

QUWF



Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation  
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MERRY CHRISTMAS

AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

# THE HABITAT GUIDE

Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation

## Notes from the Dashboard: QUWF suggests and begins ‘RTM’ months



**By Craig Alderman** — Without a doubt, as we maintain and acquire new equipment and even new tools of the battery-operated types, technology is changing, but the old rules still apply — service your equipment and repair prior to the seasons beginning and have the spare parts you need on hand. I have a separate set of shelves just for equipment manuals, and it is hard to remember who gets what and when as these are (where)

nearly never reviewed once the equipment is put into use.

Tractors, bush hogs, dozers, backhoes, trailers, trucks, chain saws, log splitters, z-mowers, harrows, tillers, bailers, rakes, wagons, seeders, and sprayers all have different requirements, timing and maintenance needs, all the time. And most of those have tires, a huge expense if not taken care of. Some have two, others four, some eight, and all have different pressures and needs. Here at the QUWF farm, we have 80 tires on various pieces of equipment, and we just replaced the big tractor tires. Ouch! Some of these are filled with AG tire sealant, others with alcohol for more weight in the big tires of the tractor.

The “use it til it breaks” mentality is an easy option when you need to begin working the machines, but when it breaks, it normally is a bigger and more costly repair or replacement.

**So, what is the “RTM” months program? “Reread The Manuals” in January and February when you are performing preseason maintenance. Review not only normal maintenance but the storage maintenance recommended for best results. Know the various oil, grease and hydraulic types you should always keep on hand, synthetic does not work in many smaller engines, in others it is mandatory. What liquids need to be brought in for the winter including chemicals that should not freeze?**

**Grab the manuals and pick a few each night to review. I find a yellow highlighter is better than my “oh yeah” moments. Keep a pad nearby to remind you of the items you forgot, overlooked or just did not sink in.**

Continued on Page 2

**Continued from Page 1 — Same for parts you need. *Keep your parts and tools organized*, that in itself is a challenge, but saves me untold hours looking for the ½ open end wrench when needed.**

We have mentioned many times, bring in all your batteries for those expensive tools or suffer the loss of those little golden nuggets that are ever increasing in price.

**Further, learn/know what parts wear out regularly and buy or get them on order now before the season starts. Grade 2 shear pins are getting very hard to find, Grainger is my go-to source. Don't forget those pesky plow bolts, nuts and washers for ground contact equipment. They are very hard to find when you need them.**

In the winter, start and run your tractors, trucks, dozers etc., to include, after warm-up, loader lift and drop, 3-point exercise, and a drive around the barn once or twice. Don't just start it and not work all the systems or change the flat spot on the tires. Check for any leaks. All should have battery tenders on them either in the equipment or on the bench.

I have begun the **RTM Program** here at QUWF and found white paint markers (Amazon) work great to label various oil weights, tire pressures, dates of oil changes, new parts on metal surfaces and last a very long time.

Bottom line, you know the phrase, "Take care of the equipment and it will take care of you." The RTM program ensures you and your family take the time to understand the care and feeding of equipment. There is no reason why each member of the family cannot be assigned a manual or two to be the maintenance chief.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of us at QUWF. God Bless.

*Craig Alderman is the QUWF executive director.*

## OK redcedars may contribute to lone star tick spread

**STILLWATER, Okla.** — Eastern redcedar trees may be contributing to the spread of lone star ticks across the State of Oklahoma.

These ticks have the potential to spread certain diseases, which pose "a range of problems for human, wildlife and livestock health." Specifically, this tick carries the alpha-gal syndrome which can cause people to develop a red meat allergy.

Eastern redcedars, which are native to the more rocky areas of eastern Oklahoma, have a negative impact on water resources, livestock productivity, and rangeland quality.

These trees use a large amount of water and are highly flammable.

Lone star ticks tend to prefer living in areas with these trees due to the amount of moisture retained. Lone star ticks prefer large amounts of humidity and can survive in dry climates.

OSU Professor of Entomology Bruce Noden and OSU Professor of Natural Resource Ecology and Management Scott Loss both said there isn't a coincidence that both the lone star tick and eastern redcedars are spreading across the state.

"When I first came to Oklahoma in 2014, we conducted surveys, and surprisingly, we found lone star ticks all the way out to the western border of Oklahoma... I was talking to an agricultural producer in western Oklahoma, and I asked him where he would find ticks on his property, and he said, 'Everybody knows they're down in the cedars,'" Noden said. "It was common knowledge among cattle producers, but no one had put some science behind it yet."



**Continued on Page 3**

**Continued from Page 2** — Noden and a graduate student found evidence that the expansion of eastern redcedars in Oklahoma is directly contributing to the spread of these ticks.

OSU graduate student Jozlyn Propst, said these trees create a “humidity dome,” making the areas under the trees “moister than the surrounding environment and allowing ticks to remain alive until they can attach to wildlife.”

Loss said while the explanation behind how eastern redcedar affects how these bugs find hosts, he is positive there is a connection to wildlife and livestock.

"It could be deer, small mammals, birds or any number of animals that they are finding as resources within eastern redcedar trees," Loss said. "You go into an arid environment like western Oklahoma in the summertime, and it's obvious that it feels cooler and more humid during the day under redcedar trees, making it evident that the trees are changing the microclimates and habitats."

