QUWF
QUAIL AND UPLAND WILDLIFE FEDERATION
THE HABITAT GUIDE
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Notes from the Dashboard:

QUWF goes to YouTube. Well, maybe.

By Craig Alderman — I may have taken on something that goes beyond the abilities of my medication or my favorite bourbon. I have wanted to have YouTube offerings from QUWF for a long time. Not being of sound mind, I decided to give it a try and produce our first video myself. Yes, that meant filming, editing, publishing.

After getting the minimal equipment in — an extra video camera, remote shirt mic, and relying on the iPhone to begin — I began looking for an easy, economical (cheap) editing software. I had a video person recommend a package which we downloaded and appeared to meet my EZ goals.

As I tried to load the first videos (after the expert left, of course) from the iPhone to the software for editing, up pops a message, "Apple audio and video are not compatible with this software." Wonderful. Who knew this company did not like Apple and had a particular dislike for iPhones?

So, I scrambled to find something else. Many recommended a program included with the Microsoft 365 package called ClipChamp, an app paid for in the 365 packages for editing videos.

I began learning the new package, with peach tea to begin, and yes, it accepted the upload from the iPhone and the camera with ease.

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QUWF Jayhawk chapter celebrates 40th banquet

From the editor — We are very proud to say one of our largest and most active chapters in the Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation, the Jayhawk Chapter, recently celebrated its 40th consecutive conservation banquet.

"They started as a QU chapter, and when that changed directions, they came with QUWF and blasted into the future with great success," said Nick Prough, QUWF chief wildlife biologist.

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Continued from Page 1 — It was confusing for the ol' guy, but I played through the features chuckling at my disastrous but humorous first attempts.

Struggling, the first video is up, it is absolutely a "deer in the headlights" attempt to show clearing storm tree damage and the use of a chipper rather than burn piles. Rough edits, sound issues, you name it. I'll give you the title shortly to search YouTube for it. Give it a like and share as much as you can. It is on a dual channel of Cedar Oak Farm and QUWF, as the original QUWF channel had someone change the password — to what I have no idea — meaning it's useless to use.

I then really worked hard on a second video whose purpose is to educate on cedar chips for tick control. It was going up today. When I got on the PC for the final edit and to export to YouTube, when clicking on the file, it read "Unable to open, code 404," try a new video. Well, that just made my day. I contacted Microsoft and they were quick to tell me they knew of the issue and the engineers were working on the problem as we were speaking to restore all video projects (data files). They said many had reported the issue. That fact gives one little faith in the engineers who built this app/program. They would create a patch and update the program when able. Meanwhile there are no accessible project files that took me a solid week of nights to load and edit.

The first video, and be nice, is "Chipper Use on Timber Cleanup," enter it into the YouTube search bar.

Peach tea to bourbon, any questions?



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

Tractor, equipment sales continue downward slump

From the editor — The downward trend we reported in earlier Habitat Guide articles is not getting any better. Tractor sales in the under 100 HP, 4x4 equipped are the work horse units of small farms, hobby farms and conservation, are down 25% YTD, after a year of the same declines the year before. The main target in HP we have always recommended for what we do in conservation is 50 to 55HP. Combine sales, which are the very backbone of food production, are down 80%.

Many brands are facing very tough times, with parts shortages, lack of dealerships, and of course, costs ravaging their customers of all sizes. Ditto for farmers, whose tight checkbooks are literally under devastating pressure. The number of farms going out of business is not just alarming, it is a national disaster! They produce our nation's food supply.

Throw in the weather in the farm belt like Missouri, with nearly three months near 100 F or over with no rain, and nothing grows. Pastures are dirt and farmers are beginning to feed bales now because the normal pasture growth after the first cutting of hay, late because of heavy rains early in the season, is nonexistent.

I visited Arizona a few weeks back and was anxious to see areas where I used to hunt on farmlands stretching from Chandler to north Phoenix, a good 50 distance and enjoy the desert habitat**. IT IS ALL GONE! NO FARMS**, **thousands of acres**, **zero farms and it appears no one cares.** It is all concrete, factories, apartments and now eight-lane highways where two lanes used to wind through the desert.

