

# WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT *News*

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## PA Buck Forage Buck

by Glenn Wolfe, Director of Sales & Marketing  
Co-operative Feed Dealers Inc.

The story begins in the summer when I began building a fence around the perimeter of our upper (destination) food plot.

Deer are lazy critters and we needed a way to “funnel” them, instead of having them enter anywhere they wanted into the 10-acre smorgasbord of food plots my son, son-in-law and I had planted throughout the spring, summer and fall planting season. The plan was to build a simple 3-strand barbed wire fence with strategically placed openings that would allow us to hunt these funnels and take advantage of the deer’s natural instinct to travel the path with the least resistance by not jumping the fence.

As soon as the fence was complete, the deer started using these funnels very heavily as indicated by the

number of pictures we were getting on our trail cameras.

It didn’t take long to identify three or four good bucks that were using the funnels and these bucks then went on our “shooter” list.

The first couple of weeks of PA archery season didn’t offer the correct wind to hunt the southeast funnel stand, so we let it sit idle; the evening of October 18th the weather prediction sounded good, so I left work early as the conditions would be perfect for my first sit in this funnel stand.

After a quick shower and changing into my hunting clothes, I jumped into the southeast funnel stand. The evening got off to a pretty quick start having several doe come through the funnel and by my stand shortly after 4:00 PM. *Continued on page 2*



THIS IS GLENN’S POPE & YOUNG PA BUCK. HE ALSO HARVESTED A POPE & YOUNG BUCK IN KANSAS WHILE HUNTING WITH THE BUCK FORAGE GANG. WE WILL FEATURE GLENN’S “BLOODY ANTLER” BUCK IN THE NEXT EDITION OF WMN.

## Wendel Crosby’s “Jim Buck”

I had the chance to be the next to last person to see this trophy buck alive. Although I never had an opportunity to shoot at him, my information and encouragement provided to Wendel helped him harvest this monster buck who is at least named after me.

In order to give this story justice, I need to share where this adventure started. While representing Buck Forage Products at a Sportsman’s expo near Hagerstown, Maryland,

this past summer, I met Wendel, Lisa, and Harold (Pappy) from Bedrock Big Bucks. We shared nearby displays and several hot and humid days, sometimes with the temperatures surpassing 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Wendel’s display featured some of the buck that had been taken in their area of Ohio and I told him how I would love to someday have the opportunity to hunt there. One thing led to another and as we parted ways I told the guys that I would check my schedule out

*Continued on page 2*



WENDEL CROSBY WITH HIS 330 LB. “JIM BUCK”!

### ***PA Buck Forage Buck continued from page 1***

The doe, fawn and small buck activity was somewhat steady from 4:00 PM on, moving from my neighbor's property to our destination food plots.

Around 5:15 PM I saw one of the bucks on our "shooter" list come out of a bedding area on the neighbor's property and feed out into their hay field about 200 yards away.

Soon after seeing the shooter in the neighbor's field, I had a really nice 8-point that didn't quite make our "shooter" list come through the funnel at 15 yards. I attached my release to the string loop and was tempted to shoot this buck because in person he looked bigger than the trail camera pictures showed, but I let him walk hoping to get a shot at the "BIG 8" that was still in the neighbor's field.

As it got closer to dark the deer in the neighboring field continued to move in the direction of the funnel where I sat. Around 5:30 PM the "BIG 8" made his way toward the Buck Forage Oat plot like he had so many times before, but the fatal mistake he made was walking through the funnel during daylight hours as I sat in the stand only 15 yards away.

I drew my bow before he got to the funnel and as he walked out on the stand side, I shot him walking at 15 yards; he ran 60 yards into our field of Big Bluestem and stood there for a minute or two before he laid down. I watched the area where he laid until dark to make sure he didn't get back up and I slipped out of my tree stand and circled wide of the area as to not disturb the deer and went home for dinner. After having dinner and discussing the scenario with my son, we decided that I probably hit him back in the lungs or the liver and that we should give him extra time to expire as I certainly didn't want to jump this buck after dark and risk the possibility of not finding him. I went back at daylight the next morning, climbed my stand for a reference point in the Big Bluestem and walked straight to my buck about 70 yards away.

This is the largest buck we have taken off the property since purchasing it seven years ago.

#### **STATS:**

**Estimated 3½ years old**  
**8 point**  
**19½" inside spread**  
**21½" outside spread**  
**Live weight 240 lbs**  
**Dressed weight 199 lbs**



### ***"Jim Buck" continued from page 1***

and talk to some friends to try and coordinate a trip to Bedrock.

Several months later, Wendel contacted me again to build a fire under my butt to get things going for a hunt. I contacted some friends, picked a date (when the rut would be on), sent deposit checks, and made arrangements to take some Buck Forage seeds with me as well.

The 9-hour trip to Wendel's lodge flew by as we drove Dave Sienko's pickup across PA and Ohio. Scott Glezen, Dave, Dan Sorg, and I knew we were timing our trip well with the rut because of the number of road kill bucks we observed along the highway!

Conversations while en route to a hunting adventure are always animated and fun and I think Scott had the most profound thought when he said that regardless of the outcome, it was great to get out of Dodge for a few days and hang out with three good guys. Dave, Dan and I were hoping to see some good bucks and maybe lucky enough to bag one, but on a first time hunt at a new place, we really didn't know what to expect. Everyone knows that regardless of how much you spend there are always horror stories once you arrive. Since I was the ring leader of this hunt, I was really praying for a good experience for my friends (I didn't want to be thrown out of the truck on the way home).

We arrived at Bedrock Big Bucks in time for a bear pot roast dinner and Wendel showed us our rooms. Only four hunters are booked at a time and the accommodations are absolutely outstanding. Each guest had his own bedroom (no snoring bunk mates) and a full bath for two to share.

The hunt began the next morning after we had a huge breakfast. Wendel and Harold (Pappy) dropped us off on the stands we were shown the evening of our arrival. We did not take any deer the first morning, but Dan scored first with a nice eight point (he shot it because he thought it was a nine point and wanted it because he had never killed a nine. Scott got his buck the first afternoon as well, a huge 240 lb eight point scoring over 140.

