



QUAIL AND UPLAND WILDLIFE FEDERATION

# THE HABITAT GUIDE

VOLUME 17 ISSUE 4 • MAY 2026

## Notes from the Dashboard:

Saving our wildlife habitat - it's getting worse!

**By Craig Alderman** — Without any doubt, our wildlife lands are being taken over and converted to many forms of “social destruction.” Whether it be AI land grabbing going on all over the country, aging out of farmers and ranchers whose children do not have the same love of the land and sell out to developers, or economics, costs and the revenue formulas, are killing the farmers of today.

Understand, farming is the ONLY industry in the U.S. that has to buy everything at retail, from equipment to fuel, seed, fertilizer, all supplies, parts and repairs. Then they are forced to sell their products at below wholesale by a corrupt system of middlemen (not U.S. owners, by the way) that will not allow them to factor increased costs of anything.

Every other business in the U.S. can work to control or cover costs by controlling selling prices except farmers. If it is not fixed, we will not eat, simple. Further, ownership of our farming lands, food supplies and pricing control structures needs to be mandated as U.S. only.

We are losing tens of thousands of farms and ranches each day in every state, from cattle, sheep and goat production to crop production of corn, wheat or oats. Politicians do not have a clue, and it seems those on the left are especially clueless. Go ahead Google the farm losses in your state and get ready for a shock.

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## *Turtles need your help*

**From the editor** — If you live in the country, or suburbs, you are seeing the turtle movement across roads, fields and even your front lawn. Like the following article states, if you see the turtle crossing, help them get across in the direction they are travelling.

We had the joy of watching a slider turtle make a nest, lay her eggs and cover up the area, of course on the very edge of our main field access road.

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**Continued from Page 1** — For those of us involved in wildlife preservation and agriculture, when 95% of all lands are privately held, we are losing huge amounts of habitat with those agricultural lands, to never again be used for agriculture or wildlife preservation. Worse, once used for AI, solar arrays or windmills, the land is permanently raped and will never be suitable again for any ag or wildlife use. Developers want to build, build, build, and care less about agricultural impact or wildlife.

Some state wildlife agencies are nearly useless. When I met with the private lands division chief of Missouri this year about the loss of farmlands, his response was, "Yeah, we heard that." No program, no plan just a hollow CYA response. They don't care as they only worry about state lands and protecting their budget or lands through the NRCS joint program where they can gain credit for that agencies work through NGO's that focus on Farm Bill lands with no real results for the landowners, just taking lots of credit. They try getting more federal grants to create a bigger budget but not for the goal of agriculture or wildlife, its for their interests.

Here at the QUWF home office, we plant test food plots with various seed choices and techniques. With Deisel at nearly \$5.10 a gallon at last fill up, even our small planting program just jumped nearly a thousand dollars in fuel costs. What cost \$62.50 last year to fill the tractor cost \$127.50 this year. Seed is double, chemicals are still climbing and hard to get, fertilizer is still sky high, and then mother nature is still wringing out a drought for poor germination or flooding conditions. Many farmers just cannot afford to plant this year; they are struggling to survive, last report showed over 70% maybe not be planting.

Help farmers, buy from local growers whenever you can. Get involved in the process to protect them and their families. As QUWF chapters and members, work with local landowners to assist in any way you can. Push our politicians to get things changed for farmers before it is too late. Catch you across the creek.



**Craig Alderman is the Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation founder and executive director. Reach him at [admin@quwf.net](mailto:admin@quwf.net).**

**Continued from Page 1** — *We marked the area to protect it, and to keep an eye on incubation which falls in the 45-to-90-day time frame depending on ground temperatures. If warmer they will hatch faster, cooler and it may take the full 90 days. Be careful around snapping turtles!*

Vermont's turtles are on the move, and the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is asking for the public's help in keeping them safe. Female turtles will soon be looking for places to lay their eggs, and they sometimes choose inconvenient or dangerous locations. For example, turtles often lay eggs in gravel parking lots and driveways and along road shoulders, which puts them at risk of being hit by motor vehicles.

"Turtles commonly cross roads as they move to nesting sites and summer foraging habitats," said Luke Groff, biologist for the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. "Many of the turtles killed on roads are mature breeding females, so not only is the female taken from the population but so are her future offspring. Turtles grow slowly and females of some species may not reproduce until 10 or even 17 years old. So, for small, isolated populations, the loss of mature breeding females may have population-level effects."

Turtle nesting activity peaks between late May and June, and drivers are urged to keep an eye out for turtles on the road – especially when driving near ponds, rivers and wetlands.

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**Continued from Page 2** — "Turtles are usually slow to move, so they have a tough time safely crossing roads. If you spot a turtle on the road, please consider helping it across but be sure you're in a safe spot to pull over and get out of your car. Human safety comes first," said Groff. "If you're going to move a turtle off the road, always move it in the direction it was traveling. They know where they're going."