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Continued from Page 2 — I saw the new chip factory that made national news recently, being built north of Phoenix. 2,300 acres of desert farmland gone and another 900 being acquired for additions, and the plant is not open yet. When operational, it will need 16.4 MILLION GALLONS of water per day. I believe the factory states they could recycle all but 5 million gallons per day, ohhhh that makes everything better. 5 million gallons a day in an area fed by a limited water supply now. On the other side of the highway, untold numbers of apartments being built; it was heartbreaking for this conservationist to see.

What we call legacy-generational farms, those whose history spans generations in the same family, are disappearing from the landscape, horribly so. Costs are skyrocketing, equipment is so expensive, it is literally a “wait and see,” “repair what we have” mind set. Diesel fuel is very high at the worst time, harvest. Though as of today, it appears it is coming down. Diesel dropped in our town about 55 cents yesterday. There is another fuel processing plant that came back online yesterday after being shut down under the previous government administration’s lack of focus.

For wildlife — no good land, no good food or very poor quality, natural food. Trees are already turning that burnt brown and shedding leaves to preserve what they have. Ponds are very low, and those without a good spring source are causing the outbreak of EHD in deer.

Lose the farm lands, we totally lose our food source and the very wildlife habitat we work so hard to protect.

Motorists: Stay alert, share road with farm equipment

Editor’s note: This applies to all states and rural areas where farmers are moving equipment around for the harvest season. In our home town recently, we had a farmer killed by a driver not paying attention and destroying a large tractor he was operating to another field.

INDIANAPOLIS — Harvest season is fully underway for Hoosier farmers. That means Hoosier motorists will begin to see large slow-moving farm equipment traveling Indiana's roads and highways.

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture, Indiana Department of Transportation, and the Indiana State Police want to encourage motorists to slow down, be alert and be patient on roadways this fall.

"As harvest season begins, we caution all motorists to be mindful of all farm equipment that may be on or near the roadways," Lt. Governor Micah Beckwith, Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development. "Thank you to the Indiana State Police and the Indiana Department of Transportation for partnering with my office on this important safety announcement."

From 2020-2024, 22 occupants were involved in crashes with farm equipment in Indiana which resulted in seven deaths, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration*.

"Safety on our roadways during harvest season is a shared responsibility," said Indiana State Police Superintendent Anthony Scott. "We ask that motorists exercise patience and grant our farming community the necessary space to safely navigate the roads as they work to harvest their crops and provide for families across Indiana."

While the term "farm equipment" encompasses a wide range of vehicles, during harvest season this could include tractors, combines, grain carts, grain wagons, hay wagons, spreaders and large trucks hauling agricultural products.

These vehicles are wide, sometimes taking up most of the road, and often travel at speeds no greater than 25 mph or less.

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Continued from Page 3 — ***Visibility from the tractor cab has lots of blind spots, know that and be careful.***

"Drivers must practice patience and courtesy when they encounter farm equipment on the road," said INDOT Commissioner Lyndsay Quist. "Agriculture keeps Indiana's economy moving, and farmers require extra time and space to do their jobs safely."

The following list includes several safety tips for motorists approaching large farm equipment:

- ***Farmers will pull over when they are able to let motorists pass, but it may take time for them to get to a safe place to do so.***
- ***Be patient. Farm equipment is wide, AND SLOW, sometimes taking up most of the road.***
- ***Be careful when passing. Do not pass in a designated "No Passing Zone" or within 100 feet of any intersection, railroad grade crossing, bridge, elevation structure or tunnel.***

Do not try to pass slow-moving farm equipment on the left without ensuring that the farmer driving is not planning a left turn. It may appear that the driver is pulling over to allow a vehicle to pass when the farmer is actually preparing to turn. You will drive right into its path, endangering yourself and the farmer.

