

PENNSYLVANIA Spring 2008
TURKEY TALK

Publication of the PA State Chapter of the NWTf



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PENNSYLVANIA *SPRING 2008* TURKEY TALK

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Volume 33 Number 3



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PENNSYLVANIA TURKEY TALK

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**THE PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL
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The deadline for submitting articles for the next issue of Turkey Talk is June 2.

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From the President

Jon Pries

The pace has slowed a bit for most hunters over the last few months, but at the state and local level of our organization, things have been popping. Over the first weekend in January, our Thirty-third Annual Rendezvous and Awards Banquet was held at the Ramada Inn in State College, much to the enjoyment of a record attendance. The Hunting Heritage Banquet season is off and running, and many of us have just returned from the NWTF National Convention that was held in Atlanta, Georgia. On top of that, spring gobbler season is just around the corner.

Hello everyone, I am Jon Pries from Lycoming County, and I am proud to be your new President of the PA State Chapter NWTF. Joining me in their new roles are Don Heckman as Vice President, Joe Drolet as Secretary, and Bob Schmid as our newest Executive Board member. Our team of Board members is enhanced by new members Harold Daub, Jim Nyce, Chuck Mathues, and Jay Straley. Welcome aboard to all of them. We have numerous challenges ahead, but I am pleased to report that we have a strong team that is focused and moving forward to strengthen our state and local chapters through growth in memberships and dollars raised for conservation.

An historic event occurred at the latest Pennsylvania Game Commission meeting in January, when the commissioners voted 7 to 0 to rescind mandatory orange during spring turkey season. Voluntary use is encouraged, but it is no longer the law in Pennsylvania that you must wear orange while moving. Thus it will be up to each of us to be even more diligent regarding safety and to "Think Safety - Hunt Safely" and to always "Positively Identify Your Target - And Beyond."

For your planning purposes, I would like to let you know that any interested member of NWTF is invited to attend our board meetings. You are most welcome to sit in as an observer, thus giving you the opportunity to see firsthand just what we do and how you may someday become further involved in one of today's greatest conservation organizations.

Further, in early August, we will hold our annual President's weekend - a fun-filled learning weekend where local chapter presidents and one additional representative from each chapter may attend. More on that in the next issue.

Finally, I would appreciate hearing from you. Particularly if you have any positive suggestions as to how to encourage participation in our outreach programs, stimulate growth in membership, or bolster our bottom line in our budget. After all, the more dollars we are able to raise, the more we can do for the wild turkey and other species as we continue our habitat projects throughout Pennsylvania.

And above all, I wish you a safe and bountiful spring gobbler season. May your days be filled with thundering toms, jaw-dropping sunrises, and memories to last a lifetime.

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Thirty-third Annual Rendezvous and Awards Banquet

SUBMITTED BY JON PRIES,
PA NWTF PRESIDENT

A record crowd attended this year's Rendezvous and Awards Banquet, and once again, old friends had a chance to visit, new attendees got acquainted with fellow turkey hunters, and everyone kept a fast pace with all of the activities that ran throughout the day. NWTF National COO, Carl Brown was our keynote speaker on Saturday evening and our three Regional Directors kept things moving as the awards were being presented to this year's recipients.

Board of Director's member Bob Schmid, along with Regional Biologist Bob Eriksen, conducted a well-attended seminar on habitat management and food plots. Both are extremely well versed on when, where, and how to improve your fields and woods for turkeys as well as other species, and main seminar area was standing room only! Bob Eriksen also presented a seminar on black bears, and Jon DeBerti, the Pennsylvania Game Commission elk biologist, had a very informative presentation on our elk herd and their habits. Rounding out this year's seminars was an informative offering by Greg "Doc" Caldwell on Mentored Youth Hunting.

Once again, Rhonda Henry was the "official" greeter, money taker, and direction giver! As always, she did a wonderful job of keeping our records organized and deserves a great deal of credit. Thanks, Rhonda.

