



QUAIL AND UPLAND WILDLIFE FEDERATION

THE HABITAT GUIDE

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Notes from the Dashboard:

The celebration of the Fourth of July

By Craig Alderman — I try — I really do — not to discuss politics or political position, but when it comes to my country, my flag, my faith, and its freedoms I served for, time's up.

As we celebrate the birthday of our country, a Republic based on freedom, this veteran and my family ignite stronger patriotism having offered our lives to protect it.

Myself, both my boys, my father, all my uncles, my father-in-law, we all served to protect it. Patriotism is a strong burning light that will never go out and defending it is a right we hold true and must be preserved if we as a country are to survive and prosper.

Our American flag is a worldwide symbol of freedom, paid in blood commitment by veterans and their families. To see states refusing to participate in the birthday is, in a word, disgusting; they should lose all funding and support. Cities that do the same should be isolated in my opinion — enough is enough. Organizations or HOAs that ban the great American flag should be stripped of all authority and disbanded.

Our most powerful support of this Republic, our country, is the VOTE. The significant right of only citizens, and yes, citizens must be identified, and vetted for truth and honesty, especially in light of 20 million illegal aliens coming into our country and magically appearing on voting rolls and getting benefits even veterans cannot get.

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A great July 4th to all

From the editor — Without a doubt, we live in the greatest nation in the world, a nation whose core is FREEDOM, fought for and still being fought for today both against outside influences and, most disturbing, inside politicians and organization focusing on tearing down what we truly stand for.

Our history is built on FREEDOM and the strength to defend it. This July 4th celebrates your country with the pride it deserves, fly our flag with pride and distinction it has earned by blood, sweat and tears.

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Continued from Page 1 — We need better laws on voting! Make sure you participate in all VOTING issues, all the time, every time. It appears also getting involved with the proper performance of voting procedures is a requirement now to ensure fair and ethical conduct of our voting officials.

The right of freedom includes leaving this country. If you cannot support it and follow the Christian base of our beliefs, go to countries that better suit your beliefs; it's FREE.

As a conservationist it is chilling to see the state of Oregon trying to ban hunting, fishing and agricultural practices. Idiotic people who know nothing of those issues are gathering in small urban pockets to force-feed ridiculous laws. They need to be removed from office along with the judges, many not even from the U.S., who want to destroy our countries heritage.

Again, I encourage you to tune into Carl Higbie on NEWSMAX to hear the voice of truth and the data and research to back up the information from a veteran who knows the cost of freedom first hand. He is now the official voice of conservation and national news for QUWF.

Tune in every day to Frontline News at 6 p.m. eastern, 5 p.m. central on NEWSMAX. You will not regret it.

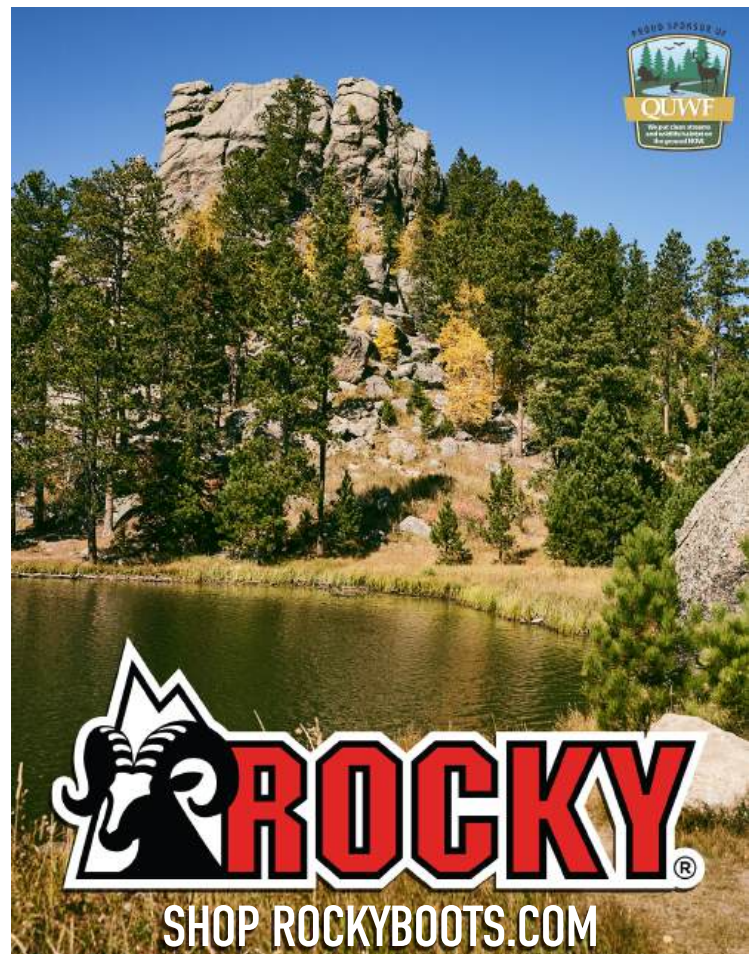


Craig Alderman is the Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation founder and



