



State Representative **Anita Astorino Kulik** 45th Legislative District

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Outdoors 2022

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Friends,

As spring approaches with the promise of better weather, greener grass, leaves on the trees, and the welcome opportunity to get outside, now is a good time to prepare for our return to the streams and open spaces of western Pennsylvania.

Our state is blessed with myriad natural resources, be they pristine trout streams, wild woods full of game, wide waterways for boating and fishing, or miles of trails and acres of open fields for hiking and wildlife viewing. Like you, I look forward to getting out and enjoying all that Pennsylvania has to offer. In the meantime, I hope you find this newsletter informative about our state's outdoor activities and traditions.

These considerations are of immense personal and professional importance to me. I love my time with family and friends in Pennsylvania's great outdoors. Also, I am pleased to be a member of the House of Representatives' Game and Fisheries Committee. My committee membership allows me to participate in the oversight of the operations of both the Game Commission and the Fish and Boat Commission, meeting with their leadership and employees and working on legislation, regulations, issues, and priorities that affect the state's outdoor sporting community.

If you would like more information about any of the materials in this newsletter or my work on the Game and Fisheries Committee, or if you'd like to make your voice heard about hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, or any other subject of concern, please do not hesitate to contact me. I value your thoughts about how best to enjoy, preserve, and promote Pennsylvania's natural wonders.

Anita Astorino Kulik

Resources for Fighting Tick-Borne Disease

As the weather changes and we begin getting out and into nature once again, it is important to reacquaint ourselves with the widespread prevalence of Lyme Disease in our state and ways to avoid and prevent it.



A few years ago, my husband had the misfortune of being afflicted with Lyme Disease from a tick bite. Because it was identified early, after a prolonged period of treatment he improved under doctors' care and has been symptom-free. To me this demonstrated that Lyme Disease awareness, education, and early intervention are critical.

An excellent resource in fighting the spread of tick-borne illnesses is available at minimal cost to all Pennsylvania residents. The Tick Research Lab of Pennsylvania is a university-affiliated laboratory based in East Stroudsburg, which is dedicated to providing rapid and reliable tick testing in areas at risk for Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses nationwide. The Lab offers qPCR-based tick testing that is 99.9% accurate and can detect the presence of 18 pathogens that cause disease, including Lyme disease, Anaplasmosis, Babesia, Bartonella, Ehrlichiosis, Tularemia, and Rocky Mountain Spotted fever.

Unlike many laboratories, the Tick Research Lab of Pennsylvania provides a simple, easy-to-use interface for ordering tick tests. All that is required is placing an order through the Lab website (<https://www.ticklab.org/>), mailing the removed tick to the Lab in a plastic bag (packaging and postage is not included), and receiving results via email or text message within 48 hours (Monday through Friday). This service, while normally \$50, is free to Pennsylvania residents.

Pennsylvania is ranked fourth nationally in the rate of new Lyme disease cases. To help prevent a tick bite, long-sleeved shirts, pants, and long socks all help in keeping ticks off the skin. Checking oneself carefully after being outside and doing the same for pets is another vital step toward avoiding infection. Tick season generally lasts from April until mid-to-late October.

Fish & Boat Announces No Fee Increases for Upcoming Season

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission announced that it will not institute any fee increases for the upcoming fishing and boating seasons. Legislation recently passed and signed into law gave the Commission the authority to set its own fees with the oversight of the General Assembly, which it will continue to do through 2026.

At the time of the law's passage, the Fish and Boat Commission indicated that it would only raise fees if it would be necessary to sustain operations. With the recent increases in fishing and boating license purchases, the Commission is fiscally well-positioned and will not be seeking additional revenue from higher license fees.

