

Dear Sports Enthusiast,

Thank you for being part of the sportsman and outdoor legacy in our great Commonwealth.

Like you, I enjoy the endless opportunities provided by thousands of acres of forest land across our region. It's a great tradition, and I encourage you to help continue it for future generations.

This newsletter includes information about Chronic Wasting Disease, an expansion of the Game Commission's Mentored Hunting Program, last year's bear harvest, hunter-trapper education options, the Hunters Sharing the Harvest Program and more.

I hope you find this newsletter helpful and informative. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please contact my office or visit my website at www.RepCauser.com. It is always wonderful to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Marty Causer

Rep. Marty Causer
67th Legislative District



I always enjoy hunting with my son, Matthew.

Touring the Oswayo Fish Hatchery

I was glad to join the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) for a tour and discussion at the Oswayo Fish Hatchery in May. This is an outstanding facility that raises some of the best trout in our state. Special thanks to hatchery manager DJ Beckey for leading the tour, along with PFBC Commissioner Bill Brock and Executive Director Tim Schaeffer. We were also joined by Sen. Cris Dush, Rep. Brian Smith and Potter County Commissioner Bob Rossman.



Increased PILT to Support Local Communities

A new state law will increase the payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) on state lands managed by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) and Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC).

The PILT provides much-needed compensation to communities that have a high amount of state-owned land that is not subject to property taxes.

Under Act 54 of 2024, each of the three agencies would pay \$9 per acre of land, split evenly among the county, municipality and school district in which the land is located. That's an increase of \$1.80 over the current rate. The increase will be funded through slot machine revenue.

In addition to the immediate increase in the PILT rate, the law will also require the rate to be adjusted for inflation every five years, starting in 2030-31, ensuring our communities are more consistently and fairly compensated for the value of this land.

Though the rates were adjusted last year, prior to that, it had been six years since the DCNR rate was increased and more than 15 years since the PGC and PFBC rates had been increased.

PGC Expands Mentored Hunting Program

Continuing its efforts to get more people involved in hunting in the Commonwealth, the Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners recently approved a plan to allow mentors hunting with a mentored youth to accompany up to two additional hunters, be they mentored youth, junior hunters or mentored adults.

Previously, no additional junior or mentored hunters could accompany a mentor hunting with a mentored youth. There was a required one-to-one mentor/mentee ratio. That limit has now changed to three.

The requirement that limits mentors and mentored youth to possessing only one sporting arm between them remains. The mentor must carry the sporting arm at all times while moving. Junior hunters and mentored adults may possess their own sporting arms while accompanied by a common mentor.

This change will be in place in time for the fall hunting seasons.

Learn more about mentored hunting at www.pgc.pa.gov.



2023 Bear Harvest

The Pennsylvania Game Commission announced 2,920 bears were taken during the various seasons in 2023.

Hunters took bears in 58 of the state's 67 counties and 20 of 22 Wildlife Management Units (WMUs). Hunters got bears in all seasons, too. The traditional statewide firearms bear season contributed the most to the harvest at 1,086. The archery season added 695, the extended season 591, the muzzleloader season 424, the special firearms season 117 and the early archery season seven.

The largest bear harvested was a 691-pounder taken in the extended rifle season in Porter Township, Pike County, by Mitchell Jonathan of Quakertown. But five other hunters got bears exceeding 600 pounds, and all of the top 10 heaviest bears weighed at least 576 pounds.

Totals for bears taken in our area are as follows: Potter, 155; McKean, 90; and Cameron, 85.



Tracking Spread of CWD

Responding to the continued spread of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in the state's deer population, the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) is expanding three of its disease management areas (DMAs) for the 2024-25 hunting season.

As of early June, 440 deer tested positive for CWD in the 2023-24 sampling year, 291 of them harvested by hunters. Both numbers are up from the year before when 426 deer overall, 243 of them harvested by hunters, tested positive.



While two of the affected DMAs are down state (DMAs 2 and 8), DMA 3 – which includes portions of Elk County, as well as Armstrong, Cambria, Clarion, Clearfield, Indiana and Jefferson counties – is also being expanded due to detection of CWD in a road-killed fawn in Armstrong County. The commission conducts road-killed deer surveillance year-round, so there is potential for the boundaries to change prior to the hunting seasons. Be sure to check online for the most up-to-date boundaries.