Most turtles can be picked up and carried across the road. However, snapping turtles have long necks and a powerful bite, so people should be alert and know what the species looks like. If the turtle is large or if it lacks colorful lines, spots, or other markings, then it may be a snapper. Instead of picking up snappers with your hands, try gently lifting them with a shovel or pulling them across the road on cardboard or a car floor mat.

## Recent spring surveys show increased mule deer numbers

**GLASGOW** – Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks biologists completed 2026 spring aerial surveys of deer population trends across Region 6 in northeastern Montana. The surveys indicate general increases in most districts.

Every year, Region 6 wildlife biologists conduct aerial surveys across 11 deer trend areas across the region to assess mule deer population trends in total observations and fawn recruitment ratios. Mule deer surveys occur post hunting season, usually in December and January, and again in the spring in March and April to estimate winter survival. The following results focus on the spring survey. Note that the trend areas surveyed are meant to be a sample of the total land area, and deer populations may vary across the region and in individual hunting districts.

An important factor of spring surveys is fawn to adult ratios that indicate fawn recruitment. Fawns that have survived their first winter, which is typically the hardest period in the annual cycle, are considered recruited into the population. These ratios can help inform FWP on overall winter survival, how the population is faring as it enters the summer season, and what the potential for growth might be in the upcoming year.

### Northeast Montana region-wide summary

The 2026 winter across northeast Montana was fairly mild, but some areas in the extreme northeast corner had more difficult conditions with heavy snow. However, an early warming event in January melted most of the existing snow and the area experienced an open and mild winter from mid-January to spring, which is often the most challenging months for big game animals.

Mule deer densities in all 11 deer trend areas this spring indicated an increase of 32% from 2025 and overall were slightly above the long-term average. Region-wide fawn to adult ratios show a slight increase from 2025 and are 21% above the long-term average, indicating growing populations. Below is a breakdown of the 11 trend areas by geographic region going west to east in northeast Montana.

### Havre area summary

Total deer counts were up from 2025 in all three trend areas in the Havre area, covering portions of Hunting Districts (HDs) 600 and 690. The population trend surveys in HDs 600 and 690 were above the long-term average. In addition, the fawn to adult ratios were above the long-term average in all three trend areas.

### Malta area summary

The Malta area includes three trend areas in portions of HDs 620, 621, and the western end of HD 670. Spring 2026 surveys show increased numbers in the HD 620 area from 2025 and total deer numbers were above the long-term average. In HD 621 and the western 670 trend areas, numbers were below the long-term averages and slightly below 2025 numbers.

**Continued on Page 4**

**Continued from Page 3** — The fawn to adult ratios in all three trend areas remained above the long-term average, indicating good recruitment into the population.

### **Glasgow area summary**

Spring 2026 mule deer surveys in the Glasgow area indicated improved numbers in all three trend areas in hunting districts HD 630, western 650, and eastern 670, with the trend areas in 630 and western 650 being above the long-term average. The 670 Bitter Creek trend area showed substantially increased numbers from last year but was still 34% below the long-term average.

The fawn to adult ratios in all three trend areas remained above long-term averages but had little change from the 2025 surveys.

### **Plentywood area summary**

The Plentywood area includes two trend areas, one in HD 640 and another in the eastern end of HD 650. The trend numbers in HD 640 remain 32% above long-term average but decreased from the 2025 spring survey. In the eastern portion of HD 650, total deer numbers increased over 30% from 2025 and are right at the long-term average.

Fawn to adult ratios were near long-term averages.

### **Conclusion**

These surveys indicate a steady recovery of mule deer populations across much of Region 6 in northeast Montana, following the recent low numbers observed in 2024.

"Mule deer populations historically have followed a cyclic pattern from high to low populations over a 10-year period," says Region 6 wildlife manager Scott Thompson. "Biologists use these survey data, combined with harvest estimates and other factors such as weather, Chronic Wasting Disease prevalence, and landowner tolerance to recommend mule deer hunting season adjustments."

"If mother nature provides ample moisture in 2026, we should expect to see mule deer numbers continue to increase across northeast Montana," adds Thompson.

## **Register for North Dakota game warden exam**

Individuals interested in taking the exam to select candidates for district game warden positions must register by May 27. Exams are scheduled for 9 a.m. Central time at the following locations:

- June 2 – Minot Job Service Building, Minot.
- June 3 – West Fargo Police Department, West Fargo.
- June 5 – Game and Fish office, Bismarck.

Exam is scheduled for 9 a.m. Mountain time at the following location:

- June 4 – Game and Fish office, Dickinson.

Applicants must register by submitting an online application through the [North Dakota State Job Openings](#) website.

Applicants must be at least 21, have a bachelor's degree at time of hire or an associate degree with either 2 years of law enforcement or wildlife experience, have a valid driver's license and a current North Dakota peace officer license, or eligible to be licensed. Candidates must successfully complete a comprehensive background check and must not have a record of any felony convictions.

