QUAIL AND UPLAND WILDLIFE FEDERATION

THE HABITAT GUIDE

VOLUME 17 ISSUE 7 • AUGUST 2026



Notes from the Dashboard:

Getting older means working smarter

By Craig Alderman — As I attempt the same process on the farm for habitat work, it is clear that I need to engage some of the technology that is out there to save lifting, pulled muscles, falls, bruises, cuts and scrapes, or worse.

As we age, we sense the need to think about balance — leaning too far forward and you discover getting off the ground is not as easy as it used to be. My primary doctor calls it "leaning over your skis." Lean too far and down you go. Keep your center of gravity balanced, and you handle it well, but you have to think about it and exercise.

Same thing with lifting. I used to lift the fuel containers to the top of the tractor, balance on the loader arm to then lift again to tilt it to fill the tractor or dozer whose filler caps are on the top. Ninja moves required. Why cans/containers? To install a diesel fuel tank in at the farm is expensive and only has an ag diesel delivery, the red fuel.

I will not run that in any of my equipment. It's dirty, has lots of sulfur, and my equipment does not like it at all. It's 25 miles to town to get fuel, so we are careful with our supply. I also do not like the ethanol mix diesel; it is getting harder to find pure #2 diesel.

Then I found the "happy place" in refueling, thanks to a little internet surfing at night. Enter the small , battery-operated fuel transfer pumps. These little pumps save all the lifting, are VERY FAST, and shut off automatically.

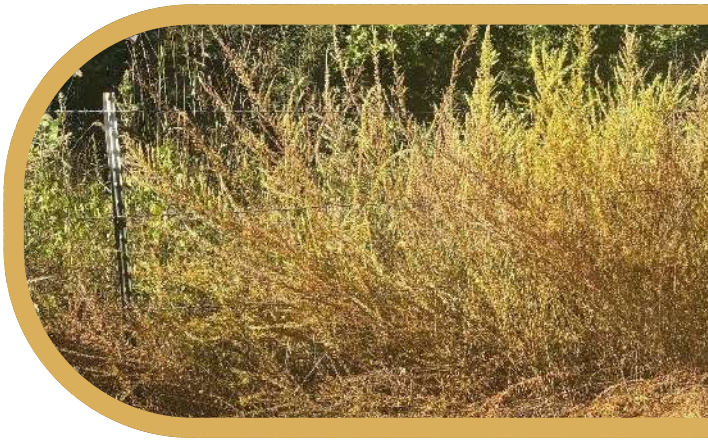
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2026 in the Midwest: Bad for invasives

From the editor — The scattered and constant heavy spring and summer rains, combined with extreme heat, partnered for the perfect storm when it comes to the growth of invasives, which only a good spraying can control.

Problem is, with scattered and constant rains, spraying was delayed until the last possible days, meaning just before plants went to seed.

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Continued from Page 1 — This first version I use for diesel, color matching and it runs off a Dewalt standard 20V battery which I have. It comes with multiple adapters to screw onto various size fuel cans, which I'll admit I do not use. I drop the intake hose into the can and I'm good. I did have to remove a few filter screens on the old metal cans to get the hose in the can, but that took seconds.

Before this, I did try the new Tuff Jug fuel can. It is designed like a NASCAR fuel can with a fast drain rate but, and this is a big BUT, you have to get that thing all the way up on the tractor, invert it and hold it. NOPE! Further, the design of the can is not centered so when carrying it, it is not a balanced carry and it is taller than a standard can, therefore it will not fit in standard fuel racks.

I drop the suction hose with filter into the full fuel can, attach the output hose to the fuel tank filler lip, and press the button on the side of the pump.

In the picture, I left the intake hose out of the can so you can see that the hose is quite sufficient to reach the bottom of the 5-gallon fuel can. Note the small yellow on/off button on the side of the pump. Press that, and in less than a minute, 5 gallons are in your tank with no more "ninja moves" struggling to get the cans on top, tilted and then held there while it drains. I set the can on the foot platform of the tractor, a very easy lift, install the pump, hook the fill hose to the tank filler lip, push the button and bam, done with no spillage.







I will **caution** — when you remove the filler hose, let it fully drain into the tank before lifting out. Which means, lift the pump higher than the hose. The fill hose has an auto stop on it so it does not overflow when fuel hits the filler hose, and it works fine.

I purchased the second version in a red color to match the gas fuel containers so I did not pump gas and diesel out of the same fuel pump. This one is operated by 4 AA batteries put performs the same.

Both versions were obtained from the farm's best supplier, Amazon, and arrived quickly.

I fill the Z-mower, Sidekick RTV, log splitter etc. with the RED version as they use NO-ethanol gas.