Dave Sienko and I continued to hunt the next couple of days with Wendel and Pappy doing their utmost to get us in the path of a big buck. Dave had a nice buck in range after seeing several smaller ones but could not get a good shot off at it.

*Continued next page*

## ***“Jim Buck” continued***

The last afternoon of our hunt I was set up in an area where there was a lot of doe activity and I did see four small buck. Late in the afternoon with dusk approaching, the largest deer I have ever seen in my life shot out of the thick wooded area and stood at the edge of a bank. This buck was in pursuit of a couple of doe that had been feeding on locust pods in the area and were now over the bank and out of sight. I grunted several times and got his attention but his mind was on a hot girlfriend, not me. He did have an attitude and gave me a look like “When I’m done here, I’m coming back to kick your butt.” He never got closer than 80 yards.

When Wendel and the guys came back to pick me up at a pre-arranged site, they asked what I had seen that afternoon. I told them that I saw the biggest deer I had ever seen – in fact it was like a horse with antlers.

Back at the lodge Wendel and Pappy were more than a little excited about my sighting of this buck. In fact they knew of this buck and had not seen hide nor hair of him for several weeks. When a deer like this

comes up missing, Ohio is just like anywhere else, there is always the potential for a poacher to take him.

As we sat around the kitchen table talking, I could tell Wendel was becoming more and more excited. He asked me about the shape of the rack and how many points and where and when it came out in relationship to the stand I was in. I told him exactly where he was and what he did but couldn’t give him an idea of points, I said only that there were lots of them and he probably had close to a 24” inside spread.

Finally all of the little boy came out of Wendel, and believe me Wendel is not a little boy, and he said, “That’s it; I’m taking off work and going after him.” I didn’t hear from Wendel until Tuesday night. He called me at home right from the field where he set up and I had last seen the “Monster.” “Jimmy,” he said, “I nailed him! He was quartering away inside 15 yards. I stuck him good!” Then Wendel said, “Man! I think I’m going to have a heart attack!” I told him to settle down and chill out and that we needed him to take us hunting next year! So don’t go having a heart attack.

Wendel went home and I wouldn’t be surprised if he had a little liquid encouragement! He went back the following morning after what I’m sure was a sleepless night to find his “Jim Buck.” I told you that Wendel is a pretty big guy, but the “Jim Buck” is a tad bigger than him. This Ohio bruiser weighed 330 lbs., scored over 170 and had an inside spread of 22” (I exaggerated at 24”) and had 13 points with triple eye guards on one side!

The folks at Bedrock Big Bucks like to limit the number of guests to four for the simple and great philosophy of being able to share the experience with the hunters. I wasn’t physically there to share Wendel’s hunting experience, but I was there to see him drag out Scott Glezen’s deer, and honestly I think Wendel was as happy as Scott was to get that trophy. We booked a trip for next year already and if you would like to have an excellent affordable hunting experience in Ohio, by all means contact Bedrock Big Bucks at 614-499-6589 or [www.bedrockbigbucks.com](http://www.bedrockbigbucks.com). You won’t be disappointed!



**Scott Glezen  
2012 Crossbow Buck  
Taken at Bedrock Big Bucks**

# Dunstan Chestnut Tree Sale

Our previous Dunstan Chestnut Tree Sale was a huge success! It's great to know that people are very much interested in repopulating this historic tree...one tree at a time. If you would like information and/or be added to our email list, please send request to: [denisesellers@epix.net](mailto:denisesellers@epix.net).

Why are chestnuts better than oaks? They begin to bear in only 2-4 years. You don't need to wait 20 years for them to start bearing like with many oaks. They are proven to bear 10-20 lbs of nuts per tree by 10 years old, before most oaks even start to bear. Plus, chestnuts bear every year without the on-year, off for 2-3 year cycles that many oaks have. Chestnuts are sought out by deer because of the sweet-tasting nuts and their nutritional value – they have very high carbohydrates and protein, and they have no bitter-tasting tannin like oaks. Chestnuts bear from September to early November. —*RealTree Nursery*

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QDMA Susquehanna Branch, PO Box 454, Montrose, PA 18801

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**Trees will need to be picked up at Matt Sellers, 5059 Meshoppen Creek Road, Montrose.  
Please be sure to include your phone number so we can contact you when the trees are delivered.**

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# Maybe there are Deer on PA State Game Lands

Bill Stepniak proudly displays his record buck that he took on State Game Lands this 2012 rifle season. Bill knows very well what takes up residency on State Game Lands because he is one of the guys who is employed by Pennsylvania to plant food plots and create habitat for all types of wildlife on these properties.

It's no easy task to oversee the thousand acres that are involved in our game lands. The Game Commission welcomes the help of many organizations such as the Quality Deer Management Association and the National Wild Turkey Federation who generously donate time and funding to create habitat and food sources. The Buck Forage Oat company has also been very generous in donating thousands of dollars worth of clover, chicory, and oat seed to be planted on State Game Lands.

To see the quality of Bill's magnificent deer, it is evident that the great effort of the managers of this PA public property is paying off. Bill told me that many people have had the attitude that State Game Lands are the place to hunt only if you don't have anywhere else to go. I think when folks see this is the kind of deer that makes the game lands home, they are going to change their minds.



BILL'S PA GAME LAND BUCK SCORED 165 7/8"



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## Northeast Regional Coyote Hunt – \$2000 Grand Prize!

**February 1, 2, & 3, 2013**

**Sponsored by District 9, Pa. Trappers Assn.**

\$2000 grand prize will be awarded to the hunter with the heaviest coyote. Also, a \$250 daily prize will be awarded to the heaviest coyote weighed in each day, and \$100 will be awarded for all other coyotes turned in during the hunt. Coyotes taken on the three days of the hunt in Bradford, Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyoming, Lackawanna, Pike, Luzerne and Sullivan Counties may be entered for weigh-in.

Coyotes may be taken by **HUNTING ONLY. NO TRAPPED OR CABLE-RESTRAINED COYOTES ALLOWED.** Pennsylvania Game Commission regulations must be strictly adhered to. Coyotes must be taken by fair chase/stalk methods. In case of a tie, the first coyote weighed in wins.

