



KORTZ

38th Legislative District



Sportsmen Newsletter

Welcome

Pennsylvania is blessed to have a historic outdoor tradition with some of the best hunting, fishing and boating available anywhere in the country. A walk in the woods on a hunt, a day on the stream fishing, or an afternoon floating on a river or speeding across a lake are activities that can be enjoyed by all Pennsylvanians, no matter where they live. For hunters, anglers and boaters, western Pennsylvania is exceptionally rich with these opportunities.

Whether you are someone who already enjoys these activities, are thinking of trying them, or are interested in the environment and our state's natural animals and wild fish, this newsletter is for you.

I hope you will find the articles and pictures interesting. My aim is to cover a variety of topics being discussed at hunting camps and sportsmen's clubs, on streams and waterways, in the news, and in homes throughout the outdoor community in Pennsylvania.



Chairman of Game and Fisheries

I was proud to be named the minority chairman of the Game and Fisheries Committee of the House of Representatives at the beginning of this session. The committee oversees both the PA Game Commission and the PA Fish and Boat Commission – writing laws, holding hearings, and working with the professionals who manage the state's aquatic and wildlife resources.

My new duties include addressing the many serious issues that lie ahead for hunting, fishing and boating. In fact, never has there been such a pivotal time for the commissions, as they work to face serious ecological threats, declining license sales, and renewed efforts to address a restructuring of their fees and fiscal responsibilities.

For my work to be successful, I need to hear from hunters, anglers and boaters with their ideas and opinions. Even though some may rely upon the statewide organizations that represent these groups to act on their behalf, I believe individual license buyers have the personal insights and experiences that might otherwise be missed. I invite you to join me in that dialogue on matters of shared concern about our outdoor sports and natural resources. Many of the issues facing us are controversial and divisive, but we all share the same goal: to preserve the fishing



and hunting heritage that makes Pennsylvania the envy of the nation. I look forward to you joining me in that effort.

New Sunday Hunting Law

As the minority chairman of the House Game and Fisheries Committee, I worked hard to get the Sunday hunting bill passed through committee and the House. Kudos to my friends and colleagues, including Sens. Laughlin and Brewster, for getting the bill through the Senate and to the governor's desk. Just before Thanksgiving, Gov. Tom Wolf signed legislation to expand Sunday hunting. **Sen. Bill 147** was designed to be a compromise and offer a solution that respects the views on both sides of the issue.

Until recently, Pennsylvania was one of the only three states in the nation that banned Sunday hunting for big game animals, only allowing crows, coyotes and foxes to be hunted.

The new law allows the Pennsylvania Game Commission to **add only three Sundays a year – one in archery deer season, one in rifle deer season, and one other Sunday to be determined by the PGC.** The measure itself was the result of negotiations with outdoor organizations and the PA Farm Bureau and aimed to find middle ground on this contentious issue. By only allowing three Sundays, supporters of this legislation found a balance between the call for unlimited Sunday hunting and the opposition to any Sunday hunts. It also includes substantial increases in the penalties for trespassing while



hunting, protecting the rights of landowners. In addition, it requires those who are hunting on private land on one of the newly created Sunday hunts to have written permission from the landowner.

Thanks to the hard work of all involved, 2020 will be the first year in which Pennsylvania hunters will be able to hunt for a big game animal on a Sunday. It will be a significant change, and I believe it to be a good one, as landowners get the protections they have long sought, and hunters get more opportunities to enjoy the state's outdoor traditions.

Committee Activities Around the State



The Game and Fisheries Committee visited Benezette, PA in October, which included an opportunity to view Pennsylvania's elk herd.



One of several young bears the PA Game Commission officials checked as part of their black bear management and health program.



Left: Rep. Kortz and Game and Fisheries Committee Executive Director Steve McMullen with Pennsylvania Game Commission wardens during a March 2019 black bear biology and management program near Lock Haven, PA.



Rep. Kortz with Game and Fisheries Chairman Keith Gillespie.



Chairman Gillespie with one of the bears checked by PA Game Commission officials.



The Game and Fisheries Committee visited the PA Deer Farmers Association at the Rocky Meadows Whitetails Deer Farm in Dauphin County to see firsthand how deer farms operate.





Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) – Important Information

Generations from now, Pennsylvanians, including hunters and all who watch and value our state's wildlife, will look back and judge how we confronted Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in our deer populations. They will ask if the PA Game Commission (PGC) and the PA Department of Agriculture did enough to control the spread of this disease.