Again, when done, make sure to lift the filler hose and let its contents drain into the tank by lifting the pump higher than the filler hose.

What is next? A battery chain saw, of course. When you are bush hogging trails or field edges there will be branches and limbs that want to slap you upside the head, rip off mirrors and ruin your day. Again, you can choose the brand and size suited for you. I went with the Milwaukee 8" inch hatchet saw. One big factor, it has a self-contained chain auto oiler, unlike others including STHYL's version.

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Continued from Page 2 — I think I would vote this my new "best tool" in the field. I carry it in the RTV all the time. When I'm bush hogging, it is on the tractor or in the bucket, on the dozer, it comes with. The battery lasts a very, very long time. The little saw cuts great on oaks and butter slides through cedars. As I said it has the auto-oiler tank which is a must for me.



The chain adjustment tool comes with it. I did get an extra chain and it takes a smaller file. Watch for the sales, I will say, it is very popular and sell out. They also have a 16-inch version; however, I have an arbor chain saw with a lot of power for that size.

If you own a chipper like the WoodMaxx 8600 we have, it is a requirement to have this. Any limb at 90 degrees to the main stalk may stick the chipper feed and can cause a jamb. This little saw at the ready, is a fast one-handed fix to the problem.

Last up in this sequence is the battery-powered 2-gallon sprayer.

I spot spray a lot for thistle, sericea lespedeza, multi-floral rose, poison ivy, Johnson grass and you know my favorite, poison sumac. This little sprayer has a selectable pressure spray from 1 to 3 when you need to reach across fences. I use the 2 setting unless I'm hitting across fences.



This little Milwaukee sprayer has a lot of muscle. It runs off of the 12V system from Milwaukee as it outperforms your expectations. All of these tools are purchased and not provided so I choose the best options on tools that I can use that make it easier for me in the field. All were shipped to the farm with no shipping charges.

This also came with a BOGO deal last year, the extra item was the additional 2-gallon spare tank. It is super to use, has the right controls and the control unit can be moved to a new tank in seconds with no loss of pressure. The battery lasts a very long time, in fact the regular battery that came with it, lasted the first season and still was on half when I recharged it.

Four gallons of spray (using both tanks), walking and spraying is about my new parameter now. Not having to pump the tank is a dream come true. I keep it on the rear corner of the Side Kick RTV bed so most often I do not even have to lift it out, just grab the hose and spray with the tank in the bed of the RTV.

As with any sprayer, when finished spraying, I clean it out with fresh water ensuring no chemicals remain in a designated area. At year's end, or as needed, I clean the nozzle assembly.

Final note, DO NOT buy Milwaukee or DeWalt items from Amazon. If you do, the companies will not honor any warranty as they do not authorize items on Amazon. I use Home Depot, Lowe's etc. with on-line ordering.

Catch you across the dry creek!



Craig Alderman is the Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation founder and executive director. Reach him at admin@quwf.net.

Continued from Page 1 — Here at QUWF, the expansion of thistle, sericea lespedeza (SL) and Johnson grass is a real battle to preserve native grasses and good quality hay fields. Throw in Poison Sumac, and it makes you think twice on the battle, but we keep going. We have been hard at it for over two weeks. SL and Johnson Grass have been creeping in from the road edges and exploded this year. We hit it hard and three days later, between rains, the hammer became evident.

This group along our road is typical of the growth this year. The stretches about ½ mile along our road frontage leading to the fields so it had to be controlled.



The application worked its magic in about three days, just before it went to seed. We use Pasture Guard and Oust where it is really bad. Oust can leach so only use it along fence lines.

I know we will need to hit it again next year because of the seed in the soil we did not get in prior applications. We owe the misguided efforts of MODOT for thinking years ago this was a good edge for the highways, dumb decisions now costing farmers and landowners thousands in eradication/control efforts. Second, when they or the County mow the edges they wait until it has gone to seed and spread it all over again.

Second, if you see it in your fields and bush hog, clean off the tractor and bush hog BEFORE heading to the next field, you will spread it if you do not. Further, it is just good technique to clean off at the end of each field. It gives you a chance to check all hitch pins, adjustments, get off the tractor, hydrate a bit before the next task.

Pictured is the Milwaukee blower I use to clean off the equipment. Pick the brand you use for your battery group. I like Milwaukee as their sales often include “BOGO”, buy one get something for free. I use Home Depot as they seem to have the largest selection and the best prices with a veterans discount, and ship to the farm. A real time saver as the store is 120 miles round trip.

I visited a very exclusive housing development recently with the average cost of homes beginning at $750K. Their pristine lawns were showing Johnson grass and Bermuda grass from a lawn service that never cleaned its equipment, same problems. They dropped seed from other jobs. Too many lawn services just load up and go, never cleaning the equipment. Many, it seems, cannot identify the invasive species they transport around.