Continued from Page 1 — Be careful, be courteous, be safe. DO NOT drink and drive, boat and drive, ATV or UTV/side by side and drive.

Know the rules of fireworks in your town or county, and be exceptionally cautious any time you are using them.



Sea turtles nesting at record rates in Georgia

Halfway into nesting season for loggerhead sea turtles, Georgia's No.1 marine turtle is bound for a record summer. By June 22, roughly the midway mark, the Georgia Sea Turtle Cooperative had documented 2,366 nests. (The total has since climbed to over 2,800.)

Citing the first-half count, DNR Sea Turtle Coordinator Mark Dodd expects about 4,700 nests by season's end. That would easily be the most since comprehensive surveys began on Georgia beaches in 1989. The previous high was 4,072 in 2022.

The prediction isn't a sure thing, of course. This has been a weird season, Dodd said, one characterized by stronger-than-normal "pulses" of more females nesting during a night.

Those surges also have come in regularly timed patterns, like waves, or what Dodd calls "a high level of temporal nesting synchrony."

Small pulses are not uncommon, he explained. They are usually caused by factors such as stormy nights deterring turtles from the beach and creating pent-up demand to nest. What's odd this summer is not only the higher numbers of loggerheads nesting at a time, but "the extent to which the pulses are synchronized," roughly every 12-13 days.

"We're having these really big pulses," Dodd said. "And then these slow days."

For example, Ossabaw Island set its single-day record with 31 nests June 16. Two days later, only eight loggerheads crawled onto the island's wild beaches to lay eggs.

Georgia was due a big year, though. Thanks to conservation efforts such as the cooperative monitoring and protecting nests, the big, federally threatened turtles are steadily if slowly recovering. Also, nesting in the state had followed a three-year cycle until last summer, which was the third since 2022's record count and thus expected to be ultra busy, but only had about 1,900 nests, the fewest in four years.

The up-and-down nesting so far this year helped mask how well things were going for loggerheads – which could also help explain why cooperative members checking the beaches at dawn every day are so tired, Dodd quipped. "Now maybe we know".

Editor's Note: We have many members within QUWF living on the coast that follow the sea turtle's unique life cycle. These historic creatures of the wild offer another glimpse into why we have to preserve as many species native to our natural world without upsetting nature's rules like that which has been done with the grey wolf and others.



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Living with wildlife: Bats in your house?

Bats are everywhere! It may feel that way to some of Vermont's human residents. Summer is when some species of bats gather in colonies to raise their young in human-made structures such as houses, barns, office buildings, and bat houses.

"Summer is the time of year when the greatest number of unwanted bat-human interactions are reported," according to Vermont Fish and Wildlife's Small Mammals Biologist Alyssa Bennett, who works on the conservation and recovery of Vermont's threatened and endangered bat species.

"Bats can end up in your living space for many reasons, including young bats that are weak, disoriented, or lost while coming and going from the roost, bats moving within a structure to find warmer or cooler roosting space as temperatures fluctuate, and bats being displaced from their roosts due to building repairs and renovations."

Finding and sealing off holes inside your home, such as around attic doors or chimney flues, will keep bats out of your living space and can be done any time of year. However, during the summer when flightless baby bats are present, you should not attempt to seal holes on the outside of the house where bats come and go, a practice which can result in more bats in your bedroom at this time of year.

"Waking up to a bat flying in your bedroom or suddenly uncovering a dozen bats roosting behind a rotting trim board during home repairs can come as quite a shock," adds Bennett. "But don't fear, because there are answers to your burning bat questions on Vermont Fish and Wildlife's website using the search term — bats."

"Living with wildlife doesn't mean we have to share our homes with bats in order to protect them," says Bennett. "Our main concerns are to avoid human contact by safeguarding our living spaces, to evict bats from structures safely, and to provide alternative habitat for displaced bats by putting up bat houses."