Weigh-in will be held at the Triton Hose Co., 116 West Tioga St., Tunkhannock, PA 18657, from 12:00 PM to 8:00 PM on Friday & Saturday, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM on Sunday. **WEIGH-IN ENDS AT 2:00 PM SHARP ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3.** A weigh-in dinner, included in the entry fee, will be held for all entrants on Sunday from 1:00 to 3:00 PM.

All members of a hunting party must be registered in the hunt. All coyotes entered become the property of the Hunt Committee. Hunter who makes the kill must present the coyote for registration. The Hunt Committee may not award prizes for 72 hours after the hunt ends to allow review of the animals and verification of rules compliance. An autopsy may be done on animals that the Hunt Committee deems suspicious. By paying the entry fee the hunter agrees that the decision of the Hunt Committee is final. Any infractions will result in immediate disqualification of the hunter(s) involved, and all prize monies and entry fees will be forfeited.

\$25 early entry fee (due by January 21) will cover the three days of the hunt plus weigh-in dinner from 1:00 to 3:00 on Sunday. \$30 late registration fee is required after January 21. Registrations will not be accepted after 10:00 PM January 30. Clip the registration below and send along with a check or money order made out to District 9, Pa. Trappers Assn. Mail to: Northeast Regional Coyote Hunt, 3833 Old Newburg Turpike, Union Dale, PA 18470. For more info call 570-942-6895 or 570-679-2318, or e-mail [pricee@nep.net](mailto:pricee@nep.net) – “coyote hunt information” in the subject line of the e-mail.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Attending Buffet? (circle one) Y N

**My signature below indicates I have read the rules and agree to abide by the decisions of the Hunt Committee.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## BEAVER CARCASSES WANTED

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Whole carcasses including skulls are needed. However, **we are not collecting juvenile (kit) beavers (kits usually weigh less than 28 lbs).** Each carcass must be tagged with 1) Date of harvest, 2) Wildlife Management Unit, 3) County, 4) Township, 5) Watercourse name, and 6) Trapper's name. Carcass tags will be provided to cooperating trappers.

Decomposed carcasses cannot be used. Trappers may be required to transport beaver carcasses to a PGC regional office, PTA fur sale, or other pick up point. We may reach the quota for the number of carcasses needed in a WMU. If a WMU quota is reached, we will attempt to contact you and will not collect any additional carcasses from that WMU.

*If you are interested in becoming a cooperating trapper, please contact:*

Tom Hardisky  
PGC Wildlife Biologist  
2621 E. Winter Road  
Loganton, PA 17747  
570-725-3663  
[thardisky@pa.gov](mailto:thardisky@pa.gov)



## Pennsylvania Game Commission Speakers at QDMA Meeting

The Susquehanna Branch of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) hosted an open meeting in November, at the Central Conservation Club in South Montrose. This meeting featured speakers from the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC), Wildlife Conservation Officer Mike Webb, PGC Food and Cover Corps Foremen Chuck Wiseman and Darren Pettyjohn.

The focus of PGC Wildlife Officer Webb's talk was an update of his current work activities, sportsmanship and how hunters and landowners can help to improve hunting opportunities for everyone. One way to improve hunting opportunities is to help stop illegal hunting (poaching). One way this could be done is by providing accurate and timely information to the PGC Regional Office (570-675-1143) about poaching. Officer Webb detailed that there had been a considerable amount of illegal hunting done in the western part of Susquehanna County. Officer Webb said that during the fall hunting season he often works 80-100 hours per week of which much is focused on reported illegal shooting and hunting.

Wiseman and Pettyjohn both spoke of their crews' activities on the local State Game Lands (SGL) 35, 140, 219, 236 in Susquehanna and Bradford Counties. The PGC Food and Cover Corps is a little known part of the Game Commission whose efforts are focused on habitat improvement projects on the more than 1.4 million acres of State Game Lands. The PGC network of State Game Lands is critical to ensuring that wildlife will always have

access to the three habitat components it needs to survive: food, shelter and water. Both Wiseman and Pettyjohn spoke about their crews' work such as preparing and planting food plots and mowing herbaceous openings, mowing grass and legume areas several times from spring through fall, spraying herbicides to control noxious weeds and undesirable species control along roadways, impoundments, fields and forest under-story. Also mowing many of herbaceous openings to maintain certain habitat conditions and control unwanted vegetation encroachment. Food and Cover Corps crews do necessary SGL road repairs such as grading, ditching and culvert maintenance to try and keep water off the roadways and maintain passable access to the SGLs. Foreman Wiseman also spoke about the use of prescribed fire this past spring on SGL 35. "The prescribed fires (burning) were conducted successfully on 54 acres of SGL 35 in Susquehanna County to promote oak regeneration. (SGL 35 covers an area of 7,000+ acres on the east side of Interstate 81 between Hallstead and New Milford.) Foreman Pettyjohn also told the group "that each and every SGL is different and the management needs are different. Different terrain, soils, acreage, forest types, amounts of water, wildlife management opportunities. There is no one-size-fits-all management plan."

The Susquehanna Branch QDMA has worked with the PGC to provide both financial help and on the



FOOD AND COVER CORPS FOREMEN CHUCK WISEMAN (L) AND DARREN PETTYJOHN (R) SHARE HOW PA STATE GAME LANDS ARE MANAGED.

ground resources by planting grasses and legumes, planting annual crops such as corn, sorghum, forage oats, brassicas and soybeans, liming and fertilizing, mowing planted food plot areas, and mast tree release cuttings on SGL 35, 140 (near Friendsville) and 219 (northeastern Bradford County). The Branch has also provided educational materials to the PGC Regional Office during the past year. According to Branch Vice President Mike Koneski, "The Susquehanna Branch plans to meet with SGL Land Manager Rich Lupinsky and Food and Cover Corps Foreman this winter to devise a strategy to better assist the habitat improvement efforts on State Game Lands in our area."

Information on the Quality Deer Management Association can be found on the web at [www.qdma.com](http://www.qdma.com) and at the Branch's website [susq-qdma.org](http://susq-qdma.org) (new website since October).



