

Rep. Chris

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Sportsmen Report



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PA.'S BALD EAGLE POPULATION CONTINUES TO SOAR

Pennsylvania now has a record 254 active bald eagle nests, according to the state Game Commission's annual mid-year count.

To celebrate our national symbol and update the progress of the bald eagle reintroduction program, the commission released a count of bald eagle nests before July 4. The reintroduction program started in 1983. That year, only three bald eagle pairs were nesting in the northwestern corner of Pennsylvania. Nests are now in 59 of 67 counties.

The game commission sent employees to Saskatchewan in Western Canada to obtain eaglets from wild nests. Initially, 12 seven-week-old eaglets were taken from nests and brought to specially constructed 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 are raised by humans and then gradually released into the wild.

The species steadily came back, and in January, the Game Commission removed the bald eagle from the state's list of threatened species.

The Game Commission always welcomes reports of bald eagle nests. This can be done through the commission's public comments email address at pgccomments@pa.gov. Please use "Eagle Nest Information" in the subject field.



I stopped at the Lawrence County Coon and Fox Hunters Booth at Bessemer Community Day.

Bill targets drones that interfere with hunting, fishing

Legislation has been introduced in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives that would make it illegal to use drones that interfere with people who are lawfully hunting, fishing and boating.

Some animal rights groups have promoted the use of drones to monitor hunters and anglers in other parts of the country, claiming the drones could be used to spot illegal activity. However, these drones have disturbed wildlife and spoiled recreational opportunities for law-abiding citizens.

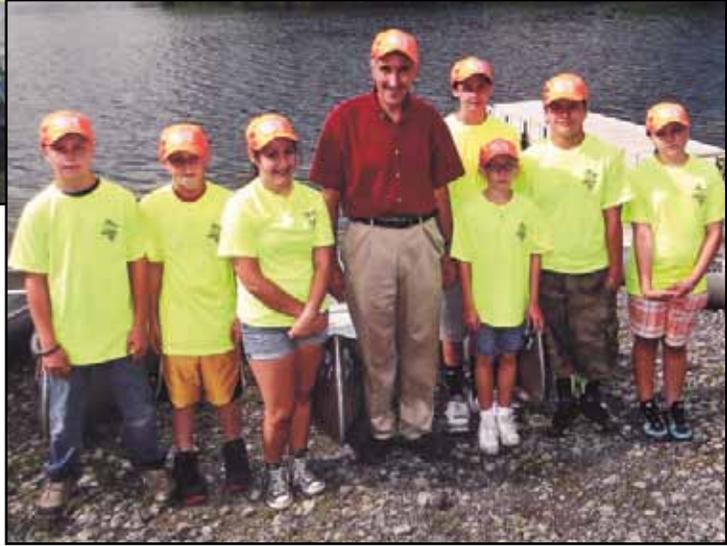
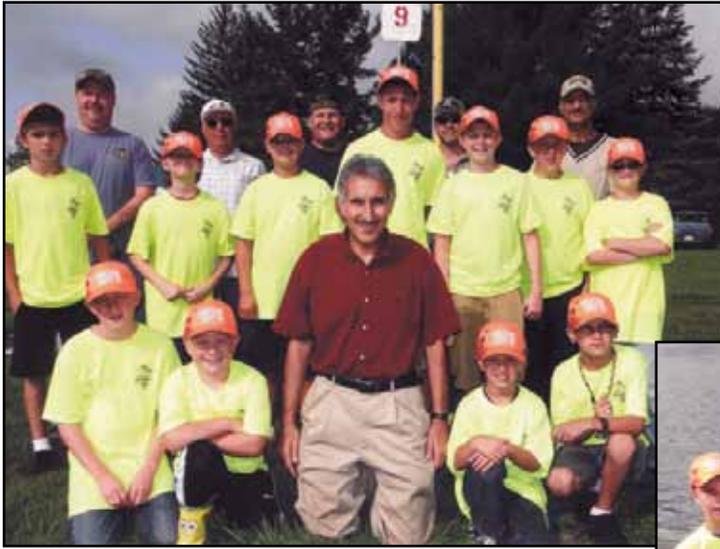
This legislation would ensure that Pennsylvania laws keep up with technology.

Under this bill, using a drone to interfere with lawful fishing or boating would be a first-degree summary offense, while using a drone to interfere with lawful hunting would be a second-degree misdemeanor.

Several other states, including Illinois and Alabama, have enacted similar laws to address this issue.



LAWRENCE COUNTY YOUTH SPORTSMAN DAY



The Lawrence County Youth Sportsman Day helps prepare the next generation of hunters, anglers and outdoor enthusiasts. I attended the event at the Mahoning Sportsmen Association grounds.



A closer look at the Pennsylvania elk



Researchers in early July placed a collar with GPS tracking capability and a small camera that will record video and audio of a Pennsylvania elk.

The collar will fall off of the adult cow elk in mid-September, allowing recordings and readings to be retrieved.

