nature unfold. With the state’s expanding and growing bald-eagle population, there should be plenty to get excited about for many years to come, he said.

“Pennsylvania’s eagles have spent so much of 2014 in the spotlight, and they’ve made for some great stories,” Hough said. “All three of the bald eagles that hatched this spring in front of an online audience fledged their nest – that’s a great story by itself.

“But it’s a story too that’s completely within the character of Pennsylvania’s eagles,” he said. “Each year, there are too many great stories to count, and each year builds upon previous successes to reach new heights.

“You might say that, for many decades now, each year could be considered the ‘Year of the Pennsylvania Bald Eagle,’” Hough said. “And there promises to be many more to come.”

Eagle reintroduction

While Pennsylvania’s bald-eagle population is soaring, just 30 years ago, the bald eagle’s future looked bleak.

Its population decimated by the effects of water pollution, persecution and compromised nest success caused by organochlorine pesticides such as DDT, only three pairs of nesting eagles remained in the state – all of them located in Crawford County, in northwestern Pennsylvania along the Ohio border.

In 1983, the Game Commission launched a seven-year bald eagle restoration program. The agency, as part of a federal restoration initiative, sent employees to Saskatchewan to obtain eaglets from wild nests.

Initially, 12 seven-week-old eaglets were taken from nests in Canada’s Churchill River valley and brought to specially constructed towers at two sites. At these towers – at Haldeman Island on the Susquehanna River near Harrisburg, and at Shohola Lake in Pike County – the birds were “hacked,” a process by which the eaglets essentially are raised by humans, but without knowing it, then released gradually into the wild.

In all, 88 bald eaglets from Canada were released from the sites as part of the program, which was funded in part by the Richard King Mellon Foundation of Pittsburgh and the federal Endangered Species Fund.

This reintroduction jump-started the recovery.

By 1998, Pennsylvania was home to 25 pairs of nesting bald eagles. Within the next three years, the number of nesting pairs doubled and by 2006, more than 100 nests were confirmed statewide.

The bald eagle population has continued to grow and expand in Pennsylvania and in January the Game Commission removed the bald eagle from the state’s list of threatened species.

August 06, 2014

Release #066-14

EARLY MIGRATORY BIRD SEASONS SET

Dove hunters to enjoy expanded opportunity in coming seasons.

Pennsylvania's early migratory bird seasons have been approved, and changes this year give dove hunters about three additional weeks to spend afield.

Federal frameworks have increased the total season length for mourning doves from 70 to 90 days.

In Pennsylvania, that means the first segment of dove season will expand substantially, opening on Monday, Sept. 1 and running through Saturday, Nov. 15.

Traditionally, the first segment started and ended in September, and much of October was closed to dove hunting.

Ian Gregg, who heads up the Game Commission's game birds section, said channeling the additional dove-hunting days to the early season segment was done with hunters in mind.

"Pennsylvania dove hunters who responded to a recently completed survey indicated they generally prefer as many dove hunting days in early autumn as possible," Gregg said. "As a result, the additional days have been routed to the early season segment to create 2 ½ months of continuous dove hunting."

Hunting hours during the longer first segment are from noon until sunset from Sept. 1 through Sept. 25. Then beginning on Sept. 26, and through Nov. 15, hunting hours begin at one-half hour before sunrise and end at sunset.

Two short-season segments around the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays also have been retained. Gregg said this also is in response to the survey results, which showed these later seasons are popular and productive times for the most avid dove hunters to be afield. The later season segments will run from Nov. 22 to Nov. 29 and from Dec. 27 to Jan. 1, with hunting hours during those segments set at one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

The daily bag limit in each dove-hunting segment has been set at 15, with a possession limit of 45.

The September statewide season for resident Canada geese also will open Sept. 1, and continue through Sept. 25. The September season retains a daily bag limit of eight Canada geese, with a possession limit of 24.

Shooting hours during the September goose season are one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset, except when the season overlaps with youth waterfowl hunting days. On those days, shooting hours end at sunset.

There are special regulations – including smaller bag limits and possession limits – in a couple of areas of the state.

In most of the Southern James Bay Population Goose Zone, and on the Pymatuning Reservoir and the area extending 100 yards inland from the shoreline of the reservoir, excluding the area east of state Route 3011 (Hartstown Road), hunters will have a daily limit of three and a possession limit of nine.

Also, in a portion of western Crawford County, the daily bag limit is one goose and possession limit is three geese. That area begins south of state Route 198 from the Ohio state line to intersection of state Route 18, then follows state Route 18 south to state Route 618; follows state Route 618 south to U.S. Route 6; U.S. Route 6 east to U.S. Route 322/state Route 18; U.S. Route 322/state Route 18 west to intersection of state Route 3013; and state Route 3013 south to the Crawford/Mercer County line. The exception to the rules in this area is State Game Lands 214, where September goose hunting is closed. This restriction does not apply to youth participating in the youth waterfowl hunting days, when regular season regulations apply.

The controlled hunting areas at the Game Commission's Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area in Lebanon and Lancaster counties, as well as all of State Game Lands 46, will remain closed to September goose hunting to address the decline in the resident Canada goose flock.

And, in the area of Lancaster and Lebanon counties north of the Pennsylvania Turnpike (Interstate 76) and east of state Route 501 to state Route 419; south of state Route 419 to Lebanon-Berks county line; west of Lebanon-Berks county line to state Route 1053 (also known as Peartown Road and Greenville Road); and west of state Route 1053 to Pennsylvania Turnpike (Interstate 76), the daily bag limit is one goose, with a possession limit of three geese. This restriction does not apply to youth participating in the youth waterfowl hunting days, when regular season regulations apply.

Kevin Jacobs, a waterfowl biologist with the Pennsylvania Game Commission, noted that recent liberalizations in Canada goose hunting opportunities, along with control programs being implemented by many municipalities and public and private landowners, appear to be stabilizing the growth of the state's resident Canada goose population. The 2014 Pennsylvania spring resident Canada goose population was estimated at 241,732, which is statistically similar to the recent 10-year average of 266,306 geese.

However, populations remain significantly above the management goal of 150,000.

"Hunting remains the most effective and efficient way to manage resident Canada geese, provided hunters can gain access to geese in problem areas," Jacobs said.

The first youth waterfowl hunting day will be held statewide on Sept. 20, and the second day will vary by duck-hunting zone and will be announced when late migratory game bird seasons are selected in mid-August.

Youth waterfowl days are open to licensed junior hunters who are 12 to 15 years old. To participate, a youngster must be accompanied by an adult, who may assist the youth in calling, duck identification and other aspects of the hunt. During those hunts, youth can harvest ducks, mergansers, coots and moorhens, and both youth and licensed adults can harvest Canada geese.

During youth waterfowl days, youth and adults have the same daily limit for Canada geese in the area being hunted. Bag limits for ducks, mergansers, coots and moorhens will be consistent with the limit for the regular season, which will be announced in mid-August, after the annual Waterfowl Symposium on Aug. 8.

Pennsylvania's woodcock season retains its longer format this year, opening on Oct. 18 and closing on Nov. 29. The daily limit remains three, with a possession limit of nine.

The season for common snipe also will run from Oct. 18 to Nov. 29, which is the same structure as previous years. The daily limit is 8, and the possession limit is 24.

Virginia and sora rail hunting will run from Sept. 1 to Nov. 8. Bag limits, singly or combined, are three daily and nine in possession. The season for king and clapper rails remains closed.

Hunting for moorhen and gallinules also runs from Sept. 1 to Nov. 8, and the bag limits are three daily and nine in possession.

Migratory game bird hunters, including those afield for doves and woodcock, are required to obtain and carry a Pennsylvania migratory game bird license (\$3.70 for residents, \$6.70 for nonresidents), as well as a general hunting, combination or lifetime license. All waterfowl hunters age 16 and older also must possess a federal migratory game bird and conservation (duck) stamp.

Hunting hours for all migratory birds close at sunset, except for September Canada geese, as noted above, and the snow goose conservation season.

Annual migratory bird and waterfowl seasons are selected by states from a framework established by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

The "Pennsylvania 2014-15 Guide to Migratory Bird Hunting" brochure will be posted on the Game Commission's website (www.pgc.state.pa.us) in mid-August.

Hunters are encouraged to report leg-banded migratory game bird recoveries online at www.reportband.gov, or use the toll-free number (1-800-327-BAND). Hunters will be requested to provide information on where, when and what species were taken, in addition to the band number. This information is crucial to the successful management of migratory game birds.

Pennsylvania Mentored Hunting Programs

Mentored Youth Hunting Program

Youth ages 11 and under may purchase a Mentored Youth Hunting Permit to pursue five different species in Pennsylvania – squirrel, groundhog, antlered and antlerless deer, fall and spring turkey and coyote. Youth must be accompanied by a licensed mentor who is 21 years of age or older.

A mentor may accompany only one youth in the field and only one firearm can be used by the pair. The firearm must be carried by the mentor while moving but may be given to the youth once the pair stops. Youth must remain within arm's reach of the mentor at all times when holding the firearm. The required amount of fluorescent orange must be worn during the appropriate seasons by both youth and adult mentor.

A Mentored Youth Hunting Permit may be purchased at any [license issuing agent](#) or [online](#) for \$2.70. Both residents and non-residents can purchase this specific permit. [Hunter–Trapper Education](#) courses are not required for a youth to participate in this program.

For more information and opportunities on this program, consult the [Pennsylvania Hunting and Trapping Digest](#). Information on Hunter Safety can be found in the online study guide: [Today's Hunter & Trapper in Pennsylvania](#).



Mentored Adult Hunting Program

Beginning July 1, 2014, interested hunters ages 18 and older who have not taken a [Hunter-Trapper Education](#) course or held a hunting license in Pennsylvania or another state are eligible to purchase a Mentored Adult Hunting Permit. With the permit mentored adults can hunt squirrels, ruffed grouse, rabbits, pheasants, bobwhite quail, hares, porcupines, woodchucks, crows, coyotes, antlerless deer and wild turkeys. Mentored adults may not harvest antlered deer.