Raffles were conducted, and both silent and live auctions kept things moving throughout the dinner. The drawing for the JAKES Hunt was won by Austin Robinson from the Susquehanna Longbeards Chapter and the Sponsor Hunt Drawing winner was Don Cox, from the Walking Purchase Chapter. Don will hunt in Kansas with Paradise Adventures for Eastern, Rio Grande and Hybrid turkeys.

Chapter Awards

Ron Sandrus Local Chapter Awards:

Under this category, determined by the guidelines used by National NWTF as set by

the L. A. Dixon award criteria, the following chapters received recognition as the top three chapters within the state.

First Place – Southeast Silver Spurs Chapter; Second Place – Jerry Zimmerman Memorial Chapter; and Third Place – Wapiti Roost Chapter.

Best New Superfund Banquet:

Went to the Southern End Strutters Chapter.

The Jerry Zimmerman Memorial Award:

Presented to the chapter hosting the "Most Improved Banquet" went to the Southeast Silver Spurs Chapter.

Best Wheelin' Sportsmen Event:

Under "Best New Wheelin' Sportsmen Event," the winner was Bass Pro & the Michaux Yellow Breeches Chapter, and under "Best Repeat Wheelin' Sportsmen Event," the winner was the Terrace Mountain Chapter.

Individual awards

Certificates of Recognition were presented to both Joe Drolet and Rhonda Henry for their "Outstanding service and contributions to the PA State Chapter."

David Wanless Award:

Given for service to the PA State Chapter, Above and Beyond the Call of Duty –Regional Director Ray Smith.

Roger Latham Award:

Given to the Outstanding Regional Director of the Year who has exhibited "Exemplary Leadership" and for Contributions Above and Beyond their responsibility – Regional Director Phil Ferrare.

James Wilhelm Memorial Award:

Presented as a Conservation Award for an individual who contributes to the wise management and conservation of the wild turkey through habitat work, land acquisi-

tion, fundraising, legislation, or public relations. Two individuals received this award – Ira "Bunk" Harding and Dave Mitchell.

Irven Buttray Award:

Given to an individual for "Outstanding service in their first year of Service as a Director or Officer." This year, Board member Joe Drolet was the recipient.

Frank Piper Hunting Safety Award:

Awarded for "Outstanding Contributions" in the promotion of turkey hunting safety, education, and ethics – was Dale Butler, State Chapter board member.

Corporate Conservation Award:

Awarded to a corporation, group or agency that has displayed "Outstanding Effort or Support" of the wise management and conservation of the wild turkey. It went this year to the Sportsmen's Warehouse and to Denron Signs.

Loyal Order of Silver Spurs:

Presented for at least 10 years of loyal service as a board member. It went to Don O'Brien.

Hall of Fame Award:

Awarded to an "Outstanding" turkey hunter, conservationist, and ethical sportsman who throughout his life has worked for the betterment of the wild turkey in Pennsylvania. This year this award was presented to Greg "Doc" Caldwell, Larry Holjencin, and posthumously to Earl Mickel (accepted by his wife, Janene, and family).

This year, the Thirty-third Annual Rendezvous and Awards Banquet was truly one of the highlights of the year for all who attended and demonstrated just how each year they continue to get better and better, and the crowd just continues to grow. Please mark your calendars for next year – Saturday, January 10, 2009. It promises to be even better and will probably sell out, so make your reservations as soon as it is published!

Pennsylvania Brings Home the Gold from National Convention

SUBMITTED BY JON PRIES
PA NWTF PRESIDENT

The Thirty-second Annual NWTF National Convention, held on February 21–24 in Atlanta, Georgia, was the scene of many awards being given to individuals and chapters from throughout Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania State Chapter was recognized at the Leadership Meeting on Thursday by receiving the L. A. Dixon Memorial Award as the state that had raised the highest total net/net dollars with a grand total of \$489,706.00. That figure, by the way, translates directly from the effort by all of our chapters and volunteers into the monies available for habitat improvement, land acquisition, safety and education, and all of our various outreach programs.