Fall and spring are the times to safely and effectively evict bats from structures where they are not wanted.





Watch out! 'Tis the season for the 'pain' plants

From the editor — Here are a few of the “pain” plants you need to watch for while working in the fields and timberlands of our wildlife. This year, in the Midwest, with all the spring and early summer moisture, these pests are thriving and can be very uncomfortable as skin irritation and worse.

Poison Ivy here has leaves the size of sunflowers and reaches out into many trails and access roads with gusto. It also can cross breed with the plant/bush version creating a plant/vine combination just to make your day. It is the oil within the plant that is the big offender, as with all of these. If you cut it, the oil comes out big time, burn it and it is in the smoke and can really make your day. Cutting firewood and you might unknowingly get the vines as a bonus as you cut and split wood.

Poison Oak is a little harder to identify as it is a low bush and you need to be looking for it before you brush against it while clearing trails or fence line.

Poison Sumac is my nemesis, it drives me nuts if I accidentally bush hog the plants and the oils get in the air. It irritates the skin as well and can affect your sinuses, eyes and skin at the same time. Missouri fields seem to be a prime location to contact the itch master. Always use a good filter face mask when bush-hogging and safety glasses. I like the Milwaukee work safety glasses that wrap around the eyes as dust and debris fly in the changing winds.

How to control them? I use spot spraying with a Glyphosate mix, or Pasture Guard HL spray, follow the label instructions. This is the same mix I use for thistle and teasel though I add a granular herbicide for fence lines like Oust or Chaparral, again read the labels. Oust and Chaparral stay in the soil longer and can migrate with rains so do not use them near any lawns or gardens. If you cut the Ivy vine, you can apply Tordon RTU to kill it but understand you have the oil on your axe or cutters now so clean them off. Burning, even after dead and removed still will spread the old oils. I leave them on the tree for a year, then cut them off and leave them in the woods, well off trails.

If you do get exposed, there is a good and practical solution to get the oils off of your skin before a lot of irritation and itch. As soon as you can, wash the entire area with Lava soap, American made, by the way. Use a washcloth and LIGHTLY scrub the entire area with a good lather of Lava. Rinse and do this three times. The pumice within the soap will remove the oils from your skin.

In fact, if you work outside or in the shop, use this soap every time to remove stubborn stains like grease, oil, paint etc. It works.

If in the field and you know you have or may contact one of the three amigos above, always carry potable water to wash immediately using the same technique. Think ahead and have a wash cloth or roll of good paper towels with you.

You can get the multi-pack of Lava soap bars on Amazon. Many local stores have stopped carrying them and for me, these are a must have all the time.



Utah Habitat Council allocates funds to restoration projects

Editor's Note: *This is a good cooperative program to use the federal license funds and from the Pitman-Robertson and Dingle-Johnson Acts that go back to the states for these types of projects. However, every sportsman and angle needs to stay involved and find out what their state is doing with these funds. Some states use it for budget matters and not for wildlife that is was intended for. Pay attention and ask!*

SALT LAKE CITY — A little over \$3.4 million was allocated to 71 selected habitat restoration projects — several of which will benefit mule deer in Utah — at the recent annual Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Habitat Council funding meeting on April 29.

The DWR Habitat Council was created in 1995 by the Utah Legislature as a way to provide funds for fish and wildlife conservation that are specifically used to:

- Enhance fish and wildlife habitat
- Preserve and protect habitat
- Manage and acquire new habitat areas for fish and wildlife
- Improve hunting and fishing access

These funds are a portion of the revenue from license, permit and certificate of registration fees related to hunting and fishing.

The Habitat Council consists of eight individuals who act as an advisory board. They provide recommendations regarding the use of the funds received annually from the sales of hunting and fishing licenses. Members include four public representatives and four DWR or Department of Natural Resources employees.

"We appreciate the hunters and anglers who truly are the backbone of wildlife conservation," DWR Habitat Conservation Coordinator Alison Whittaker said. "When you buy a hunting or fishing license, you are directly supporting wildlife conservation. That money helps fund many of the crucial habitat restoration projects that help to maintain fish and wildlife populations for future generations to enjoy. Providing the necessary habitat for these species is vital to their survival, and requires ongoing restoration efforts as climate conditions continue to shift."

The funding available to the Habitat Council from fishing and hunting license sales totaled a little over \$3.4 million and will help fund 71 projects over the next fiscal year (from July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027). Several high-priority fish and wildlife projects will be funded during the upcoming fiscal year.