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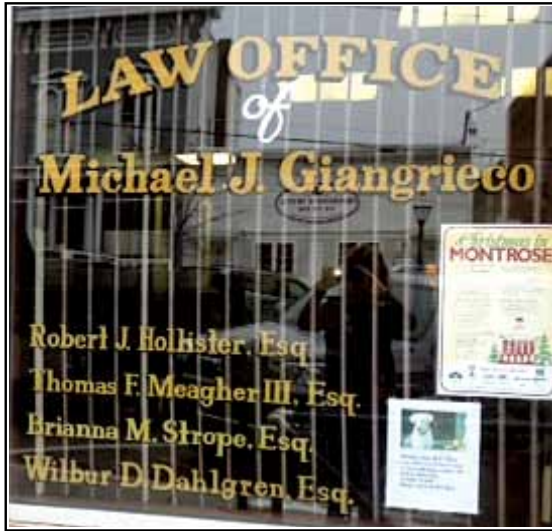
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# Testing 3 Varieties of Oats for Cold Tolerance

These photos were taken at my test plot in northeastern PA on Dec. 23, 2012. From left to right the three small plots include Jerry Oats, Buck Forage Oats, and Whitetail Oats Plus. The seeds were planted 2" deep during the third week in Sept. in the lower edge of a protected garden. The soil conditions were excellent and consistent for all three plots. Temperatures at the time these pictures were taken were fairly moderate; the coldest morning, with the wind chill considered, was estimated at 5°F. We can clearly see that the Jerry Oats (left) are brown and frosted out. The Whitetail Oats (right) are somewhat wilted and some browning has occurred as well. The Buck Forage Oats are clearly a more lush green color and healthy.



With deer being the creatures that they are, they will seek out the most desirable and healthy plants available to feed on. Buck Forage Oats are selectively bred to be extremely cold-tolerant, and preferred by deer.

I will have more photos in my next edition of WMN. ~Jim Holbert



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Kip Adams, Director of  
Education and Outreach



# Kip's Korner

Prior to 2002 chronic wasting disease (CWD) was unfamiliar to most hunters from the East, Midwest or South. In fact, unless you were from Colorado, Wyoming or a handful of other western states, you probably hadn't heard of CWD or at least didn't know much about it. Today, the picture is much different. You would be hard pressed to find a deer or elk hunter anywhere in North America who hasn't heard of CWD. Unfortunately, there's much about CWD that we still do not know, but this article will cover some new discoveries and discuss CWD's impacts on the future of deer hunting.

In 2002 CWD was confirmed in Wisconsin from three bucks killed near Mount Horeb in November 2001. This marked the first incidence of CWD east of the Mississippi River. This was a major discovery because the disease was now in a high-density deer population. Many western deer herds average less than 15 deer per square mile while Wisconsin has herds exceeding 45 deer per square mile. This was important because infected deer can pass the disease to other individuals, and high density herds, especially those in close proximity such as at feed sites, provide an avenue for high disease transmission rates. Scientists knew deer could pass the disease to other deer but were, and still largely remain, unsure of exactly how they do it.

As of December 2012, CWD has been identified in captive and free-ranging herds in 22 U.S. states, 2 Canadian provinces and Korea (from an elk imported from Canada in 1997). CWD has been identified in white-tailed and mule deer, Rocky Mountain elk and moose. Black-tailed deer are also susceptible as they are a subspecies of mule deer. Much research has been conducted on CWD and much contin-

## Chronic Wasting Disease

ues today, but we still don't know the origin of the CWD agent(s) in cervids (deer, elk and moose) and likely never will.

Fortunately, research suggests the disease won't cross the species barrier and infect humans. The World Health Organization and Center for Disease Control both state there is no evidence that humans can contract the disease from eating CWD-infected cervids. This statement is important as the infective prions (abnormal forms of cellular protein) causing CWD accumulate in an animal's brain, eyes, spinal column, tonsils, lymph glands, spleen, saliva, blood and muscles. The last two locations are most noteworthy for humans since we come in contact with blood while field dressing and/or processing a harvested animal and we eat the muscle tissue. Research suggests prion concentrations may be somewhat lower in muscles than other tissues but they are still present.

A recent study also identified the prions in blood and saliva. These locations are important from a disease transmission standpoint. It raises the possibility that biting insects that feed on blood may have the ability to transfer the disease from CWD-positive animals to other individuals. It also raises the possibility that CWD-positive animals can transmit the disease via saliva at bait stations, feed and mineral sites, rubs, scrapes and through social grooming. We all know the branch above a scrape is referred to as the "licking" branch and we know bucks lick and rub their forehead glands on rubs. Many hunters have also viewed submissive bucks licking a dominant buck's forehead. Young bucks, especially yearlings, are generally submissive to older bucks. We know a high percentage of yearling bucks disperse one to five miles from their natal range, so infected yearling bucks potentially could serve as major disease transmission vehicles. I say they "potentially could serve" because I am merely speculating. Research hasn't identified this occurring on a large scale in free-ranging populations. Also, the disease doesn't appear to move within a region by leaps that would result from yearling

dispersal. Future research will hopefully shed more light on exact modes of transmission.

What do we know about CWD? We know it is always fatal and there is no vaccine, cure or practical live animal test. The best current live animal test uses tonsil tissue but it is ineffective in elk and not applicable for large scale use in deer. We know the probability of infection increases with age in whitetail bucks and does and that adult bucks are nearly twice as likely as adult does to be infected. You need to keep this statistic in perspective however, as many deer populations contain a much higher percentage of adult does than bucks. This finding isn't a reason to return to traditional management programs and remove the majority of bucks at an early age.

We know the clinical signs of CWD are emaciation, incoordination, a drooping head and ears, and excessive drooling, drinking and urination. It is important to note these symptoms are also seen in deer infected with EHD or bluetongue. EHD and bluetongue are the most common deer diseases and they routinely kill deer throughout the Southeast on a nearly annual basis. We know CWD's clinical signs typically develop from one and a half to three years after exposure. Thus, infected deer generally appear healthy while they may be passing the disease to others. No deer has ever recovered once clinical signs developed and animals generally live from a few weeks to several months after developing clinical signs. We also know that CWD can be expensive. Wisconsin has spent over \$32 million on CWD from 2002-2006, and sadly the CWD infection rate in the "core area" of Wisconsin hasn't declined.