Carry a portable, handheld blower (see picture) and before you pull out, totally clean off the equipment. Especially the back of the tractor that gathers seed and dust like it hates you. Blow out the rims of the tires, both sides, that will surprise you. Clean off the grill, frame and air flow areas as well to prevent heating issues. If you have a cab, clean the filter in the field before heading out with the blower.

I use a plant ID app on my phone called “Picture It.”I highly recommend it for trees, plants and invasives.



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Nebraska: Hunters can request CWD test kit

Hunters in the chronic wasting disease testing zone for 2026 deer hunting seasons are encouraged to order a free mail-in sampling kit before they head into the field.

This year's testing zone spans the archery, firearm and muzzleloader seasons and includes the Upper Platte, Plains, Pine Ridge, Sandhills, Platte, Frenchman, Buffalo and Republican units.

Hunters intending to Telecheck their harvest can order a kit through Dec. 25, or they may pick one up at the Nebraska Game and Parks' offices in Alliance, 299 Husker Road; Kearney, 1617 First Ave.; or North Platte, 301 E. State Farm Road. Samples will be accepted through Jan. 31.

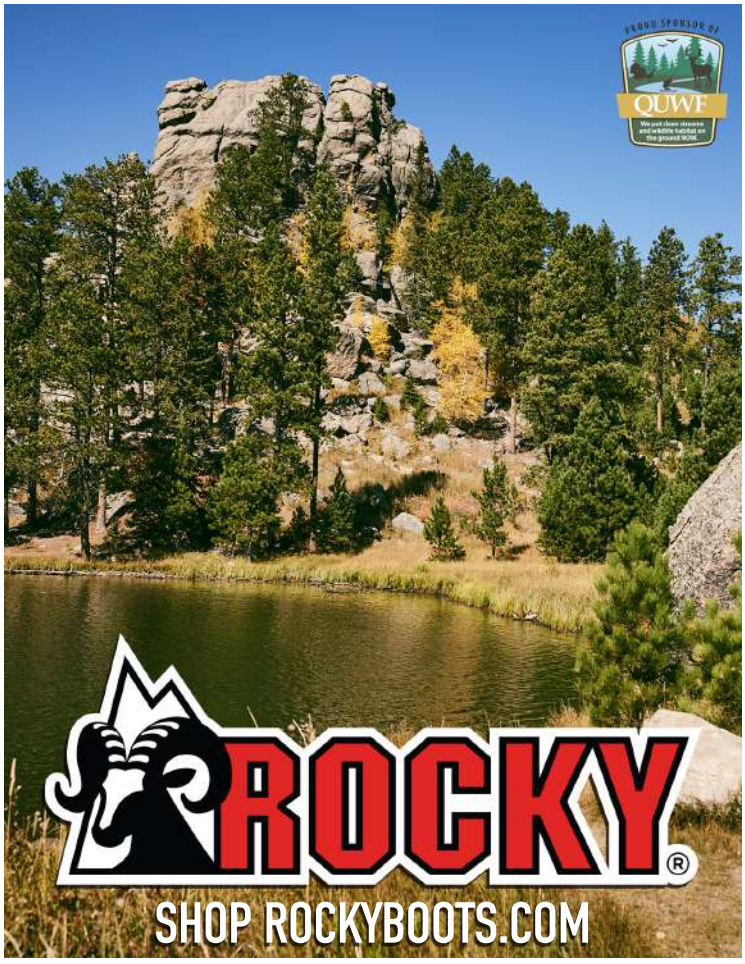
Testing is part of Nebraska Game and Parks' continued surveillance of chronic wasting disease. Testing and access to results are free of charge to hunters who submit a sample using a kit or check their deer in person.

Request a kit at OutdoorNebraska.gov by searching for "CWD" and filling out the "Request a CWD Sampling Kit" form. Hunters will need to select the deer management unit they intend to hunt and provide their permit number to complete the form and receive a kit. Hunters with unused kits from las The kit with supplies, instructions and a free return shipping label will be mailed to the hunter through the U.S. Postal Service; shipping should take three to seven business days.

Hunters should sample their deer within three days of harvest and keep samples frozen until mailed using the free FedEx shipping label. Hunters should not ship samples on Fridays or Saturdays to m Kits will be available on a first-come, first-served basis as part of Nebraska's deer health monitoring.

Firearm season hunters in the Upper Platte, Plains, Pine Ridge and Sandhills units wishing to get their deer sampled in person may do so at participating in check stations Nov. 14 to 22. Find participating stations closer to the firearm season at OutdoorNebraska.gov.





