



State Representative *to the* 50th Legislative District

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2018

SPORTSMEN UPDATE

Combating Chronic Wasting Disease

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) could very well be the greatest threat to whitetail deer hunting in the history of the commonwealth. The disease affects a deer's brain and nervous system and is fatal. Our state's response to the presence of this disease within the captive and wild deer populations will determine how the tradition of deer hunting is preserved and passed on to future generations of outdoor sportsmen.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) has created Disease Management Areas (DMAs) where CWD has been identified and has instituted strict regulatory guidelines affecting deer hunting, feeding, and handling of deer parts. Those areas and restrictions are spelled out on the PGC website at www.pgc.pa.gov.

Since CWD appeared in the wild and within deer farming operations, which are governed by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, greater cooperation between the PGC and Department of Agriculture is more important than ever if our state is to respond comprehensively toward controlling the spread of this disease.

Legislation was recently referred to the House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee that would remove any impediments in the law that would keep the Agriculture Department and the Game Commission from working together in efforts to protect the deer herd in the wild and within deer farming operations. House Bill 2422 is a good idea and one that should be supported by all organizations, industries, and individuals affected by CWD in the deer population.

It may be impossible to totally eradicate CWD because the disease can be transmitted by the slightest deer-to-deer contact, and can become present in soil, plants and the air. However, other states have responded to CWD in a manner that limited its impact and controlled its spread. I believe we can learn from those efforts while doing everything we can to use our state's agencies and experts to protect our deer herd and to promote our outdoor heritage.

In the meantime, deer harvested from a DMA can be tested for free by following the steps outlined on the Game Commission website. It includes detailed information about the movement of high-risk deer parts, where bans on public feeding of deer are in effect, and many more aspects of the state's response to CWD.



Broadening the horizon: Expanded hunting opportunities

Are you a senior citizen or disabled hunter who enjoys deer hunting? If so, you may be interested in learning about legislation that potentially could expand your hunting opportunities.

House Bill 2160, which currently sits in the House Game and Fisheries Committee, would expand deer hunting opportunities for junior, disabled and senior license holders, as well as active-duty resident military personnel.

This bill is of particular significance to the above groups because it would allow these hunters to harvest an antlerless deer during the first day of statewide regular deer firearm season. Currently, the first five days of regular deer firearm season in most parts of the state are restricted to antlered deer.

Enactment of this legislation would increase the chance that these deserving and/or disadvantaged hunters harvest a deer.

Doe licenses on sale

Antlerless deer permits are now on sale via the U.S. mail and through county treasurers' offices.

The cost of a doe tag this year is \$6.90.

The PGC has allotted 49,000 licenses for local Wildlife Management Unit 2A. In all, the state has 549,347 antlerless licenses available. If licenses are still available, residents may apply for a second license starting Aug. 6 and a third license Aug. 20.





Know your antlers! WMU 2A has the “three up” requirement!

Knowing what is and is not acceptable or lawful while hunting is one of the foundations of good sportsmanship. For example, not all Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) have the same antler requirements for the legal harvest of whitetail deer. As such, it is important to know the definition of a point:

- A point is defined as any antler projection (including the brow tine) at least one inch in length from base to tip. The brow tine is the point immediately above the antler burr.
- The main beam tip shall be counted as a point regardless of the length.
- In most parts of Pennsylvania, hunters are required to abide by three points on one side (including brow tine).

However, in **WMU 2A**, which covers our area, hunters are required to abide by “three up,” which means three points, including the main beam counted as one of the points, on one side. The brow tine is excluded and does not count toward a “point.”

So, for hunters in WMU 2A, please carefully check the points on the deer you’re looking to harvest.

Changing the first day of buck season

Are you aware there is legislation currently in the House that calls for a change to the first day of buck season?

If voted into law, H.B. 2428, which currently sits in the House Game and Fisheries Committee, would move the first day of buck season to the Saturday after Thanksgiving.

The earlier start for rifled deer season has been discussed for many years, with strong arguments on both sides of the issue. Many support giving a new date a try to determine its impact on hunter participation and deer kill numbers.

This legislation would not change any other details regarding deer season. The season would continue through the second weekend of December, as it currently is scheduled.

Visit my offices for 2018 Hunting and Trapping Digest

Are you interested in a 2018 Hunting and Trapping Digest but don’t want to pay \$6 to get one?

Last year, the Pennsylvania Game Commission stopped providing complimentary Hunting and Trapping Digests.

But you can visit any of my offices to get one for free.



Using dogs for tracking

At one point, it was illegal to use a dog to hunt, take or pursue big-game animals like whitetail deer.

However, Act 11 of 2018 allows for the use of a leashed tracking dog to track whitetail deer, bear or elk when attempting to recover an animal that has been legally killed or wounded during any open season for them.

This legislation, which was signed into law March 26, will greatly benefit both our sporting community and our valued big game.