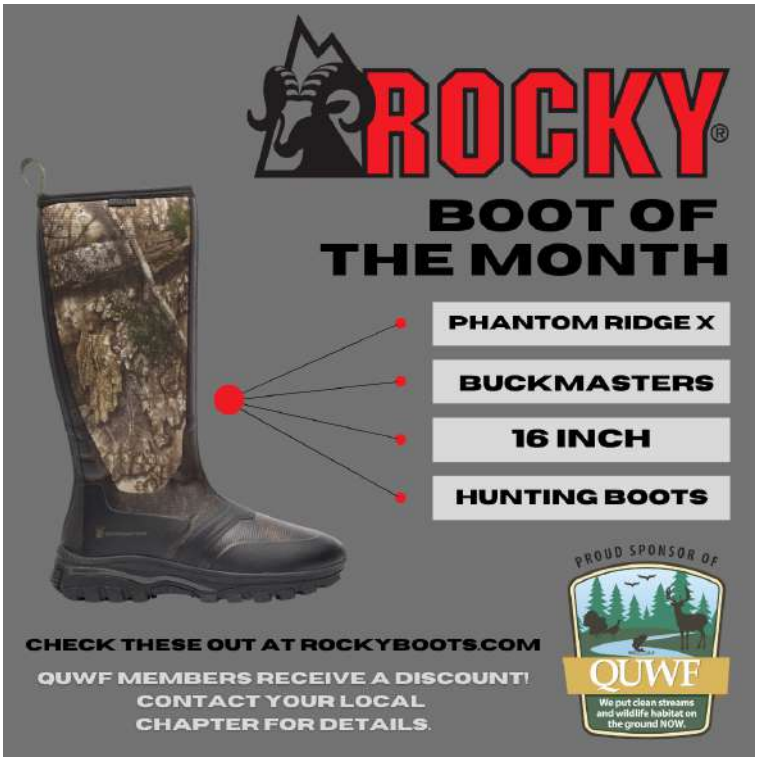
Additionally, avoid tailgating as some farm equipment might have to make sudden stops along the road. Allow plenty of time to get to a destination, be aware of alternate routes and avoid distractions.

Continued from Page 1 — Led by John Hill, they maintain a steadfast commitment to the local youth, traditional hunting and farm values.

“This is not a paid machine, it is dedicated, long time group of volunteers who care about our wildlife, our farms, lands and engaging youth for generations in conservation. Putting on a banquet is work, lots of it and includes balancing untold personalities, timelines and costs,” Prough said.

Always well attended, their drive to engage attendees for conservation sets new records most every year, along with the enjoyment of attending a very classy event.

VERY WELL DONE, JAYHAWK CHAPTER!





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Oklahoma: Put archery season in your sights

The Oklahoma deer archery opener is Oct. 1. Bowhunters need only an annual hunting license and a deer archery license to harvest the full archery bag limit. Hunters under 18 just need their youth annual super hunting license.

Nonresidents who purchase a deer archery license after Sept. 30 must do so two days in advance of going hunting.

Hunters can take up to six deer as part of the archery season, (no more than two antlered), all of which count toward the hunter's combined season limit of six deer.

Oct. 1 is also the archery opener for elk, pronghorn, black bear and turkey. For complete rules for archery hunting, check out the Oklahoma Fishing & Hunting Regulations at https://wildlifedepartment.com/hunting/regs or on the Go Outdoor Oklahoma mobile app.



From The Hunting Wire: Handgunning for squirrels

***Reprinted from The Hunting Wire*, By Jay Pinsky —** This is supposed to be a series about hunting squirrels with a handgun, so naturally we're going to start by not talking about handguns.