As hunters and managers, what can we expect in the future? We can expect CWD will likely be found in new states/provinces and new areas in current CWD-positive states/provinces. We can expect to see a lot of research on CWD, its mode(s) of transmission,

*Continued on page 27*

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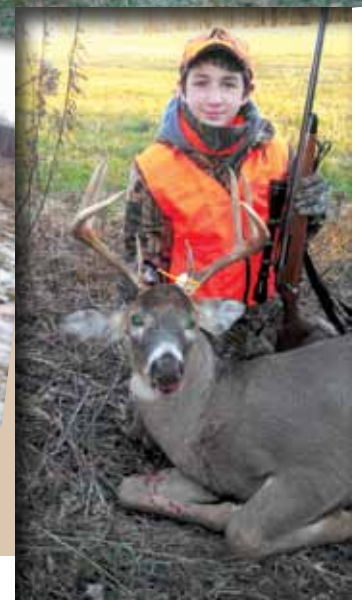
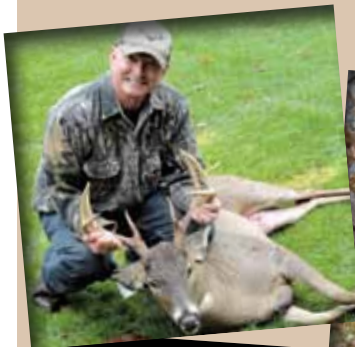
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## Robotic Deer Presented to PA Game Commission

Article by Bob Wagner

At the Susquehanna Branch of the Quality Deer Management Association's (QDMA) annual open meeting on November 10, a special presentation was made to PA Game Commission Wildlife Conservation Officer Mike Webb. A robotic deer was presented to Officer Webb for his use in helping stymie unlawful hunting and shooting of whitetail deer. Officer Webb assured all those at the meeting "... that this robotic deer will be put to good use. We thank all of those involved in the purchase of the robotic deer for their support in efforts to have more deer available for the sportsmen of the area by helping to eliminate illegal shooting and poaching."



The Susquehanna Branch of the QDMA, the Finch Hill Rod & Gun Club, the Canawacta Rod & Gun Club, the Pennsylvania Trappers Association District #9, the Hallstead-Great Bend Rod & Gun Club and the South Gibson Conservation Club all provided funding for the purchase of the robotic deer.

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## WILDLIFE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

# Academy Seeks Youth Leaders Energized About Wildlife Conservation

**The Wildlife Leadership Academy is now accepting applications from youth ages 14-17 from Pennsylvania for this year round program that focuses on wildlife conservation and leadership development. The mission of the Academy is to empower youth to become ambassadors for wildlife conservation in order to ensure a sustained wildlife legacy for future generations.**

For more information,  
contact Wildlife  
Leadership Academy  
Director Michele Kittell at  
[mkittell@piceweb.org](mailto:mkittell@piceweb.org) or  
(570) 245-8518.

The Academy begins with an intensive, five-day summer field school experience that focuses on fish or wildlife species as a springboard for exploring biology, habitat, and conservation issues. Youth also develop leadership skills by engaging in team-building activities, educational presentations, and mock "town hall" meetings.

Two field schools will be available for youth to apply to: **Pennsylvania Bucktails**, which focuses on white-tailed deer, or **Pennsylvania Brookies** which focuses on brook trout and coldwater fisheries.

Prepared with the knowledge and the skills from the field school, students return to their home communities to complete conservation outreach that focuses on environmental education, community service, media engagement, and/or participation in the arts.

*Student Brook Martin of York County describes his participation in the program as "life changing." He shared how his time with the program affected him. "At the field school, I was able to reach my full potential and find a career path that I feel will be very rewarding. It was an experience that I will cherish and remember the rest of my life," he said.*

### A HIGH QUALITY EXPERIENCE

Led by the Pennsylvania Institute for Conservation Education, the Wildlife Leadership Academy is a cooperative initiative and brings the experts to the students. Participants are taught by and interact with conservation professionals daily. These professionals represent agencies, leading organizations and universities from across the state.

*Instructor and professional ecologist Lisa Smith commended the program. "The high caliber and sheer number of conservation professionals who are involved as instructors in this program are beyond impressive, but more than that is the commitment of time, energy and passion that each of these instructors gives to the students," Smith said.*

### YOUTH BRING HOME THESE LESSONS

Students return to their community to share what they have learned. They also keep a record of their conservation outreach efforts. Top outreach achievements qualify students for educational field trips, opportunities to return to field school tuition-free as mentors, and college scholarships.

*Molly Diefenbach of Centre County, a student at Pennsylvania Drummers, said the feeling she got from doing her outreach was not what she expected. "I was surprised by how accomplished and proud I felt after completing each outreach activity – whether it was speaking to a crowd of 200 or finishing up another entry in my nature journal alone in the woods," she said.*

Molly gave an educational presentation to the Conservation Officers of Pennsylvania Association (COPA) and also wrote an article for their magazine, *The Greenline*. Bernie Schmader, a member of COPA, was impressed by Molly. "Her article and oral report reassures our members and others that there are intelligent, interested, dedicated and understanding young people who are preparing to step up and carry on in our efforts to promote and safeguard Pennsylvania's precious fish, wildlife and other natural resources."

Academy youth have taken the program's mission to heart. To date, Academy graduates have conducted 606 conservation education, communication, and service projects; given more than 2,500 hours of work towards these efforts; and engaged over 10,000 Pennsylvania citizens across 46 counties in the state.

*Academy Director Michele Kittell said the participants are "the next generation to speak for wildlife conservation. We hope the leadership of Academy youth in their home communities will inspire others to care more and therefore act more on behalf of the environment," she said.*

The Wildlife Leadership Academy is a cooperative initiative involving state agencies and conservation organizations and is administered by the Pennsylvania Institute for Conservation Education. Expert instructors at the field school include representatives from Kutztown University, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Pennsylvania State University, Quality Deer Management Association, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and many more.