Mentored adults must be accompanied by an adult mentor who is a licensed hunter and must remain within eyesight of their adult mentor, and in proximity close enough for verbal instruction and guidance to be easily understood. Both mentor and mentee may carry firearms

A Mentored Adult Hunting Permit may be purchased at any [license issuing agent](#) or [online](#). Resident permits cost \$20.70 and non-resident permits cost \$101.70. An adult may purchase a permit for up to three consecutive years after which they must take a [Hunter-Trapper Education](#) course to purchase an adult hunting license.

For more information on this program, consult the [Pennsylvania Hunting and Trapping Digest](#). Information on Hunter Safety can be found in the online study guide: [Today's Hunter & Trapper in Pennsylvania](#).

Turn in a Poacher

The Pennsylvania Game Commission has established a "Turn-In-a-Poacher" program to strengthen the Commonwealth's efforts to apprehend people who are suspected of killing threatened or endangered species or big game animals, and a witness report was instrumental in securing a successful conviction. You can get involved by either calling a toll-free-telephone number - **1-888-PGC-8001** - or filling out a "TIP" Reporting Form.

The TIP program was authorized by the General Assembly as part of a legislative package to deter crimes against wildlife. The act authorizes the Game Commission to increase by \$500, fines against individuals convicted of killing threatened or endangered species or unlawfully taking big game animals. That money is then placed in a special fund from which \$250 will be used to pay the individual providing the "tip," as long as the district justice imposes the additional \$500 fine. The additional fine money will be used to maintain the TIP Hotline.



Calls to the TIP telephone number are always answered by a secure recording device. Tips submitted using the new on-line reporting system will be delivered electronically to a special email account in the agency's Bureau of Wildlife Protection. Access to the recording device and e-mail account is limited to ensure confidentiality and program integrity. Both methods of reporting are available to the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

People who provide "tips" can choose to remain completely anonymous, particularly if you're not interested in a reward for your efforts to help wildlife and fight criminal activity against it. But if you would like to claim a reward you're entitled to, you'll have to provide a way for the agency to let you know that your information led to the successful prosecution of the accused individual and that the reward is yours.

Information about other crimes against wildlife - the illegal harvest of a single deer, bear or elk, crimes on state game lands, etc. - is still of great interest to the Game Commission, but should be reported to the appropriate agency Region Office serving the county in which the violation(s) occurred. Remember, every time another individual gets involved with reporting crimes against wildlife and wild places, Pennsylvania's great outdoors improves.

Safety Tips

Positively identify that target! - Be sure your shooting at legal game and not another hunter. **Never shoot at sounds or movement!**



Stay in the zone! - Know your zone of fire - that area where you can safely shoot at game and not endanger your partners. Never shoot at game moving between you and someone else.

Be seen! - Wear fluorescent orange clothing. Check your hunting regulations to determine specific amounts for each season.

Plan your hunt, then hunt your plan! - Let someone know where you're hunting and when you'll return. Provide a detailed plan and stick to it!

Buckle up! - If you hunt from an elevated stand, always wear a fall-restraint device whenever your feet leave the ground until they return. A full-body harness is best!

Dress for success! - Layers of clothing that wick moisture, insulate and block wind or rain will keep you safe and comfortable all day.

Keep fit! - Hunting is hard work. Don't become a statistic - stay physically fit and enjoy your outdoor experience. Start with a check-up and follow the doctor's advice.

Do your homework! - Scout your hunting area and learn the habits of the game you hunt. Practice with your sporting arms to become a skilled and proficient shooter.

Stay found! - Become familiar with your hunting area. Learn how to use a map and compass or GPS unit.

Be prepared! - Anticipate problems and emergencies. Always carry a basic survival kit and know how to use it!



Safe hunting is NO accident! - Follow all firearm-handling and safe hunting rules

Safety Tips

Treestands

Stay away! - Avoid permanent stands; they weaken with age, damage trees and are eyesores.



Smart choice! - Used stands certified by the Treestand Manufacturers Association (TMA). They are commercially designed and tested to meet high standards.

Read the directions! - Read and follow manufacture's guidelines. Practice with stands before hunting.

Look carefully! - Inspect all stands and climbing equipment before each use.

Choose wisely! - Select only suitable trees. Avoid dead trees or those with loose bark.

Buckle up! - Use a fall-restraint device, preferably a full-body harness, any time your feet leave the ground! This includes climbing up and down the tree. Choose a harness that will keep you upright and will not restrict your breathing.

Keep it short! - Make sure there is no slack in the fall-restraint tether when you are in a sitting position.

Hold on tight! - Maintain three points of contact with the climbing system, ladder or tree at all times while climbing.

Climb safely! - Use a haul line to pull up gear. If hunting with a firearm, make sure it is unloaded and the muzzle is covered! Never attach the line near the trigger or trigger guard.

Ask a friend! - Use 3 persons to set-up any ladder-type treestand.

Hunt with a plan! - In the event of a fall, be prepared to help yourself. Have someone contact authorities if you don't return at an established time.

Firearms

Handle all firearms as if they're loaded! - Never assume they're unloaded. Double check to be sure.



Take charge of that muzzle! - Always point it in a safe direction.

Identify your target! Don't rush. - Look for unmistakable, positive proof your shot will be safe. Make sure the area in front of and beyond your target is safe, too!

Don't ride the trigger! - Don't put your finger on the trigger until you're ready to shoot.

Keep the barrel and action clear! - Check for obstructions like mud or jammed cartridges. Only carry ammunition matching the caliber or gauge of the firearm you're using.

Unload all firearms not in use! - It eliminates unintentional discharges and saves lives. Transport unloaded firearms in cases with the action open.

Cross or climb safely! - Unload and place your firearm on the ground before crossing a fence, log or other obstacle, or climbing a tree. Retrieve it with your hand or hoist rope butt first.

Check your backstop! - Shoot only when a safe and adequate backstop exists. Don't shoot at hard, flat surfaces; water; or a target on the horizon.

Store firearms and ammunition separately! - Keep them locked and away from children or other inexperienced people.

Don't mix guns with drugs or alcohol! - Never take or drink anything that impairs your senses either before or while you're shooting.

Public Shooting Ranges



For your shooting enjoyment and to make you a better hunter, the Game Commission maintains public shooting ranges across the state. Those who shoot firearms at one of the Pennsylvania Game Commission's state game lands public shooting ranges must possess and carry with them either an annual \$30 range use permit or a current general hunting or furtaker license. Individuals without a range use permit or hunting or furtaker license may be fined.

Unless otherwise posted, these ranges are open year-round, from 8 a.m. until sunset, Monday through Saturday, and noon to sunset on Sundays. See the exception for [Scotia Range](#) below. Please contact the appropriate [Region Office](#) to check the daily status of ranges you wish to visit.

Before you visit, please review the [Shooting Range Regulations and Prohibited Acts](#). Do not collect the brass of shooters while the range is active.

Shooters should show consideration for others waiting for an open bench. It is common, especially leading up to the bear and deer seasons, to find an adult teaching a youngster how to shoot, or to find someone having difficulty sighting-in a rifle. Please be patient in such circumstances, and if it seems appropriate, offer assistance. Anyone under the age of 16 must be accompanied by someone 18 or older.

The Game Commission has completed lead remediation and safety upgrade projects at all public shooting ranges. Routine maintenance, including rebuilding target-line stations, cutting grass and other clean-up activities, often required the closure of ranges for several hours every month. More than \$200,000 is spent annually on shooting range maintenance. To help keep costs down, and allow these funds to be diverted to other projects and programs, users should:

1. Avoid shooting up the framework used to hold the backstop material and
2. Clean up spent cases, remove targets from backstops, keep shooting benches clean and dispose of all other litter.

Groups may reserve ranges from January 1 through October 1 by calling the [Region Office](#) at least 20 days in advance. The range is closed to other individuals when it is reserved.

Scotia Range

Scotia Range is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. A clay target range and two auxiliary target ranges are located outside the fence and are not restricted to operating hours. Please call the Northcentral Region Office at 570-398-4744 to inquire about extended hours from **April through November**: Monday through Thursday 7 a.m. – 7

p.m. and Friday through Sunday 10:30 a.m. – 7 p.m.

The road to access Scotia Range—Range Road—has two entrances and is not a through road. There is a gate on Range Road in front of the range that is open 2 weeks before and through hunting seasons (from the beginning of archery deer season to the end of the extended deer seasons in January plus Spring Gobbler season). Outside of hunting seasons and operational hours, the gate on Range Road is closed. During this time, to access the two auxiliary ranges by vehicle, enter Range Road from the North (Greys Woods) side, and, to access the clay target range, enter Range Road from the South (Gatesburg) side. If you happen to enter Range Road from the side of the gate opposite your range of choice, you will have to walk approximately 100 yards from the gate to the range.



