



## Sportsmen Report

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## HUNTING SEASON REMINDERS

Fall is here and so is hunting season in Pennsylvania. Whether it's rabbit, duck or deer season, here are some friendly reminders to help keep everyone safe.

### Rifle Deer Season

As tradition has it, the two-week firearms deer season will open statewide on the Monday after Thanksgiving. This year, the statewide season runs from Nov. 28 to Dec. 10.

Different parts of the state observe different rules as to the number of points an antlered deer must have, and when hunters may harvest antlerless deer. You can find more information on this at the Pennsylvania Game Commission's website: [www.pgc.pa.gov](http://www.pgc.pa.gov).

### Safety Zones

Hunting with a firearm is not permitted within 150 yards of any occupied structure, school, farm building or playground, unless prior permission is given by the building's occupants or property owner. Possessing a loaded firearm within a "safety zone" is a violation of the law. Unless permission is given, trapping, chasing or disturbing wildlife are also prohibited in safety zones.

Similarly, archers and hunters using crossbows must remain at least 50 yards from any occupied structure or building, unless permission to hunt at closer distances is

given by property owners. Also for archers, safety zones around schools and playgrounds remain 150 yards.

### Fluorescent Orange Requirement

Hunters are also reminded to wear fluorescent orange when hunting. The requirements vary depending on the species being hunted. These requirements can be found in the 2016-17 Pennsylvania Hunting & Trapping Digest, which is given to hunters when purchasing a hunting license and is also available online by going to the Pennsylvania Game Commission's website, clicking on "HUNT & TRAP" at the top, then "LAW."

### Reporting Harvests

Hunters must report deer harvests and are encouraged to do so soon after their successful hunts. Harvests can be reported in one of three ways:

1. Go to the PA Game Commission's website and click on the "Report a Harvest" button on the homepage;
2. Call 1-855-724-8681; or
3. Mail in a harvest report card that can be found in the Pennsylvania Hunting & Trapping Digest, which is given to a hunter when purchasing a license.

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It is a pleasure to visit with the Coachman Club Officers.

# Sportsmen's Legislation Update

## Law allows air- or gas-powered weapons while hunting

As of the writing of this newsletter, a bill I supported that passed both the House and the Senate is on its way to Gov. Tom Wolf for his signature. House Bill 263 will remove the prohibition on hunting with an air- or gas-powered weapon.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission will have the authority to regulate and allow the use of these weapons during specific seasons or for specific species as it sees fit in order to properly manage the commonwealth's game species.

Many states including neighboring Maryland, Ohio, New York, West Virginia and Delaware allow hunting with air-powered weapons.

## Law helps disabled hunters

A new state law accommodates those who are disabled and permanently confined to a wheelchair to fully use that device while hunting.

Previously, hunters using a motorized wheelchair had to power off their wheelchair every time they wished to load their weapon. This law lets hunters have a loaded firearm while the wheelchair is in motion.

## Law extends benefits to Pa. Game Commission & Pa. Fish and Boat Commission employees

A new state law adds enforcement officers and investigators of both the Pennsylvania Game and the Fish and Boat commissions to the Enforcement Office Disability Benefits Law, also known as the Heart and Lung Act.

Employees covered under the law receive temporary salary, medical and hospital expenses if injured or they contract certain diseases while performing their official duties.

## Bill to increase availability for hunter education courses in schools

You may be pleased to know I supported House Bill 1168, which would have increased the availability of certified hunter education courses in public schools. The bill passed the House with my support and was sent to the Senate for consideration. Unfortunately, the Senate did not take final action on the bill. Please be assured that I will continue to support this legislation should it be reintroduced during the 2017-18 legislative session.

Making certified hunter education safety courses more accessible, and at locations that are both familiar and easily accessible to students and parents, will help increase interest and protect our valued hunting tradition and preserve this important part of our heritage for future generations to enjoy.

## HUNTING HERITAGE LICENSE PLATE AVAILABLE

Pennsylvania has a number of specialty license plates available. One such plate is the Pennsylvania Hunting Heritage Plate, which has the image of a white-tailed deer on it.

The cost is \$56. This money is divided among Hunters Sharing the Harvest and nonprofit sportsmen's clubs to promote sport hunting, youth hunter education and the conservation of game species in the state.



## HUNTING SEASON REMINDERS *Continued from page 1*

### Mistake Kills

Any hunter in any season who, by accident or mistake, kills an illegal deer, is required to deliver the carcass – entrails removed – within 24 hours, to any Game Commission officer in the county where the deer was killed. A written statement must be provided to the officer explaining when, where and how the accident or mistake happened. The deer must be tagged with the appropriate deer harvest tag.



### Help stop poaching in Pa. with 'Operation Game Thief'

Poaching – the shooting or taking of big game (deer, turkey, bear and elk) or a species that is protected, endangered or threatened – is a crime in Pennsylvania.