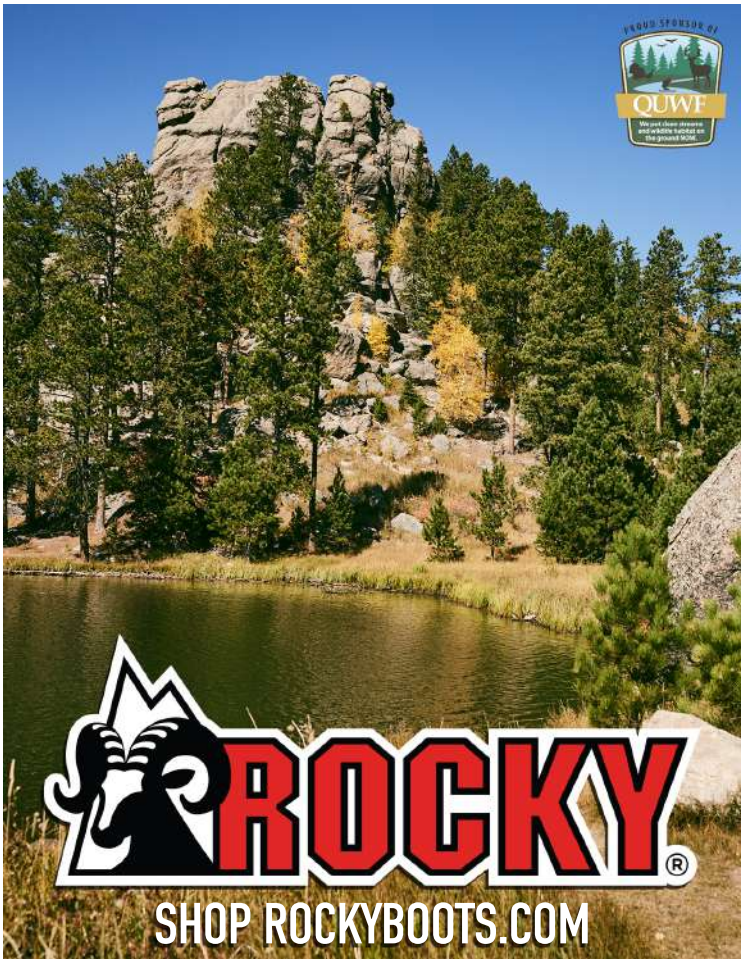
We need to find some squirrels first, and that means talking about habitat. More importantly, we need squirrels close. How close? Think Labrador retriever when you have pizza close. Our self-imposed rule for this adventure is about 25 yards, which means the real challenge isn't choosing a handgun. It's learning enough about squirrels to consistently get inside handgun range, because the most accurate handgun on Earth isn't particularly useful when the squirrel we're hunting is 47 yards away, 60 feet up an oak tree and looking down at us like we're idiots. Which, to be fair, we might be. We're hunting squirrels with a handgun, so welcome to the series.

Squirrel Hunting Is Easy Until I Go Squirrel Hunting

A lot of hunters think squirrel hunting is easy, maybe even too easy, and I understand why. While P.T. Barnum may have considered the circus the Greatest Show on Earth, from 20 feet up in a deer stand, I'd argue the Squirrel Olympics have it beat. They chase each other up trees, jump from limb to limb, bark at things that apparently deserve to be barked at, and occasionally do their best rendition of the WWF in the canopy above our heads. Meanwhile, we're sitting there wondering why we bothered bringing a deer rifle when we've seen 37 squirrels and exactly zero deer.

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Continued from Page 7 — There's a reason we see so many squirrels while deer hunting. Deer and squirrels share a lot of the same habitat, and many of the things we do to put ourselves around deer also put us around squirrels. We find food, cover and travel routes, pay attention to edges, then sit down, shut up and give the woods enough time to come back to life around us.

When we're deer hunting, squirrels are entertainment. They're a free episode of *Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom* while we wait for a buck. We watch them make impossible jumps and dig through the leaves, making enough noise to convince us a 200-pound buck is headed our way. Half the time we're rooting for them, laughing at them or quietly cussing them for making us turn our heads for the 47th time that morning.

Then we come back specifically to hunt squirrels and the show gets canceled. The trees are empty, the leaves are quiet and the squirrel that spent three hours throwing acorn pieces at us during deer season has apparently entered the witness protection program. That's when we remember that squirrel hunting and seeing squirrels while deer hunting are two very different things.

A One-Pound Animal That Could Probably Kick My Ass

The eastern gray squirrel is so common that we probably don't give it much thought, but anatomically it's an impressive little animal. An adult is generally around 16 to 20 inches long, including the tail, and weighs somewhere around a pound to a pound and a half (you metric folks will just have to Google the conversions). Powerful hindquarters launch it between limbs, while long toes and sharp, curved claws grip bark. Its hind ankles can rotate enough to let it descend a tree headfirst, and that big bushy tail helps with balance, communication and insulation.

Meanwhile, some of us are at the age where getting out of the truck wrong earns us a trip to the emergency room, or at least the medicine cabinet.

Squirrels are rodents, so those front incisors never stop growing and are continually worn down by gnawing. Add large eyes with a broad field of view and excellent hearing that somehow includes our boot touching the only dry stick in an otherwise damp forest, and we begin to appreciate how well equipped they are.