Northwest Region

County	SGL	Rifle Range		Pistol Range	
		Firing Points	Yards	Firing Points	Yards
Forest	24	4	200	--	--
Clarion	72	6	100	--	--
Erie	109	6	100	3	25

Southwest Region

County	SGL	Rifle Range		Pistol Range	
		Firing Points	Yards	Firing Points	Yards
Allegheny	203	20	100	10	50
Cambria	108	2	100	3	25
Fayette	51	4	100	--	--
Greene	179	7	300	--	--
Greene	223	5	100	--	--
Indiana	248	4	100	5	25
Somerset	50	8	50/100	8	15/25
Washington	245	6	100	--	--
Westmoreland	42	6	100	3	25
Westmoreland	42	4	100	--	--

Northcentral Region

County	SGL	Rifle Range		Pistol Range	
		Firing Points	Yards	Firing Points	Yards
Centre	176	25	200	25	50
Clearfield	77	6	100	--	--

Southcentral Region

County	SGL	Rifle Range		Pistol Range	
		Firing Points	Yards	Firing Points	Yards
Cumberland	230	9	300	25	25

Northeast Region

County	SGL	Rifle Range		Pistol Range	
		Firing Points	Yards	Firing Points	Yards
Carbon	141	7	300	11	50
Columbia	58	7	150	7	150
Lackawanna	300	17	50/100/200	6	50
Luzerne	91	10	100	--	--
Luzerne	206	10	100	8	25
Monroe	127	12	50/100	12	10/25
Pike	183	11	100	6	25
Wayne	159	11	100	12	25

Southeast Region

County	SGL	Rifle Range		Pistol Range	
		Firing Points	Yards	Firing Points	Yards
Berks	106	10	100	--	--
Chester Closed for repairs starting August 12th	43	12	100	--	--
Dauphin	211	8	100	--	--
Lehigh	205	13	100	--	--
York Closed for repairs August 13 & 14	242	8	100	12	50



White-tailed Deer

THE WHITE-TAILED DEER, *Odocoileus virginianus*, was so named because the underside of its tail is covered with white hair, and when it runs it often holds its tail erect so that the white undersurface is visible. Whitetails belong to the Cervidae family, which in North America includes the elk, moose, caribou and mule deer. Cervids are split-hoofed mammals with no incisor teeth in the front of the upper jaw. They are classed as ruminant animals, meaning they have a four-chambered stomach and frequently chew a “cud.” Adult male whitetails grow and shed a set of antlers each year. On rare occasions, females also grow antlers.

Whitetails are the most widely distributed large animal in North America. They are found throughout most of the continental United States, southern Canada, Mexico, Central America and northern portions of South America as far south as Peru. White-tailed deer are common throughout Pennsylvania. The species is absent from much of the western United States, including Nevada, Utah and California (though its close relatives, the mule deer and black-tailed deer, can be found there).

A male deer is referred to as a buck, and a female a doe. In Pennsylvania, the average adult buck weighs about 140 pounds and stands 32 to 34 inches at the shoulder. He is about 70 inches long from the tip of his nose to the base of his tail. His tail vertebrae add only about 11 inches, but the long hair makes it far more conspicuous. Does tend to be smaller compared to bucks of the same age.

Deer weights vary considerably, depending upon age, gender, diet and the time of year the weight is checked. For example, breeding-age bucks might weigh 25 to 30 percent more at the onset of the breeding season than they do at its conclusion. Hence, a 140-pound buck in December might have weighed approximately 180 pounds in September.

Adult deer share the same coat color and markings.

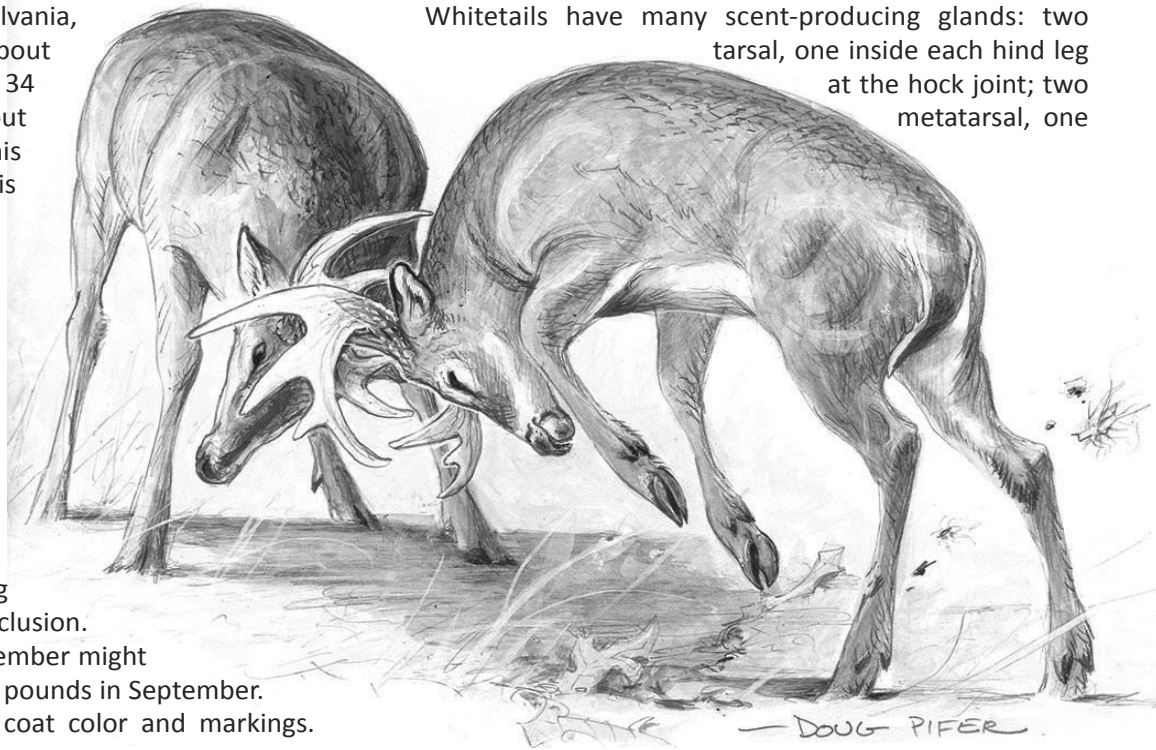
The belly, throat, areas around the eyes, insides of the ears and the underside of the tail are white all year long. During summer, the upper parts of the body are reddish brown, and in winter they are grayish brown.

Summer coats are composed of short, thin, wiry guard hairs with no underfur. Winter coats have long, thick guard hairs that are hollow with soft, wooly, densely packed underfur. The winter coat provides excellent protection against the elements. Summer coats are shed in August and September, winter coats in April and May.

Melanistic (dark-colored) and albino (abnormally white) deer occur, but they are exceptionally rare. Partial white deer, called “piebalds” or “calico” deer, occur more frequently but are still reported to make up less than 1 percent of the population.

Fawns are born with reddish-brown coats dappled with white spots. This simple pattern is excellent camouflage. When a fawn is lying on the ground or in dry leaves, this coat looks like the sun hitting the ground after it passes through the treetops. Fawns lose their spots by taking on the same coat colors as adults in the fall.

Whitetails have many scent-producing glands: two tarsal, one inside each hind leg at the hock joint; two metatarsal, one



on the outside of each hind leg between the hock and the foot; four interdigital, one between the toes of each foot; and two preorbital, one below the inside corners of each eye. The tarsal and metatarsal glands release scents conveying excitement or fear; while the interdigital glands produce odors that let deer trail each other by smell. The preorbital glands are used to personalize the prominent overhanging branch at “scrapes” – dirt areas where leaves and grass are scraped away – that are used to communicate with other deer during the breeding season, also known as the rut.

Deer can run at 40 mph for short bursts and maintain speeds of 25 mph for longer periods. They are also good jumpers, capable of clearing obstacles up to 9 feet high or 25 feet wide. The air-filled guard hairs enable them to swim easily.

Day or night, a deer’s visual acuity is excellent. Deer can distinguish among different colors, but their eyes are particularly adapted as motion detectors. Their keen senses of smell and hearing help them to detect danger.

Usually deer are silent, but they can bleat, grunt, whine, and when alarmed or suspicious, make loud *whiew* sounds by forcefully blowing air through their nostrils. Does whine to call their fawns, and fawns bleat to call their mothers.

Although antler growth is evident on male fawns, the button-like protrusions are not prominent. A buck’s first set of antlers begins to grow when it’s about 10 months old. From this point forward, a buck will grow and shed a new set of antlers each year. Typical antlers curve upward and outward to point forward, and consist of two main beams with individual tines growing upward from them.

If the yearling buck comes from an area with poor food conditions, his first set of antlers may be only “spikes” – antlers consisting of single main beams only. Spikes are common in yearlings because antler growth starts at a time when the young buck’s body still is growing. But because antler development is tied in closely with the animal’s nutritional status, older bucks may also produce spikes if they come from an area with poor food conditions.

Antler growth is a complex process driven by hormones and photoperiod (day length). Antler tissue is the fastest growing tissue known to man, having the capacity to grow an inch or more per day. Annually, antler growth begins when the days are lengthening – between the spring equinox and the summer solstice (mid-March through mid-April). Antlers grow from the tip and are full of thousands of blood vessels and are covered in velvet.

As the summer progresses and day length begins to decrease, testosterone production increases. This triggers mineralization or hardening of the antlers. The soft tissue is transformed directly into bone by the depositing of minerals within the cartilage matrix through the extensive capillary network – hardening the antlers from the base to the tip. Antler-hardening takes about a month starting in mid-July and ending in mid-August, after which time, the velvet dries up and is rubbed off.

After the breeding season, testosterone levels drop off and antlers are shed in late winter or early spring. The process then starts all over again.

While antlers are growing, they’re soft and subject to injury. Bent and twisted tines and main beams often indicate the antler was injured while



it was growing. Broken antlers occur after the antler has stopped growing and has hardened.

Antler shedding usually occurs earlier in northern states than southern ones. Natural variation and general health (which relates to nutrition) factor into when a buck will shed his antlers. It is typical for most bucks in an area to shed their antlers within a month or so of one another. But each buck has an individual antler cycle, and this also plays a role in when antlers are shed. This antler cycle is independent of all other bucks and is thought to be related to the animal's birth date.