If you witness a wildlife crime taking place, you are urged to call Operation Game Thief's toll-free hotline, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year: 1-888-PGC-8001. You can also fill out an Operation Game Thief Reporting Form online by going to the Pennsylvania Game Commission's website and clicking on "REPORT A VIOLATION."

### Hunter Access Program

The Hunter Access Program creates a partnership between the Game Commission and a landowner through a term-lease agreement of at least 50 acres for five years or more.

Hunters and trappers help to manage game and furbearer populations while the commission provides a variety of benefits to the landowner, from law enforcement to wildlife habitat improvement.

More than 13,000 landowners and tenants currently take advantage of this program. The properties, located in most of the state's 67 counties, cover more than 2.6 million acres.



I stood with some of my colleagues and supporters for Second Amendment rights in Pennsylvania.

## PA Fishing Licenses

Current Pennsylvania fishing licenses, signed in ink and displayed (attached to a hat or outer garment), are required for anyone 16 or older to fish for any species of fish. A license is also needed to take fish bait or baitfish. Casting and/or retrieving, whether by rod, reel and line, or by hand line, for oneself or another person, also requires a current license unless specifically exempted by law.

Fishing licenses are not needed on Fish-for-Free days. Opening days, seasons and Fish-for-Free days are listed on the Fish and Boat Commission's online calendar: <http://fbweb.pa.gov/calendar>.

Fishing licenses, permits and vouchers are usually available Dec. 1 of the year prior to the license year. This also means the license is valid for the month of December in the prior year. You can get 13 months of fishing for any one license!

The PA Fish and Boat Commission is offering 50 percent off the price of 2016 resident and non-resident licenses now through Dec. 31.

## Reduced rates for hunting and fishing licenses for Pa. seniors and disabled veterans



Hunting and fishing licenses for Pennsylvania seniors and disabled veterans are available at a reduced cost or free.

From now until Dec. 31, almost everyone including seniors can obtain a fishing license for 50 percent off. The cost for a hunting license varies on the person's interest (i.e. Archery, Muzzleloader).

The cost for a hunting license varies for Pennsylvania disabled veterans, depending on their interest. For fishing licenses, a disabled veteran may obtain one for free if he or she qualifies as one of the following:

Have a disability incurred in any war or armed conflict consisting of:

- Loss of one or more limbs;
- Loss of use of one or more limbs; or
- Total blindness;

**OR**

- Being 100 percent disabled as certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

For a veteran to receive a full-year fishing license at reduced cost, he or she must qualify as one of the following:

Have a disability incurred in any war or conflict consisting of:

- Loss of one or more limbs;
- Loss of use of one or more limbs; or
- Total blindness;

**OR**

- Be 60 to 99 percent disabled as certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

For more information about fishing licenses, visit [www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com). To learn more about hunting licenses, go to [www.pgc.pa.gov](http://www.pgc.pa.gov).

## MANDATORY LIFE JACKET REQUIREMENT

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission reminds boaters that now until April 30, 2017, they are required to wear a life jacket while under way or at anchor on boats less than 16 feet in length or on any canoe or kayak. The requirement applies to all Pennsylvania waters.

When a person is unexpectedly plunged into cold water, his or her first response is usually an involuntary gasp. Without a life jacket, a victim may inhale while underwater and drown. If a person does make it back to the surface, his or her ability to swim is usually restricted because of shortness of breath or hyperventilation.

Those who plan to fish, boat or hunt from a boat this fall or winter are urged to follow these cold water survival safety tips:

- Always wear a life jacket, even when not required. Many models also offer insulation from cold air. Read the life jacket's approval label to be sure it's appropriate for your boating activity.
- Never boat alone.
- Leave a float plan with family or friends and know the waters you plan to boat.
- Bring a fully charged cell phone with you in case of emergency.
- Wear clothing that still insulates when wet, such as fleece, polypropylene or other synthetics.
- If you are about to fall into cold water, cover your mouth and nose with your hands. This will reduce the likelihood of inhaling water.
- If possible, stay with the boat. Get back into or climb on top of the boat.
- While in cold water, do not remove your clothing.
- If you can't get out of the water, get into the Heat Escape Lessening Posture (HELP). In this position, individuals bring their knees to their chest and hug them with their arms.
- Once out of the water, remove wet clothes and warm up as soon as possible.
- Seek medical attention when necessary. Some effects of exposure to cold temperatures can be delayed.

For additional information on water and ice safety, visit the PFBC's website.



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It is always nice to spend some time with Lawrence County's young sportsmen during Youth Field Day at the Coachman Club.

A beautiful day for boating during Youth Field Day at the Coachman Club.



Skeet shooting during Youth Field Day at the Coachman Club.