As with previous years, most of the deer that tested positive for CWD in the 2023-24 hunting season came from DMA 2, located in southcentral Pennsylvania, and were concentrated in the Established Area (EA) that covers portions of Bedford, Blair, Franklin, Fulton and Huntingdon counties. This area, where CWD is considered established within the deer population, has produced nearly 90% of Pennsylvania's CWD-positives since the disease first was detected here in 2012.

This is also where a CWD research study is taking place, specifically in Bedford and Fulton counties. This was the second year of the study and in total, crews captured and collared 95 deer. This multi-year project is conducted in cooperation with the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Penn State University and the Wildlife Futures Program at Penn Vet.

A critical part of this research is testing deer that have been ear tagged or collared. If you find or harvest a tagged deer, please call the number on the ear tags so samples can be collected.

CWD is an always-fatal neurological disease affecting cervids, including deer and elk. There is no vaccine and no cure for animals that get it.

Learn more about CWD surveillance efforts by visiting www.pgc.pa.gov/cwd.

Are You Enjoying This Newsletter? Sign Up to Receive It Every Year!

If you are receiving this Sportsmen Report for the first time – and you want to receive it again – please fill out the coupon below or log into my website and sign up at www.RepCauser.com/huntfish. Your information will not be provided to any third party.

NAME: _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

Clip and return in an envelope to Rep. Martin Causer, 78 Main St., 1st Floor, Bradford, PA 16701.

Extended Firearms

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| WMUs 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 4C, 4E & 5A | Nov. 30 - Dec. 7, Sun., Dec. 1 included |
| WMUs 2B, 5B, 5C and 5D | Nov. 30 - Dec. 14, Sun., Dec. 1 included |

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Sportsmen's Report

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Attention First-Time Hunters!

Hunter-Trapper Education courses are required for all first-time hunters and trappers before they can buy a license in the Commonwealth. The Pennsylvania Game Commission offers both in-person and online options.

The course covers responsible hunting behavior, firearms basics and safety, basic shooting, wildlife conservation and management, outdoor safety and survival, hunting techniques, trapping and furtaking basics, and hunting safety.

The following options are available:

- ✓ PGC's Basic Hunter-Trapper Education In-Person Course is offered free of charge to anyone age 11 and older. Classes are held in various locations across the Commonwealth. A schedule is available at www.pgc.pa.gov.
- ✓ This interactive online version of PGC's Basic Hunter-Trapper Education Course is offered to Pennsylvania residents age 11 and older. The fee for this course is \$49.95.
- ✓ PGC's official online course is offered to Pennsylvania residents age 16 or older. The fee for this course is \$34.95.
- ✓ The National Rifle Association offers a free online hunter education course to Pennsylvania residents age 11 and older.



Visit www.pgc.pa.gov for more information.

Hunters Sharing the Harvest

Did you know Pennsylvania has a venison donation program to help families in need?

Each season, Hunters Sharing the Harvest (HSH) aims to donate over 100,000 pounds of venison to more than 5,000 food banks, soup kitchens and mission outreach centers statewide. Families and individuals access the food banks to help put food on the table for themselves and their children.

Since 1991, HSH has coordinated the processing and distribution of approximately 2.5 million pounds of donated deer meat and wild game from hunters and municipal herd reduction sources to hungry people throughout Pennsylvania.

An average-sized deer, for example, will provide enough high-protein, low-fat meat for 200 servings. Thanks to program sponsors, hunters can donate venison at no charge.

To learn more about the program, and find participating processors, visit www.sharedeer.org or call 866-474-2141.



Services Available at My Office

Among the many resources available at my offices in Bradford, Coudersport and Kane are several publications of interest to the region's sportsmen and women. Stop by during office hours for the following publications:

- Fish and Boat Code (Title 30)
- PA Fishing Summary
- Game and Wildlife Code (Title 34)
- PA Hunting and Trapping Digest
- PA Laws Relating to Firearms
- Personal Firearms Inventory
- A Guide to Purchasing Firearms
- PA Firearms Laws and Commonly Asked Questions
- PA Hunting and Trapping Pocket Guides
- Targets