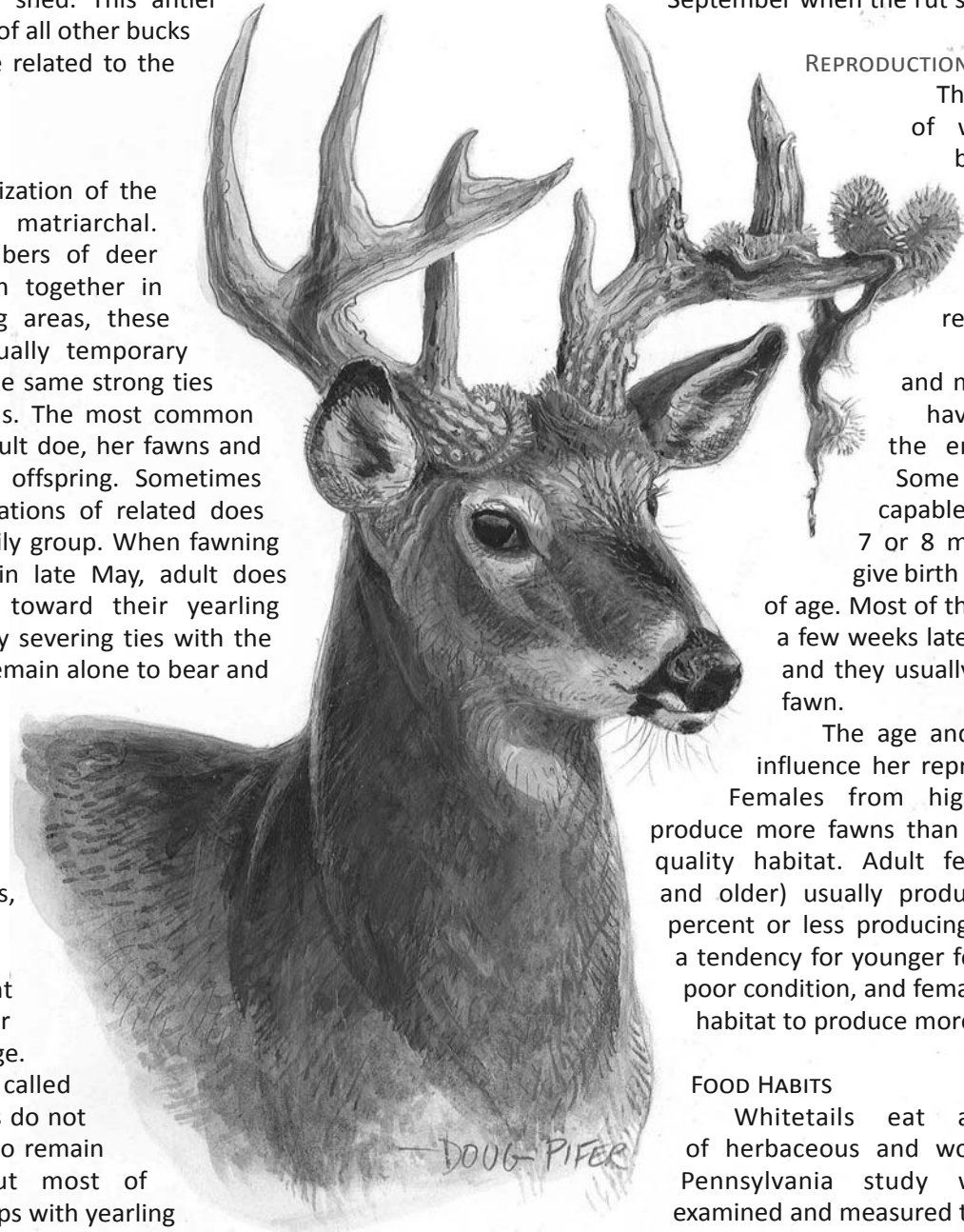
SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The social organization of the whitetail is largely matriarchal. Although large numbers of deer are sometimes seen together in feeding or wintering areas, these associations are usually temporary and do not reflect the same strong ties as family associations. The most common social group is an adult doe, her fawns and her yearling female offspring. Sometimes three or four generations of related does are present in a family group. When fawning season approaches in late May, adult does become aggressive toward their yearling offspring; temporarily severing ties with the family group. Does remain alone to bear and rear their fawns. A doe's yearling offspring are left on their own for the summer.

For both male and female yearlings, this breakdown in family bond could result in movement away from their mother's home range. This movement is called "dispersal." If siblings do not disperse, they tend to remain together throughout most of summer. Sibling groups with yearling bucks break up in September as the rut approaches. Yearling bucks tend to disperse from the mother's home range at this time. In Pennsylvania, yearling bucks travel 3 to 5 miles on average, although dispersal movements of more than 40 miles have been observed. Yearling does that do not disperse remain in the mother's

home range and rejoin her, and her new fawns, between September and October.

During the breeding season adult and yearling bucks tend to stay alone except when in pursuit of a female approaching estrus. After the breeding season in late January, bucks form loose associations of usually two to four animals. These bachelor groups remain together throughout most of the winter and summer months. These associations dissolve in September when the rut starts again.



REPRODUCTION

The breeding season of white-tailed deer begins as early as September and can last into late January. Breeding activity reaches its peak in mid-November, and most adult females have been bred by the end of December. Some female fawns are capable of reproducing at 7 or 8 months of age and give birth at 14 or 15 months of age. Most of these animals breed a few weeks later than older does, and they usually produce a single fawn.

The age and health of a doe influence her reproductive capacity.

Females from high-quality habitat produce more fawns than those from poor-quality habitat. Adult females (2½ years and older) usually produce twins, with 5 percent or less producing triplets. There is a tendency for younger females, females in poor condition, and females in poor-quality habitat to produce more male offspring.

FOOD HABITS

Whitetails eat a wide variety of herbaceous and woody plants. In a Pennsylvania study where biologists examined and measured the food contained in the rumens of vehicle-killed deer, about 100 different plant species were identified. More than half were tree, shrub or vine species, the remainder, herbaceous plants. A large number of ingested plants could not be identified.

Whitetail food preferences are largely dependent on

plant species occurring in an area and the time of year. Green leaves, herbaceous plants and new growth on woody plants are eaten in the spring and summer. In late summer, fall and early winter, both hard and soft fruits, such as apples, pears and acorns are incorporated into their diet. In winter, evergreen leaves, hard browse and dry leaves are eaten. A variety of natural foods at all times of the year are essential if an area is to carry a healthy deer population.

HABITAT

The age of a forest determines the number of deer it can support. Studies in Pennsylvania's northern hardwood and mixed-oak forests show that seedling/sapling stands can support the greatest number of deer, pole-timber stands support few or no deer, and saw-timber stands can support a moderate number of deer.

Vegetation that affords protection to an animal is commonly referred to as cover. Dense thickets, especially evergreens, usually jump to mind as being best for deer. This type of cover is perfect for winter. The key word is "protection" – protection from all enemies, be they man, beast, insects or weather. Some kind of protection is needed during all seasons of the year, not just winter.

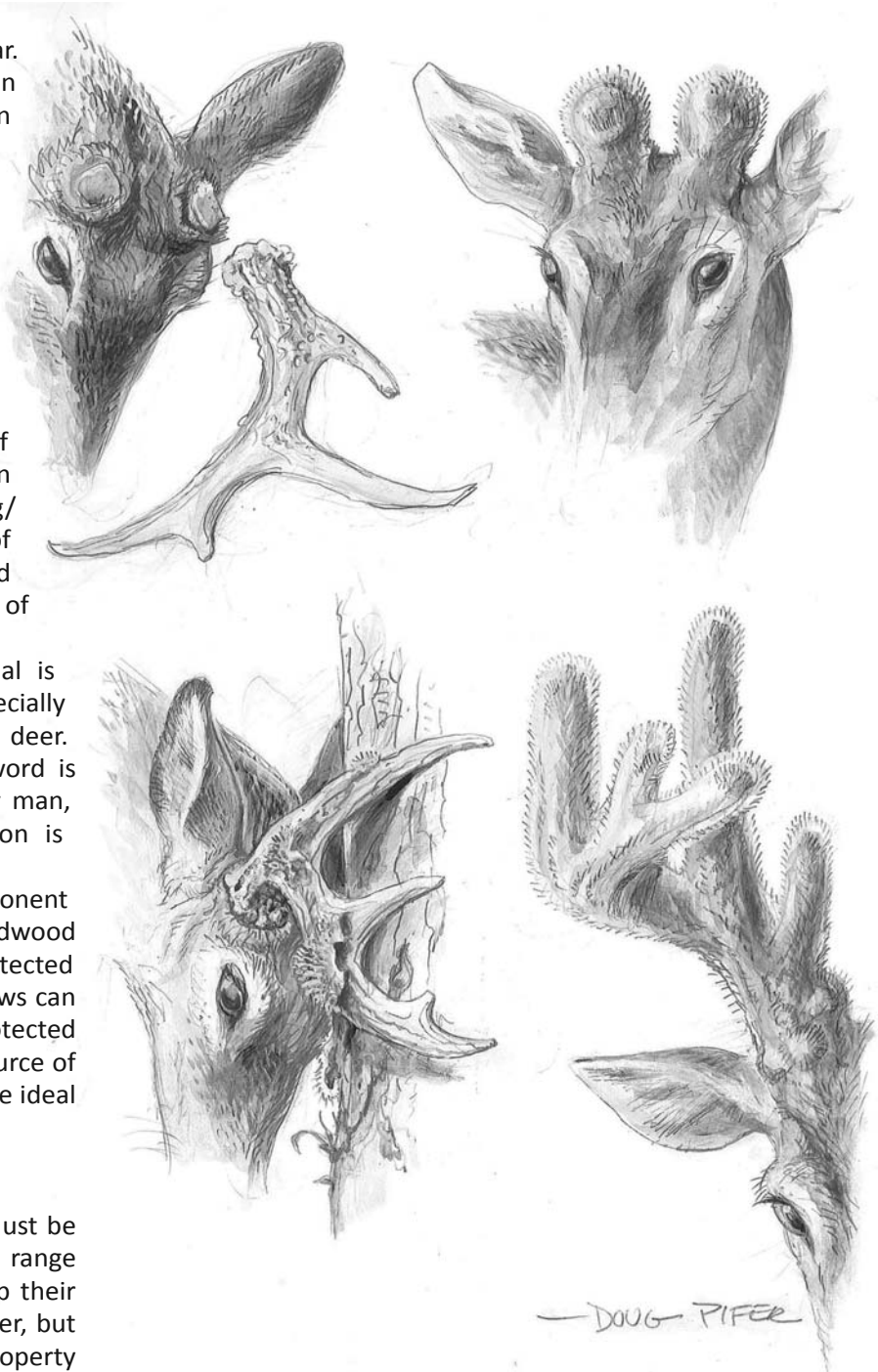
In Pennsylvania, the most essential cover component is probably winter protection within extensive hardwood stands. This kind of cover is best provided in areas protected from cold winds with southern exposures. Heavy snows can cause deer to move from high elevations to lower, protected valleys particularly into areas with conifer cover. A source of natural foods in the vicinity of good winter cover is the ideal location for deer to survive this critical time of year.