During the Saturday Awards Banquet, the Pennsylvania State Chapter was recognized again for reaching the third runner-up position for Net Dollars raised. The L. A. Dixon Awards are given to chapters that excel at conservation fundraising, education, and outreach events and honor year-round performance.

Additionally, the Wapiti Roost Chapter received the ninth-place award for having 103 Sponsors at their banquet, and the number one chapter for Sponsor Membership Achievement was our own Southeast Silver Spurs Chapter with 141 Sponsors attending.

The Red Rock Chapter received JAKES event award for having held the “Best Event for 151-250 Jakes.”

Pennsylvania turkey call makers received top honors throughout the judging this year. Scott Basehore won not only the coveted Neil Cost Champion of Champions Award but also the Don Chancy Award for Box Call Set. Mike Lapp was honored with the Best of Show and the Gibson Award. Additionally, Pat Strawser won both the D. D. Adams Award and the Best Sounding Friction Call Award.

Turkey callers from numerous categories placed well this year. Within the National Junior Turkey Calling Championship for ages 15 and under, Corry Hoone of Smithville placed second and Dakota Chamberlin of Claysburg placed fifth.

Dakota Clouser of Danville entered the National Intermediate Calling

Championship for ages 16 to 20 for the first time and won first place, taking home a bonus of a \$1,000 savings bond.

During the NWTF National Friction Calling Championship, Matt Van Cise of Brookville placed first, taking home the \$1,000 prize money, and Harrisburg’s own Matt Morrett placed fourth.

The NWTF Grand National Champion was Billy Yargus of Ewing, Mo., and Pennsylvania’s Matt Van Cise placed fourth. And in the NWTF Champion of Champions category this year, Damon Davis of Danville placed fourth.

From Brookville, a budding young artist, Hallie Gregor placed third in the 12-14 age group.

Overall, it was a banner year for Pennsylvania. Congratulations to every chapter and individual who represented our state so well. The bar has been set and with the work ethic that these and others have displayed within our membership, watch out for 2009. We just may outdo ourselves again!



Jon Pries accepts L.A. Dixon Award



Dakota Clouser, National Intermediate Calling Champion



Mike Lapp was honored with the Best of Show and the Gibson Award.



Pat Strawser won both the D. D. Adams Award and the Best Sounding Friction Call Award



Matt Van Cise, National Friction Calling Champion

Think safety, hunt safely

meeting our commitment to improving turkey hunting safety

BY DON HECKMAN,
PA NWTF SAFETY EDUCATION
COMMITTEE, WTM COMMITTEE

Throughout the past 30 years, the PA NWTF Board, our NWTF members, and local chapters have answered the call to communicate and promote fundamental turkey-hunting safety and ethics practices. I will list what we have accomplished and what we hope to achieve in future years.

Turkey hunting seasons begin with PA NWTF hunter-safety news releases and articles on defensive turkey-hunting tactics. NWTF has provided several brochures on turkey-hunting safety that have been used at sports shows, calling contests, and local and state chapter meetings. I know over the years I have distributed thousands of these brochures at these events.

Many NWTF volunteers are or have been hunting safety instructors and have provided their experience and knowledge in teaching firearms and hunter safety, especially turkey-hunting safety, to thousands of youths and adults taking the course for the first time. Multiply that by NWTF volunteers and state and local chapter involvement in seminars and events across the state for more than 30 years talking about turkey hunting safety and ethical behavior.

The "Identify Your Target" hologram and pamphlet was an early PA NWTF safety program that was used at these same seminars, sports shows, and events across Pennsylvania. Many of you have seen NWTF billboards in the 1990s and a few still exist today around Pennsylvania. These billboards told the story of "identify your target" and appeared before and during turkey hunting seasons.

The NWTF and PA NWTF Web sites in the mid 1990s offered turkey hunter safety information and educational material. Today's Web sites, www.nwtf.org and www.panwtf.org, have additional information and educational material on turkey hunting safety and ethical behavioral. These Web sites promote wild turkey management information, hunting and safety news releases, hunting articles, hunter-safety materials, and safety signs to be used by turkey hunters to promote informational and education materials.