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Continued from Page 7 — "We are extremely grateful for other partners who help fund these projects as well, which are so critical for fish and wildlife," Whittaker said. "We wouldn't be able to complete as many of these necessary conservation projects without these important partnerships."

Since 2006, the Habitat Council program has:

- Allocated over \$50.6 million to complete 1,672 wildlife habitat projects across Utah
- Improved over 455,450 acres of terrestrial habitat
- Restored 2,151 miles of streams and rivers



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North Dakota spring grouse survey shows mixed results

- **Editor's Note: Does anyone else note that they never mention predation on the lek sights from coyotes? Research is showing devastating impact from predation on the lek sights. Not mentioning it shows the mind set.**
- Each spring, North Dakota Game and Fish Department staff count the number of male sharp-tailed grouse, greater prairie chickens and greater sage grouse dancing on leks, while also tallying the number of male ruffed grouse drumming in suitable aspen habitats.
- These surveys serve as relative indices of spring breeding populations.
- "The sharp-tailed grouse counts were mixed across the state this spring, which resulted in an unchanged statewide count compared to 2025," said Jesse Kolar, department upland game management supervisor.
- This result was better than expected following poor reproduction and decreases in adult sharptail densities in last summer's roadside surveys and the 24% decrease in hunter harvest last fall.
- "Thus, we expected to see very poor numbers for lek counts this spring, but we suspect that our mild winter led to minimal mortality and helped minimize losses after the cool and wet summer of 2025," Kolar said.
- By district, observers saw 4.9 males per square mile in the southwest, down 8% from 2025; 5 males per square mile in the prairie potholes, up 2%; and 2.9 males per square mile in the drift prairie, up 10% from last year. The only remaining survey block in the Red River Valley is Grand Forks County, which is not a primary region for sharptails but was up 9% from last year.
- Ruffed grouse survey results indicated an uptick in drums heard in the Turtle Mountains (+40%) and a decrease in the Pembina Hills (-15%) compared to 2025.
- "In contiguous forest habitats, ruffed grouse numbers usually rise and fall in cycles, but because habitat in North Dakota is isolated and fragmented, we have not seen these peaks, but the population has been increasing slightly since 2019," Kolar said.
- Small greater prairie chicken populations remain in Grand Forks County and the Sheyenne National Grasslands but overall, North Dakota no longer holds enough suitable, intact tallgrass prairie to support a huntable population.

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- **Continued from Page 9** — Only one male and one female sage grouse were observed in 2026. Both sage grouse and greater prairie chicken hunting seasons will remain closed.
- Overall, the long-term outlook for our native prairie grouse remains a concern due to grassland conversion, fragmentation and woody encroachment on prairies.
- **OK Crappie Limit Change at Lake Eufaula and Other New Fishing, Hunting Rules in Effect Now**
- Hunters and anglers should be aware of several new rules affecting hunting and fishing that begin immediately, and others that may go into effect later this year.
- The following rule changes were approved this week by the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission:
- In response to constituent concerns regarding local populations, a daily limit of 20 crappie is now in effect for Lake Eufaula and Atoka Lake.
- To address issues with stunted populations where fish rarely exceed 5 to 6 inches, all daily limits for crappie have been eliminated at all Close to Home Fishing waters, as well as Lakes Dahlgren, Boomer, Holdenville, Purcell, Shell, and Wewoka.
- **Commissioners also approved these resolutions:**
- For migratory game birds, setting 2026-27 hunting season dates and bag limits; defining youth waterfowl hunters as those 17 and younger; and aligning woodcock hunting season more closely with quail season.
- For antlerless deer, setting 2026-27 hunting season dates and bag limits by zone; prohibiting mule deer doe harvest statewide during muzzleloader and gun seasons; and opening muzzleloader season to antlerless hunting opportunity in the Panhandle.
- For elk, setting the 2026-27 hunting season dates, bag limits and quotas by zone, creating a Special Southeast Zone (areas in Carter and Murray counties east of Interstate 35); increasing harvest quotas in the Panhandle and Special Northwest zones; adding a few more days of hunting opportunity in the Special Southwest Zone; and defining antlerless elk as showing less than 6 inches of antler above the natural hairline.
- For black bear, eliminating the quota for the muzzleloader season.
- **Emergency Rules**
- The following emergency rules were adopted by the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission. These temporary rules go into effect if signed by the governor.
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- A mandatory two-day waiting period for any nonresident who purchases a deer hunting license while the season is already open.
- License and requirements for hunting guides and outfitters offering waterfowl and sandhill crane hunts.
- Specific protocols under the CWD Genetic Improvement Program regarding the managed release of deer on private property.
- Specific details and maps will be published in the 2026–27 Oklahoma Fishing and Hunting Regulations guidebook. A downloadable PDF will be accessible at wildlifedepartment.com in July. Physical guidebooks will be distributed to license vendors statewide in late August.