The information will help Pennsylvania Game Commission better understand elk and its habitat. Habitat quality directly influences elk pregnancy rates, survival and distribution. The game commission manages a 3,500-square-mile elk-management area.

The research project is the result of a partnership between the game commission and the Keystone Elk Country Alliance, a nonprofit organization. The Keystone Elk Country Alliance purchased the collar and will use the information collected for educational programming, and habitat management.

MENTORED YOUTH FISHING DAY SET FOR LABOR DAY

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission will host a second Mentored Youth Fishing Day this Labor Day, Sept. 1, on 17 panfish enhancement lakes.

To participate in the mentored youth program, adult anglers (16 years or older) must have a valid fishing license and be accompanied by a youth. Youth anglers must obtain a free PFBC-issued permit or a voluntary youth fishing license. Both are available at www.GoneFishingPA.com or at any of the more than 900 licensing agents across the state.

To encourage participation, the commission also reduced the price of a Labor Day one-day adult resident and Labor Day one-day adult non-resident license to just \$1. With issuing agent and transaction fees, the total price for the license is \$2.70.

A normal one-day adult resident license costs \$11.70 and a one-day adult tourist license is \$26.70. The Labor Day licenses are available through the commission's Outdoor Shop and various licensing agents. Visit the commission's website — www.fish.state.pa.us — for a complete list of agents and the exact date licenses will be available.

The commission chose panfish enhancement lakes because these waters have been managed to produce a large number of fish. As an added incentive, the commission is removing the minimum size limits, which are either seven or nine inches, depending on the species.

PANFISH ENHANCEMENT LAKES IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA ARE:

- **Cambria** - Beaverdam Run Reservoir, Hinkston Run Reservoir, Wilmore Dam
- **Somerset** - High Point Lake, Quemahoning Reservoir
- **Washington** - Cross Creek Lake
- **Westmoreland** - Lower Twin Lake, Northmoreland Lake, Upper Twin Lake

Enjoy the outdoors!

Pennsylvania is home to beautiful scenery and the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is encouraging families to spend time outdoors to see it! The department is offering the following contests:

■ **Kids in Nature** – The contest runs through Dec. 31 and is open to families and individuals younger than 21. Participants must complete an online survey and “earn” opportunities by visiting parks or forests and taking part in educational programs or hikes. The contest’s grand prize is a behind-the-scenes tour with Bureau of State Parks staff and two nights of free camping at the winner’s desired state park.

■ **Capture the Flag** – The game is also open to families and participants under 21, and runs through Sept. 4. In this contest, state park staff will post a picture to social media of a flag hidden within their park and provide a clue. Those taking part are encouraged to be the first to find the flag and post their family or child’s picture with the flag on Facebook.

I encourage all families to consider taking part in these fun, educational contests. For more information, please visit www.PaNatureKids.org.

Pa. to receive federal dollars for local parks, outdoor recreation

Pennsylvania will receive \$1.37 million from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for local park, outdoor recreation and conservation projects.

This money is awarded through the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to help municipalities plan, acquire and develop parks and trails and conserve natural areas.

Since 1965, Pennsylvania has received almost \$165 million in LWCF funds. LWCF dollars require a 50/50 match.

More than 1,500 local parks in Pennsylvania have received support through the fund.

The fund was established by Congress in 1964 to ensure access to outdoor recreation resources and to provide money to federal, state and local governments to purchase land, water and wetlands for the benefit of all Americans. The primary source of revenue for the Land and Water Conservation Fund is from federal oil and gas leases on the Outer Continental Shelf.

In Pennsylvania, the fund also helped to acquire and develop land for Pennsylvania’s extensive state park system.



I visited with officers of the Mahoning Sportsmen Association.

HUNTING HERITAGE PLATE COMING THIS YEAR

Thanks to a new law that I supported, a Pennsylvania Hunting Heritage Plate will be available in November. The state Transportation Department will design this plate in consultation with the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

The cost will be \$25, plus a fee to be determined by the Game Commission. This money will be 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.

FISHING TACKLE LOANER PROGRAM

Many of our beautiful state parks offer the Fishing Tackle Loaner Program. This partnership between the state Fish and Boat Commission and the American Sportfishing Association enables the public to borrow rods, reels and a tackle box full of hooks and other gear.

This equipment is borrowed in much the same way books are borrowed from a library. Those wanting to borrow gear complete a form and the loan is made. The equipment is returned to the site at the end of the loan period.

Please visit www.fish.state.pa.us/loaner.htm to learn more about the program.

WEB LINKS FOR SPORTSMEN

Pennsylvania Game Commission
www.pgc.state.pa.us

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
www.fish.state.pa.us

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
www.dcnr.state.pa.us

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
www.fws.gov

National Rifle Association
www.nra.org



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2014-15 Hunting Seasons and Bag Limits

These are the dates and bag limits for many seasons through June 30, 2015. For a complete list, please visit www.pgc.state.pa.us.

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: 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.)

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): 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.

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.