For more information, see the [district game warden testing announcement](#) on the Game and Fish website, [gf.nd.gov](http://gf.nd.gov).







## Barn owl nest box at Goose Pond area has eggs

A pair of barn owls staying in Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife Area's nest box has produced eggs. You can watch this couple as they prepare for the hatch at [on.IN.gov/goosepondfwa](https://on.IN.gov/goosepondfwa), then scroll to the middle of the page to the link that says, "view live feed from the Visitors Center."

The laying season for barn owls can begin as early as March, and their clutch usually contains four to seven eggs, according to state ornithologist Allisyn Gillet. Barn owls usually lay once every two to three days and start incubating their eggs right away. Once the barn owl chick is fully developed, after 29-34 days, the chick will use an egg tooth to break through the shell in a process called pipping. It can take more than 12 hours for the chick to hatch completely from the egg after pipping. The eggs at Goose Pond started to appear around mid-April, so their hatch date would be sometime in mid-May.

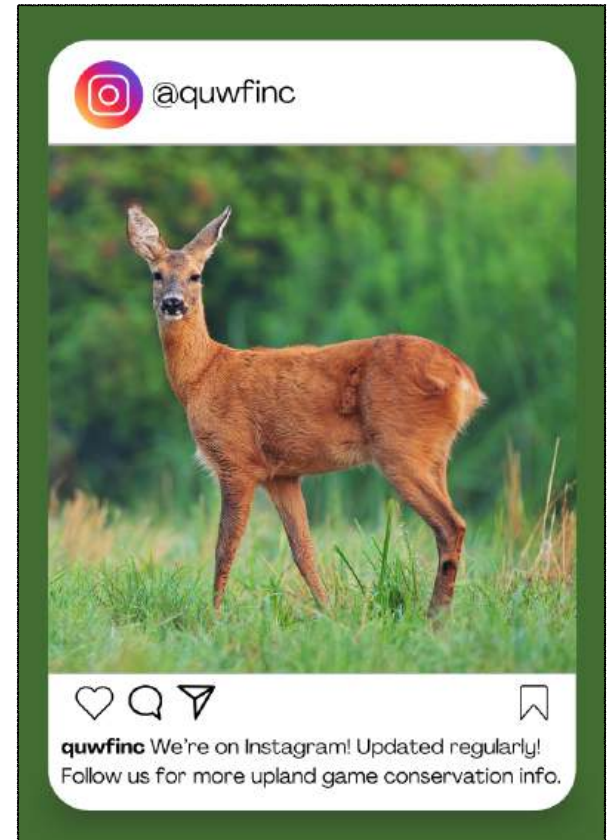
Once the eggs have hatched, a male will bring in small mammals that the female then tears into small pieces to feed their owlets.

Because the hatching doesn't happen all at once, the older owlets that hatch first are usually stronger. If there are plenty of resources, all the owlets in a clutch have a good chance of survival, but if resources are scarce, only the stronger, older owlets may survive. DNR does not interfere in these routine natural events.

Barn owls are an endangered species in Indiana due to grassland habitat loss. Fewer than 50 nests are found annually in Indiana.

To provide barn owls with secure nesting sites that are protected from predators, the DNR has built more than 400 nest boxes and erected them in barns and other structures with suitable habitat over the last 30 years.

The nest box at Goose Pond was first completed in March 2022 and first occupied in February 2024.



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## NSSF applauds DOI for expanding hunting opportunities

NSSF®, The Firearm Industry Trade Association, applauds the **major announcement** today by the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) Secretary Doug Burgum stating that millions of acres of public lands under the control of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Park Service (NPS) will be opened up for public hunting and fishing.

In a **press release** making the announcement, DOI stated that USFWS is proposing to make available to the public more than 1,450 hunting and fishing opportunities in 32 states, across 111 USFWS stations. The new opportunities are also included in 107 National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs). In addition, the proposed expansion would open up more than 92 million acres, roughly 95 percent of National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) lands, available for hunting, and specifically create first-ever hunting or sport fishing opportunities at 14 refuges and three hatcheries.

"Today's announcement by Secretary Burgum, together with USFWS Director Brian Nesvik and National Park Service Acting Director Jessica Bowron, should be celebrated by all Americans, including hunters, recreational target shooters and everyone who enjoys experiencing the great and beautiful American outdoors. This is yet another major step by President Donald J. Trump and his administration carrying through on their promises to deliver for America's hunters and conservationists," said Lawrence G. Keane, NSSF Senior Vice President for Government & Public Affairs. "NSSF has long advocated for public lands to be accessible to the American public, especially for hunting, and these new opportunities will ensure America's greatest pastime — hunting — will continue for generations to come. Thank you President Trump, Secretary Burgum, Director Nesvik and Acting Director Bowron for carrying through on efforts to make America's public lands open to her original conservationists."