Landon Neumann, another graduate student, published a study that confirmed that changes in the grasslands correspond to the invasion of cedar trees.

"There is certainly evidence now that areas with eastern redcedar retain moisture more consistently and return it to the atmosphere as water vapor, which is creating the new microclimates," Scott Loss said.

Loss and Noden said they hope their research can help landowners better understand the risks of “not managing eastern redcedar on their property.”

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# December is the start of bird feeding season

Winter bird feeding is a great way to observe and learn about our year-round bird residents such as black capped chickadees, nuthatches and blue jays. This winter is also predicted to be a great year for seeing birds that visit in the winter, including evening and pine grosbeaks, and red polls.

“Currently, limited food resources north of us will pull more birds south in search of cone seeds and berries,” said Jillian Kilborn, Vermont Fish and Wildlife’s bird project leader.

Here are some basic bird feeding tips from Vermont Fish and Wildlife:

- Make your own feeding mixture to maximize the number of species visiting your yard. Black oil sunflower seed is a favorite of many birds, but when mixed with “thistle” (or “nyjer”) or cracked corn you will be sure to attract a wide variety of species. Don’t forget the suet to attract woodpeckers and even chickadees.
- Mix up the type of feeders you use. Hopper feeders are great for large birds such as blue jays, while tube feeders are best for smaller birds. Elevated tray feeders will attract birds that usually feed on the ground including juncos and larger bodied winter visitors such as evening grosbeaks.
- Place your feeders near natural habitat, or even add a habitat for birds to hide. A Christmas tree is a great addition to a snowbank next to your feeder to provide quick cover.
- Keep your feeders clean. Only put out enough food for a day, and wash feeders every couple of weeks in a 10 percent bleach solution and let dry to prevent the spread of bacteria and disease.



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**Continued from Page 5 — If you decide to feed birds, remember:**

– Feeding can expose birds to hazards they might otherwise avoid. The risks of predation are higher close to people, especially from domestic cats -- the leading cause of bird deaths in North America. Keep cats inside and take feeders down if predators become frequent visitors. Also, we recommend placing feeders either within 3 feet of windows, or greater than 30 feet from windows. This has been shown to minimize high speed window strikes.

– Don't feed birds when bears are active. Most bears are in dens from December 1 to April 1, but some will delay hibernation or re-emerge to feed during periods of warmer weather. Remove bird feeders immediately if you see signs of bears or know a bear is active in your community.

Bears that learn to associate food with a house, even only once, will continue to return, potentially leading to property damage and dangerous encounters with people. Also, it is illegal to feed bears in Vermont.

– Once you've started feeding the birds, keep your feeders stocked. Although wild birds are not entirely dependent on bird feeders, they can become accustomed to this easy food source. If you wish to stop feeding during winter months, gradually taper off the amount of food you provide rather than stopping abruptly, giving the birds a chance to find other food sources. This is especially important when food is scarce in late winter or during periods of extreme weather.

– Immediately remove feeders if there are reports of HPAI (Avian Influenza) or even a bacterial infection outbreak. Concentrating birds at a feeder only contributes to the spread of diseases. If you find a dead bird visit the [Avian Influenza Wildlife Health Bulletin](#) on the Vermont Fish and Wildlife website for more information on when to report, and what to do.

– Report your observations! While watching your bird feeders, you can participate in one or more bird monitoring projects by looking up the [Great Backyard Bird Count](#) and [Project Feeder Watch](#) and [eBird](#) -- all collect important information for understanding bird populations.

As winter sets in, find a comfortable spot inside where you can watch the birds visiting your feeders.

Figure out what birds they are, observe how they interact with each other, and see what they prefer to eat. It's an easy way to learn more about the lives of the birds around you.

“With the extra visitors we anticipate in Vermont coming from the north this winter, you have a chance of seeing see some new, colorful surprises,” says Kilborn.



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## Maryland Canada goose seasons resume in 2025-26

Maryland's Atlantic Population (Migratory) Canada goose hunting season opens Friday, Dec. 19. The season contains two segments, Dec. 19 through Jan. 3, 2026, and again from Jan. 14 through Jan. 31, 2026. Late southern and late western resident goose hunting split seasons run from late November into March 2026.

"A Maryland Canada goose hunt is a great opportunity to reconnect with family and friends, or introduce a new hunter to the tradition," said Wildlife and Heritage Service Director Karina Stonesifer. "Canada geese are one of Maryland's iconic gamebirds and the sounds of migrating geese are a sign that fall has arrived."

The daily bag limit is one goose per day in Maryland's [AP Canada Goose Hunting Zone](#). The possession limit for all migratory game birds is three times the daily bag limit. More information on waterfowl seasons, regulations and license requirements, is available on the [DNR Wildlife and Heritage Service website](#).

For late southern and late western resident goose zones, the boundaries, season dates, and bag limits are as follows.

The [Late Southern Maryland Resident Goose Zone](#) includes Montgomery County; and that portion of Prince George's County west of Route 3 and Route 301; and that portion of Charles County west of Route 301.