For the 2022 season, the cost of a residential annual fishing license will remain \$22.97 (which includes a \$1.97 vendor

2022 FISHING LICENSES			
Annual licenses are valid from December 1, 2021, through December 31, 2022.			
Code	Type of Fishing License or Permit	Age	Cost*
101	Resident (Annual)	16-64	\$ 22.97
104	Senior Resident (Annual)	65 & up	\$ 11.97
105	Senior Resident (Lifetime)	65 & up	\$ 51.97
108	1-Day Resident (not valid March 15-April 30)	16 & up	\$ 11.97
102	Non-Resident (Annual)	16 & up	\$ 52.97
113	Non-Resident PA Student** (Annual)	16 & up	\$ 22.97
106	1-Day Tourist*** (not valid March 15-April 30)	16 & up	\$ 26.97
103	3-Day Tourist	16 & up	\$ 26.97
107	7-Day Tourist	16 & up	\$ 34.97
110	Voluntary Youth Fishing License (Annual)	Less than 16	\$ 2.97
109	Mentored Youth Permit	Less than 16	\$ 0.00
150	Trout Permit	16 & up	\$ 9.97
033	3-Year Senior Lifetime Trout Permit	65 & up	\$ 25.97
053	5-Year Senior Lifetime Trout Permit	65 & up	\$ 41.97
063	10-Year Senior Lifetime Trout Permit	65 & up	\$ 81.97
151	Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$ 9.97
151SLE	Senior Lifetime Lake Erie Permit	65 & up	\$ 9.97
152	Combination Trout / Lake Erie Permit	Any age	\$ 15.97

fee), and the price of a trout permit will remain \$9.97 (also including the \$1.97 vendor fee). Fishing license fees have not increased since 2005.

Trout Opening Day

From 2007 until 2019, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission had held two opening days for trout season. Initially, a regional approach was taken for opening day since weather can hinder stocking and participation.

During the past two years, however, the Commission had only one opening day due to public safety concerns during the pandemic. During the last season, the Commission made a surprise announcement of an early opening day, and this past season, a single day was again used, and the southeast regional opener was not scheduled. These past two seasons afforded the Commission unplanned opportunities to reevaluate the use of multiple opening days for trout season. The Commission also used surveys of anglers to evaluate the popularity of a single opener.

Anglers strongly supported a single-day opener, and given the experiences from the past two seasons, the Fish and Boat Commission is confident it can continue with a single-day opener statewide. Trout season will begin throughout the state on the first Saturday in April from now on.



Digital Hunting Licenses Available for Downloading

Pennsylvania hunters may now carry digital versions of their licenses in place of paper licenses.

Unlike Pennsylvania's former hunting and furtaking licensing system, the new system, HuntFishPA, is equipped to issue digital licenses. The Pennsylvania Game Commission this year authorized hunters and trappers to carry digital licenses and permits. Paper harvest tags still must be carried and used in any season where harvests must be tagged.

Hunters and trappers who already have purchased their 2021-22 licenses can download PDF copies of their licenses and permits by logging in to their profile on HuntFishPA (<https://huntfish.pa.gov>) and accessing their "Purchase History." Those who buy licenses from now on will be emailed a PDF version of their licenses, provided their email address is included in their HuntFishPA profile. This applies to licenses purchased online as

well as through an issuing agent. All documents will be emailed, except for harvest tags.

Deer, bear, and turkey hunters, and those hunting or trapping in any other season where harvests must be tagged, must continue to carry paper harvest tags afield. No electronic harvest tags are being issued or authorized for use. All paper licenses and permits that are carried afield must be signed. Those planning on hunting big game, bobcats, or trapping fish or otters must be in possession of their harvest tags prior to hunting or trapping those species. All harvest tags will be mailed to those who purchase their licenses online. For many hunting and trapping opportunities, a digital license is all that is required.

Downloading your digital licenses and permits to your mobile device guarantees you'll have them on you if you have your device on you.

Spotted Lanternfly Invasion

All over Pennsylvania, an invasive insect threatens the ecological and economic wellbeing of the state.