Game Commission publications have for many decades provided turkey hunters with valuable information on safety and hunting. From Game News, "Hunting and Trapping Digest," and "Hunting Annual" to the Game Commission Web site, this information is readily available to all turkey



Enjoy a safe and
successful turkey season ...
please be sure you
**POSITIVELY IDENTIFY
YOUR TARGET!**

A cooperative effort of the
Pennsylvania Game Commission
and the
Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation

hunters.

The NWTF Wild Turkey Hunting Safety Task Force was established to educate state and local chapters on how to instruct and communicate the turkey-hunting safety message across the United States. Turkey Call and Turkey Talk ran articles on the recommendations and informational materials provided by the task force.

PA NWTF has worked with wildlife artists for create and produce artwork identifying key wild turkey characteristics to be used as posters at seminars, events, hunter education classes, sports shows, and other state and local chapter venues.

NWTF produces for distribution the NWTF green sticker – Hunt Safely – for turkey hunters. Pennsylvania has added "Think Safety" to that logo.

One of the most used methods to instruct and teach turkey hunting and safety is through the NWTF DART Interactive System used at sports shows, JAKES events, and other events run by volunteers and local chapters.

Recently, NWTF authored and has been distributing NWTF Turkey Hunting Safety DVD for all Pennsylvania hunter-education courses and for turkey hunters to purchase.

Even the Internet has provided a venue through many product and business message boards many of you turkey hunters log into every day. the Internet is another way to distribute and talk about turkey hunting and hunting safety.

NWTF magazines and television pro-

grams, PA Chapter NWTF newsletters, and local chapter newsletters continue to spread the message about turkey-hunting safety and ethics through these publications.

PA NWTF is committed to continue many of the programs, events, and communications that have been working the past 30 years. In addition, PA NWTF will be working with the Game Commission and legislators to establish a turkey-hunting license, something that was not done 20 years ago or even 10 years ago when the last two hunting license increases were granted. Additional revenue generated from a turkey license could be used to create new educational material for turkey hunting safety and fully fund the 47 strategies documented in Pennsylvania's wild turkey management plan.

Electronic point-of-sale licensing would identify turkey hunters purchasing a turkey license. Turkey-hunting safety material could be mailed to turkey hunters prior to each hunting season based on their turkey hunting license.

Like in Missouri, mandatory placing of a green Think safety - Hunt safety sticker on a firearm or bow would serve as a last reminder and possibly help reduce hunting accidents, as could a mandatory turkey-hunter safety course.

Ideas that have worked in the past and ideas that would provide improved hunting safety information and materials would serve the turkey hunter well. PA NWTF must be committed to step forward to continue communicating "Think safety - Hunt safely."



Pennsylvania Women in the Outdoors earn national honors

SUBMITTED BY TAMMY MOWRY
NATIONAL COORDINATOR

Learning outdoor skills, meeting new people, and spending time with friends and family is what the Women in the Outdoors program is all about. With 47,400 members across the United States and Canada, women are discovering that hobbies such as camping, hiking, fishing, kayaking, hunting, shooting, boating, and bird watching are fun ways to reconnect with the special people in their lives.

The Women in the Outdoors program marks a very special year 2008. We're celebrating our tenth anniversary. In honor of this anniversary, we will be hosting a National Women in the Outdoors event that will take place in September at the Wild Turkey Center in Edgefield, S.C. Registration forms for the event are now available, and you can get a copy from your Women's Regional Coordinator or by visiting the Women in the Outdoors Web site.

We know our success depends on our volunteers and because of them that success continues to reach new and exciting levels. Pennsylvania's top volunteers were recognized recently at the national NWTF convention.

The strength in any organization or program is found in the number and quality of

its membership. The following events are to be commended for having 100 or more members at their events:

The Jerry Zimmerman Memorial Chapter and Walking Purchase Chapter event with 100 members. Katrina Skrapits is the event coordinator for this event.