Public access to hunting opportunities is critical for America's hunters. To date, the firearm industry has invested over \$30 billion, when adjusted for inflation, since 1937 toward wildlife conservation. These excise taxes, paid by the manufacturers, are dedicated solely for the conservation of wildlife, the habitats in which they thrive, hunter education programs and construction of new, or expansion of existing, recreational target shooting ranges to promote safe and responsible firearm skills, handling and ownership.

These 10 to 11 percent excise tax dollars collected for the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act are specifically designated to be used by state wildlife agencies for conservation and related purposes. Collectively, the firearm industry, purchasers of firearms and ammunition and hunters are the greatest source of wildlife conservation funding.





## Fish and Wildlife announce CWD on National Elk Refuge

**Editor's Note: If you have never visited the National Refuge, it is a huge herd of Elk that come down from the Teton mountains of Wyoming to avoid the heavy snow and wolves. They winter in the Refuge near Jackson Hole.**

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department (Game and Fish) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) announce that chronic wasting disease has been detected in Wyoming Elk Hunt Area 77 on the National Elk Refuge, which is managed by FWS.

National Elk Refuge biological staff humanely euthanized and sampled an adult cow elk suspected of having CWD. Tests conducted at the Game and Fish Wildlife Health Laboratory confirmed a positive case. All CWD samples, including those collected on the refuge, are sent to the Game and Fish health lab for processing.

This is the first documented case of CWD in the hunt area and the first confirmed case of an elk with CWD on the refuge.

Moving forward, National Elk Refuge staff will increase monitoring and surveillance of herds for CWD, re-evaluate some existing programs and implement additional bio-security protocols to keep people and wildlife safe.

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**Continued from Page 8** — Any changes will be shared with the public. The [National Elk Refuge Chronic Wasting Disease Response Strategy](#) contains the details for next steps.

CWD is a fatal neurological disease that affects deer, elk, and moose. Game and Fish partners with FWS to manage wildlife on federal lands and both will continue monitoring CWD over time to further understand the potential impacts of the disease and evaluate future management actions.



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# Food plots — What to plant and how much?

**From the editor** — The common question among hunters, landowners and habitat managers is what to plant and how much? Some basics: Your food plot should be as close to an acre as you can make it, near bedding areas or travel routes. Another rule of thumb: 1 acre of food plot for each 40 acres of habitat. Too small and it will not survive the pressure; too large and your budget will hurt more. Orient it east to west to maximize sunlight with good cover on the edges. Ours are about 1.5 acres each.

**Test the soil for PH:** Here in Missouri, it averages 5.5, goal is 6.5 to 7.0, so it needs all the help it can get. learn how to take a soil test and get it to your local extension service for evaluation. Not enough time, or just too busy? See below. Fertilizer is expensive, not to mention seed and diesel fuel for the tractor, and of course, try not to break anything, good luck with that. Do it right the first time.

**Spray for any left-over invasives and weeds** like thistle, teasel, sumac etc. Use Pasture Guard HL IAW the label. Wait a few days after spraying. Prep the ground (burn off the grass or bush hog then maybe burn if it still heavy liter), plow, till or harrow for planting. Oh yeah, the fun part — pick up any surface rocks every time you work it.

**Rough formula if no soil test:** 300 pounds of fertilizer triple 13 or above and 600 pounds of pelletized lime per acre. Use a broadcast spreader and about 5 to 7 mph on the tractor. The pelletized lime works in the soil faster than AG lime and its purity is much higher, normally in the 90s.

**What seed to use?** Milo-Grain Sorghum is a good fall browse, plant about 8 pounds per acre, some like radishes, plant at 10 pounds per acre, turnips, purple top 6 pounds per acre. Check with your local supplier for mixed deer seed options and the recommended rate.

We always lightly harrow over the seed to cover it, very little angle on the harrows, and then roll it with a multi-packer roller for good soil to seed contact. If we do not try a light cover of soil and rolling, the army of turkey appear and have a feast on the seed, gotta love it.

One favorite for us is clover, white ladino at 5 pounds per acre. It has a good growth rate and survives a few seasons. Crimson clover is a winter annual is about using about 15 pounds per acre. We use the bush hog to cut it back at about 6 inches and to keep grasses/weeds from overgrowing until established.

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# AR turkey hunters post highest harvest in 20 years

Arkansas turkey hunters checked 13,591 turkeys during this year's official turkey hunting season, which ended Sunday night. According to historical data, this is the highest spring turkey harvest since 2006.

"Arkansas had a good amount of mature gobblers on the ground this year, thanks to conservative seasons during the last few years promoting high gobbler carryover. This was complemented by good weather two years ago that enabled the birds to take advantage of improved habitat in many pockets across the state," Allison Fowler, assistant chief of wildlife management for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, said. "We also saw a change in our season structure this year that offered split opening weekends, and we're analyzing those results to see if it played a large role in the harvest."