ATV/UTV crashes causing many fatalities

From the editor — As we approach the various hunting seasons, the use of ATVs and UTVs while hunting and in habitat preparation cranks up. Here at the QUWF farm, we use the RTV about every day and the ATV. We have been operating them for decades, respect came early with the three-wheeled Honda that was like a beach ball with an engine and no training wheels.



The power and speed of these machines make them more than just a quick trip around the field. Especially now with power steering, they can go out of control so fast the brain cannot comprehend the accident happening. There were two more deaths this month in two different states from ATV operators going too fast, a teenager and an adult male both lost their lives while on curves, losing control then slamming into trees.

It is an adult parents' responsibility to train and monitor the use of the machines. There is a reason the stickers on all ATVs, UTVs say "no one operating under 16." When your kids bring friends over, they should not be allowed on the ATV or UTV. WHY? You assume full liability if they get hurt or worse, are killed because of faulty operator control.

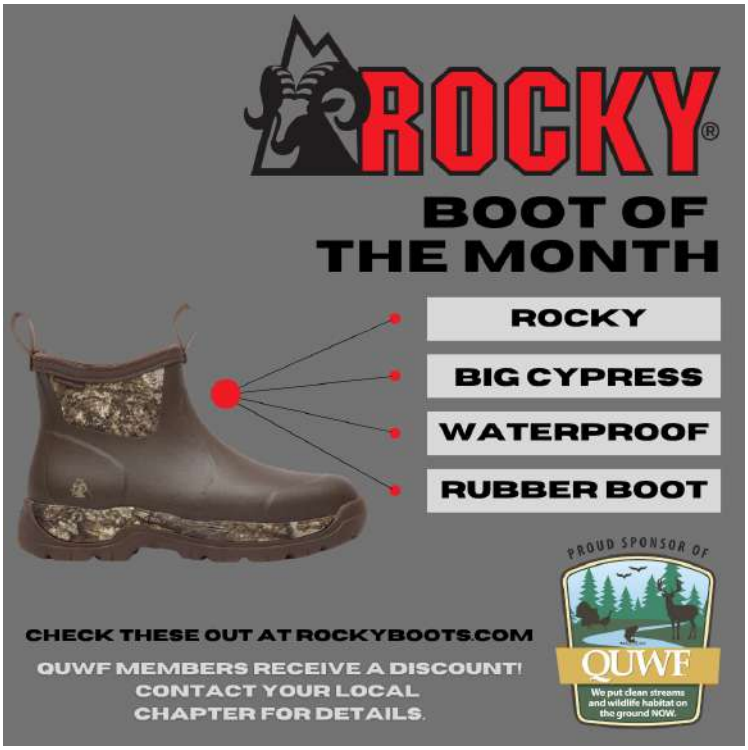
Take them in and through the woods and you compound danger like twisty trails, large holes, trees down, rocks and obstacles like honey locust limbs, ready to cut into you and the tires or the real crowd pleaser, spiders whose webs cross the trails at exactly face height cause many to go into the heebee jeeby dance. That normally means trouble and injuries. A windshield on a UTV or RTV or ATV keeps spiders at bay.

What happens if they do jerk or react? The operator jerks away from the pain or spider and bam, loses totally control. Growing up on farms in New England, power was dominant over speed, however, both were treated with absolute respect because either one of them could hurt you.

Here on the farm today, we chose the RTV SideKick for power and general farm work. Controls are manual for many operations, and it is a workhorse with great power and agility on the trails, crossing streams and general field and forest maintenance. The roll cage is integral with seat belts.

In this picture we are moving a coyote blind built on a compact AG trailer to its next location.

Whatever you choose, respect its ability to hurt you if you do not pay attention all the time. Do not let children operate them "for the fun of it."



Hunters: As hunting season draws near, now is the perfect time to dial in your bow or firearm

Editor's Note: This is a good outline of preparation for the hunting and outdoor activities about to unfold. Look for ranges close to you or set up your own if your farm or property has the safe distance required for range work and the proper back drop needs.

IDFG encourages hunters to dust off their firearms or bows and visit their local shooting or archery ranges to get dialed in for hunting season. Hunting season will be here before we know it. If you haven't already, here's why *now* is the perfect time to dust off that firearm or bow in preparation for the 2026 season

Only accurate rifles (and bows) are interesting

In a 1957 issue of *American Rifleman Magazine*, famed writer and marksman Col. Townsend Whelen quipped that "only accurate rifles are interesting." Townsend argued that only those who spent the time sighting in and taking pride in their firearm – we'll go ahead and assume he meant bows as well – produced rewarding outcomes as their skillset and marksmanship increased.