**Applications for the 2013 field schools can be downloaded at [www.PICEweb.org](http://www.PICEweb.org); click on the youth programs link. The application deadline is April 1, 2013. PA Bucktails will be held at Stone Valley Recreation Area in Huntingdon County June 18-22. PA Brookies will be held at Sieg Conference Center in Clinton County July 9-13.**

# A Unique Mother/Daughter Experience

8-year-old Alayna Cooley was selected by QDMA National to be part of a unique youth hunting and educational experience early this fall. She and her Mom, Beckey Cooley, were sponsored by the Susquehanna Branch QDMA and were flown to the Bradley Farms in Georgia to be part of the "Rack Pack."

Alayna and Becky returned without a deer, but once home, shared at our directors meeting how much they appreciated this once-in-a-lifetime experience. Both mother and daughter met new friends and learned valuable lessons on hunting safety and a new appreciation of the whitetail deer.

As you can see from these photos, Alayna was part of a program that most folks never have the opportunity to experience. The QDMA Rack Pack program gives all young people the chance to sharpen hunting skills and learn about the outdoors.

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# The Deer Drive: A Pennsylvania Tradition

by John Butler

Deer drives have been a long-lived Pennsylvania hunting tradition. Prior to the 1930's there were truly not enough whitetails to even hunt. My father, who was born in 1896, told me he never saw a single deer until he was 21 years old, so that would have to be about 1915 before he saw his first deer. In comparison, today's deer hunter has little to complain about.

Once a viable deer population was established, and hunting deer was legalized, it wasn't long before deer drives became the method of choice as they were both effective and enjoyable. If you have never had the opportunity to hunt whitetails with a group, you have missed lots of fun and one of the most productive ways to hunt deer. I thoroughly enjoyed walking along steep side hills, jumping from hummock to hummock in swamps, pushing through briars and brush, and crossing creeks while hoping to push deer to friends and family. The loud "BANG!" of a rifle announced a successful drive, but it didn't necessarily mean that the person on stand was successful with their shot.

Deer drives were a lot of work, but the rewards were well worth it. A lot of folks today stand in one spot and wait for deer to pass by. If deer choose not to move during legal hunting hours, the likelihood of seeing deer is reduced. With drive hunting your chances of seeing deer are increased because you make deer move. Whether or not you will get a shot off is a different story. The shooting isn't easy as you are usually trying to bring down a running deer. Most shots are less than 50 yards, but a moving target is much harder to hit than one that's standing still.

Operating a good deer driving group requires a good leader; preferably someone who knows the area, watches the deer all year, knows where the bucks are hanging out, and is familiar with how neighboring hunting groups operate. Maintaining good relationships with landowners and other groups is important.

Secondly, everyone needs to know the drive plan and they need to communicate effectively during the drive. When driving you need to try to stay in a line

and know what the other drivers are doing and what type of terrain they may be encountering to either slow them up or allow them to walk along easily. It takes time and experience to learn each patch of woods, but our group was very knowledgeable and experienced, and after a few years we could drive silently and do just as good a job as if we were hollering and making noise. Actually, silent drives were very effective. It seemed like fewer deer slipped away when we did silent drives. Perhaps this was because they did not hear us coming and had less time to react to our presence.

Obviously, harvesting a deer was one of the greatest benefits but the camaraderie was truly the best part of drive hunting. I made some wonderful friends, had some great times, and enjoyed numerous stories of past hunts. The memories we made were a real treasure.

There is a saying that anticipation is greater than realization but I can honestly say that that's not necessarily true when it comes to hunting deer by driving. The anticipation started each fall when deer started showing hard antlers and reached a fever pitch about the time small game season started. While chasing grouse, rabbits, and turkeys we would occasionally run into a good buck and that would get the adrenaline flowing. The conversation would undoubtedly turn to deer season when any of our members met.

Opening day was always exciting for me. It was so exciting that I always wanted to be a driver on the first hunt so I could ease my tense nerves and get calmed down enough to shoot accurately if the opportunity presented itself later while on stand.

I was very fortunate to be involved with a great group of drive hunters. Unfortunately, as time went on, large farms were sold and/or split into smaller parcels and posted signs overtook the landscape. Such conditions did not bode well for drive hunters. Stand hunting became more popular among the younger generation. Eventually, many of the hunters in our group grew too old or passed away and the group fi-

nally fizzled out around the year 2000. The real finish was when our long time captain was no longer physically able to continue but there are still some third and fourth generation hunters doing some very small pushes. They are successful at times, but certainly not to the scale and volume of years past.

Though drive hunting is becoming a lost art, it is still a tradition worth preserving. In some cases, it is about the only way to get deer up and moving during legal hunting hours. I'm sure there are still some groups in PA that continue the tradition of driving deer. We can only hope that those hunters will pass this valuable, successful, and time-honored tradition to the next generation of deer hunters who will in turn keep it alive.

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## *Kip's Korner continued from page 22*

etc., and we can expect pressure from deer farmers to open state/provincial borders and allow movement of captive animals. We can also expect changes in deer season regulations such as extended seasons and increased bag limits. Currently, the best way to limit the spread of CWD in free-ranging herds is to reduce deer populations to minimize contact between individuals.

Will CWD mark the end of deer hunting? Probably not, but we must be vigilant to balance deer herds with their habitats, minimize transmission of CWD in infected areas, prevent introduction of CWD in new areas, and support research and our state agency's efforts. The sum of these items equates to being a good steward of our deer resource. For more information on CWD visit the Chronic Wasting Disease Alliance website at [www.cwd-info.org](http://www.cwd-info.org).

Kip's Korner is written by Kip Adams, a Certified Wildlife Biologist and Director of Education and Outreach for the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA). The QDMA is an international nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ensuring the future of whitetailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. The QDMA can be reached at 1-800-209-DEER or [www.QDMA.com](http://www.QDMA.com).

# Evaluation of the Split Season Regulation

by Jim Stickles, AWB®

## Background

In 2008 the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) Board of Commissioners (BOC) changed the 12-day concurrent harvest to a 5-day buck only harvest, followed by seven days of concurrent harvest in four Wildlife Management Units (WMUs). The BOC also recommended research be conducted in these four units to determine if the split season regulation would change the antlerless harvest, change population dynamics, and increase hunter satisfaction. In 2010, the BOC implemented the split season regulation in several other WMUs, but the research was not complete. By 2011, half the state's WMUs were being managed under a split season regulation with the study still ongoing. If the BOC really cared about the effect of a split season regulation on the deer herd, they would have waited for the results of the study before implementing the regulation in other areas of the state.