Although this is the highest harvest since 2006, Arkansas's record turkey harvest was in 2003, when hunters checked 19,947 birds. A quick dive into the comparison reveals that this year's harvest isn't too far off that mark when accounting for a few major differences in season structure.

In 2003, hunters shot 4,610 jake turkeys. Nearly a quarter of the harvest was made up of these immature male birds. Only 15,225 mature gobblers were taken that spring.

"We established the 'No Jakes Rule' in 2011," Fowler said. "Since then, only youth hunters can legally harvest an immature gobbler, and they may only take one per season."

Fowler said even though youth hunters can take a jake, most still opt for a mature bird if they have the choice, and this year's harvest of just over 300 jakes is a testament to that.

"We had a good amount of mature birds out there gobbling, and the youths have the first shot at the birds, so we saw less than 3 percent of the harvest made up of jakes this year. That hopefully translates to decent numbers of adult gobblers available for hunters next year."



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## SC Waterfowl shares first mallard migration data

The South Carolina Waterfowl Association (SCWA) is sharing the first migration data collected from its ongoing Mallard Research Project at the SCWA Wildlife Education Center in Pinewood, offering an early glimpse into the movement patterns of wild mallards traveling through the Atlantic Flyway.

Researchers recently tracked the spring migration routes of three wild Mallard drakes captured at Cantey Bay near Lake Marion on March 3rd using a rocket net system. Each bird was equipped with a GPS-enabled cellular tracking device programmed to record a location every eight hours and transmit the data daily through the cellular network.

The preliminary tracking results revealed dramatically different migration behaviors among the three birds.

One mallard departed South Carolina just two days after being tagged and traveled as far as Ohio overnight before eventually continuing north into Canada. Another bird remained near Lake Marion for more than two weeks before beginning its migration through western North Carolina. The third duck stayed in central North Carolina for approximately two weeks before continuing into Virginia.

"The early results have already shown us how differently individual birds can behave during migration," said project researcher Margaret Jensen. "Even with a small sample size, we are seeing unique routes and stopover habits between birds that were captured in the same place."

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**Continued from Page 12** — Jensen noted that one bird's solar-powered GPS unit charged so efficiently during flight that the device automatically recorded additional position fixes to prevent battery overcharging, providing an even more detailed look at the duck's movement path.

The Mallard Research Project was launched in 2025 to better understand the future of mallard populations in the Atlantic Flyway and examine the impacts of game farm mallards and hybridization on wild birds. The study is being conducted in Pinewood, South Carolina, an area identified as a hotspot for mallard releases.

The project compares movement patterns, migration behavior, and reproductive success between wild and game farm mallards using advanced tracking technologies, including VHF radio transmitters and GPS-enabled cellular tags.

To date, researchers have released nearly 100 radio-tagged mallards, several GPS-tagged birds, and 187 banded ducks as part of the study.

"This type of research is critical to the future of waterfowl conservation," said SCWA COO Lou Tocci. "The data being collected will help conservationists better understand mallard behavior in the Atlantic Flyway while also creating hands-on educational opportunities connected to real-world wildlife science."

While researchers caution that the current sample size is too small to draw broad conclusions, the early findings reinforce the complexity of mallard migration and highlight the importance of continued monitoring and data collection.

The project is a collaborative effort between SCWA, the Clemson Kennedy Waterfowl and Wetlands Conservation Center, the University of Texas at El Paso, Palmetto Waterfowl Conservation, LLC. and generous private donors.

Additional tracking data and research updates are expected throughout 2026 as the study continues.



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## Carl Higbie: Official QUWF Voice of Veterans, Conservation, and Truth in News on NEWSMAX



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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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# Notes from the Road:

Landowners continue to play key role in battle against invasive plants

**By Nick Prough** — Many of us work with private landowners daily to help them improve their wildlife habitat as well as improve their farms/ranches across the landscape for a wide variety of species.

Over the past several years, fighting invasive plant species has become an ever-increasing portion of that technical assistance with private landowners as they continue to battle the ongoing invasion of invasive plant species across the country's landscape.

A few weeks ago, I was quoted saying, "If you haven't been out fighting invasive plant species in the fields, pastures and right-of-ways the past several years then you are probably way behind the curve." This is most definitely true this spring/summer as I have seen this portion of landowner TA truly triple or even quadruple in call volume and landowner assistance requests over the past several years. Some of this can be attributed to the multi-year drought patterns we have seen in many midwestern states over the past several years followed by this spring's record setting rainfalls in many areas of the Midwest where many invasive plant species seem to thrive and expand during extreme weather conditions.

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**Continued from Page 15** — However, this expansion is also attributable to the lack of control on many tracts of land, and it is very easy to see once you start recognize the invasive species you have in your area and start to look for them in your local area while you are out and about in your daily travels. I have had tons of landowners comment to me the past several years just how expansive the invasive plants such as teasel, johnsongrass, sericea lespedeza, and other invasives are once they started to look for them not only on their own lands but along the highways and roads across their county as well as on many of their adjoining neighboring properties. “They are literally everywhere, Nick,” stated one landowner, “It’s almost impossible to drive five minutes and not see one of those three invasives in any direction from my farm and usually you see all three.”