MANAGEMENT

Deer are a valuable natural resource, but they must be closely managed or they'll quickly overpopulate the range they inhabit. When overpopulation occurs, deer strip their habitat of its life-supporting qualities, not just for deer, but for many woodland wildlife species. Crop and other property damage problems also increase, as well as deer-vehicle collisions.

To balance these costs, the Game Commission engages the public to identify deer-management goals. These goals then direct the deer-management program. Goals include managing for healthy and sustainable deer populations and habitat, maintaining deer-human conflicts at acceptable levels; and providing deer-related recreational opportunities such as hunting and wildlife viewing.

Population control can only be facilitated through regulated harvest of female deer. The Game Commission



uses hunting to adjust deer populations. By issuing permits entitling hunters to take antlerless deer in particular management units, population trends can be affected to meet management goals. Deer population, habitat and deer-human conflict measures are used to determine how many hunting permits should be issued.

A sound management program is essential in maintaining the deer population as a public asset to be enjoyed by future generations of Pennsylvanians and visitors to the Commonwealth.



Wild Turkey

The wild turkey is a shy, permanent resident of Pennsylvania's woods and mountains. Infiltrating a flock of these big birds is no easy feat, and when the hunter or naturalist is finally discovered, he's treated to a spectacle as the flock breaks up. Turkeys flap upward on loud wings, some run full tilt, heads extended on serpentine necks. Others sneak along through the understory. Eventually, quiet returns to the woods. And, with time the first tentative calls of regrouping birds break the silence.

Turkeys have long been important to humans in North America. Native Americans hunted them for food, and some natives even domesticated the big birds. Later, the wild turkey became a steady food source for settlers. It earned a symbolic role as the main course of the Thanksgiving meal, which epitomized the successful harvest. Benjamin Franklin so admired the big bronze bird that he wanted it for our national emblem. Comparing it to the bald eagle, he said: "The turkey is a much more respectable bird, and withal a true original Native of America."

Several theories explain how the bird got its name. Early naturalists might have confused it with a species of Old World guinea fowl found in Turkey. Or the word might describe one of the bird's calls, which sounds a bit like *turk, turk, turk*. Still a third explanation is that the word sprang from a Native American name for the bird, "firkee."

Whatever the source of its name, the fact remains that this big bird was nearly exterminated by the ax, the plow and the gun.

As our nation grew, settlers cleared wooded habitat for farms. And they shot turkeys for food. By 1800, market hunters were selling the birds for as little as 6 cents each. By the early 1900s — when eastern forests had been lumbered and periodic fires hampered their regeneration — the turkey was in trouble.

Fortunately, here in Pennsylvania, the newly formed Game Commission stepped in. Through seasons and bag limits, the agency succeeded in safeguarding what remained of



the state's once-thriving population, which by that time could be found only in the rugged mountains of the state's southcentral counties. Over time, the agency experimented with ways to return turkeys to the rest of Penn's Woods. Turkey farms were tried. So was placing hen turkeys in holding pens for wild gobblers to breed. But neither enterprise fared well. What turkeys needed was habitat improvements. In the 1950s, as the state's forests began to mature, turkeys began to naturally expand their range. Expansion was furthered through a Game Commission wild turkey trap-and-transfer program that would become a model for every state interested in turkey restoration. Today, after thousands of wild turkeys were transferred

throughout the state, and provided to other states, turkeys are found in every county, and this wily bird has developed quite a following among hunters and naturalists.

Biology

The wild turkey, native only to the North American continent, belongs to the single and highly variable species *Meleagris gallopavo*. Taxonomists recognize at least five subspecies; the variety found in Pennsylvania is known as the eastern wild turkey. Turkeys are gallinaceous — “chicken-like” — birds (order Galliformes), related to grouse, quail, pheasants and chickens.

Adult males, also called gobblers or toms, stand 2½ to 3 feet tall and are 3 to 4 feet long. Females, or hens, are about one-third shorter and weigh about half as much. Gobblers weigh up to 25 pounds, averaging 16. Adult hens weigh 9 to 10 pounds, and 6-month-old birds, 6 to 13 pounds.

The wild turkey looks much like the domesticated subspecies, except the wild bird is slimmer, has a smaller head, a longer neck, longer, rangier legs, and smaller fleshy head and neck adornments. Tail feathers and tail coverts are tipped chestnut brown on wild birds, white on domesticated ones.

Plumage is an overall rich brown. In shadows, turkeys appear black; in bright sunlight, their feathers gleam with copper, blue, green and mahogany highlights. A hen’s plumage is duller and not quite as iridescent, and her breast feathers end in a brown or buff band, while those of a gobbler are tipped with black.

Gobblers have spurs — sharp, bony spikes on the backs of their legs that are used in fighting — and rough, black “beards,” growths of rudimentary, hair-like feathers called mesofiloplumes, which protrude from their breasts. These beards grow quickly for their first few years, then more slowly,

until they’re about 12 inches long. The ends may break off, though, so beard length isn’t a reliable indicator of age. Usually, hens have neither spurs nor beards.

A gobbler’s head is practically bare, while the hen has fine feathers on the back of its neck and head. A fleshy, pencil-like appendage called a caruncle, or snood, dangles from between the gobbler’s eyes. The heads of hens are bluish-gray, and their necks may appear somewhat pinkish, whereas gobblers’ heads are pink to red. During mating season, a gobbler’s head and neck are more red; during courtship display, his snood may become long and swollen, and the color of his head and neck changes quickly from red to blue, purple and white.

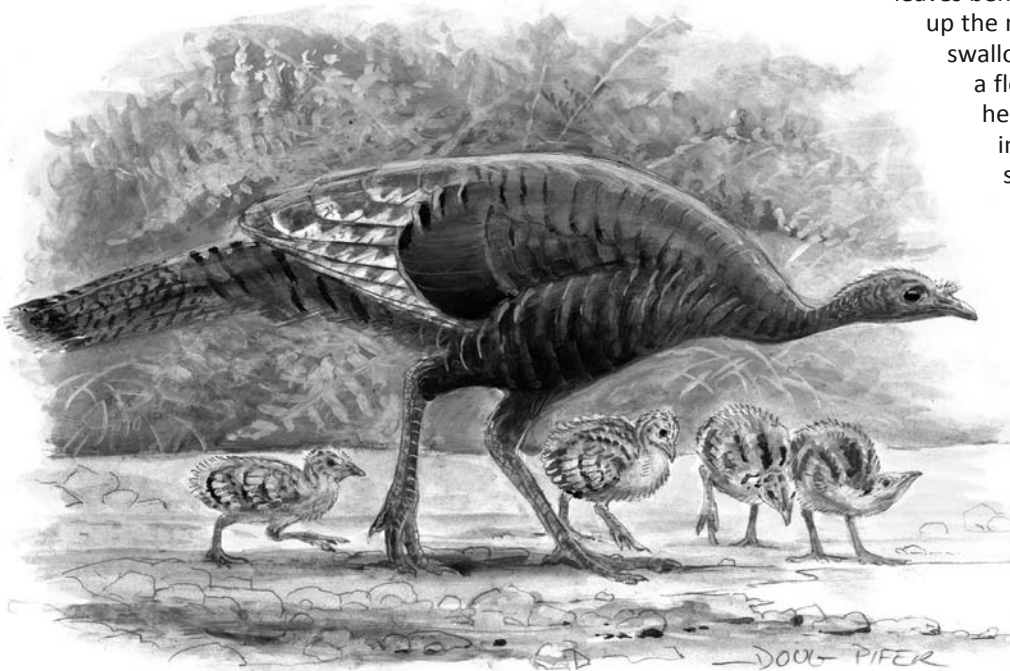
Food

In spring, turkeys eat tender greens, shoots, tubers, leftover nuts and early insects. As the weather warms up, they eat more insects, including grasshoppers, walking-sticks, beetles, weevils, dragonflies, ants and larvae. They also consume spiders, harvestmen, ticks, millipedes, centipedes, snails and slugs. But even in summer, a majority of the diet (perhaps 90 percent) is vegetable. A wide variety of plant species are eaten, as well as a number of plant parts, including fruits, seeds, seedheads, tubers, roots, bulbs, stems, leaves, flowers and buds.

In fall, turkeys eat mast (beechnuts, acorns); fruits (dogwood, grape, cherry, gum, thornapple); and seeds (grasses and sedges, ash, corn, oats, weeds). During winter, they rely on seeds, nuts and fruits left over from autumn, and on green plants, crustaceans and insect larvae found in and around spring seeps where groundwater emerges along a hillside or in a flat. Temperature of this water is above freezing, so the seeps remain open all winter, providing food for turkeys and other wildlife.

A turkey often scratches for its food, kicking forest duff and leaves behind. If the bird finds an acorn, it picks up the nut in its beak, straightens its neck, and swallows. The nut is stored in the bird’s crop, a flexible “bag” in which juices and body heat work to soften it. Then the nut passes into the gizzard, an enlarged, thick-walled section of the food canal that contains small stones and gravel called grit. Strong muscles use the grit to grind down the acorn.