Walleye are a bad match for Idaho waters

Walleye are typically a bad match for Idaho because they are native to large Midwestern lakes that have nearly unlimited schools of minnows, shiners and other baitfish that walleye live on. Those large baitfish populations are unavailable in most Idaho waters, which means walleye consume game fish to survive, and most Idaho anglers prefer to catch those other game fish.

That's why Idaho Fish and Game is extremely selective where it manages for walleye fishing, which is limited to: Salmon Falls Creek Reservoir, Onieda Reservoir, and Oakley Reservoir.

Fish and Game biologists ask anglers to keep, kill and consume all walleye they catch outside of those waters. People should also never move walleye between bodies of water, and they should report anyone who does. It's not only illegal, it can be very harmful to other fish populations.

Walleye keep popping up in unexpected places

Walleye are being discovered in waters where they are unwanted, and were illegally released, which rarely benefits anyone. Some anglers have accused Fish and Game biologists of being biased against walleye, but that's not the case.

Fish and Game has spent decades surveying anglers for their fishing preferences, and the department tries to provide diverse fishing in suitable waters. In most places, biologists aren't managing a single species, they're managing multiple species that must be compatible with each other.

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Continued from Page 11 — Any given water can only support so many fish and different species. It's common for these varied game fish to feed on each other, but there has to be a reasonable balance between species so they can coexist and provide diverse fishing opportunities.

Numerous waters in the Northwest and Rocky Mountain states have shown a fairly predictable pattern after walleye populations become established. At best, another fishing opportunity is temporarily added. But most often, limited walleye fishing displaces other valued and established fish populations and fishing opportunities. The walleye fishery is unlikely to be sustainable because they have a history of eating themselves out of house and home.

Biologists are currently experiencing that in two of the three Idaho waters managed for walleye. Walleye are plentiful, but small and skinny, because there's not enough prey fish remaining for them to get bigger.

Part of the problem is trying to hit an elusive sweet spot where there is an abundant enough walleye population to provide good fishing, and enough bigger fish to make it interesting.

When the walleye population is too big and the average size fish is too small, it's hard to bring it back into balance. It's difficult to reduce the walleye population and/or increase the forage base because there are so many hungry, predatory fish, and they can be prolific spawners.

"We will continue to try to improve these few reservoirs where we manage for walleye," State Fisheries Manager Joe Kozfkay said. "But if someone wants a glimpse into the future where an illegally stocked walleye population gets established, this is most likely what it will look like."



Ruger expands 250th anniversary series

Sturm, Ruger & Company, Inc. (NYSE: RGR) is proud to expand its 250th Anniversary Series of firearms, further commemorating the United States Semiquincentennial while celebrating the Company's longstanding tradition of American manufacturing. Each limited production model in this special collection is distinctly marked with the inscription, "Made in the 250th Year of American Liberty."

This collection now includes six additional models representing a broad cross-section of Ruger's product offerings: the SR1911® pistol, two Hawkeye® rifles, the No. 1 rifle and two Marlin® Model 1894™ lever-action rifles. While each firearm offers its own unique configuration, all share a unified commemorative theme with patriotic motifs and elevated finishes.

Among the collection's standout offerings, with only 250 of each model being produced, are the Hawkeye chambered in 30-06 Springfield, the No. 1 rifle chambered in 375 Ruger and the Marlin Model 1894 chambered in 44 Remington Magnum.

The commemorative Hawkeye rifle, chambered in the iconic 30-06 Springfield, serves as a fitting tribute to the nation's 250th birthday. Its highly polished, richly blued metalwork is enhanced by elegant engraving and gold-plated accents.

The bolt features an attractive jeweled finish, while the extractor is highly polished for a distinctive appearance. The 22" cold-hammer forged barrel is equipped with an express-style, windage-adjustable V-notch rear sight and a brass bead front sight for fast, intuitive target acquisition. Completing the package is a beautifully checkered stock crafted from high-grade American black walnut with an ebony forend tip.