That is unfortunately the case in many counties and states across our countries current landscape and unless everyone begins to fight the same invasive battle at the same time on every possible treatable acre that they can find to do control and spraying on then that case will continue. In addition to these “Dirty 3” that I tend to term them as, many invasive tree species such as honey locust, Bradford pear and autumn olive continue to plague landowners’ properties as well as state highway department of transportation agencies highway right-of-ways.

Many public land agencies such as state game and fish agencies, state and county parks agencies, also continue to fight these invasive species on the lands they manage as well. If we all continue to work on our side of the fence then we can come together with a much-improved landscape in which invading

**Continued on Page 17**

A man wearing a black t-shirt, a black cap with "RUGER" on it, large black earplugs, and sunglasses is aiming a black handgun with both hands. The background is a dark, textured wall. Large white text on the left reads "THIS ONE SETS ITSELF APART". In the bottom right corner, there is a logo featuring a stylized bird with a letter 'R' inside a circle, followed by the text "RXm™" and "LEARN MORE" below it.

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**Continued from Page 16** — species of undesirable plants are much more limited and controlled and not becoming the dominate plant species we see in our daily travels both on the farm and in between farms. We all have to row in the same direction at the same speed to truly get a handle on these invasive plant species, if just a hand full of landowners work on this, we may feel like we are winning a local battle on a select few but the larger war will remain very much out of reach and once again those pesky invasives will be knocking and creeping in at the fence line of even those “islands of landowners which did try to control them the first time.”

As a wildlife biologist, I for one have been working very closely with local and regional MODOT staff over the past several years which are tasked with the daunting task of controlling these pesky invasives on the thousands of miles of highway right-of ways across the state by contacting them and assisting them in their ongoing efforts in any way we can as well as helping them in locating high density invasive species problem areas in and around many of our existing quality landowner wildlife habitat projects or in focal areas such as quail habitat priority landscapes.

We have all worked way to hard of many years on these priority habitats with landowners to let the invasives get a strong foothold to overtake and degrade these quality habitats. As I stated above, if we continue to attack these pesky invasives on both sides of the fence of not only our adjoining landowner's properties but along our highway and roadside right-of way's then we can finally begin to gain some additional traction on this ongoing invasive battle we face across our landscape. I personally have run a UTV or tractor sprayer almost every non-raining day that I possibly could the past month plus and there is still a whole lot more to attack each and every day, if we don't then later this summer one will be even further behind the invasive battle.

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](mailto:chiefbiologist@quwf.net).*

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# Holding deer on your property — can you?

**From the editor** — QUWF uses individual landowner desires and wildlife wishes to help shape a viable plan. The super majority of first statements are that of “seeing more deer,” holding deer on their property. After some 30 years of field observation and many projects oriented to deer populations stability, tick control and fawn production, we offer some of our field notes.

**First, it all takes work, time and money.** There is no free ride to help wildlife, and if you are working to help wild deer, just a little more effort helps turkey, rabbits, dove, etc. Free range and Fair chase are essential, no high fencing or restrictions of free movement.

Our studies on our 200 acres reveal a minimum acreage requirement with the proper habitat as well, and one that seems to follow a common summation or theory of others.

Continued on Page 19

## JOIN QUWF IN CHOOSING CONSERVATION AND OUTDOOR PRODUCTS



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**Allegiance Flag Co:** showallegiance.com

**Rotopax:** Mountable container systems

**WoodMaxx:** PTO & Skid Steer MX series wood chippers, American made with American parts, veteran founded & focused \*QUWF Habitat Sponsor

**TuffJug.com:** Diesel and gas containers made in Idaho

**Continued from Page 18** — The basic premise, doe can be held on minimum acreage of about 80 acres IF, IF that 80 acres contains, good cover for fawn production, low pressure intrusion of the fawning areas year round (we use about 60 acres where we do not enter during fawning and is a no hunting area), good food and water sources which includes food plots. Open areas are not good fawning spots.

We look for white oak and good acorn production, red oak in off years and clear small areas around the trees to help, wild grapes, persimmon, natural food sources that are the key to a base line food source.

Good access roads around, not through, these areas are no problem, and provide good escape routes if predators exist like coyotes.

**Why hold does?** Boys seek girls, biology is the rule. The bucks will seek out the does when the rut gets serious. On average bucks seem to travel many miles during the rut, again theory says an average of 7 miles. They normally are selected by the dominant doe to breed first, yes, our theory says the dominant doe selects her mate. After the initial dominant doe breeding it does become a bit of a free for all. Fun to watch and photograph.

A doe comfortable on her holding acreage will stay for many generations of that gene pool, content and stable in that 80 acres IF it holds the key components.