Turkeys can range up to several miles a day in search of food and water, sometimes establishing regular feeding areas if left undisturbed. In autumn, hunters “read” the turkeys’ scratchings to determine when a flock passed by, what size the flock was, and which way the birds were headed.



Physical Properties, Behavior

Like most birds, turkeys have keen eyesight and hearing. They hide cleverly, fly an estimated 40 to 55 mph, cover more than a mile while airborne and swim with ease. But turkeys usually rely on their feet to escape danger. The strides of chased gobblers have been measured at 4 feet and their top running speeds are estimated at 18 mph. Tracks vary somewhat by the age of the bird (a young tom, for example, might have a shorter print than an adult hen) but any track larger than 4¼ inches, from the back of the heel pad to the tip of middle toe, was probably made by a male.

Each evening, turkeys fly into trees to spend the night. A flock of six to 40 birds might roost in the same tree or in adjacent trees. They prefer the shelter of conifers during inclement weather. In early morning, the birds glide to the ground, call, and regroup for feeding.

Turkeys make a wide range of sounds. The best known is the male's gobble (described *ill-obble-obble-obble*), used in spring to attract females and proclaim territory. Other calls include yelps (*keouk, keouk, keouk*), made by both sexes; the cluck (*kut*), an assembly note; the whistle, or "kee-kee run" of a young bird (*kee, kee, kee*); and the alarm note (*putt*). Gregarious birds, turkeys call when separated from the flock. By imitating such calls, hunters attract birds.

Reproduction

Toward the end of March, a male turkey changes physically. His fleshy crown swells and turns pale, his wattles redden and hang from his head, and he develops a thick, spongy breast layer containing oils and fats to help sustain him over breeding season. Toms gobble loudly in early morning and sometimes in late evening. Blowing a car horn, beating a tin pan, or making almost any loud noises might provoke lusty gobblers.

If hens are present, a gobbler will display by fanning his tail, erecting his feathers, and tucking his head back against his body. He will strut back and forth, hissing and dragging his wing tips on the ground. Rival males fight: each grasps the other's head or neck in his bill and tries to shove or pull his foe off balance. The first bird to let go or lose balance gets thrashed with wing and spur.

Year-old birds are sexually mature; hens often mate during their first spring, but young males usually can't compete with mature gobblers. A dominant male may collect a harem of eight to 12, or even more hens. Males are polygamous: a gobbler mates with several hens and plays no part in nest site choice, brooding eggs or rearing young.

In late April, mated females slip away from the flock. They choose nesting spots in wooded or brushy areas, near water sources and usually close to forest clearings or old fields. The nests are leaf-lined depressions in the ground and might be located under the curves of fallen logs, concealed by vegetation or fallen branches or built at the bases of trees.

The gobbler's sperm is stored in the hen's oviduct, so that fertilized eggs can be laid up to four weeks after mating. One mating is usually sufficient to fertilize an entire clutch as well as a renesting attempt, if needed. A hen lays an egg nearly every day until her nest contains eight to 15 eggs. Clutches average 12 eggs, but are smaller for younger birds. Hens begin incubating constantly after all eggs are laid.

Eggs are oval and pointed markedly at one end. The smooth, dull shells are colored pale buff and are evenly marked with reddish-brown spots or fine dots. Foxes, bobcats and great horned owls prey on nesting hens; eggs are eaten by the aforementioned predators plus minks, raccoons, opossums, black snakes, skunks, crows, red squirrels and even house cats.

Incubation takes about 28 days. After young hatch, the hen broods them until they're dry and then, if the weather is mild, leads them away from the nest.

Poults

Young turkeys are called poults. They're covered with a fine, brownish fuzz and even at hatching have a wild turkey's distinctive long neck and legs. Easy game for predators, their main defense is to hide. They scatter and freeze at the hen's warning call, remaining motionless until she sounds the all-clear. A hen might feign injury to lure intruders away from her young.

Poults need high-protein food to grow quickly, and the hen soon leads them to open areas where insects abound. Poults eat beetles, leafhoppers, crickets, other insects and larvae, tender greens and fruits. The hen broods them nightly for at least two weeks, until their wings develop and they can roost in trees. When poults are about 3 weeks old, several family groups might merge to form a flock of hens and poults.

Six-week-old juveniles are fairly strong fliers, and by autumn they're practically self-sufficient. Birds of the year can be identified by their middle tail feathers, which are longer than the others, as these adult feathers have already molted in. In adults, the edge of the fanned tail forms an unbroken curved line.

In autumn, flocks often contain several old hens and their young, and occasionally hens that have not raised broods, for a total of 40 or more birds. Old toms usually remain apart, in pairs or trios. During early winter, family groups disperse and form new flocks by sex and age: hens, young toms and old toms.

Although susceptible to diseases, turkeys are hardy animals. Periodically, a harsh winter might lead to starvation, especially if there is deep, powdery snow, which makes it difficult for birds to become airborne. Disease outbreaks have been verified in the past, but none has had a substantial population impact over large areas. The most common disease to wild turkeys is a virus called avian pox, which is caused by bites from mosquitoes or other blood-feeding arthropods. Another

disease, lymphoproliferative disease virus, or LPDV, first was identified in wild turkeys in North America in 2009. Previously, LPDV was known to affect domestic turkeys in the United Kingdom and the Middle East. LPDV signs include some similar to avian pox, such as brown, crusty lesions on the head. But with LPDV, lesions also are common on the legs and feet.

Population

In 1900, few turkeys were left in the eastern United States, largely because widespread logging had destroyed their woodland habitat. An estimated 3,500 to 5,000 birds remained in Pennsylvania — a far cry from the large, healthy population that had existed here a century earlier, mainly in southcentral Pennsylvania's oak and American chestnut forests.

Restoration of the species involved several steps. First, refuges were established and new game laws strictly enforced to protect remaining local populations. Half-wild turkeys were bred on the Game Commission's wild turkey farm, beginning in 1930. These birds proved to be nearly useless. As cut-over forests began to regrow, existing wild flocks began to move into new areas on their own. In addition, wild birds were trapped in areas where they were abundant and transferred to suitable, but unoccupied, habitat to speed up the dispersal that was naturally occurring. The superiority of this approach over game-farm turkey releases has been obvious. Today, turkeys are found throughout the state and are abundant in areas where, in the past, continual releases of game-farm turkeys failed to establish even limited self-sustaining populations.

The Game Commission also works to improve turkey habitat, especially brood and winter-range habitat, which tend to be limiting factors for populations. Wild turkeys can be found in every county within Pennsylvania.

What are a turkey's chances of survival, from egg to adult? The following statistics are from *The Wild Turkey — Biology and Management*, edited by James G. Dickson and published in 1992 by Stackpole Books: (a) nesting success of the turkey is 31 to 45 percent, about normal for a ground-nesting species; (b) 53 to 76 percent of poults perish, mostly within two weeks of hatching; (c) life expectancy of a turkey surviving its first two weeks of life is still less than 1½ years, although a few have been known to survive more than 10 years in the wild; (d) annual turkey survival generally ranges from 54 to 62 percent; (e) predation is generally the most common cause of wild turkey mortality; and (f) hunting-related turkey mortality is highly variable, depending largely on varying hunting season regulations, but can range from less than 5 percent to more than 50 percent of all losses.

Habitat

Turkeys have shown more tolerance for fragmented habitat (woodlots) and human disturbance than previously believed, but they still depend on forested habitats and do best with limited human activity. Habitat diversity — varying habitat types and differing ages — is the key to good turkey habitat.

Turkeys seem to do best with a mix of forested, actively farmed and reverting-farmland habitat types.

A turkey flock uses an extensive area — several thousand acres — during a year to meet its needs, so a small landowner shouldn't expect to maintain a resident flock. However, anyone with forested land can do something to benefit turkeys, especially if neighboring landowners will cooperate.

Trees such as oaks, beech and cherries are most beneficial to turkeys when producing the maximum mast; this occurs when trees are 50 to 100 years old. Landowners can manage their woodlands for saw-timber by conventional even- or uneven-age silvicultural approaches and by "pushing" young hardwood stands to maturity by culling out less-vigorous and non-mast-producing trees. Some woodland cuttings — which aren't economical in terms of timber management — can be made to allow more sunlight to reach grape, dogwood, greenbrier, hawthorn, viburnum and other food-producing understory species. Planting shrubs such as crabapple, serviceberries, high-bush cranberry and Washington hawthorn, or allowing clumps of brush such as blackberries and raspberries to grow will provide abundant and persistent winter foods. Discourage exotics such as Russian olive, autumn olive, and multiflora rose, which tend to overtake native shrubs.

Forest clearings are especially used by hens and poults. Here, sunlight penetrates the tree canopy and allows grasses and forbs to spring up. Increased plant life gives rise to increased insect life, and insects form a key part of a young turkey's diet. Thus, forest openings resulting from cleared timberlands, old logging roads and log landings, power line rights of way and old beaver meadows should be preserved, or planted with a grass-legume mixture if needed. Spring seeps also are important, as they provide insect and vegetable food over winter.

Free water (streams, lakes, ponds, springs, seeps and rainwater in shallow depressions) has never been demonstrated to be lacking for wild turkeys in the eastern United States. Artificial feeding? Turkeys don't generally need it, especially if they live in good habitat. Such feeding might actually pose a hazard by unnaturally concentrating a local population, thus increasing the danger of poaching and disease transmission, and giving predators an unnatural advantage.

Pennsylvanians can be proud of the wild turkey's restoration to this state. With enough concern for meeting all the birds' needs, we can enjoy them well into the future.



Elk

Before settlers arrived in Pennsylvania, elk (*Cervus elaphus*) lived throughout the state, with concentrations in the northcentral and Pocono mountains. By 1867, the species had been extirpated. Ultimately it became extinct throughout its range, which included New York and New England.

Today, elk inhabit portions of Elk, Cameron, Clinton, Clearfield and Potter counties. The animals are descendants of elk released by the Pennsylvania Game Commission between 1913 and 1926.