The Wilhelm Chapter event with 106 members. Annette Tobin and Meg LeSuer are event co-coordinators for this event.

The first runner-up for Best Overall Membership Achievement with 182 members is the Mount Pisgah Women in the Outdoors Event. Nicole Carman is the event coordinator.

Thank you to each of these top events for proving that a women's event can be huge!

For Best Overall Highest Net Dollars: 1st Runner Up – with a total of \$10,259 net dollars – is the Jerry Zimmerman Memorial Chapter and the Walking Purchase Chapter event.

The Annie Oakley Award is presented each year to outstanding volunteers for their commitment in helping us build the Women in the Outdoors program. This year's first recipient of the award is an avid outdoors woman from Pennsylvania, Katrina Skrapits. She enjoys sharing the hunting experience with her children. She's been an Event Coordinator since 2005. Her 2007 event had 100 members, and her events have received numerous awards on the state level. Katrina is very active in two



Katrina Skrapits
2007 Annie Oakley Award

local chapters. Both of these chapters have benefited tremendously with her talents. She works as a graphic artist and is always ready and willing to assist the local chapters and the State chapter.

Chestnut Foundation

chestnut trees is possible. To minimize this possibility, our breeding program uses genetic material from different Chinese and Japanese trees, each creating a potential new source of resistance.

Trees are tested for blight resistance by actually taking the blight, putting it in the trees, and then seeing how the trees resist the infection. Trees that fight well are then usually control-pollinated by volunteers and resulting progeny are subsequently planted in Chapter orchards with volunteer growers.

TACF relies on its core of citizen scientists to accomplish many of the breeding activities. In Pennsylvania, volunteers maintain more than 150 orchards and have planted more than 30,000 trees. There are more than 975 members dispersed throughout Pennsylvania who

have combined to log about 10,000 hours of volunteer time per year.

As part of those efforts, TACF and the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) have joined forces, having signed an official memorandum of understanding at the end of 2006. Currently, one of the most solid partnerships is occurring near Lancaster, Pa., where two new orchards are being established in 2008 on land owned by the Lancaster County Conservancy (LCC). Thanks to a large grant from the Alcoa Foundation, TACF, LCC, and the NWTF will be planting several acres of advanced back-cross hybrids (fifth generation) with the hopes of producing seed for reforestation and increasing the wildlife production of the land. Cover crops of white pine and spruce

from page 14

will be planted as windbreaks around the orchards as they grow and will also provide habitat for wild turkey. When the orchards begin to fruit – which will likely be within the next 8 to 10 years – the fruit will be available for all wildlife.

To find out more about how you can help, visit www.patacf.org or call the Penn State office at 814-863-7192.

Sara Fitzsimmons works as the Northern Appalachian Regional Science Coordinator for The American Chestnut Foundation. She's housed at their Penn State office and oversees the breeding activities of the greater mid-Atlantic region. After earning her Masters degree in forest ecology and environmental management, Sara took on a full-time position with TACF and has worked for the Foundation for over five years.

CHAPTER NEWS

PA NWTF Habitat Superfund Committee

Recently the PA NWTF Habitat Superfund Committee along with Pennsylvania Game Commission technical committee member, Mary Jo Casalena, and Chief of Game Lands Planning and Development Division, Ben Jones, met to review habitat proposals for 2008. The committee approved funding for 63 of the 83 habitat project proposals submitted for a total of \$100,375.72 committed for wild turkey habitat improvement throughout Pennsylvania, plus \$10,000 for the seed subsidy program. Of these 63 approved projects, 40 were funded in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Game Commission for a total of \$68,784.77. Many proposals were funded at a lower level than requested because there simply were not enough funds available to fully fund every proposal. The committee has made several technological advances for project review, which made the review process more streamlined. The new electronic proposal form, created by the PGC, worked seamlessly this year as all PGC proposals were submitted electronically. In light of the Game Commission's current budget shortfall, when dollars for planning and implementation of wildlife habitat work are so critical, it is through cooperators such as the PA NWTF, that the Pennsylvania Game Commission is able to continue its mission.