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Continued from Page 8 — Shooters who neglected their firearms, on the other hand, found the road to proficiency to be long and arduous, eventually losing interest in their hobby and soon disposing of it altogether.

As hunting season approaches, let Whelen's remark serve as a reminder that taking pride in your firearm or bow is merely the prologue to yet another edition of the hunting season. An obvious, yet important, reminder: Your hunt will not end successfully if you can't deliver a bullet or arrow on target when it matters most.

"Taking the time to prepare and become a better marksman is a hallmark of an ethical hunter," said Brenda Beckley, Hunter Education Administrator. "And the better marksman you become, the better your chances of successfully harvesting an animal."

Now that we've established the *when* to get started improving your aim, here's the *how*.

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JOIN QUWF IN CHOOSING CONSERVATION AND OUTDOOR PRODUCTS



CAN'T TELL IF IT'S FROM CHINA?

LOOK AT THE BARCODE. IF THE FIRST THREE NUMBERS ARE 690, 691, OR 692, THE PRODUCT WAS MADE IN CHINA. IF THE UPC BEGINS WITH 00 THROUGH 09, IT'S USA MADE.

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WeatherTech: Truck & cab foot liners, bed liners & vehicle accessories
Truax Inc: Grain drills & planters *QUWF Habitat Sponsor
CornholeGame.com: Game boards
InvaderConcepts.com: Chest holsters & accessories, made in Montana
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 9 — Get in range time

Fish and Game offers several options for shooting and/or archery ranges around the state. Blacks Creek, Farragut, Nampa and Garden Valley Shooting Range are all Fish and Game-owned, public shooting ranges designed for safe firearm/bow practice by shooters of all abilities.

Pre-Season Prep Tips | Rifles



For rifle hunters, many shooting experts recommend setting your initial target at 25 yards to make sure you hit the paper if you have a new rifle, have replaced a scope or don't know where your rifle is hitting. After shooting at that distance, move your target out to 100 yards or more to finish the sighting-in process.

Editor's Note: If you bring your Armalite Rifle to the range for fun, try setting your initial target at 37 yards to reach center hit at 100 yards.

Consistent accuracy is the ultimate goal when practicing shooting skills, so it's important that hunters consider their effective shooting range and practice at all distances out to that maximum number.

It's also important to practice from a variety of shooting positions and not just from a bench. Think about it. When that 4-point buck or 6-point bull pauses along the hillside, you're not going to have the luxury of a bench rest and 5 minutes of slow breathing when you go to take that shot.

Shooters should try to replicate the conditions they are likely to encounter in the field as closely as possible, so after your rifle is sighted in, consider doing some exercise to get your heart rate elevated and your lungs working harder to mimic what shooting may feel like in the field.

"We stress in our hunter education courses that all hunters have an ethical obligation to know their personal limits and be prepared," Beckley said. "Practicing often, at a variety of distances and from a number of different shooting positions, will help hunters prepare for a variety of situations they may encounter."

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Continued from Page 10 — ***Hot Tip:*** **Hunters should always use the same ammunition for hunting as they did when sighting in their rifle.**

Pre-Season Prep Tips | Shotguns

Don't let the Elmer Fudd cartoons fool you – there's a lot more to using a shotgun than just spraying a target with pellets. When it comes to preparation for wing shooting, hunters should focus on practicing different shots at different angles that may at first seem difficult.

Hot Tip: **Be sure you use the choke and shell combination you plan to use for the hunting season.** Modified chokes produce a moderately tight pattern, good for rabbits, quail and upland game birds. Full chokes have an even tighter pattern and are best suited for turkey, squirrels and other game at longer range.

Patterning a shotgun before the season is a fairly common practice with turkey hunters, but it's something upland and migratory bird hunters should consider, too. Knowing your pattern density at given distances can help you determine your effective range, and give you a good idea of how your shotgun performs with a particular choke and shell combination. Every shotgun is different, and your shotgun will likely perform differently if you change either of those variables.

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Continued from Page 11 — Pre-Season Prep Tips | Bows

By this point in the game, most archery hunters using traditional and compound bows will already be dialed in as early-season and archery-only hunts kick off in late August.

But if you're new to the sport of bow hunting, you should start by visiting your local bow shop and get your bow tuned up, especially if you haven't shot much or at all since last fall.

After that, it's time to get your body back into shooting shape and practice at known and unknown distances. Archery ranges with life-sized, 3D targets are good place to practice your shooting and estimating distance in a field setting.

Hot Tip: **Estimating distance is a lot more crucial in archery than in rifle hunting.** To become proficient at gauging distances in the field, sharpen your eye by making estimates on various landmarks or 3D targets. Once you make an assessment, whip out your trusty rangefinder and confirm just how close or far off your naked eye was.