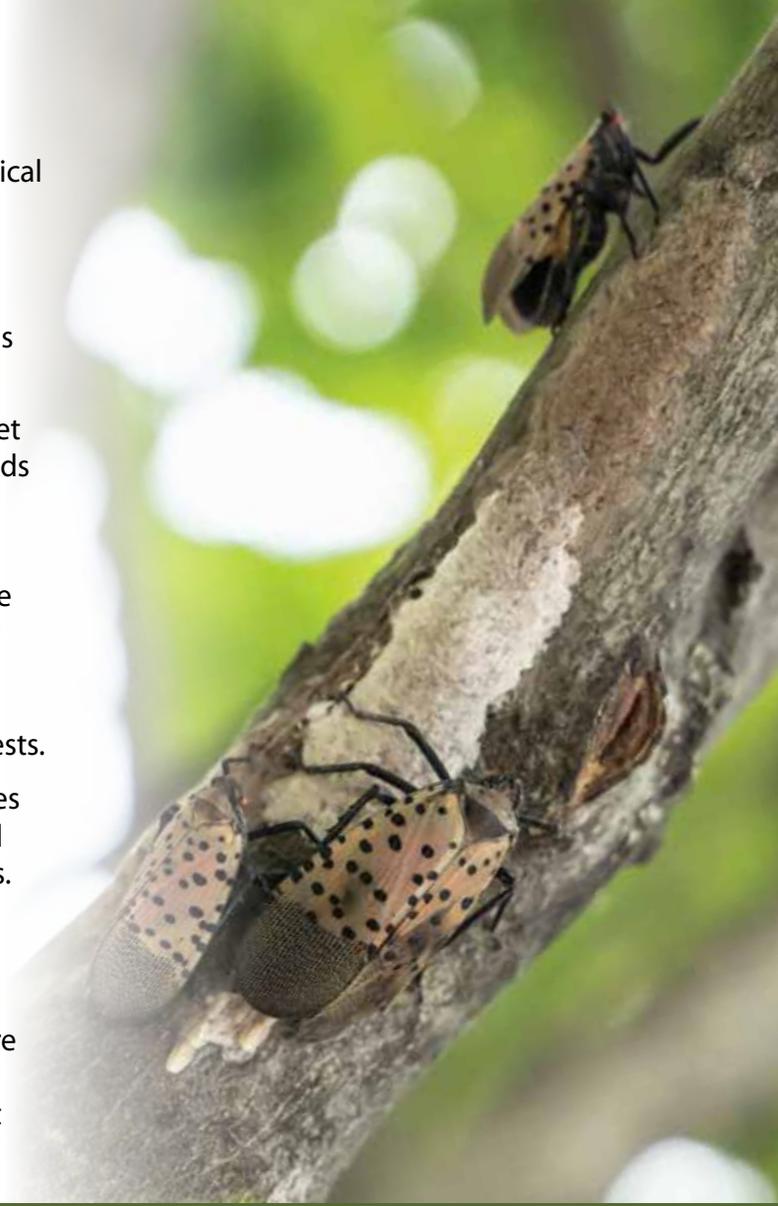
The spotted lanternfly first appeared in Berks County in 2014. It is a plant hopper from Asia but has spread across the commonwealth. It is confirmed to populate 34 counties at this time.

Adorned with pale, pinkish gray wings, black dots and a scarlet undercoat, spotted lanternflies can cover trees by the hundreds and swarm in the air.

They target sap from plants that are vital to Pennsylvania's agriculture and forest industries. When they feed, they excrete a sugary substance called honeydew onto which black, sooty mold grows. The mold is harmless to people but can prove deadly to plant life. Grapevines, apple trees, maples, black walnuts, birch, and willow trees are all susceptible to these pests.

A 2019 study at the Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences concluded that if left unchecked, the spotted lanternfly could cost the state \$324 million annually and more than 2,800 jobs.

In the fall, they will lay between 30 and 50 eggs each. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and United States Department of Agriculture have urged the public to safely exterminate both the insects and their eggs wherever they are encountered. There is a public hotline at 1-888-4BADFLY to report sightings, especially if seen in an area where the insect has not been observed previously.



Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Poses Growing Threat to Deer Population

CWD continues to be the most serious biological threat that has ever faced Pennsylvania's whitetail deer population. It was first found in Pennsylvania in captive deer in October of 2012 and in wild whitetails in early 2013.