If a squirrel were our size, I'm pretty confident it would royally kick our ass. There wouldn't be a Rocky moment where we dug deep



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Continued from Page 8 — and fought back, either. Yes, I know Rocky is the squirrel in *Rocky and Bullwinkle*, but I mean the underdog boxer. Yo, Adrian.

Fortunately, squirrels are squirrel-sized, although we haven't talked about fox squirrels yet. Compared to an eastern gray squirrel, a fox squirrel looks like somebody fed a gray squirrel protein powder, gave it a gym membership and told it to start bulking for winter. They're basically swole gray squirrels. I've seen a few around here that probably couldn't whip our ass, but I'd still walk the other way.

Let's talk squirrel anatomy. The heart and lungs sit inside a very small chest behind the front legs, while the skull presents an even smaller target. Fur and that oversized tail can make the animal appear larger than the anatomy we're actually trying to hit, and shot angle complicates things when a squirrel is clinging to a trunk or stretched across a limb. Black bears are similar in the sense that their puffy fur can fool us into thinking they're bigger than they are.

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InvaderConcepts.com: Chest holsters & accessories, made in Montana
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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 — Wow, gray squirrels and black bears in the same paragraph.

Anyway … Mature hardwood timber provides squirrels with the two things they need most: food and a home. Oaks are the obvious starting point, but telling ourselves to “find the oaks” is about as useful as telling a deer hunter to “find the woods.”



White oak acorns generally contain less tannin and tend to be more palatable, while red oak acorns contain more tannin but can remain available longer. Hickories can be squirrel magnets, and walnuts and beechnuts matter too. Squirrels also eat berries, seeds, buds, fungi, fruits and agricultural crops. Basically, if we’re trying to think like a squirrel and something is edible, the evaluation process doesn’t appear terribly complicated.

And you thought there wasn’t any woodsmanship to squirrel hunting.

Unlike your local Publix, Mother Nature’s grocery stores change. A spot covered in squirrels in September may seem dead in December because food disappears, crops get harvested and squirrels adjust.

One thing that’s worked for me is finding good habitat and then sitting tight wherever we find feeding activity, regardless of whether we immediately see squirrels. We’re looking for acorn husks, ground that’s been dug up and, most importantly, whether there’s enough viable mast left to keep squirrels there. If there is, we sit tight.

I’m Basically in Their Basement

Once we know we’re in a good spot, we look around and, most importantly, we look up. Why? Squirrels live vertically. Us? We’re more horizontal. So we need to start looking at the woods differently.

Look for cavities, den trees and dreys, and study how tree crowns overlap. A squirrel escaping through the canopy usually isn’t inventing the route as it goes. It already knows which branch connects to the next tree, which limb gives it an escape route and which tree has a hole it can disappear into.

Once we start seeing those connections, the woods look different. We’re not wandering around hoping to bump into a random squirrel. We’re basically sitting in their basement trying to figure out where the stairs are.

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Continued from Page 10 — Sit Down and Be Quiet

One deer-hunting skill transfers perfectly to squirrels, and that's sitting still. When we walk into good habitat, everything knows we're there. Instead of immediately marching through the woods looking for something, we need to sit down and give the woods 15 or 20 minutes to forget about us.

If we do, thats when the magic starts again.

The birds start moving, the forest settles and eventually the squirrel that flattened itself against the opposite side of a tree decides the danger has passed and reveals itself.

That's the point of starting our handgun series with habitat.

First, we have to find them. Then we have to understand them well enough to get close.

Once we can do that, we can finally start talking about handguns.

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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Find us online: www.QUWF.net



Squirrel season, a great start for youth hunters, know the arc

By QUWF Staff — Jay's previous article ***(See From The Hunting Wire: Handgunning for squirrels, Pages 7-11)*** is a great understanding of the principles of knowing squirrel habitats and how the little furred ghost can be totally silent or irritatingly noisy within microseconds. To include jumping from tree to tree, a circular movement baffling to the eyes around tree trunks to include insulting barks on our lack of tracking skills.