Remember that most ranges will not allow you to shoot broadheads, and they usually shoot differently than field tips, so you will need to re-sight in your bow when you make the switch.

So, whether you're hauling a rifle or a recurve out into the field with you this hunting season, proper maintenance and preparation is a must. Be sure to brush up on your marksmanship and take care of your weapon to ensure a fun, safe (and "interesting") hunt.



Dove season openers: Review regulations and rules

As the darting thrill of dove hunting begins, you need to review the rules and regulations of your state or the state you are heading to. Bag limit is but one item, though it sticks in the hunter's brain like a brain worm.

Make sure you have permission to hunt the fields first, written permission is best if you have active conservation agents in the fields. Check the field requirements (baiting, crop harvest, shotgun and shot size, plug requirements, shooting times, etc.) and be ready to present licenses needed for the hunt.

It is always best to bring a stout camo chair with pouches to hold spent shells (never leave shells or trash), ammo supplies may require more than you think if you have not practiced on the skeet or sporting range. Shooting glasses and hearing protection, well you know the drill.



Know your shooting zone, stay in it no matter what. In larger fields they post shooters at intervals and expect all to respect their shooting zones, do not try to take birds out of that zone. Normally the guides or owner will explain your zone area. Incoming overhead birds are normally in your zone after they cross over your head going into the zone in front of you. If there are dogs working in or across your zone, the gun should be safe the entire time. Watch the dogs work retrieval.

If it is hot, like it will be here in the midwest, wear a large hat and put on good sunscreen. Bring more water than you think you need. DO NOT have any type of alcohol in the field, ever. I you are dropped off with a UTV or wagon, make sure they are scheduled to pick you up and when.

There is much activity and shooting going on within a good dove field, always be alert and chose safety at all times. If guided, and the guide cleans the birds great, if not make sure your skills are up to the task. Large gallon zip lock bags are handy here.

This same process can go for "put and take" pheasant areas, less the chairs of course. Walking in the field, on the shooting line, knowing your zone will make it a safe and enjoyable hunt. Avoid the spinning shot, trying to aim at a zone edge bird. Be safe, knowledgeable and enjoy the great dove hunting experience.



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



Tune into Carl Higbie's Frontline show weekdays on NEWSMAX and garner factual news on all the topics we as veterans, citizens, landowners, hunters, conservationists, and Second Amendment advocates need to know and understand. He is honest, upfront, and truly entertaining. Tune in at 6 p.m. EST, 5 p.m. CST on NEWSMAX. Be there; we are!

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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We are the ONLY VETERAN FORMED and managed national wildlife and conservation organization in the U.S. QUWF and our chapters support veteran businesses as well. Let us know.

For all your chapter needs, please call Leslie Casanova direct at Sportsman Insurance Agency at 1-800-925-7767.

Open houses offer help leading into deer season

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission will host two open houses in preparation for deer season to help hunters in Grant and Sevier counties learn more about deer hunting, deer management and recent developments in their areas to be aware of this hunting season. The first open house will be held from 6-8 p.m. Sept. 1 at the Adams Building on the University of Arkansas Cossatot Community College De Queen Campus, 183 College Drive in De Queen. The second open house will be 6-8 p.m. Sept. 8 at the Sheridan REC Center at 1511 S. Rose St. in Sheridan.

Both events will offer a variety of stations in a come-and-go atmosphere.

"We won't have any formal presentations or lectures, just experts in deer management who will be available to help people get the most out of their deer season," A.J. Riggs, wildlife health biologist for the AGFC, said.

Landowners interested in joining the AGFC's Deer Management Assistance Program or learning how to develop their food plot plans for maximum benefit will be able to speak with biologists from the AGFC's Private Lands Habitat Program and the National Deer Association. Public land hunters also will be able to speak one-on-one with a few of the biologists managing local wildlife management areas.

Arkansas Hunters Feeding the Hungry staff will be available to talk about how to donate deer for needy families in Arkansas. They'll also talk about their popular snack stick program that delivers valuable protein to elementary school students through backpack programs in underserved communities.

"We have biologists from the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation attending the De Queen meeting, as well as representatives from the Army Corps of Engineers to talk about Millwood and Tri-County Lake areas," Riggs said. "And we'll have members of the AGFC's Deer Team who can answer pretty much any other question you may have about Arkansas's most popular game animal."

The location for these open houses was influenced by the detection of chronic wasting disease during last year's deer hunting season. One adult male deer from Sevier County and two adult male deer from Grant County tested positive for the disease after being harvested by hunters.