Continued on Page 8

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- CornholeGame.com:** Game boards
- InvaderConcepts.com:** Chest holsters & accessories, made in Montana
- Allegiance Flag Co:** [showallegiance.com](http://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

**Continued from Page 7** — ContHunters should note these are new zone boundaries. Season dates and bag limits in this zone are:

- Nov. 22-28 and Dec. 15-18, bag limit 5 per day, possession limit of 15
- Dec. 19–Jan. 3, 2026, bag limit 1 per day, possession limit of 3
- Jan. 5-13, 2026; bag limit 5 per day, possession limit of 15
- Jan. 14-31, 2026, bag limit 1 per day, possession limit of 3
- Feb. 2–March. 7, 2026, bag limit 5 per day, possession limit of 15



The [Late Western Maryland Resident Canada Goose Zone](#) includes Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, Washington, and that portion of Carroll County west of Route 31 to the intersection of Route 97, and west of Route 97 to the Pennsylvania line. The season is open Nov. 22 – Nov. 28 and Dec. 15 – Mar. 7, 2026, with a daily bag limit of 5 per day and a possession limit of 15.

Licenses, stamps, and permits may be purchased [on the MD Outdoors website](#), at a [DNR Service Center](#), or at any one of the more than [250 Sport License Agents](#) statewide.

The DNR website includes information on [Maryland public land hunting opportunities](#). Hunters with questions may contact the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Wildlife and Heritage Service at 410-260-8540.

## What a nonresident hunter needs to know about Idaho tags

If you're a nonresident hunter looking to hunt deer or elk in Idaho next year, the process is going to look a little different—and much improved.

Now, the modified nonresident tag framework does have one important caveat: Out-of-state hunters will be required to buy a nonresident hunting license in order to draw any 2026 tags. The sticker price on a nonresident license to hunt is \$185 and is nonrefundable. In other words, if you don't draw, you don't get your money back.

However, once you have your nonresident hunting license in your possession, you will be eligible to put in for a whole slew of tag opportunities, including deer, elk, and pronghorn controlled hunts, or moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goat tags. Additionally, you could purchase returned or unsold tags.

### Dates every nonresident hunter should write down

- Dec. 5-15, 2025 | Application period for the 2026 tag drawing
- Jan. 2026 (early) | Results announced
- Jan. 20 | Deadline for successful applicants to buy their tags, except DAV tags
- Feb. 5-15 | Second application period for any tags not drawn or not purchased
- March 2026 (early) | Results announced
- March 20 | Deadline to buy tags, including all DAV tags

**Continued on Page 9**



**Continued from Page 8** — The 2026 Nonresident Supplement and the Big Game Seasons and Rules will be available in October 2025. Hunters should know the deer hunting unit and/or elk zone for the tags for which they want to apply. The nonresident draw allows up to five hunt choices on an application and up to four hunters can be on one application, but all must have a valid annual hunting license.

#### **Disabled American Veteran (DAV) tags**

DAV tags will have a separate drawing for the reduced fee DAV tags. Hunters eligible for DAV may also apply for nonresident tags, but will pay full nonresident tag prices.

#### **Junior mentored tags**

Nonresident junior mentored tags will continue to be available, but junior mentored hunters only need to apply for elk tags in capped zones. Uncapped elk tags and deer tags will be available over-the-counter for junior mentored hunters after the nonresident draws are completed.

#### **Lifetime license holders**

Former Idaho residents who are lifetime license holders can buy tags outside of the nonresident quotas, so they will not have to apply for general season nonresident tags. Tags for lifetime license holders can be purchased in the summer when resident tags become available.

Hunters interested in applying for nonresident deer and elk tags in December should check back regularly for more information on the [Nonresident Deer/Elk Tag webpage](#).

A close-up photograph of a Ruger American rifle. The rifle is black with a silver-colored receiver. A hand is visible at the bottom, holding the trigger guard. The text "RUGER AMERICAN" is visible on the receiver. The background is a soft, out-of-focus brown.

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## Check stations show need for improved CWD compliance

Staff from Idaho Fish and Game's Panhandle Regional Office operated a check station on Nov. 16 along Interstate 90 near Fourth of July Pass. The purpose of the station was to monitor hunter compliance with Idaho's wildlife laws and to evaluate whether big game harvested out of state or from an Idaho chronic wasting disease management zone was being transported in accordance with CWD regulations.

Like many other states, Idaho prohibits transporting or importing the spine or brain tissue of deer, elk, and moose harvested in states where CWD has been detected. Nearly all of Idaho's neighboring states—and most states nationwide—are currently CWD-positive.

While the recent check station represents only a brief snapshot in time, Fish and Game staff observed that compliance with CWD-related transport rules was very low. Chronic wasting disease is a fatal neurological disease that poses a significant risk to Idaho's big game herds, and following transport rules is one of the most effective ways hunters can help slow its spread.

Hunters who pursue big game outside of Idaho and plan to bring any parts into or through the state are encouraged to review Idaho's legal transport requirements by visiting the [CWD webpage](#) on the Idaho Fish and Game website. Hunters who pursue big game within Idaho's CWD management zones should also take time to understand the [zone-specific rules and requirements](#) before heading into the field.