## Study Results

Preliminary results show the split season regulation protects does. In fact, it protects does to the point where management objectives to keep the herd levels stable in each study unit were not met and deer populations in all of the study units have increased substantially (Table 1).

**Table 1**  
Population change from 2008-2011 in split season WMUs

WMU	2008 Population	2011 Population	% Change
3C	74,255	111,199	+49%
2D	103,395	136,155	+31%
4B	38,503	58,543	+52%
2G	84,645	109,741	+30%

Source: 2012 Antlerless Allocations and Supporting Information

## How the Split Season Protects Does

A recent hunter survey showed that opening Monday, the first Tuesday, the first Saturday, and the closing Saturday are when a majority of deer hunters are in the woods (Table 2). Since does are not allowed to be harvested during the first five days in split season WMUs, they only really get harvested on the opening and closing Saturdays. At that point, not only are there fewer hunters in the woods, but does have had time to learn that rifle season is open and change their behavioral and movement patterns accordingly. Additionally, hunters have had a few days to fill their freezers with buck meat.

**Table 2**  
Percentage of hunters hunting each day of the firearms season

1 <sup>st</sup> Week	% Hunters Hunting	2 <sup>nd</sup> Week	% Hunters Hunting
Monday	80	Monday	25
Tuesday	59	Tuesday	21
Wednesday	40	Wednesday	21
Thursday	29	Thursday	21
Friday	36	Friday	34
Saturday	70	Saturday	65

Source: 2011 Pennsylvania Deer Hunter Survey

## Balancing the Equation

To balance the deer herds in split season WMUs, PGC deer biologists have suggested increasing the number of antlerless allocations in those units. However increasing allocations may not be enough to stabilize herd growth. With fewer hunters in the woods and virtually two days to conduct an antlerless harvest, a greater proportion of hunters need to be willing to kill one or more antlerless deer to satisfy management objectives. To further complicate things, some WMUs have a maximum number of antlerless tags hunters are willing to purchase, so allocating more tags in those units is pointless. Also, since the antlerless season has been reduced in length, weather will have a greater influence on the antlerless harvest. From a deer management perspective, this is a terrible situation and negative long-term consequences can be expected.

## Conclusion

The split season regulation does not meet management objectives, it inflates the number of antlerless tag allocations, and it increases the influence of weather on the antlerless harvest. On the positive side, it has increased the deer herd, so hunters should see more deer, right? Some will, but some will not. There is more to seeing deer than having a lot of deer in the herd. Even when there are a lot of deer in the herd, it does not mean they will be active during legal hunting hours.

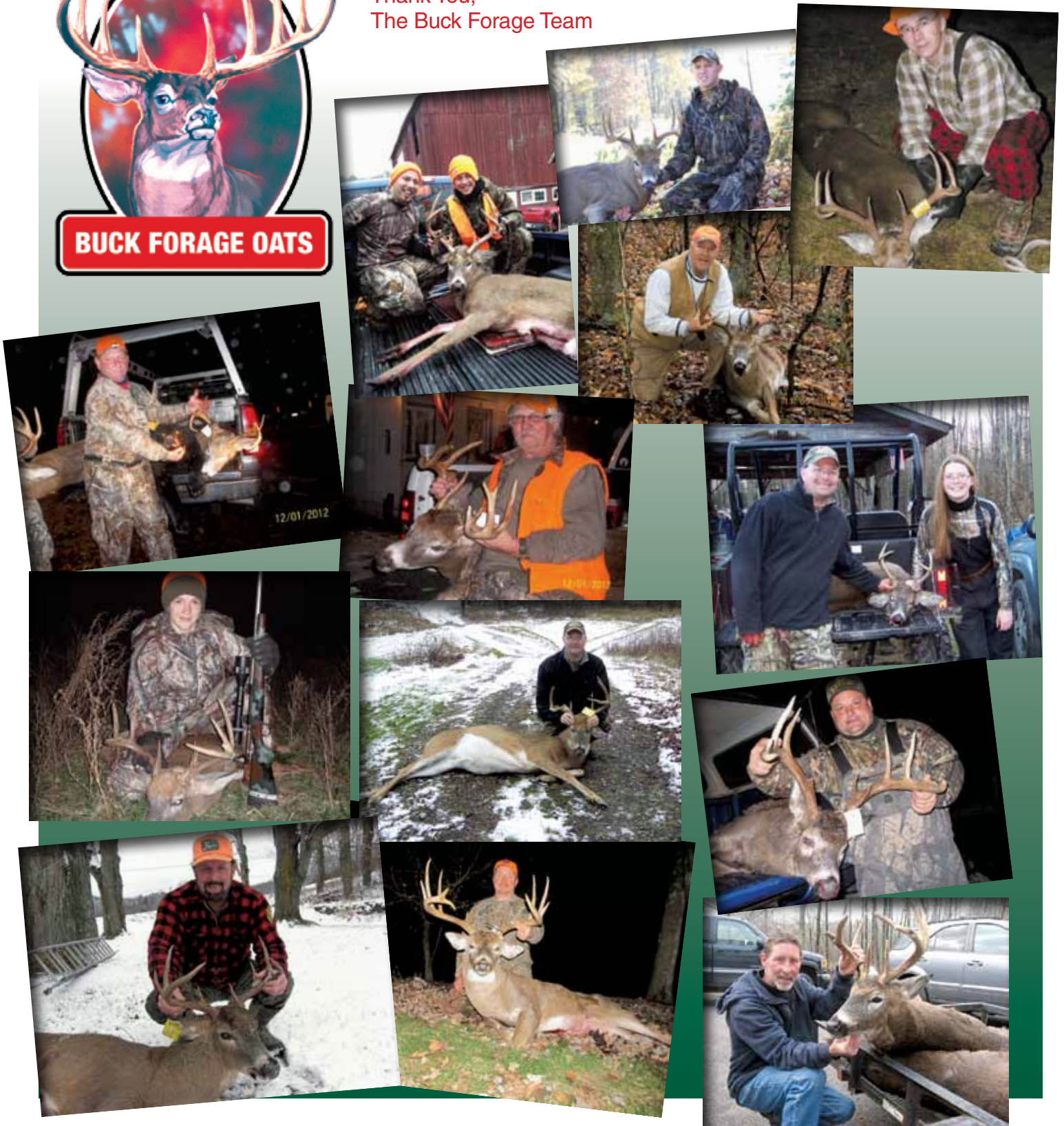
Both habitat and conditions for seeing deer continually change. Some hunters will change their hunting strategies accordingly, but most will not. One thing that will not change is with 750,000+ deer hunters in PA—and expected harvests somewhere between 300,000-400,000 deer—there will always be a large portion of hunters that return home empty handed.