The commemorative No. 1 rifle, chambered in the powerful 375 Ruger cartridge, reflects the same level of artistry found throughout the series. Its highly polished, richly blued metalwork is complemented by elegant 250th Anniversary engravings and gold-plated details. The rifle's high-grade American black walnut stock further enhances its timeless appearance and commemorative significance.

The Marlin Classic Series Model 1894 chambered in the classic American 44 Remington Magnum cartridge, reflects the craftsmanship and beauty befitting such a significant milestone in American history.



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QUWF welcomes All veterans. All the time.

The Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation was formed to focus on and help veteran landowners, veteran sportsmen, and all veterans who are interested in the great outdoors.

QUWF staff will help all veterans find and get benefit assistance through the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) or other resources.

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Continued from Page 13 — A Skinner Black Gold peep sight and brass front sight post provide both visual appeal and practical performance, offering quick target acquisition while complementing the rifle's gold-plated accents. The left side of the receiver features a detailed depiction of the American bald eagle clutching a banner emblazoned with "250th Anniversary."

The second Hawkeye rifle in the collection features the special "Made in the 250th Year of American Liberty" engraving on the floorplate. Additional features include a satin stainless finish, a 20" free-float threaded barrel and an attractive American black walnut stock.

Also included is the Marlin Classic Series Model 1894 rifle chambered in 45 Colt. This stainless steel rifle features a special "Made in the 250th Year of American Liberty" engraving on the receiver, along with a 20.25" barrel, adjustable semi-buckhorn sights and an American walnut stock.

The SR1911 features a finely detailed slide commemorating the 250th Year of American Liberty with engraved patriotic imagery. Custom grip panels showcase intricate scrollwork that complements the slide engraving, creating a refined and distinctive appearance. We are limiting production on this model to 1776 units.

Together, these limited-production firearms honor America's 250-year legacy through a combination of craftsmanship, performance and patriotic designs. The 250th Anniversary Series stands as a fitting tribute to this historic milestone and Ruger's enduring commitment to American manufacturing.



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Notes from the Road:

'Rabbitat' is still a thing, and yes, it is still working!

By Nick Prough — In well over three decades of working in the fields and forests across the country's landscapes, I have constantly seen one species persist and even thrive in many areas of the country and that is the rabbit, and it's "rabbitat" habitat that many landowners have created over the years — either by creating a "by-product" of other land management they are doing for another targeted species they were working on, or on purpose building "rabbitat" structures for that purpose.

One common theme across the country is, "It still works." I have given talks at several large universities as a guest speaker on rabbit management, given presentations at landowner workshops in multiple states, co-authored published papers on rabbit management, and talked to countless landowners on site visits from coast to coast regarding creating wildlife habitat and specifically rabbit habitat. They are remarkably consistent in many ways in the types of habitats they thrive in and the foods they require to flourish over a vast type of landscapes and weather conditions.

Yes, their population numbers vary from year to year locally, and they can have boom and bust years, but they consistently stay persistent on the landscape over a long period of time where a quality "rabbitat" is created and **maintained**.

This year in the Midwest, it is definitely a boom year, and maybe a top 2 boom year of my career. According to my 8-year-old daughter just this past weekend, "Dad, we are a rabbit factory. I've never seen this many rabbits in my lifetime." Now, while she is only 8 (but knows good habitat as well or better than 75% of adults I would say, as that is what we do 24/7, 365 in this household) she is correct. We are in 2026 a true rabbit factory going into this summer/fall.

We have literally rabbits everywhere stacked on top of each other so much that if you don't see 12-15 in just a short walk through the "rabbitat" you think something is definitely wrong. This "rabbitat" has been managed for years and recently "refreshed and upgraded" to improve it even further the past several years as most of it needed a refresh yet once again.

Some rabbitat structures have been refreshed even earlier this year in wind rowed down tree structure areas next to native warm season grass (NWSG) and forb brood rearing areas and carefully placed along or directly in brushy/shrubby old fence rows to "recreate that rabbitat look" we all remember as kids trying to walk through as we said "ouch" hundreds of times.

Many of you that have been around QUWF more than the past couple years remember I had a 10-year-old beagle Lucky who still to this day was one of the best "rabbitat judges on earth." Even just last week a landowner on a site visit who had been out in field with Lucky a few times said to me, "Ol' Lucky, now he knew good habitat as soon as he got out of truck." He was an older beagle in his prime and didn't need to use his nose which was aging along with his body; he knew after being there both in hunting situations, but also for for hundreds if not thousands of "rabbitat building structures," what to look for even without one drop of a scent and what not to look for when it came to rabbits.