Idaho law authorizes Fish and Game to operate check stations to enforce wildlife regulations and collect biological data that supports wildlife management. All hunters, anglers and trappers—with or without game—are required to stop when encountering an official Fish and Game check station.

## 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.

### You are NOT alone.

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.



# Notes from the Road:

## So you want a winter habitat project? Try a wildlife opening



**By Nick Prough** — I will start this column off by saying its 9 p.m. and I just walked in literally from working on a new wildlife forest opening for a landowner who has been wanting to create one ever since I told him about them earlier this summer.

Well, we have been working on his since late last week, and I know I have written about the concept of them before so I will spare you those details at this time or go back and look at the older articles to brush up on the techniques of creating them and why. I will go more into the nuts and bolts of how to create one and some of the obstacles you can and will face.

First off, if you have any locusts or hedge in your timber then you will probably bleed during and after your work. I know as I type this, my knuckles and shins are both bleeding from working all day in the wildlife opening amongst the locusts and hedge trees as I have been poked and prodded more than at a doctor's office today doing lab work. I often say if you aren't bleeding, you didn't make a true wildlife opening.

For those of you that have created one you are nodding your head right now. I have included several pictures with the column to show you the partially finished project as of today before dark. Wildlife openings can be any size. I have literally made them with landowners  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an acre in size as that was all the area they had to work with or equipment capability they had at their disposal. I have also created several that were 2-3 acres in size as well with more available equipment at their disposal. I would say about my favorite go to size is about 1 acre in size and they are magnets to deer and turkey as well as to many other species of wildlife year-round. Quail often utilize them as well, depending on their location and inhabit the edges of them for cover and feeding.

What you plant in them depends on your goals and objectives or if you just let natural succession occur. The possibilities and options are endless depending on how you want it to look and what you are wanting to achieve. I have called in many a nice gobbler in the spring in wildlife openings, flushed coveys of quail in wildlife openings as well as seen my share of nice mature bucks utilizing them all year long. If songbirds are your thing, then create one and sit back and listen and watch as they will find it very fast. They can be created by using a chain saw, a skid steer with a tree saw, a tree puller on a skid steer, a track hoe, a bulldozer, a track loader and probably several other mechanical machines I have yet to see used on them. If you have the will then there is a way!



**Continued on Page 20**

# Hodgdon releases 2026 Hodgdon annual manual

**Editor's Note: Having reloaded thousands of rounds with Hodgdon powders and developed special rounds with their ballisticians over the years in both pistol and shotgun, they are a great company and produce a superb product.**

Hodgdon Powder Company, The Gunpowder People®, is pleased to announce the release of the **2026 Hodgdon Annual Manual**.

This reloading manual features data for Hodgdon, Accurate Powder®, IMR®, Ramshot® and Winchester® Smokeless Propellants. In total, more than 12,000 loads are represented in this title, with updates for more than 116 rifle and pistol cartridges and more than 1,000 shotshell loads. Along with comprehensive load data, the **2025 Hodgdon Annual Manual** offers authoritative articles by leading firearms industry writers from Shooting Times magazine.

“This year’s Annual Manual reflects our continued commitment to both new and experienced reloaders,” said Aaron Oelger, vice president of marketing. “For 2026, we expanded our educational focus with a series of Reloading 101 articles for beginners and advanced Reloading 301 features for seasoned handloaders. This edition also includes a memorial honoring JB Hodgdon, whose influence continues to guide our work.”

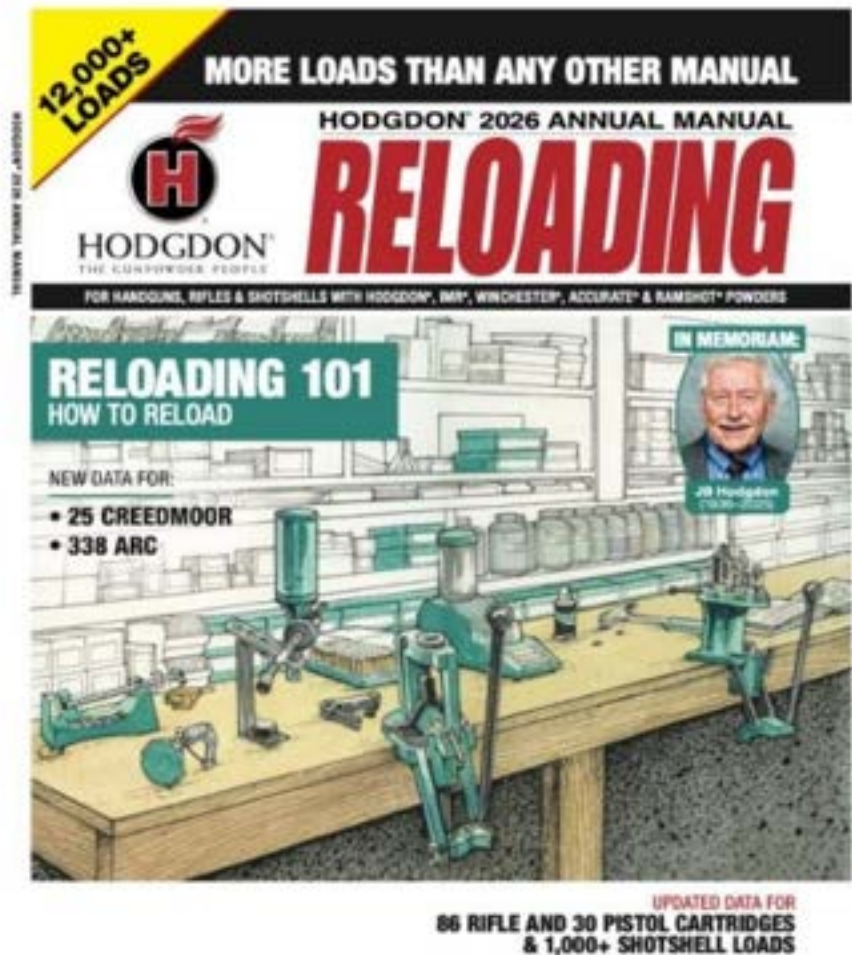
**This manual also includes articles on the following topics:**