Allegheny Plateau Chapter elects new officers

SUBMITTED BY LENNY BEITER



New officers of the Allegheny Plateau Chapter: (left to right) Treasurer, Leonard S. Beiter; Vice President, Dan Eash; Secretary, Brandy Beiter; President, Bruce Eash; and Committee Banquet Chairman, Bill Nagy.

The Allegheny Plateau Chapter held a revitalization meeting in December 2007. The new chapter officers are very excited about carrying on the fine tradition the chapter has upheld for many years. The chapter will be having their 14th Annual

Heritage Banquet on June 18 at the Ace's Lounge in Johnstown. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m. and the banquet will begin at 6:00. This year, the banquet will include a dinner, raffles, and auctions as well as providing JAKES membership signups and a new women's raffle.

The Allegheny Plateau Chapter would also like to announce their monthly meetings for 2008 will now held at Gander Mountain in Johnstown at 7:30 p.m. on the following dates for: March 13, April 10, May 8, June 12, July 10, August 14, September 11, October 9, November 13, and December 11. All are welcome to attend.

First Turkey



Madeline and Ronnie Daub with Madeline's first turkey, which she killed her while hunting with her uncle Harold Daub during the 2007 youth hunt. Madeline bagged the gobbler with one shot from her 12-gauge 870 Remington after waiting about 10 minutes for the bird to close to within 25 yards.



Michael Sojack of Volant bagged his first gobbler shot during the 2007 youth turkey hunt. The turkey weighed 21 pounds and had an 8 3/4-inch beard 1 1/16-inch spurs.

Lower Bucks Longbeards put together a winning combination



Special thanks goes to Sponsor Member Craig William for donating a vintage World War II M-1 Garand rifle. The rifle was paired with Jack Paluh's "Gifts of Freedom" print and recently auctioned off at Lower Bucks Hunting Heritage Banquet. Pictured above is winning bidder Charlie Davis and NWTF Regional Director Ray Smith.

Turkey Banding



Left to right: Wildlife conservation officer Will Dingman, and JAKES members Ronnie Daub, Owen Daniel, and Madeline Daub. These JAKES members of the PANWTF volunteered their time to participate in the gobbler banding study and assisted with the banding process. The gobbler was trapped this year in WMU 4C on March 1.



LONGBEARD LESSONS

There's so much more to learn about turkey hunting than this brochure can describe. Fortunately, by becoming a member of the National Wild Turkey Federation you can continue fine-tuning your skills with a one-year subscription to our fall-cock, bi-monthly magazine *Turkey Call*. You'll get the latest turkey hunting advice from the experts as well as updates on new products, member deals, and more. Sign up today and a membership card and member deal are also yours by simply displaying that you're part of one of the fastest-growing conservation organizations in the world.

Sign up today and a membership card and member deal are also yours by simply displaying that you're part of one of the fastest-growing conservation organizations in the world.

- **YES!** I want a membership with the NWTFF for \$30 and receive six issues of *Turkey Call* Magazine, a NWTFF hat, a tote bag, local and other member-only benefits.
- **YES!** I would like to become a sponsor member for \$25 and receive all the regular member benefits as well as a special sponsor gift, sponsor deal, lapel pin and many other sponsor benefits.
- **YES!** For an additional \$5, I would like to become a member of the NWTFF Hunting Heritage Club.
- **NO.** I do not want to receive news and information about turkey hunting and conservation via NWTFF's weekly e-mail newsletter.

Name:

Address:

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State:

Zip:

Check Enclosed Credit Card

Account Number:

Expiration Date:

Signature:

Daytime Phone:

Email:



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IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AND BEYOND

TURKEY HUNTING TACTICS

A safe turkey hunter, like a safe driver, is deliberate minded whether hunting public or private land. If you suspect there's another hunter already working the same bird, leave the area.