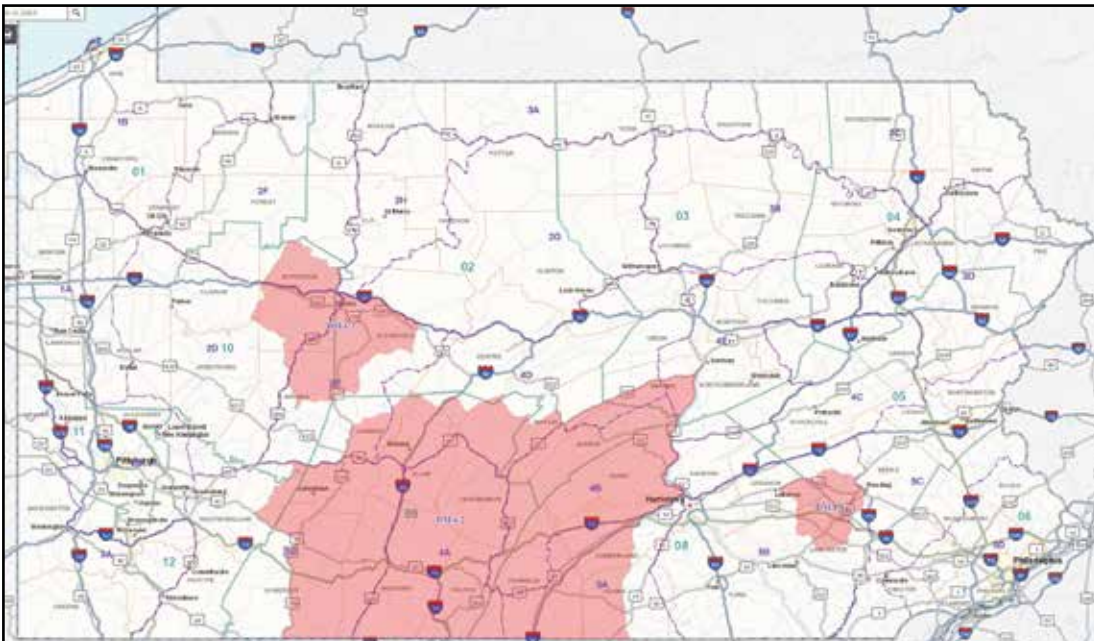
That is why every time a PGC official appears before the Game and Fisheries Committee, as well as in private conversations, they are asked for updates on their plans. By strictly regulating hunting, feeding, and transporting of deer within Disease Management Areas and offering testing of harvested deer, the PGC is taking serious steps to control CWD within wild deer. However, since CWD can also appear in captive deer and can be transmitted to wild deer through fences or escapes, coordination with the Department of Agriculture is needed for a comprehensive approach to this growing problem.

Chronic Wasting Disease is a deadly and contagious disease that affects deer in Pennsylvania and in 23 other states. It is always fatal for the infected wildlife. CWD is transmitted either by animal-to-animal contact or from soil or plants contaminated by deer bodily secretions. A carcass can be contagious and contaminate the environment where it decayed for decades.

CWD has been detected in both wild deer and captive deer within deer farms. The Game Commission has created Disease Management Areas (DMAs) and put strict regulations in place, including controlling the movement of deer parts out of the region, the use of urine-based attractants, and the feeding of wild deer.

The PGC website (www.pgc.pa.gov) includes more information on CWD and DMAs and should be relied upon if hunting in these areas.

Hunters should also take precautions against Eastern Equine Encephalitis, which has also been found in wildlife and livestock and transmitted through mosquitos, and Lyme Disease, which is spread by deer ticks. The PGC has advised hunters and others who spend time outdoors to take necessary precautions to prevent being bit by mosquitos or ticks, including using bug repellant on skin and clothes, wearing clothes that cover arms and legs, and tucking pants into socks. Officials also urge you to report any dead or strange-acting wild animals you believe to be infected. While no human cases have been reported in our state, Eastern Equine Encephalitis can infect humans and is similar to the West Nile virus. While mosquitos will be less of a concern as the weather gets colder, outdoor enthusiasts should still be mindful of ticks as Lyme Disease can cause symptoms that can be mistaken for the flu.



Bear Harvest Update

2019 was indeed a successful year, with the Pennsylvania Game Commission reporting a total of 4,193 bears harvested as of the end of November.

Modifications made for the 2019 season included expanding the mid-October muzzleloader and special firearms deer season to include bears, increasing the length of the statewide archery bear season to two weeks, and expanding the four-day extended bear seasons to seven days in most wildlife management units (where they are held).

The top five counties for harvesting bears for 2019 were: Lycoming (276), Clinton (261), Tioga (248), Potter (164), and Luzerne (153).