- Reloading newer cartridges such the 22 ARC, 22 GT, 25 Creedmoor, 30 Nosler, and 338 ARC
- Loading subsonic cartridges
- Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Pyrodex
- A special reprint of RCBS Founder Fred Huntington’s classic 1967 essay ‘Why Reload’

Customers can purchase the **2026 Hodgdon Annual Manual** wherever popular magazines are sold or can order on the Hodgdon website at [www.Hodgdon.com](http://www.Hodgdon.com) for \$14.99 (shipping included).

## About Hodgdon Powder Company, Inc.

Established in 1947 by Bruce and Amy Hodgdon and sons J.B. and Bob, Hodgdon Powder Company is now the largest US consumer supplier of smokeless and blackpowder substitute propellants. The company distributes gunpowder under the **Hodgdon®**, **IMR®**, **Ramshot®**, **Accurate®**, **Winchester®**, **Pyrodex®**, **Triple Seven®** and **Blackhorn 209®** brands.



# HuntLink for North Dakota landowners

**Editor’s Note: This is a good link between landowners and hunters or trappers. It keeps the ultimate decision and control to the landowner and provides access to trappers and hunters to assist with predator control. Good landowners relations is the key to all hunting access.**

**HuntLink** is a new, voluntary program designed to help North Dakota landowners easily connect with hunters and trappers. The program offers a simple way to allow managed access for antlerless deer, coyotes, turkeys, and other species. For landowners experiencing wildlife depredation or looking for additional management tools, [HuntLink](#) can help.

Landowners can enroll through their North Dakota Game and Fish [My Account page](#) and may remove their listing at any time once they’ve connected with enough participants.

Hunters can view landowner requests across the state through the [HuntLink Map](#), but must contact landowners directly to obtain permission.



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For all your Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation chapter insurance needs, please call Leslie Casanova ([link](#)) 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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# Utah wildlife board approves bison hunting updates

The Utah Wildlife Board approved some updates for bison hunting and a few other rule changes during a public meeting held Thursday.

## Bison hunting changes

The wildlife board approved adjustments to some of the existing bison hunts, as well as the creation of a new cow bison hunt that would be held during the 2026 and 2027 hunting seasons. As part of the hunting season changes, the board also confirmed that the bison archery hunt would continue to be the final hunt of each season, ending on Jan. 31.

“These changes will help us to better manage the herd to the population objective and maintain the bull-cow ratio, which will help address current drought conditions,” Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Northern Region Wildlife Biologist Sam Robertson said. “The updates should also improve hunter distribution and hunt quality, while avoiding changes in bison distribution.”

The changes will be implemented for the 2026 and 2027 hunting seasons.



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**Continued from Page 14** — The board also approved a new Book Cliffs Bison Management Plan. The [previous plan was approved in 2007](#), and a committee was formed to address the challenges facing this particular herd and hunting unit. The new plan will increase the bison population objective and split it between the three subunits — Bitter Creek, Little Creek and South — for a total of 650 wintering adult bison, rather than 450.

“The reason for this increase is because the distribution of the bison herd on the Bitter Creek subunit has greatly increased,” DWR Northeastern Region Wildlife Biologist Clint Sampson said. “Thousands of acres of habitat have been restored in recent years to provide additional feed, and we have also repaired ponds, built more guzzlers and worked on spring developments. This has helped the bison herds to spread out more across the entire Book Cliffs area.”

**Updated hunting relief options related to natural disasters**

[Recent wildfires](#) and other natural disasters prompted the DWR to propose updates to its administrative rule, adding some relief options for affected permit holders. The board approved the changes, which include allowing one or more of the following options for hunters (both residents and nonresidents) when a natural disaster impacts them and prevents their participation in the hunt listed on their permit:

- Reinstating their bonus or preference points
- Waiving their waiting period, if applicable
- Refunding their permit fee, minus a \$25 processing fee

In order to be eligible for the relief options, the hunter must fill out an application and submit it to the DWR within 30 days of the last day of the hunting season listed on their permit.

They must also include documentation of the natural disaster that caused the impacts and include notarized statements of how the disaster restricted their ability to travel, displaced them or restricted them from being able to safely hunt. The associated permit for the affected hunt must also be submitted to the DWR.