PA's Fish and Boat Commission defers spending cuts



On July 10, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission board deferred last fall's decision to reduce spending by about \$2 million starting July 2018.

This crucial decision is based on a commitment by key members of the General Assembly to work toward providing additional revenue in the upcoming legislative session.

This is excellent news as this decision, coupled with new internal revenue sources identified by the PFBC's staff, will prevent the closure of hatcheries and potential reductions in trout and other stockings.

Working to reduce hunting fees for nonresident disabled veterans

In a continued effort by legislators to show support for veterans across the U.S., I voted for legislation (H.B. 1409) currently in the Senate that would reduce the fees for hunting and furtaking licenses for nonresident disabled veterans and former prisoners of war.

Current Pennsylvania law allows state veterans who are fully disabled or have lost use of one or more limbs due to service in the military to qualify for free hunting and furtaking licenses. State residents who were prisoners of war and veterans who possess a disability rating of 60 percent to 99 percent due to a service-related injury are eligible for a hunting or furtaking license at the cost of \$1.

However, the same can't be said for out-of-state veterans under similar circumstances. Nonprofit organizations that offer hunting opportunities to wounded veterans continue to incur higher costs when obtaining licenses for out-of-state disabled veterans.

By voting this bill in to law, Pennsylvania will lead by example and welcome all out-of-state disabled veterans to our woodlands, free of charge.

H.B. 1409 currently is in the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee.

How much fluorescent orange should you wear?

While most hunters know the requirement, it's often difficult to remember. Below you'll find a quick and easy reference guide that lists how much fluorescent orange hunters should wear based on the season, game and whether or not they're stationary or moving through the woodlands.

All small game seasons: A minimum 250 square inches must be worn on the head, chest and back combined. It must be visible at 360 degrees and worn at all times.

Deer, bear or elk firearms seasons: A minimum 250 square inches must be worn on the head, chest and back combined. It must be visible at 360 degrees and worn at all times.

Archery deer and bear seasons (fall turkey overlap): When hunting in an area with a concurrent fall turkey season, a hat containing a minimum of 100 square inches of solid fluorescent orange must be worn when moving. The hat may be removed when archer is stationary or on/in stand.

Archery deer season (during October deer seasons overlap): During the overlap with October muzzleloader and Antlerless Special Firearms seasons, a minimum of 250 square inches must be worn on the head, chest and back combined. It must be visible at 360 degrees at all times when moving. Fluorescent orange may be removed when archer is stationary in a tree or ground stand, granted 100 square inches of fluorescent orange material is posted within 15 feet of the location and visible at 360 degrees.



You can view Rep. Snyder's "Keep Hunting and Shooting Safe" video at <https://youtu.be/fX0EVp1AmUY>.



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Get involved! Become a Deputy Game Warden!

Are you an avid hunter or someone who enjoys the outdoors? If so, becoming a deputy game warden might be for you!

Deputy game wardens are local representatives of the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Deputies are recruited locally on an as-needed basis. Though they do not receive a regular salary or wage, they may receive compensation at a commission-approved per diem rate, in lieu of wages and expenses, on certain approved days.

Applicants must be in good physical condition, have a working knowledge of hunting, trapping and other outdoor activities, and be able to maintain a good working relationship with fellow officers and the public.

Deputies should be prepared and willing to function in all phases of commission activities, including law enforcement, hunter education and other educational programs, wildlife management and land management.

If this is of interest to you, visit www.pgc.pa.gov and click on "Information & Resources" and then "Careers and Volunteer Opportunities" to read more about the qualifications needed to become a deputy game warden.



Operation Game Thief

Wildlife crime affects us all. The illegal shooting or taking of big game or protected, endangered or threatened species, or any crime against those species, should be reported through the PA Game Commission's toll-free tip line: Operation Game Thief – 1-888-PGC-8001. Please be prepared to provide as many details as possible, including a description of what you saw and the species involved; the date, time and location; and any descriptive details of the person involved and vehicle.

Calls to the hotline are always answered by a secure recording device. Callers may remain confidential; however, your contact information is necessary to claim any monetary reward.

Other violations should be reported to the regional office serving the county in which the violation is taking place, as quickly as possible. The Southwest Regional Office is located in Boliver, Westmoreland County, phone 724-238-9523.

MY OFFICE CAN HELP YOU WITH:

- Free notary service
- Car registrations, special tags, disability placards, titles and driver's license applications
- Information on financial assistance for higher education
- Assistance in obtaining and completing state forms of all kinds
- Voter registration and absentee ballot applications
- Unemployment compensation, disability and workers' compensation
- Complaints or questions about utilities and the Public Utility Commission
- Birth and death certificates
- Pennsylvania income tax questions or problems
- Renewal of state-issued licenses or certifications
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program problems or questions
- Problems or questions about the state lottery
- PACE prescription-drug cards for senior citizens
- Consumer complaints
- Tours of the state Capitol for individuals or groups