"Our previous CWD management plan included similar meetings any time the disease was detected in a new county," Riggs said. "The current plan does not specifically call for these meetings, but out of an abundance of transparency, we wanted to offer resources for hunters in Sevier and Grant counties because these counties have been placed in the CWD Management Zone and we want to help them

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Notes from the Road:

What piece of the puzzle are you missing in your habitat?

By Nick Prough — I often get numerous calls each month from landowners asking the simple question, "How do I get more (insert species here: deer, turkey or quail) on my property?" Now that seems like a simple and straight forward question, or is it?

My answers vary depending on a whole host of factors and other situations depending on the piece of land, but they usually have a common theme to them depending on what is most limiting on their land and adjoining lands around them. This tends to be the "missing puzzle piece" that we often refer to while working on wildlife habitat. I like to think of it as what is most limiting or most needed and then address the upcoming habitat projects and practices to address those limiting or missing puzzle pieces directly.

When it comes to ground nesting birds, such as turkey and quail, many times that is brood cover in many areas of the country, especially over the past 10 years or so. It is very common for brood-rearing habitat to be the missing puzzle piece or most limiting factor on many tracts of land I do site visits on with a countless number of landowners. I have seen this be the case for quite a few years in many states, but especially in the past several years it has become more and more evident. In fact, several states now have brood-rearing initiatives or are having groups of biologists on a committee designed to look specifically at the issues associated with the lack of brood rearing habitat in their respective states.

Just this week I had a landowner contact me who I have been assisting the past several years about some new brood-rearing habitat he had installed on a lower portion of a property that he manages. In fact, he located a nice group of juvenile wild turkeys in the middle of that habitat which he was very happy to see following his intensive habitat work he has been doing in conjunction with his extended nest predator trapping efforts this past year. When he called me, he was very excited to see that several of his missing pieces of his specific puzzle were finally starting to fall into place after several years of hard work. Upon a closer detailed look at this several acre brood rearing tract, he was amazed to see all the insects and wildflowers/forbs that were growing in this area and the fact that the insects were "loaded on the wildflowers" just waiting to be eaten by the juvenile turkeys.

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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.

Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation, PO Box 947, Buffalo, MO 65622
Find us online: www.QUWF.net

Continued from Page 16 — "It's definitely working just like you said it would." He was so excited and can't wait to create even more brood rearing habitat and continue to reduce down the number of nest predators by continuing to trap on that and adjoining tracts in the coming months ahead.

This next couple months be sure to get out this early fall season and find what is limiting on your property and then customize some habitat work that will help reduce that issue of it being the most limiting factor, then you can also fit in more missing pieces to the puzzle on your land as well.

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.



Continued from Page 15 — understand what this means for their deer hunting and transport of game they harvest."

Riggs says wildlife health professionals will also be available to discuss other diseases and parasites that hunters may have questions about.

Epizootic hemorrhagic disease, also known as bluetongue in deer, exhibits periodic outbreaks that hunters may observe at times.

This is especially true during droughts when sick deer concentrate near water sources. Recent concerns from New World screwworm sightings in domestic livestock in Texas and New Mexico also may spark questions from hunters about this parasite, and the AGFC will have experts on hand to address those maladies.

"We want to give hunters the ability to ask questions one-on-one about these diseases," Riggs said. "Again, we're not going to have any formal presentation, but biologists will be available for the duration of the open house to meet with people and offer resources for them as we go into hunting season."

No registration is required for either meeting. More details about deer, deer hunting and wildlife health can be found at agfc.com/deer.





Nebraska upland bird hunting prospects optimistic

Surveys and field reports point toward an optimistic outlook for Nebraska upland bird hunting seasons this fall.

"Birds survived well into the breeding season due to a mild winter across most of the state," said Bryan O'Connor, upland game program manager for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. "Timely rains in central and eastern Nebraska have maintained quality habitat, while western Nebraska has been affected by drought.

"It should be an excellent fall to experience upland bird hunting in Nebraska, with opportunities for hunters of all ages across the state."

Pheasant

Statewide spring pheasant counts increased 11% from 2025 and saw increases in five of six pheasant management regions. Statewide counts also increased 36% during the summer compared to 2025. These results were above five- and 10-year averages.

The Northeast, Panhandle and Southwest pheasant regions should support the highest bird densities this fall. Pheasant counts were good across most of their range, but drought conditions could reduce available hunting cover, with the greatest impacts in the Panhandle.

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Continued from Page 19 — Northern bobwhite

A mild winter in most of the bobwhite quail range resulted in more birds entering the summer breeding season. Statewide, survey results increased compared to 2025 and were above both the five- and 10-year averages. All regions except the East-Central saw stable or increased numbers.

The Southeast, East-Central and Republican regions support the state's highest quail densities. However, average to above-average populations are likely across the entire Nebraska quail range.