If a natural disaster is impacting a hunting unit, this rule change will allow the DWR director to grant relief to the affected hunters if the following criteria are met:

**Continued on Page 16**

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**Continued from Page 15 —**

- More than 50% of hunting opportunities are unavailable.
- Access to more than 50% of public land within an individual hunt unit has been closed
- due to administrative actions of the state or federal government.

**If these criteria are met, the DWR director could offer one or more of the following types of relief:**

- Reinstate bonus or preference points
- Waive the waiting period, if applicable
- Refund the permit fee, minus the \$25 processing fee
- Extend the hunting opportunity (for the same season and unit) to the subsequent year

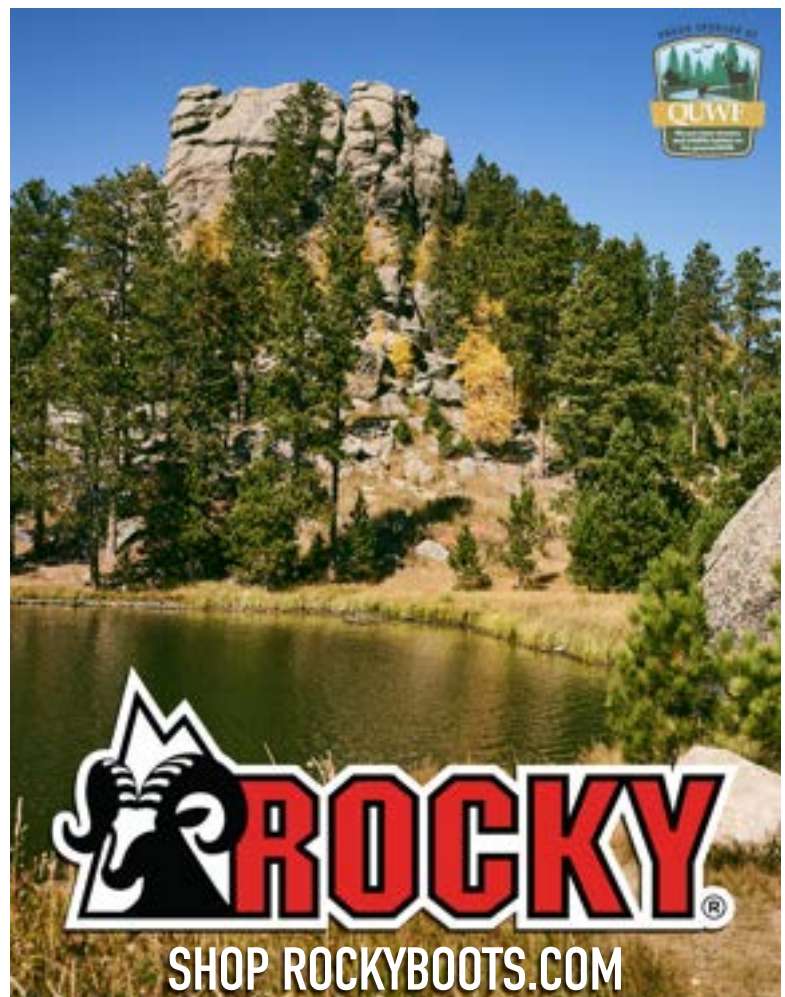
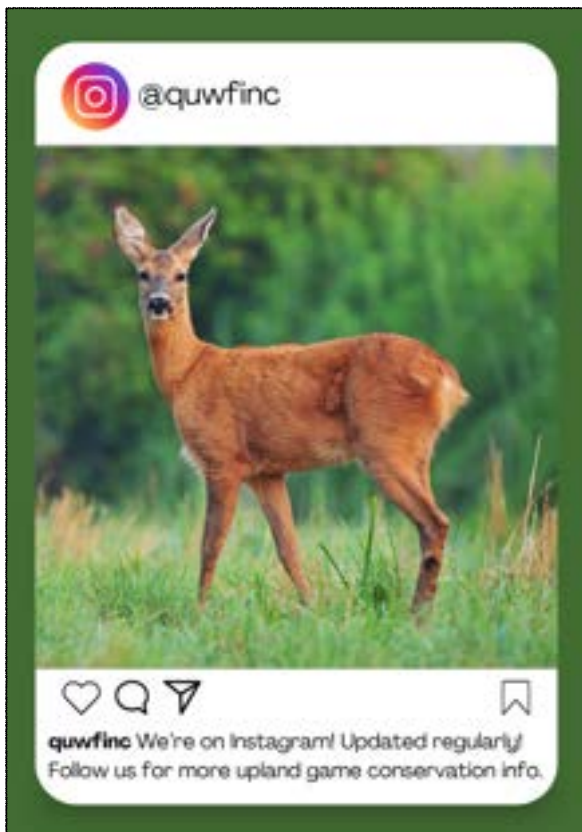
## NSSF-adjusted NICS background checks for Nov.

The November 2025 NSSF-adjusted National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) figure of 1,408,230 is a decrease of 7.0 percent compared to the November 2024 NSSF-adjusted NICS figure of 1,514,773. For comparison, the unadjusted November 2025 FBI NICS figure of 2,005,667 reflects a 20.1 percent decrease from the unadjusted FBI NICS figure of 2,509,368 in November 2024.