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# THIS ONE SETS ITSELF APART



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**Continued from Page 19** — A note about ticks, we are in a very heavy tick area and three members of my family have Alpha Gal, a tick born disease causing allergic reactions to meat, dairy. Ticks use deer to adhere to and then drop off spreading them to a wide area.

At a suggestion from an old farmer he said put out a sulfur block, sulfur being a natural internal repellent of ticks. Problem is, deer are not as attracted to it like pure salt or protein blocks.

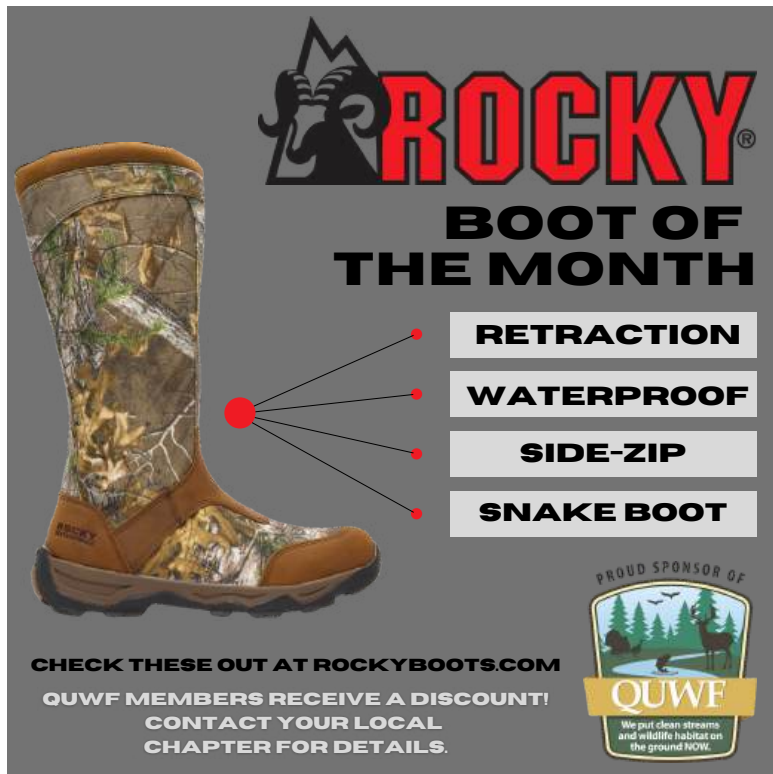
Ahh, but like a good farmer, he said soak a cool whip container filled one half with corn and then fill it with apple juice to the top.

Let it sit for a few days, the corn will absorb the juice so add more as needed, stirring a bit every day. After about 4 days, pour the mixture on top of the sulfur block adding a splash of the apple juice over the entire mixture again and the block. If a salt block is included, pour apple juice on it as well. It works. Do this about every 2 weeks.

After nearly 4 years of doing this, our deer went from nearly total collared with thick ticks around the neck, and ears covered with the pests, to this year, with binocs, hardly seeing any visible ticks at distances of 20 to 30 yards. This is a significant change indeed.

Many ask about supplemental feeders. That is your call but if used we suggest two things. First, locate them in the outer corner of the breeding or brooding acreage, the NO HUNTING zone. Second, corn is carbohydrates, not a good feed source. Mix it with 18% to 20% protein feed. 2 bags of AG corn, not box store corn, to one bag of protein helps the flow out of the feeder as protein feed will absorb moisture and can plug up auto feeders.

Last point, if you are trying to hold doe, DO NOT bush hog during the fawning times, mid-May to July 1 here. Fawns are gradually led out of the birthing area to the field edges. Same with turkey nests and quail nests. When you do climb on the tractor, Be careful, observant and go slow if you must bush hog.