The word “elk” comes from the German “elch,” the name for the European moose. The elk is also called “wapiti,” an Indian word meaning “white deer,” probably referring to animal’s sun-bleached spring coat or its light-colored rump.

The elk is the second-largest member of the deer family in North America; only the moose is larger. Many Western states, several Canadian provinces, and a few eastern states – including Pennsylvania – support thriving elk populations, and in those places the elk is a popular big-game animal.

Biology

Elk are much larger and heavier than white-tailed deer. A mature male elk, called a bull, stands 50 to 60 inches at the shoulder and weighs 600 to 1,000 pounds. Females, or cows, weigh 500 to 600 pounds.

Elk have a summer and a winter coat. The summer pelage is short, thin and colored reddish brown. In winter, long, coarse guard hairs overlay woolly underfur. At this time, an elk’s body is tawny brown or brownish gray, with the neck, chest and legs dark brown, and the underparts darker than the back. Buffy or whitish fur covers the rump and the 4- to 5-inch tail. Sexes are colored essentially alike. Young elk, called calves, are dappled with spots.

Strong muscular animals, elk can run 30 mph for short distances, and can trot for miles. They jump well and swim readily. Their senses of smell and hearing are keen.

Cow elk often bark and grunt to communicate with their calves, and calves make a sharp squealing sound. The best known elk call, however, is the bull’s bugling. Bugling occurs primarily during the mating season. It consists of a low bellow that ascends to a high note, which is held until the animal runs out of breath, followed by guttural grunts. Cows also bugle at times.

Each year, a bull grows large branching antlers that sweep up and back from the head. In May, two bumps start to swell on the animal’s skull, pushing up about half an inch per day. The growing antlers are covered with a soft skin called velvet. This covering contains blood vessels which supply growth materials to the enlarging antlers.

Yearlings usually grow single spikes 10 to 24 inches in length, while older bulls may produce racks with main beams 4 to 5 feet in length and having five to nine tines to a side. An elk with a total of 12 antler points is called a “royal” bull; one with 14 points is an “imperial.” Before the autumn rutting season, the velvet dries and is shed or rubbed off. Bulls carry their antlers into late winter or early spring.

Elk primarily are grazers, eating a variety of grasses and forbs. In winter, they paw through snow to reach grass, or turn to twigs, buds and the bark of trees. Among trees and shrubs, early successional species such as aspen, willow, and flowering dogwood are important

to Pennsylvania elk. When available, acorns will make up a portion of elk's fall diet. They also browse oak, striped maple, black cherry, Juneberry and witch hazel. They drink from streams and springs and, if necessary, during the winter they get water by eating snow.

The mating season is September and October. Bulls bugle invitations to cows and challenges to other bulls. Bulls fight with each other, joining antlers and pushing and shoving. Battles rarely end in serious injury; the weaker bull usually breaks off the confrontation and trots away.

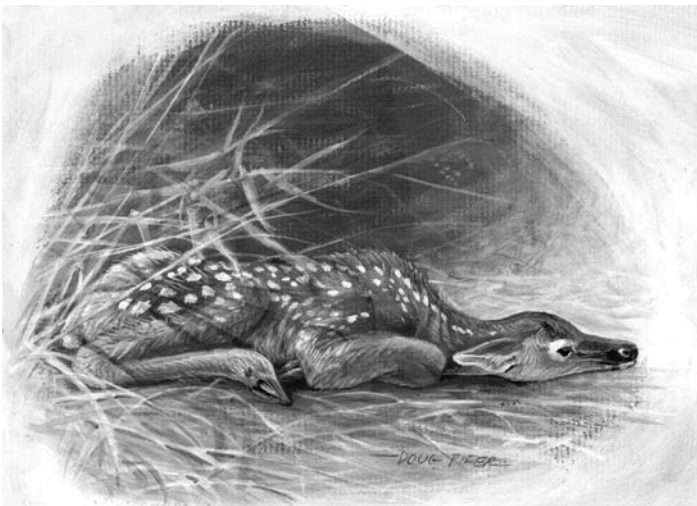
Like their western counterparts, Pennsylvania bull elk amass harems of 15 to 20 cows. Most harems are controlled by large mature bulls, although younger males, which hang around on the fringes of the groups, may also share in the breeding.

About 8½ months after she is bred, a cow in May or June will give birth to a single calf, rarely twins. A calf weighs about 30 pounds and can stand when only 20 minutes old. Within an hour, it starts to nurse, and it begins feeding on vegetation when less than a month old.

In spring and summer, bulls go off by themselves, living alone or in small groups. Cows and calves tend to remain in family units composed of a mature cow, her calf, and yearlings. Sometimes several families band together. An old cow will lead the group, barking out alarm calls and guiding the band away from intruders. In hot weather, elk bed in the shade of dense timber. They prefer not to move about in heavy wind.

Potential lifespan for an elk is more than 20 years. Pennsylvania elk die from hunting, old age, disease, vehicle collisions and poaching.

Brainworm is a parasitic nematode (*Parelaphostrongylus tenuis*) that sometimes kills Pennsylvania elk. The nematode is common in the eastern United States and



Canada. Its primary host is the white-tailed deer, which it does not normally harm. Elk pick up the parasite from snails – an intermediate host – which they inadvertently consume while grazing. The worm eventually reaches the brain and spinal column, causing death.

Habitat

Elk are attracted to forest clearcuts, revegetated strip mines, grassy meadows, open stream bottoms, and agricultural lands. Shy animals, they tend to avoid contact with humans, although they will venture into settled areas to reach favored food sources.

Pennsylvania's elk live in northcentral Pennsylvania.

The Game Commission and state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) manage public lands to make them more attractive to elk. The agencies create and maintain high-quality foraging areas and limit disturbance by humans. Elk habitat enhancement projects also benefit deer, wild turkeys, grouse and other wildlife.

Population

From 1913 to 1926 the Game Commission released a total of 177 elk in Blair, Cameron, Carbon, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Forest, Monroe and Potter counties. From 1923 to 1931, hunting seasons on antlered bulls were held, and hunters took 98 of them.

However, a decline in elk numbers, due in part to the animals being killed illegally for crop damage, closed the 1932 hunting season. And by 1936, only 14 elk remained statewide – all of them in Elk and Cameron counties, which, interestingly, is the area where the last native elk was killed.

Following a reintroduction effort, the herd slowly rebounded. In the first elk survey conducted by the Game Commission and DCNR in 1971, 65 were counted by ground and aerial spotters. By 1980, the number rose to 114. In 1992, the ground spotters were eliminated from the survey and the herd was estimated to number 183.

A three-year trap-and-transfer program launched by the Game Commission in 1998 expanded the elk's range from 350 to 800 square miles.

In 2001, survey work indicated the herd contained more than 700 elk. That same year, the Game Commission once again had an open, but highly regulated elk hunt.

Today, Pennsylvania's elk herd continues to thrive and provide hunting opportunities for a limited number of hunters each year. One-hundred years after restoration efforts began, the herd numbered about 950 animals.



Black Bear

One of the largest, and among the most secretive animals living in Pennsylvania is the black bear, *Ursus americanus*. The species ranges through much of forested North America from Mexico to Alaska and from Florida to northern Canada. In different regions, black bears exhibit different life patterns, denning times, tolerance of human activity, habitat preferences, travel patterns, reproduction behavior, pelt coloration and even size and weight.

Biology

Bears are powerfully built animals. Adults are 50 to 85 inches in length, including a 3- to 5-inch tail. They stand about 30 inches at the shoulder and weights range from 140 to 400 pounds, with rare individuals weighing more than 800 pounds. Males, sometimes called boars, tend to be considerably larger and heavier than females, or sows.

Most Pennsylvania bears are black, although a few are a cinnamon color. (In other parts of its range, *Ursus americanus* may be brown, whitish, or bluish-gray, but the majority are black.) The body is glossy black, the muzzle tinged with tan. Often a bear will have on its chest a white mark, sometimes in a prominent "V." The fur is thick, long and fairly soft. Sexes are colored alike.

Bears walk in a shuffling, flat-footed manner. Each foot has five toes, each with a curved claw. Extremely agile for their size, bears sometimes stand erect on their hind feet to see and smell better. Their top speed is 30 mph over short distances. Black bears climb easily and swim well.

Black bears have an acute sense of smell, but their vision is comparatively poor. Hearing is believed to be similar to that of humans. They occasionally growl, "woof," or click their teeth together when threatened, and females communicate with their cubs using low grunts that signal cubs to climb a tree when danger is near or to descend after it has passed.

Bears are most active at dusk and dawn, with slightly lower activity levels during the day. They can also become nocturnal to avoid human activity. Alert and wary, they tend to avoid open areas. Individuals are solitary unless with cubs or during the breeding season. While most bears will run from a human, some that live in close proximity



to people can become habituated and appear indifferent. Bears that become accustomed to people can be attracted into backyards if food is present. Bird feeders, garbage cans and backyard grills all can draw bears. Bears that learn to forage on human-provided foods often become nuisances, causing property damage and increasing the risk of a human-bear encounter. Eliminating attractants typically prevents these types of problems.

Bears find food mainly by scent. They are opportunistic feeders, with a largely vegetarian diet. Common foods are fruit (including large amounts of berries), mast (acorns, hickory nuts and beechnuts), succulent leaves, grasses, insects (including eggs and larvae), plant roots, amphibians, reptiles, small mammals, fish, carrion and garbage. Enhancing forest diversity and protecting the large component of nut-producing trees found in Pennsylvania forests is probably the single best habitat-management tool for bears.

Black bears also can prey on newborn white-tailed deer fawns, although predation typically wanes after the first few weeks of a fawn's life. An occasional bear runs afoul of humans by preying on pigs, goats, sheep, rabbits or poultry;



or by eating corn, raiding campers' food stores or destroying honey-bee colonies (beekeepers with such problems should protect their hives with electric fences). Bears drink water frequently and, in hot weather, they wallow in streams.