Additional insights on the month-over-month NICS data from GunBroker, NICS Reporting & Analysis (October 2025 data), available in the member portal under Industry Research.

- *Top-5 States for Adjusted NICS Checks: TX, FL, CA, PA, VA*
- *Top-5 States for FBI NICS Handgun Checks: FL, TX, CA, PA, TN*
- *Top-5 States for FBI NICS Long Gun Checks: TX, FL, PA, CA, VA*

**Continued on Page 17**



**Continued from Page 16** — Please note: Twenty-eight states currently have at least one qualified alternative permit, which under the Brady Act allows the permit-holder, who has undergone a background check to obtain the permit, to purchase a firearm from a licensed dealer without a separate additional background check for that transfer. The number of NICS checks in these states does not include these legal transfers based on qualifying permits and NSSF does not adjust for these transfers.

The adjusted NICS data were derived by subtracting out NICS purpose code permit checks and permit rechecks used by states for CCW permit application checks as well as checks on active CCW permit databases. NSSF started subtracting permit rechecks in February 2016.

Though not a direct correlation to firearms sales, the NSSF-adjusted NICS data provide an additional picture of current market conditions. In addition to other purposes, NICS is used to check transactions for sales or transfers of new or used firearms.

It should be noted that these statistics represent the number of firearm background checks initiated through the NICS. They do not represent the number of firearms sold or sales dollars. Based on varying state laws, local market conditions and purchase scenarios, a one-to-one correlation cannot be made between a firearm background check and a firearm sale.



*The N. C. Wildlife Resources Commission and partners began a long-term hellbender monitoring project in 2007, studying populations and revisiting key sites. They also track habitat threats and educate the public on hellbender conservation.*

**THIS ONE SETS ITSELF APART**

**RXm™**  
LEARN MORE

# Caution: Running diesel trucks in cold weather

If you own a diesel truck, many states require fuel suppliers to add a non-gel chemical to allow the fuel to not gel down to 10 degrees Fahrenheit. Problem is, there is no monitoring or testing to ensure it's truly enough and the quality to prevent gelling. Also, adding the chemical does reduce your mileage, in my truck instantly I can see a 2 to 3 mile per gallon reduction. Just a note, I also go out of my way to find fuel that does not contain ethanol or biodiesel. My truck absolutely does not like it. It runs rougher, mileage decreases and I do not need that in winter months or any month for that matter.

Also, there is no guarantee that the amount of additive will work to 10 degrees F. Therefore, if you are looking at temps of 10 degrees, plug your truck in, keep your tank full and if it gets really cold, below 10 or zero, add anti-gel IAW the instructions. Carry a bottle in the truck at all times for cold starts while travelling. If you live in north country, carry a 25 foot 12GA extension cord as well to plug in the truck.

Convenience note here: If you have the Alexa system in your home, you can put a control adapter on the outlet you use to plug in the truck. Plug the extension cord into that adapter (use 12Ga) and one where the plug illuminates so you can see it is on, then plug in the truck. Then you can tell Alexa when to turn on the truck heater and when to turn it off without putting down your coffee in the house. For our truck it takes about 3 hours to warm up the systems using the plug in at zero to -10 degrees. In some new models, the heating plug-in does not turn off at a temperature so be careful not to leave it plugged-in or you will see your electric bill sore.

Same with tractors, dozers etc., add the anti-gel to full tanks of fuel. Make sure they have battery tenders installed to trickle charge in cold weather.

No matter what the equipment, give it time to warm up before trying to work it. Use the glo-plugs on tractors and dozers. Especially if hydraulics are involved. Operating in cold to very cold weather is very tough on any machinery and you.

Remember to check your antifreeze levels and to make sure it is enough to protect your vehicles or equipment to the lowest temperatures expected, here, that is -28 degrees in January and February.



**CAUTION:** It is that time of year, be careful if you live near freezing lakes, ponds or rivers. It only needs to happen once and you will regret it. Check ice thickness regularly especially as it forms, and in the spring as it melts.



**TWO HISTORIES  
ONE NEW LEGACY**

**RUGER** X **DEAD AIR**

## Davidson's Exclusive adds new colorway to Ruger RXM

**Editor's Note: Davidson's is now a partner supplier of all QUWF Chapters.**

**PRESCOTT, Ariz.** — Davidson's, one of the nation's top firearms, ammunition, optics, and accessories wholesalers, is pleased to announce their latest exclusive firearm produced in collaboration with Ruger.

This Ruger RXM is now produced with a flat dark earth slide finish and a Magpul® FDE frame, exclusively available at Davidson's and GalleryofGuns.com.

Launched on Davidson's LIVE in December of 2024, the RXM pistol is the result of a tremendous collaboration between Ruger and Magpul. This fully American-made handgun stands out with a variety of upgraded features, exceptional ergonomics, and an affordable price.

This Magpul FDE exclusive variant has all the desirable features of the original and represents Davidson's fourth exclusive RXM.