Another teaching point for youth hunters or new hunters is the arc aspect of squirrel hunting, one literally hardly ever talked about. It is the trajectory of the shot, how far can an arced shot go with a .22 for example and the normal obstruction of sight through trees, limbs and leaves. It is, in fact, a giant bell curve trajectory. Most ballistics say a .22 can travel up to a mile over level ground, but little is researched on arced shots when the danger is where will it land.

With most other hunting like duck, pheasant, quail, dove etc., we always talk about what is behind the target that we can see to ensure there is nothing that could be hit or injured when the shot is taken. Most others, let's call it aerial hunting, involves swinging, aiming and firing upward but includes a pretty clear sight pictures and knowing what is behind the shot. Not so with squirrel hunting.

Taking a high arc shot upward means the shot will travel in a giant bell curve landing quite a distance from the shooter's position. This suggests too that the shot initially hit nothing, not the squirrel nor the tree or limbs and just launched on its way. If they shoot nearly straight up, well, not smart.

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Continued from Page 12 — There is no perfect or consistent answer except to know where you are hunting and what is around you. Onx maps can help know what is around you, and what the terrain is like. Of course, good scouting is always the best option and provides more quality time in the woods with the kids and grandkids. Never shoot in the direction of roads or dwellings regardless of how far you think they are.

The use of a shotgun is a good choice as its drop distance is much shorter and the pellets lose concentration and momentum fast beyond 25 to 30 yards with a mod choke. I grew up using an Ithaca model 37 in 16GA, with #7.5 shot for squirrels. It definitely was a meal producer in squirrel and rabbit. BTW squirrel always tasted like chicken to me.

The choice of a popular rifle, hands down, is the RUGER 10/22. Economical, easy to handle, sights in with good accuracy, accepts a scope quickly and does not break the bank for ammo. Be careful choosing ammo though, pick a quality load and try it in the gun. Try several brands and you will see the difference in functioning as well as accuracy. I shoot Winchester and Hornady ammo in all my rim fire options.

Handguns are a super challenge for a new shooter and not one I would recommend without some good practice and other instruction.

Grandpa or Grandma (Nana and Papa) gifting a new RUGER 10/22 to a grandchild with lessons on the range, and in the woods with him or her, is one of the best things I can think of. I'll bet the grandchildren who enjoy that time, will never have to worry about ammo or supplies.



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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Veterans who served our country honorably deserve and have earned the right now to enjoy its freedoms and receive the support and benefits they deserve.

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.

Idaho hunters: Know tech rules before heading into field

Editor's note: Make sure you check for new rules on technology before heading afield in any state. The soul of our hunting heritage has been and always will be free range/fair chase, giving game a wild habitat chance to elude and evade, which to many means pre-season scouting to find locations, trails, water and the general movement of game the old way.

Second, the last section of this article references AI use of finding game rules and regulations. GO TO THE SOURCE, the game departments of the various states. Courts will not use AI reference mistakes as a defense in anything.

The changes affect season dates between Aug. 30 and Dec. 31, 2026.

Hunters heading into this year's batch of hunting seasons should be aware of technology rule changes after legislation was passed earlier this year.

The Idaho Legislature passed House Bill 939, addressing the use of advanced technology during big game and game bird hunting seasons. The legislation comes on the heels of extensive discussion about the role of technology in hunting and establishes statutory restrictions that hunters need to understand before heading into the field.

Between Aug. 30 and Dec. 31, 2026, it is unlawful to use any of the following technologies for hunting or scouting all deer, elk, pronghorn, mountain goat, bighorn sheep, moose, black bear, and game birds:

- Thermal imaging technology
- Night vision technology
- Transmitting trail cameras on land owned by the federal government, the state of Idaho, or a local government within the state
- Drone aircraft or other unmanned aircraft systems

The only exceptions for these technologies being used are:

- Hunting wolves, mountain lions, or predatory wildlife (coyotes, jackrabbits, skunks, weasels, starlings, raccoons, and rattlesnakes)
- Retrieving wounded game animals or game birds
- Monitoring traps

The law includes specific provisions and exceptions, so hunters should not assume that all technology is prohibited or that the same rules apply to every species.

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Notes from the Road:

Landowners continue to see results from year-round work

By Nick Prough — Often this time of year I get the occasional phone call from a sportsman or landowner calling to inquire what he can do to draw in more deer, turkey, or quail prior to the rapidly approaching hunting season now that the average temperatures have cooled off and we have finally gotten a few droplets of rainfall on our drought-stricken landscape.