Trout Stocking News

Good news for anglers for next year: bigger and brighter trout! Twice the trophy trout will be stocked in 2020 by the state Fish and Boat Commission.

Commission officials report that hatcheries can manage the increased number of trophy-sized trout, which are approximately 14-20 inches long, without reducing the number of standard-sized trout, thanks to improvements in feed, biomass and water flow management practices. Brood trout, which are held at hatcheries as the source of eggs for the commission's rearing and stocking program, will jump from 27,000 to about 60,000 next year.

These actions mean more big fish, with most of those fish – 44,000 of the 60,000 – being stocked before opening day, which is considered one of the busiest fishing weekends of the year.

The commission also plans to put bright orange fish in an additional 61 stream sections or lakes next year. In addition, they plan to better publicize where the trout will be stocked and what kind of trout will be released.

All told, the additional trophy trout will cost about \$1.20 per fish. The new plan will also spread the larger fish out across more waters and more of the trout fishing season.

Commission officials add that the upgrades to effluent treatment systems are making it possible



to hold more trout back longer at hatcheries, allowing them more growing time. That will continue for each season moving forward, ensuring great fishing seasons for years to come.



2019-20 Hunting and Trapping Pocket Guide

Need information on hunting and trapping in Pennsylvania, including season dates and hunting limits? Please call or visit one of my offices and we'll be happy to provide you with a handy pocket guide.

Legislation on the Move

H.B. 584 – This is legislation I wrote that would allow the PA Fish and Boat Commission to issue therapeutic exemptions to fishing license requirements for programs designed to use the sport of fishing as a treatment. Providers are using fishing as a treatment for a variety of conditions, including PTSD, cancer recovery, depression, addiction, and physical and mental impairment. They include veterans' groups, such as Project Healing Waters and the Wounded Warrior Project. The bill passed the House and the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee unanimously. It now awaits action by the entire Senate.

H.B. 1772 – This bill, which was signed into law in late November, allows landowners to identify their property boundaries with lines of purple paint on trees. The purple paint serves as a warning to hunters to not trespass on the land, while also easing a landowner's need to post "no trespassing" signs that can deteriorate over time. The bill takes effect in late January 2020.

H.B. 300 – This measure would remove county treasurers as the sole distributor of antlerless deer permits. With this bill, the Game Commission would designate all license-selling vendors as authorized merchants for the sale of doe licenses. This would modernize the sale of doe tags and eliminate the need to mail in applications and checks to county treasurers. This bill is currently under consideration in the House Game and Fisheries Committee.

H.B. 301 – This bill significantly would increase the penalty for illegally using a body-gripping trap. The use of these traps is only permitted within a waterway. There have been several instances where dogs have been caught in body-gripping traps set outside of a waterway. The bill passed the House unanimously and is now in the Senate.



State Representative
BILL KORTZ
P.O. Box 202038
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2038

 www.pahouse.com/Kortz
 www.facebook.com/RepKortz
 [@RepBillKortz](https://twitter.com/RepBillKortz)

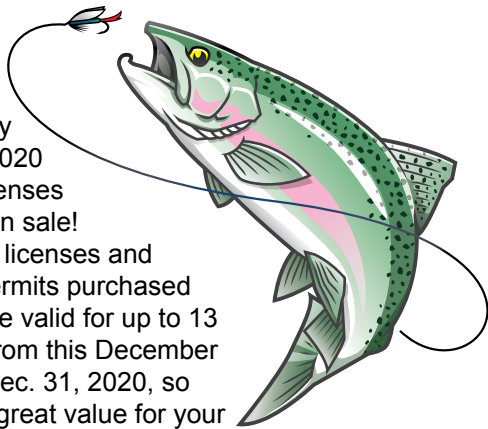
lpo.km.1219

Fishing licenses now on sale

Just in time for the holiday season, 2020 fishing licenses are now on sale!

All fishing licenses and related permits purchased now will be valid for up to 13 months, from this December through Dec. 31, 2020, so you'll get great value for your money.

The price of an annual resident fishing license this year is still \$22.90. Multi-year options are also available in 3, 5 and 10-year increments. Vouchers are also available, which can be given as gifts and redeemed by recipients. Licenses and permits can be purchased at www.gonefishingpa.com, at more than 700 issuing agents, county treasurers' offices, and at all Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission regional offices.



Check out Live Cams of Wildlife!

The Pennsylvania Game Commission has teamed up with HDOnTap.com to feature wildlife in nature in real time, including elk, bear and eagles. The website, www.hdontap.com, also features highlights from past seasons.

Be sure to check back in the spring to view live cameras of eagles building up their nests!