My daughter even said on the last one we just finished up refreshing this spring, "Oh, I think Lucky would sure like this one." She was right, and so the rabbits agreed. We walked by that rabbitat structure on one of our evening habitat walks while she did her plant ID that she is getting very good at for a second grader, and there was at least 8-10 rabbits as well as several bobwhite quail running in front of the rabbits and flushing all around behind us as we stood within feet of that refreshed rabbitat all while both of us saying, WOW!

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Continued from Page 16 — That very next morning, the rancher called me all excited as he saw that morning while opening a gate into a pasture next to the “row of rabbitat” a “huge covey of quail in the corner of the property” — over 20 birds, which was one of the biggest he had seen in a while, but he was even more excited than that as he said “half of them were tiny quail chicks, Nick, I saw them,” which was great to see and hear and he was beyond excited about that to say the least.

Then fast forward to just a couple days ago, I was out looking on a site visit on a reclaimed mine land property and I asked what the various rock structures where they had placed randomly out in the prairie grasses that had been planted on the reclaimed mine land and they answered exactly this, “Oh, that is our rabbitat,” and it all came full circle.

Rabbitat works almost anywhere, whether you have 10 acres or 10,000 it works, it is beneficial to many species once created not just rabbits, it works year-round and can be created 365, its low and many times no cost to create and it will last many years, if it is refreshed properly every 3-5 years it may last longer than you think.

So, next time you are having to clean up some blown down trees on your driveway or powerline from the latest wind storm, or you don't know what to do with the five old pallets rotting behind the barn that your seed or dog food came on, just go out and spend a few hours creating or refreshing some “rabbitat.”

Keep up all the great work out there that each of you, your landowners, your chapters and conservation partners are doing on crucial wildlife habitat projects, youth field day events, as well as all your other conservation outreach efforts, you are working on in your local communities each and every day, as you are definitely ... **“Making a Difference for Wildlife One Acre at a Time”!**



Nick Prough is the QUWF chief wildlife biologist and wildlife partnership coordinator. He can be reached at chiefbiologist@quwf.net.

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Delay bush hog work in fields until Aug. 1

From the editor — Recreational bush hogging of fields is a significant danger to wildlife nesting and upland game nesting and brood rearing.

Many fawns are in the fields, hidden in the deep grass and brush clumps. Late June and early July is the time fawns are brought into field edges for the first time to lay in cover.

From a tractor's seat you cannot see them until it is too late. Typically, new landowners even hobby farmers new to the life style are over anxious to "clean up the fields" not understanding the real value of what is there.

Wildlife habitat does not look like a mowed park.

Second, turkey nesting is still in progress, they are a smart bird but not when it comes to nesting practices in clump grasses or low brush areas, targets of the recreational bush hog user, they are not clever and can suffer total losses.

Finally, the Bobwhite Quail is also nesting in open fields, clump grasses and low brush areas.

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Continued from Page 18 — They can nest through July and need the cover to complete successful nesting and early survival.

Not to mention the many species of grassland birds that nest in the fields.

Of course, those who hay for agriculture depend on the weather to get on the fields. We ask they keep a vigilant lookout for the wildlife nesting and it is a challenge. Fawns may bolt but most often do not, nesting turkeys and bobwhite may lose the adults as well as the nest.

I do see some use of ATV's and UTV's to run the edges of fields before cutting with the tractor and mowers looking for potential conflicts. Slower speed and more eyes on the grasses can help avoid the killing of wildlife nesting. Thank you!



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FWP proposes unique conservation easement

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is proposing to purchase a 99-year conservation easement (CE) to protect critical habitat and increase public access in central Montana. The draft environmental assessment (EA) was released for public comment today.

"Increasing public access and protecting habitat is a foundational goal at FWP," Director Christy Clark said. "I am proud of the hard work from our staff to give Montanans more opportunities to access the lands and places that make our state special."

The proposed Hannah Ranch CE in Fergus County near Moore is on the western foothills of the Big Snowy Mountains and totals 3,652 acres. The CE would also increase access to the far western end of the approximately 120,000 acres of national forest in the Big Snowy range.

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Continued from Page 20 — It consists of mixed grassland and shrubland within deer/elk hunting district 411. The primary objectives of the proposed CE are to provide conservation and enhancement of high-quality native habitats, maintain traditional agricultural land uses and provide opportunities for public access and recreation.

The term length of the easement is 99 years, which is the first of its kind for FWP, and potentially serves as another option for future wildlife and habitat easements with access opportunities.