That isn't the common case, but it does occur every fall a few times a year, and I often want to say you should have called me 8-10 months ago, but usually I start to cover with them that wildlife management on any size tract of ground is a process, and a long-term process at that, and isn't something you do in a weekend or two just prior to the season.

You would probably say that is common sense to most landowners and yes, it is to most but even too many seasoned veteran landowners the year-round time commitment to doing wildlife management on your land needs to be carefully planned out well ahead of time and the "time commitment" is just that a large commitment of your time if one wants to do it right the first time.

Now before you go, "Man, I am just too busy," consider what your land or habitat would be like if you just left it alone to grow on its own and manage itself? Well, I go to those farms every month, and I can tell you without a doubt those landowners wish they had stayed ahead of the game on the invasive species, invading brush, erosion ditches and much more. Many landowners over the years usually start thinking about upcoming habitat conditions as soon as spring starts to begin in the early weeks of March/April, and while this can be a very good step in your getting close to year-round management, I challenge you to begin that process this early fall in preparation for next year even.

I have often said to landowners there is no better time to do habitat management than right now! This approaching fall is an excellent time to start looking at how your habitat has faired through the intense long hot and dry summer, what is available to wildlife and what is really lacking. Do you have enough food, water, cover for the upcoming winter? Are those components properly spaced close enough to one another? Is your escape and winter cover sufficient for the upcoming winter snows?

All these and many more questions can be asked about each and every tract of land you manage or hunt on. How does my early brood rearing cover fields look for next summer, do I need to renew or rework them all together? Yes, it is just the start of fall for many of us and you will have a lot on your plate as the holidays and hunting seasons get into full swing, so there is no better time than right now to analyze your current habitat conditions and make those improvements for not only the upcoming winter season, and for the 2027 habitat season 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 — Hunters should review Pages 95-96 of the 2026 Idaho Big Game Seasons and Rules booklet to understand how the law applies to their hunt.

"Technology continues to change how people hunt and interact with wildlife," said Legislative and Community Engagement Coordinator, Ellary Tucker Williams. "It is imperative that hunters understand the laws that apply to their hunt and make sure they are using technology legally and responsibly."

Fish and Game encourages hunters to stay informed about changes to hunting laws and regulations. IDFG staff can help explain how the law applies to specific hunting situations, but hunters are responsible for knowing and following the laws and regulations that apply to their hunt.

For more information, visit Fish and Game's website or contact a local Fish and Game office.

Don't trust AI for hunting and fishing regulations — go to the source

Speaking of technology, having it conveniently at our fingertips isn't always a good thing. Time after time, a quick Google search or conversation with Alexa and Siri to get to the bottom of an Idaho Fish and Game regs question can lead to inaccurate or false information — or worse, a violation.

Every year, Fish and Game conservation officers increasingly encounter folks in the field who use AI and search engines and get incorrect information. Remember, getting bad information off the internet is no excuse for violating seasons and rules. We know how handy search engines and AI can be, but when it comes to hunting and fishing regs, go straight to the source.

Always check Fish and Game's seasons and rules booklets to make sure you're getting accurate and current information. The most up-to-date versions can be found online at Fish and Game's website.



VT F&W urges hunters to help keep deer healthy

Editor's note: Most of the controls on CWD do not target the source, penned deer. It is where it originated from in Colorado from mule deer research in the '60s and where it still generates from in our deer herds. CWD is not a naturally occurring disease.

Limiting the use of natural deer urine, in our opinion, IS PROTECTING the wild heard in that certain brands like Tink's, Code Blue and others use natural urine gathered from penned deer herds around the country. From doe estrous to buck urine, if it comes from a pen, the potential is there for harming the natural herd.

In truth if a human urinates on a scrape, it will have the same effect IF it is concentrated on bare earth in the center of the scrape and not sprayed around the area or on any adjacent leaves. Go ahead, Google it.

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is reminding hunters of a regulation designed to help keep Vermont deer healthy by banning the use of any deer lure containing deer urine or other deer bodily fluids.

The infectious agent of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), a fatal disease of deer, is a mutant protein or "prion" that can be passed in urine.