Prairie grouse

Sharp-tailed grouse and greater prairie-chickens overwintered well in the Southwest and eastern Sandhills and Loess Hills as observations this spring indicate increases from 2025. Quality nesting and brooding habitat were present this year.

Habitat quality has been reduced further west in the Sandhills and Panhandle due to drought.

Prairie grouse production was good in the Southwest, eastern Sandhills and Loess Hills. Quality summer habitat and plentiful insects should provide good numbers of birds this fall and — depending on rainfall the remainder of the summer — good hunting cover.

Drought has reduced hunting cover in the western Sandhills and Panhandle, where bird numbers may not be as high.

Hunters should be aware the U.S. Department of Agriculture has authorized emergency haying and grazing of Conservation Reserve Program lands in most of Nebraska's 93 counties due to drought conditions.

This could affect hunting opportunities on CRP fields, including some open to public walk-in hunting through Game and Parks' Open Fields and Waters Program. For more information, visit OutdoorNebraska.gov and search "Emergency Haying and Grazing."

The Upland Outlook is based on field reports from biologists, surveys of game species abundance, regional habitat trends, and weather conditions. To view the complete outlook, survey results and other hunting information, visit OutdoorNebraska.gov/hunt/game/upland.

To find places to hunt, pick up the 2026-27 Nebraska Public Access Atlas at a Game and Parks office or wherever permits are sold.

This publication displays all the publicly accessible lands in Nebraska and is available in several online versions at OutdoorNebraska.gov/guides-maps/public-access



June report: Tractor sales are still taking a nosedive

From the editor — The June 2026 report on nationwide tractor sales was release July 10th, by the Association of Equipment Manufacturers and the picture is not good, worse than 2025, for dealers and new tractor sales. Analysts are calling it a "broken market."

Tractors under 40 HP, the small and hobby farm options are down 22% in June and 15.7 % YTD from 2025 which also was down from 2024 significantly. Inventories exceed demand by many percentage points.

The choice of habitat working landowners, tractors in the 40 to 100 HP, in which lives our QUWF recommendation of 50 to 60 HP 4WD tractors with loaders, is down 24.6% YTD, 30% for the month of June. Again, inventories are heavy at the dealers and in the pipeline.

Also noted, used tractors with low hours and well maintained are bringing as much as new tractors with many choosing to pick "older technology" with less computerization and no DEF on engines.

Does this mean you can get a good deal? Not necessarily. Dealers are struggling with floor plans, the money they have to pay manufacturers for the units on the ground in their lots. They are pushing tricky financing plans, with longer payouts to ease the monthly payments but cost the buyer significantly more over the long haul. Look for added hidden costs that have nothing to do with the tractor itself but are dealer generated for extra cash.

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Continue from Page 21 — Cash is king, always has been, if landowners can swing cash there is wiggle room. Also note: dealers bring in units with less features cheaper to sell like different wheels, hydraulic options missing like rear or front fittings that would need to be installed locally if not on the tractor, less guards and skid plates, rear work lights, etc. Spec your "ideal tractor and loader" online first so you know what you want. For habitat work you want at least 2 rear hydraulic fittings and a rear DC plug in outlet for sprayers and accessories not run off the PTO. The loader should have the skid steer styled quick disconnect.

Really pay attention to the lift capacity of the loader and rear 3-point system. Even for habitat work we suggest 1500 to 2000 pounds min lift on the loader, measured out at the end of the reach not the loader pins. and make sure the rear can lift all the attachments plus 20%.

Dealers report the buyers now are those with cash and an immediate, critical need. Meaning, they have to have the equipment now. Harvest season is unforgiving.

Combines are in horrible shape as well but really do not impact our conservation landowners.

This has a ripple effect at the dealership, as they have less cash because of paying floor plans, they carry less parts inventory and order on demand. That spells trouble when you need service and there is a delay for parts. On habitat work, or AG work, if you lose a tractor when you need to plant food plots, work fields, you may lose the entire year if the repairs are not completed quickly. Parts are an ongoing problem for all equipment; we ordered parts for our QUWF Off Grid Trailer and it's now 60 days and still no parts. The costs are an entire, separate, big problem. We had to go to a machine shop and have them made. When and if the others arrive, we will keep them as spares.

OK: Dove season starts Sept. 1

With dove season kicking off Sept. 1, we've got you covered here with public land dove hunting resources, articles, and the information you need to get going.

For most hunters, dove season participation starts with your hunting license and a Harvest Information Permit (HIP), both of which can be obtained through your Go Outdoors Oklahoma account.

Public land: Looking for public land dove hunting possibilities? Check out our dove hunting resources webpage for tips, including a map of fields on WMAs that are managed for doves.

THE HABITAT GUIDE

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