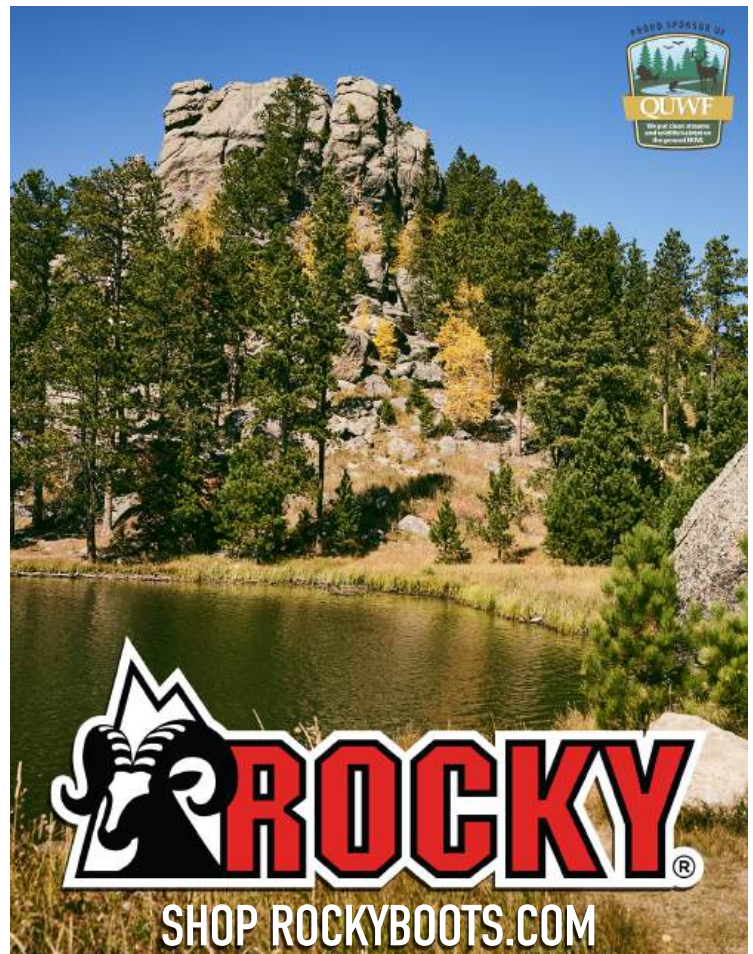


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# Don't touch or take home baby deer or elk

**Editor's note: This message is worth repeating, no matter what state you live in.**

As you are out hiking and camping this summer, don't be surprised if you come across a deer fawn or an elk calf during late May or June. If you do see one, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources requests that you not touch, try to feed or take the baby animal home — doing so can have fatal consequences for the animal and could also result in injury to you.

Deer fawns and elk calves are often born in June, which is why you may find one during your outdoor adventures during early summer. If you do happen to see one in the wild, you probably won't see its mother. Not seeing its mother might lead you to believe that the animal has been abandoned, but that is rarely the case.

"Newborn fawns are actually frequently alone and isolated during their first weeks of life — and that's on purpose," Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Big Game Coordinator Mike Wardle said. "The mother knows that leaving the fawn alone is the best way to protect it from predators."

Newborn big game animals fall into two categories: followers and hiders.

- Followers include bison calves and bighorn sheep lambs, which follow their mothers shortly after they're born.
- Hiders, such as mule deer fawns and elk calves, do the opposite — they hide, alone, for most of the day for the first two to three weeks of their lives.

During the day, a doe deer will reunite with her fawn for a short time, to nurse it and care for it. Then, to draw attention away from where the fawn is hiding, the mother will leave the fawn. The doe will spend the rest of the day feeding and resting. Hiding is the best way for fawns to stay safe right after they are born. After two or three weeks, the fawn will be strong enough to start accompanying its mother.

Fawns are born with a light-brown coat that's covered with white spots. This camouflaged coat allows the fawn to blend in with its surroundings. Fawns also don't give off much scent, so it's difficult for predators to smell them.

## What to do if you see a deer fawn or an elk calf that appears to be alone

- **Don't approach it.** Watch it or take a photo of it from a distance, but don't go near it. In almost every case, the young animal has not been abandoned by its mother.
- **Don't touch it or pet it.** Finding and petting newly born animals is a problem because the animal's survival depends on it being left

**Continued on  
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## CONTACT US!

For all your Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation chapter insurance needs, please call Leslie Casanova direct at Sportsman Insurance Agency at 1-800-925-7767. In most cases, Leslie can have your insurance the same day!

Do you have any questions concerning banquets and/or vendor programs? If so, please call the QUWF National Office at (417) 345-5960.

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**Continued from Page 21** — alone and undetected by predators. If you touch it, you may leave your scent on the animal, which could draw predators to it.

- **Give it plenty of space.** Even if you don't touch the fawn or calf, getting too close can cause it to run away from you, resulting in the animal using energy it needs to survive.
- **Never attempt to remove a fawn or calf from the wild or take it home.** Utah Department of Natural Resources conservation officers occasionally respond to instances where an individual has taken a baby deer or elk home to "care for it." However, that often has fatal consequences for the animal and can also create public safety risks as the animal matures. It is illegal to keep wildlife in captivity and can result in a class A misdemeanor. If you believe that a baby animal is injured or sick, report it to the **nearest DWR office**.

"Keeping your distance and not touching wildlife are essential to keeping young animals alive," Wardle said. "Attempting to take matters into your own hands and trying to 'help' wildlife usually does more harm than good. Help wildlife by allowing them to remain wild."

## NSSF launches 'Make Sure It's Secure'

As a responsible gun owner, the safe storage and security of your firearms today is very important, more important than ever before due to social conditions in about every portion of our country. Especially important is when you have children or guests in the home. Make sure everything is secure. Further, adding additional eyes for you is easy today. You can install BLINK security for example and literally watch your home, rooms and secure areas from anywhere in the world there is internet. BLINK notifies you at any time there is motion or activation. It keeps video records of every activation to the cloud or to a compact disc or both. You can forward clips and review them at any time.



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