FWP is currently seeking review and public comment on the EA for this project. The EA and associated documents can be viewed on FWP's [website](#).

A 30-day public review and comment period will begin on June 29 and end on July 28. A public informational meeting will be held in Lewistown July 21 at 6 p.m. at the Bureau of Land Management Field office, 920 NE Main St.

Editor's Note: We get questions as to why we add news on western states, especially Wyoming, and Montana or the Dakotas. First, many QUWF members travel to these states for recreational hunting, boating and fishing. Second, these states are exceptionally active, much more than central and eastern states. at getting the word out about their wildlife and resources including habitat work. To lease private lands for public access is a HUGE benefit. Now, let's see how many NGOs and members jump in to help with the hands on habitat work?



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Maine game wardens arrest Waterboro man

Editor's Note: Without a doubt, this reflects the total lack of respect of a landowner and total absence of common sense. The majority of outdoorsmen and women who own these types of vehicles, respect the land, understand the responsibilities of its ownership, use and care. The new generation of ATV /UTV and side by side operators have elements within them that do not have that respect, and what makes it even worse, they don't care until they are caught and that makes them dangerous. They cut fences, charge across fields (yes, we experienced it here on the farm as well) and think they can speed away and not get caught. Trail cameras serve many purposes, and protecting your property is becoming a big portion. Make sure your property has very good property boundary signage as well placed at intervals exceeding legal requirements at access and egress areas.



Maine Game Wardens arrested a Waterboro man last night and charged him in connection to an incident in Limington where a landowner was dragged after attempting to stop an ATV.

Devin Lafrance, age 21 of Waterboro, was arrested and charged with aggravated assault (Class B), reckless operation of ATV (Class D), and failing to stop and identify for landowner (Class E). Lafrance was transported to York County Jail where he was booked and later released.

Lafrance was identified as the driver of the ATV that on June 2 struck and dragged a landowner in Limington. The incident occurred at approximately 8:30 p.m. on June 2 on the Pequawket Lake Road in Limington, when a landowner stopped an ATV for riding dangerously on his property. When the landowner attempted to photograph the ATV and the registration, the operator rapidly accelerated, striking the landowner and dragging him 75 feet before he got away. The landowner was treated at the hospital for abrasions and contusions and was released that night.

The arrest was the result of multiple tips that were reported to the Maine Warden Service, and considerable video and trail camera footage. While none of the tips were able to positively identify the ATV or the rider, many of them provided insight which allowed game wardens to follow up and investigate further, including eventually identifying the make and model of the ATV. The information and investigative work culminated in a search warrant for LaFrance's property and a warrant for his arrest.

The Maine Warden Service is thankful for the public's assistance in this case, which resulted in the warrants for the arrest.



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No CWD detected in Arizona deer, elk populations

PHOENIX — The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) announced that Arizona continues to be free of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), a fatal wildlife disease that affects the nervous system of deer and elk.

CWD has now been detected in 37 states and 5 Canadian provinces, with Delaware being the most recent state to become positive in April 2026.

Department officials did not detect CWD in any of the 1,468 mule deer, white-tailed deer, or elk tested during the 2025 hunt seasons.

Here's the breakdown of where samples came from:

- 689 samples came from hunters who harvested and voluntarily submitted animals.
- 699 samples came from partnerships with game processors and taxidermists.
- 80 samples were obtained from animals involved in vehicle collisions or other fatalities. These samples are considered high-priority for testing because CWD often first appears in animals that are clinically sick or have impaired neurological function, increasing the risk of vehicle collisions and other incidents.

The department has prioritized sample collection based on the occurrence of the disease in neighboring states. A total of 756 samples were collected from high-priority areas.

AZGFD also tested 14 samples from animals that were harvested outside of Arizona. As a reminder, hunters should only bring packaged meat, quarters, cleaned skulls, or finished taxidermy mounts into the state. It's also important to disinfect your equipment after hunts in CWD-positive areas **out of state**.

AZGFD has been testing for the presence of the disease in Arizona since 1998. While CWD has been found in the neighboring states of Utah, New Mexico, Colorado, and California, the disease has not been detected in Arizona. CWD has not been documented to cause disease in people.

AZGFD appreciates the assistance of hunters who submit deer and elk for testing, as well as the cooperation of game processors and taxidermists.



THE HABITAT GUIDE

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The Habitat Guide accepts story suggestions from readers. Some story information appears as gathered from interviewees. The Habitat Guide assumes no responsibility for the credibility of statements made by interviewees.

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