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Continued from Page 19 — Prions can bind to soils and remain infectious for many years. Nearly all urine-based lures are produced in captive deer facilities, where CWD is most likely to occur. There is no accepted way to test live animals, and infected animals can spread CWD for years before showing any symptoms. No amount of testing or special certification program can eliminate the risk of spreading CWD through urine lures.



CWD is 100 percent fatal to deer and moose. It causes irreversible population declines and has been impossible to eliminate once it becomes established in a population. CWD has not been detected in Vermont.

"No single buck is worth risking the health of Vermont's entire deer herd," said Nick Fortin, Vermont's deer biologist. "If someone feels they must use a lure, there are legal, synthetic alternatives that are just as effective."

"If CWD becomes established in Vermont, the deer population, deer management and deer hunting will never be the same. The most effective way to control CWD is to prevent it from getting here in the first place."





Hunting seasons are ATV/UTV seasons

As the various hunting seasons approach, the ATVs and UTVs are rolled out for the upcoming tales of hunting camp. Some will not start, some have flat tires, others feel the lack of love and tender care left in the barn or garage for the better part of the year in leaking seals.

My personal favorite is getting the mice damage fixed, from wiring to nests in the CVT case. (Yes, it happened.)

This also includes the seldom used ATV-UTV trailer used to haul the valuable hunting woods transport around. Lights fail to work, the bed may be rotted, tires low or flat, you cannot find the ramps you loaned to a friend, and when was the last time the bearings were serviced right, etc.



For the ATV or RTV, the biggest issue is normally the lack of use causing the battery to be dead, not low but dead, and seals dried from lack of use. Battery replacement is the prime solution, and today those little buggers are expensive. We use Noco Genius 5 trickle chargers year-round that control recharge even with changing temperatures.

Second, take it to a dealer and get it fully serviced (LOF), coolant and generally checked, like all lights and switches are working — best investment in your hobby for the year. If it is a gas model, use non-ethanol fuel especially for small CC engines. Check the tire valve stems for cracking, a big factor with ATVs stored for longer periods, replace them at a good AG tire dealer who can check the tire condition at the same time. Maybe think of adding AG tire sealant all around. If you carry spare gas in a ROTO-Plex tank, use it and fill with fresh gas.

All the nuts and bolts should be checked; the owner's manual helps here.

For the trailer, grease the bearings, don't over grease. If you have not changed the bearings, both front and rear of each bearing in many years, maybe a trip to a trailer service center is required.

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Continued from Page 20 — Tires are also a check point, pressure levels (I write that on the trailer with a paint pen), cracks on valve stems and do you carry a spare tire with bearing installed? Every trailer we own, and that is 7 of them, has a spare with bearing ready to save the day. We carry a tool kit with a jack and tools, shop towels, etc., as well.

Failure of trailer lights comes normally in two offenders, very poor connectors and failure of grounding. If your trailer has those clip type connectors that splice wires, get rid of all of them and replace with shrink wrap connectors. Second, clean all your ground points to bright metal, replace wire end connectors if corroded and use stainless steel bolts, nuts and washers (cheap on Amazon). Add more grounding points if you have time. Drill new holes in the frame and clean the area bright on both sides, use stainless steel bolts, nuts and washers. Wire it to a new ground circuit going around the trailer. Check all wires for wear, breaks or rub spots replace with 14 G if need be.



Check operation of lights in two ways. I use a 12V power supply and test circuits without hooking to the truck, or hook to the truck and check that connection. Clean the cable ends with a brass brush if a 4-point, or clean the 7-wire plug. If you have electric or hydraulic brakes, make sure they are working.

Finally make sure your tie down straps are in good condition and you have the right length for each tie down point. I use one at each corner, and one in the middle, both sides.

When the RTV, ATV or UTV is ready for the hunting camp, the stars are aligned. We installed GMRS radios and have a base unit, each has 50 watts of power, enough to cover our entire hunting area and then some.

Note the gun rack holders on the front rack of this RTV, which double as tool racks, the fire extinguisher and Roto-plex extra fuel cell. This unit gets used daily here on the farm and helps patrol the entire property and coop areas with nice rides.



THE HABITAT GUIDE

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