In autumn, bears eat heavily to fatten themselves for winter. Bears enter hibernation late in the fall, with pregnant females being the first to enter dens, typically during mid to late November. Males den several weeks later. Onset of hibernation can vary from year to year depending on the availability of fall foods, with poor food years resulting in earlier denning.

The winter den might be a hollow tree, or an excavation resembling a bear-sized groundhog hole. They also den in rock crevices, cavities under large rocks, or in a nest beneath the roots of fallen trees. Some bears, including females with newborn cubs, may simply den in an open nest on top of the ground. Bears line their dens with bark, grasses and leaves. Females tend to select more sheltered sites than males. Males den alone, as do pregnant females (they give birth in the den). Females with first-year cubs den with their young.

Hibernation in bears more closely resembles resting than the deep torpor characteristic of other species. During hibernation, bears are alert and capable of fleeing or defending the den. Body temperature is not drastically reduced, but respiration and heart rate decline some. Bears do not urinate or defecate while dormant. On warm, late-winter days, they might emerge and wander nearby.

The average annual home range for adult male bears in Pennsylvania is 20 square miles. Adult females have ranges of 6 to 8 square miles, on average. Daily and seasonal movement is affected by food availability, breeding activities and human disturbances. In some areas, bears create trails while covering the nightly circuits. Individuals may scar trees with claw and

bite marks while rubbing their backs against them; these "rub trees" announce a bear's presence to other passing bears.

Bears mate from early June to mid-July. It is generally accepted that both sexes are polygamous. The male does not help rear young. Most female bears in Pennsylvania produce their first litter at age 3, although in remote areas where access to high-calorie human-related foods is absent, the initial litter might not occur until age 5.

Females give birth to cubs during early January while in the winter den. Litter sizes range from one to five, with three most frequent in Pennsylvania. Newborns are covered with fine dark hair, through which their pink skin shows. They are about 9 inches long and weigh 8 to 10 ounces. Their eyes and ears are closed.

Cubs nurse in the den. After about six weeks, their eyes open. In about two more weeks, they walk. They leave the den when 3 months old, are weaned by 7 months, and by fall usually weigh 60 to 100 pounds. Bears traveling in groups in autumn are usually females and their cubs. Cubs are playful, romping in water and wrestling with their littermates. The female protects them, sending them up trees if danger threatens. Adult male bears occasionally kill and eat cubs.

Mothers and 1-year-old cubs will den together again the winter after their birth. The family group disbands the following spring, when the female is ready to breed again. Consequently, a female generally raises only one litter every two years. The male cubs, now 16 months old and called yearlings, will disperse while female yearlings establish home ranges nearby.

Mortality factors include hunting, being struck by vehicles, or being killed due to damage control or nuisance activity. Natural diseases, predation or starvation are rare. Bears host ticks and internal parasites, and some become infected with mites that burrow into the skin and result in a condition called mange, which can be fatal. In the wild, a rare individual might live to 25 years. Age can be determined by examining a tooth in cross-section under a microscope and counting annual growth rings similar to how trees are aged.

Population

In Pennsylvania, bears are found in large forested areas state-wide. They currently occupy over three-quarters of the state, although sightings have been confirmed in every county. Large urban centers and agricultural areas, such as the southeastern corner of Pennsylvania, and parts of the western border, lack sufficient forest habitat and bears seen there mostly are transient. The total population currently is estimated to be 18,000. In the 1970s, there were fewer than 5,000 in Pennsylvania.

Because bear populations have the potential to further increase, which can result in more frequent human-bear conflicts, their numbers are managed using regulated hunting. The length and timing of hunting seasons is set such that populations with greater human-bear conflicts are reduced or stabilized while areas with few conflicts are allowed to increase. Population trend and harvest levels are closely monitored annually.

Notes:



Pennsylvania Game Commission

PGC-707-LE
09/2007

Application for Disabled Person to Use a Vehicle as a Blind

Notice: Use of this form is required by the PGC for any application filed pursuant to Title 34, Pa. C.S., section 2923. The PGC will not consider your application unless you complete and submit this form. Personal information provided may be used to determine the identity of the applicant, eligibility for approvals and for other enforcement purposes.

Return completed form to:
Pennsylvania Game Commission, Bureau of Wildlife Protection, 2001 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797

APPLICATION MUST BE FILLED OUT COMPLETELY

SECTION I - TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT. TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY.

Form with fields for Applicant's Name, Driver's License Number, Date of Birth, Street or Route #, Apartment #, Home Telephone Number, Sex, City, State, Zip Code, County of Residence, Township of Residence, and Signature/Date Signed.

SECTION II - TO BE COMPLETED BY A LICENSED PHYSICIAN (Please refer to physician's notice)

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT ALL ENTRIES

Indicate 'yes' or 'no' to all questions

PERMANENT CONDITION

Complete this section only for conditions where the patient has reached Maximal Medical Improvement.

A. MOBILITY

- 1a. Does applicant have a permanent or irreversible physical disability and requires one or more of the following support devices for mobility?
1b. Which of the following does applicant require for mobility? Check all that apply.
a. Wheelchair
b. Walker
c. One leg brace or external prosthesis above the knee
d. Two leg braces or external prostheses below the knees
e. Two crutches or two canes (single crutch or cane does not qualify)

DESCRIBE SPECIFIC CONDITION THAT REQUIRES SUPPORT DEVICE AND PART OF BODY AFFECTED. If condition is the result of a specific incident (motor vehicle accident, work related injury, stroke, amputation, etc.) please give the date and nature of that incident. Attach additional sheets as needed.

CONTINUED ON BACK

2. Does the applicant have a disability or combination of disabilities creating a minimum impairment equivalent to 90% loss of function in one leg or no more than 10% maximal functional use in one leg regardless of the functional level of the other leg..... Yes No

DESCRIBE SPECIFIC CONDITION AND HOW IT LIMITS FUNCTIONAL USE OF LOWER EXTREMITY(S) TO THE DEGREE REQUIRED. Attach additional sheets as needed.

B. LUNG DISEASE

Does applicant suffer from lung disease to the extent that at least one of the following is met:

1. Forced expiratory volume for one second when measured by spirometry is less than one liter Yes No
DATE OF TEST AND ACTUAL MEASUREMENT _____
2. The arterial oxygen tension is less than 60 millimeters of mercury on room air at rest Yes No
DATE OF TEST AND ACTUAL MEASUREMENT _____
3. Dependent upon oxygen apparatus 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.. Yes No

C. CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

Does applicant suffer significantly from cardiovascular disease to the extent that functional limitations are classified in severity as **Class 3 or 4** according to current standards accepted by the American Heart Association?

The applicant must exhibit fatigue, palpitation, dyspnea or anginal pain with ordinary exertion such as light walking...... Yes No
DATE OF ORIGINAL EVALUATION AND ACTUAL CLASSIFICATION _____

SECTION III – TO BE COMPLETED BY A LICENSED PHYSICIAN (IF APPLICABLE)

TEMPORARY CONDITION

Complete this section only for conditions where the patient has not reached Maximal Medical Improvement.

Does applicant have a temporary disability that restricts mobility or walking of any distance due to illness, injury or operative procedures and who either has a leg, hip or back, or any part thereof, casted by a licensed physician due to a fracture or had leg, hip or back surgery..... Yes No

Describe specific condition and body part effected:

Temporary permits expire June 30th of each year.

Physician Certification: I certify below that I have examined the applicant named above and read the physician’s notice included with the application. I completed the application according to the instructions included and the information provided is true and correct and is an accurate and medically documented evaluation of the patient’s condition and disability at the time of application. I understand that I may be required to appear and answer questions regarding this information at a hearing or other legal proceeding.
DATE OF PATIENT’S MOST RECENT EXAMINATION _____.

Name of Physician (Please Print)	Medical License Number	Date Signed
Signature of Physician	Telephone # (include area code)	Fax #
Address	(PGC USE ONLY)	
City, State, Zip Code	APPROVED [] TEMP PERM	DISAPPROVED []
	Chief, Technical Services Signature _____	Date _____

Permanent conditions are of three types: restricted mobility, lung disease or cardiovascular disease.

In order to qualify in the mobility category A.1, the condition must meet two criteria: 1) it is permanent and irreversible, and 2) the applicant is unable to walk without one or more of the artificial support devices listed. Occasional use of only one device is not acceptable. The patient must *require* a device for mobility and be unable to walk without one.

Category A.2 allows for other cases of restricted mobility. This may apply to a single, or multiple conditions that result in a minimum 90% loss of use of a lower extremity. This standard is substantial and is seldom met where the patient does not require artificial support to perform the activities of daily living. This category, in particular, requires a narrative description that accounts for loss of use of an extremity to this degree.

Permits will not be granted based solely on disability from pain, fatigue, etc. Due to their subjective nature, impairment due to pain and fatigue must be supported by specific causes and the loss of function due to such conditions substantiated.

Evaluate your patient's capabilities, including the effects of medication, for those conditions where medication is successfully controlling symptoms and improving their ability to ambulate.

Advanced age may be considered a contributing factor in a medical condition but will not be considered by itself as a qualifying condition.

The standards for lung disease are defined. Documentation of specific pulmonary function testing is required. The patient must have met the standard continuously from the date of the test to the date of application. A permit may be granted if any one of the three conditions is met.

The standards for cardiovascular disease are defined. The applicant must have functional limitations of class 3 or 4 as defined by the American Heart Association standards. The patient must experience fatigue, palpitation, dyspnea or anginal pain while performing ordinary physical activity such as light walking. The patient must meet this standard continuously from the date of evaluation to the date of application.

It may be necessary for us to contact you with questions about the information on the application. Please include a phone and fax number in the spaces provided.

Licensed chiropractors may complete the application as to mobility but not as to lung disease or cardiovascular disease. Chiropractors should refer their patients to the appropriate physician to evaluate those conditions.

Physicians may contact us at (717) 783-8164 to discuss any application.