Several of the deer pictured here and on page 23 were taken on properties where Buck Forage Products were planted.

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## Patterning Predators *By Jim Stickles, Associate Wildlife Biologist*®

In the last issue, I introduced you to a free website called [BigGame Logic.com](http://BigGameLogic.com) (BGL). I hope some of you have had the opportunity use the website a little bit and figure out how it works because in upcoming issues, I am going to discuss how you can use BGL to help you pattern wildlife and manage your property. Deer season is now over and it is time to start some predator management! Here is how BGL can help you figure out where to focus your efforts.

One of the features that BGL has that makes it so valuable is called a "Notable." This feature was originally created so you could name and pattern specific deer. However, a "Notable" does not need to be a deer. It can be anything you want to keep track of, both critter and non-critter alike. For example, if you want to keep track of coyote activity on your property, you can create a notable called "Coyotes." You can then enter sightings and trail camera observa-

tions to your camp map, and tag them as the notable "Coyotes."

Later, if you want to get a better idea of which areas of your property are overrun with coyotes, you can click on the notable "Coyotes" and hit the search button, and only coyote sightings will be displayed on your camp map. This is just one of many ways BGL can help you better manage your hunting property.



I ADDED TRAIL CAMERA AND COYOTE SIGHTINGS TO THE CAMP MAP AND TAGGED THEM AS THE NOTABLE "COYOTES." IN THE SEARCH TOOLS BELOW THE MAP, I SELECTED THE NOTABLE "COYOTES" AND CLICKED SEARCH TO PRODUCE A MAP THAT SHOWS ME WHERE "HOTTEST" COYOTE ACTIVITY IS ON THIS PARTICULAR PROPERTY.



## UNUSUAL CONDITION IN DEER – PARROT MOUTH/JAW

This deer picture shows a buck with an unusual condition called parrot mouth or parrot jaw. This condition occurs 2 to 5% of the time in horses. It also occurs in dogs, sheep, and deer amongst others. The picture was taken in Forest Lake Twp. The cause of parrot mouth is often not fully clear. Several causes are possible including genetics, trauma and illness as a foal near a period of rapid growth. The condition can result from the top jaw (maxilla) developing too long, or the bottom jaw (mandible) developing too short. Usually it is the lower jaw that is too short. But anything that interferes with the match up of the top and bottom jaws can cause a horse to be parrot mouthed. As far as genetics go, parrot mouth is NOT directly heritable; that is, we rarely see an individual sire or a mare throwing an abnormally high number of parrot mouthed foals. The most common cause of it is when a mare is bred to a stallion of very different head type. Surprisingly, these two stud animals often have normal teeth structure, yet when they are bred, the mismatch is so great that a parrot mouth offspring is produced.



PICTURE PROVIDED BY JEREMIAH FEARNLEY

## Pesky Predators! *By Jim Stickles, AWB®*

Currently, one of the hottest topics in deer management is predators. There are a lot of studies coming out of the southeastern U.S. that show coyotes are changing fawn recruitment rates, and thus having a significant impact on deer populations. However, it is equally as important for hunters to understand that predators are not a problem everywhere. So how are predators affecting Pennsylvania deer herds?

PA manages its antlerless harvest much differently than southern states. For years, the only significant sources of mortality for southern deer were hunters and vehicle collisions. Additionally, many of the southern states have nowhere near as many hunters as PA does. Thus, many southern states have bag limits for the number of antlerless deer a hunter can take each year. For example, in Georgia, each hunter can kill up to 10 antlerless deer per year! Bag limits work great when natural predators are not in the picture because fawn recruitment is generally high and there is virtually nothing else controlling the deer herd except hunters. Since coyotes are a new predator in the southeast, they pose a new challenge for deer managers because they are changing recruitment rates. Models used to manage deer in the past are now becoming obsolete. In order to correct this problem, antlerless harvests need to be more conservative and closely monitored.

Luckily, PA's doe harvest is monitored and strictly regulated. Each year, antlerless allocations are adjusted based on many criteria, and rarely does a hunter get more than a couple of antlerless tags. Using this type of management system is much more responsive to significant declines in deer numbers caused by any source of mortality, whether it is predators, disease, harsh weather conditions, or over-harvest. In this respect, PA is actually "ahead of the curve" in regard to predator impacts on deer herds. If statewide deer numbers are noticeably low, deer managers can reduce the number of antlerless tags distributed to hunters, thus correcting the problem and ensuring sustainable harvests each year. Southern state agencies have not yet employed this system of deer management, but it might be something they consider in the near future.

Unfortunately, state agencies monitor population trends at the management unit and statewide levels, so unless predators are a problem over a very large area, state agencies are not likely to respond when deer hunters cry "WOLF!"

What you observe and experience on your own hunting grounds might be very different than what is happening at a larger scale. If you perceive predators to be a problem on your hunting property, then you are probably not wrong. Site-specific predator problems are not uncommon. If predators are a problem in your hunting area, intensify your efforts to rid your property of predators by hunting and trapping them, and/or be more conservative with your doe harvests. Remember, just because you have a pocket full of antlerless tags does not mean you need to use them all. Monitor your predator situation and conduct your antlerless harvest accordingly. On the same token, state agencies should consider liberalizing predator hunting and trapping seasons so that hunters can take care of predator problems at the local level. Unlike the little boy from the children's story, when deer hunters cry "WOLF!" they mean it!



TRAIL CAMERA PICTURE OF A COYOTE CARRYING A FAWN

PHOTO CREDIT: GREG PERROTTE



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or events to share, email them to [Jholbert@epix.net](mailto:Jholbert@epix.net)***