CWD is a highly transmissible neurological disease that affects deer, elk, moose, and reindeer. It is caused by altered protein prions in the brains of afflicted animals, similar in principle to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, better known as "mad cow disease." It is always fatal. The disease is spread in saliva, feces, and urine. Since deer are highly sociable animals, the spread of CWD occurs easily in the woods through deer-to-deer contact or through contaminated soil or feed.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) has the challenging responsibility of managing and combating CWD. The PGC's professional staff partners with hunters and wildlife enthusiasts to gather data in order to slow the spread of CWD and limit its impact. Many of their strategies focus on reducing deer populations, as this is currently the only known way to address the spread of CWD.

When the PGC discovers CWD in a herd, it creates a Disease Management Area (DMA) and implements

steps to isolate the disease. According to the PGC, it manages outbreaks by banning movement of high-risk cervid parts outside the boundaries of DMAs, expanding hunting opportunities in order to reduce deer abundance and remove CWD-positive deer from the landscape, providing accurate and timely information of CWD testing results, and conducting educational and outreach campaigns to communicate key messages about CWD to stakeholders.

A new DMA was recently created by the PGC after a CWD-positive deer was found in Jefferson County, DMA 6. Alarmingly, in DMA 6, the CWD-positive deer was detected only two miles from the state's elk management area. As mentioned, elk, being similar to deer and belonging to the cervid family, are susceptible to CWD.

Hunters who harvest deer in any DMA must follow strict guidelines provided on the PGC website (PGC.pa.gov) about how to clean, transport, and submit their deer for study. For the PGC's plan to control CWD to work, hunters must harvest deer safely and provide samples so the extent of the spread of the disease can be limited and studied. Drop boxes are situated throughout each DMA for deer to be tested and results are provided to hunters free of charge.



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Life Jacket Requirement in Effect

The lure of a relaxing paddle along a scenic river, stream, or lake is hard to resist. To ensure boaters return home safely, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission reminds boaters to always wear a life jacket.

Now through April 30, boaters are required to wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket while underway or at anchor on boats less than 16 feet in length or on any kayak, canoe, or paddleboard. The requirement applies to all Pennsylvania waters.

Boaters should be aware that water temperatures remain cold at this time of year, and even on sunny days when air temperatures are comfortable and warm, the water can be cold enough to put boaters at risk for sudden cold-water immersion. A life jacket can keep you alive until help arrives.

Sudden cold-water immersion, or cold-water shock, occurs when a person is unexpectedly plunged into cold water below 70°F, resulting in an involuntary gasp where water is often inhaled. This uncontrollable reaction causes panic, hyperventilation, inhalation of water, and inhibits the ability of a person to swim.

According to Pennsylvania boating accident reports, nearly 80% of all boating fatalities occurred because boaters were not wearing life jackets. Prior to this life-jacket requirement being enacted in 2012, a disproportionate number of deaths happened between November and April. Since then, the Commission has seen a significant drop in the percentage of boating incidents that result in fatalities during the cold-weather months.



License Scam Warning

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and the Pennsylvania Game Commission are warning anglers and hunters about online scams after several reports surfaced of consumers who paid for licenses through third-party websites not connected with either agency.

Some of these look-alike websites mimic the agencies' branding, add in extra license fees, and may even ask for your personal information, like your Social Security number. Those are certainly red flags that the site is not legitimate, and you

could be wasting your money and putting your personal information at risk. The best way to ensure you receive a legitimate fishing or hunting license is by purchasing your license online at www.pgc.pa.gov.

Once a fishing license is purchased, a printable electronic version is issued immediately by the PFBC. For a hunting license that is purchased online, consumers receive an official email from the PGC, and licenses are mailed to the buyer within two weeks of their purchase.

Those who encounter a website offering the sale of a state fishing or hunting license that doesn't appear legitimate or does not link to The Outdoor Shop portal should contact the PFBC Fishing License Help Line at 877-707-4085 or the PGC license division at 717-787-2084.

Consumers who were victims of a fishing or hunting license scam should notify the state Office of the Attorney General by completing a scams complaint form, available at www.attorneygeneral.gov/submit-a-complaint.