Caliber: 9mm Barrel length: 4" Overall length: 7.15"

Front sight: Tritium, co-witness height

Rear sight: Steel drift-adjustable

Optic cut: RMR/RMSc footprint

Trigger: Flat faced Weight (unloaded): 23.2 ounces

15-round capacity, two magazines included

Item#19437-RUG carries an MSRP of \$519.00, however consumers will likely enjoy a lower price at their local Davidson's and Gallery of Guns FFL retailer.

This new exclusive is in stock now and available for immediate shipment.



# THIS ONE SETS ITSELF APART

## RXM™

SHOP NOW

**Cedar Mulch and Ticks:** Cedar mulch can be used to deter ticks because it's natural oils repel them, and ticks dislike its dry surface. To use it effectively, create a barrier of at least 3 feet wide around the perimeter of your yard, especially near wooded areas or tall grass, and place it around key zones like play areas, dog runs, and garden beds.

#### How to use cedar mulch for tick deterrence

- **Create a barrier:** Spread a 3-foot wide barrier of cedar mulch between lawns and wooded areas or tall grass to prevent ticks from migrating into recreational areas.
- **Use around play areas:** Place cedar mulch in garden beds, around swing sets, and in dog runs to create a repellent zone where pets and children spend time.
- **Place near the foundation:** Add a layer of cedar mulch around the exterior foundation of your home to help keep ticks from getting close to the house.
- **Maintain a dry surface:** Ticks prefer to avoid dry, loose surfaces like wood chips or gravel, so using cedar mulch can discourage them from being in that area.

#### Other tips for a tick-free yard:

- **Keep grass mowed:** Regularly mow your lawn to reduce the places where ticks can hide.
- **Remove leaf litter:** Rake and remove leaf litter and other debris where ticks often hide.
- **Consider other natural barriers:** A barrier of gravel or stones can also be an effective alternative to cedar mulch.

**Making Cedar Mulch:** The WoodMaxx 8600 Power Take Off (PTO) chipper or Skid Steer Chipper. Made in the USA.



**Continued from Page 11** — Picking out your location is half of the battle, look for one that isn't so dense that you will be fighting yourself the entire way, look for one that is flat so you can have good finished bottom once completed, look for one with decent drainage so you aren't just building a woodland wetland (that is another article and actually we are building one of those less than 300 yards away on this same tract of land). A wildlife opening can be built any time of year but the later fall and winter is my favorite time of year for a whole host of reasons but the top couple that come to mind is much easier to see and move about in the woods, less or no ticks, drier ground normally to work in and much easier to see the amount of sunlight on the forest floor with leaves off the trees that you will have to work with and are creating with each tree removed.

On this one, once we selected our site several days ahead, we flagged the trees with orange flagging tape that we wanted to save. They can be wildlife friendly trees, acorn producers, oaks, walnuts, roost trees for turkeys, quality trees for cover, berry producers, etc. Then you can flag the trees with green flagging tape that you want to be sure to remove no-matter what, those can be the locusts, the non-wildlife friendly trees, trees that are not doing well or in the way of your goals and objectives. Green means go, and so I always use green to remove them and the contractors like that method as well. The remaining trees not flagged can be dealers' choice of your equipment operator or yourself once you start to see the pieces of the puzzle taking shape. I often say take a look after you have removed the green flagged trees and see what else you may want to remove to get to your desired look and density of remaining trees you left standing.

**Continued on Page 21**

**Continued from Page 20** — It is always easier to remove some more later but remember once you cut or push a tree down with a dozer you can't put it back so be conservative to start with and then remove as needed further trees. After just a few hours, with even a chainsaw, you will begin to see it take shape and if you have access to heavy equipment after a couple hours you will be amazed at all you have accomplished in a short period of time. Take pictures along the way to see what you have accomplished at the end of the day and to remind you of what that area looked like before you started to create your new wildlife opening. Have fun. It is like a blank canvas in reverse you get to create your picture of what you are creating one tree removal at a time. You will find and hit obstacles, super windy days like last week (55 mph winds and removing trees don't equal success), sometimes you will have to wind row the downed trees to place them lightly together for cover but sometimes there is too many so you have to burn some of them (once again not good on windy days). Follow your weather and watch the changes that can and will occur. (Yes, tonight is an early night at 9 p.m. as last week one of the reasons this project got pushed into this week as well is we had a larger than forecasted front late last week and had 55 mph winds after a large dozer pile had already been burning for 24 hours).

So yes, I was the "fire watch guy" until 2 a.m. last Thursday night. All went well, but you have to plan that weather can and many times will change rapidly and will affect your field work even in the forest. Tonight its 9 p.m. you say why so late again it gets dark at 5:30. Yes, correct, but when you use larger equipment such as a skid steer, mechanical issues can and will arise and things will break so we replaced a broken skid steer track tonight in the wildlife opening that happened just before it got dark while the landowner was operating the machine trying to get just a few more trees removed for the day.

We did this tonight so we could move the equipment out of the wildlife opening and out of harms way of any obstacle trees still standing and continue work on the project early in the am. Obstacles can and will occur, it is expected in life and in habitat work. Adapt to them, overcome them and continue on with your new wildlife opening you just created. Just try one this winter you will be glad you did — a few band aids are cheap along the way.

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 landowner liaison.*

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