- Resist the urge to stalk turkey sounds. It is nearly impossible to sneak up on a turkey. It is also unethical and could lead to an accident.
- Select a spot that is in open timber rather than thick brush, wearing camouflage clothing and eliminating movement is more critical to success than hiding in heavy cover.
- When calling, sit against a large stump, blow-down, tree trunk or rock that is wider than your shoulders and higher than your head.
- Be discreet when imitating the sound of a gobbling turkey.
- Never move, wave or make turkey sounds to alert another hunter of your presence. Remain still and speak in a loud, clear voice to announce your presence.

Make sure your decoy is not visible. Stash it in your vest and make sure the head is not sticking out. Use proper methods of carrying a firearm in the field: cradle carry, trail carry, shoulder carry, sling carry, etc.

- If you use a sling, don't accidentally point your shotgun in an unsafe direction when bending over.
- Firearms should be unloaded and actions open when traveling across steep, slippery or rough terrain.
- Use approved safety techniques for crossing fences. When you're alone, unload the firearm and place it under the fence with the muzzle pointing away. When two or more hunters are together, unload the firearm and keep the action open. Have one hunter hold the firearm while the other one crosses.
- Do not lean firearms up against trees, fence posts, vehicles, etc.

important, the most important factor in turkey hunting is setting up in the right place at the right time and setting skill. Patience and a comfy, camouflaged cushion to sit on will increase your odds of success.

Select a calling location in a fairly open area because turkeys are hesitant to walk into thick brush. Before you call, sit down with your back against a tree, rock or stump that is wider than your shoulders and taller than your head. This will help break up your outline and protect you from unseen hunters who may approach your calling from behind.

CHANGE OF SCENERY

There will be times when you set up and work a bird, but it just won't come into range. Sometimes it pays to be patient and wait since birds may approach your set up slowly and silently. However, there are times when you'll have more success moving and either work a bird from a new location or find another, more cooperative gobbler. If you decide to move, make sure you keep the following guidelines in mind.

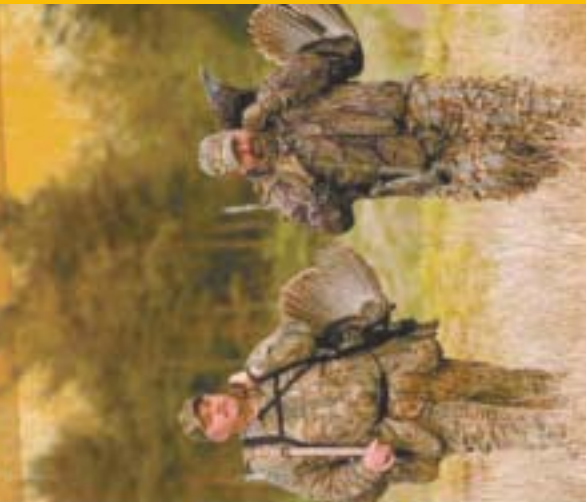
- Make sure your decoy is not visible. Stash it in your vest and make sure the head is not sticking out.
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- If you use a sling, don't accidentally point your shotgun in an unsafe direction when bending over.
- Firearms should be unloaded and actions open when traveling across steep, slippery or rough terrain.
- Use approved safety techniques for crossing fences. When you're alone, unload the firearm and place it under the fence with the muzzle pointing away. When two or more hunters are together, unload the firearm and keep the action open. Have one hunter hold the firearm while the other one crosses.
- Do not lean firearms up against trees, fence posts, vehicles, etc.

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH It's the moment you've been waiting for, a gobbler has responded to your calls and is making a beeline to your location. Make sure you're ready to seal the deal. Experts agree the best and safest way to kill a turkey is using a shotgun with number 4 or smaller shot.

The following advice can help you bring that bird home.

- Positively identify your target. In spring, only gobblers, and in some states all bearded turkeys, are legal.
- Be sure you have a safe backstop.
- Keep your shot to 40 yards or less.
- Aim for the base of the head.
- Don't shoot until the turkey's head and neck are extended.
- After firing, put your gun's safety on and approach the downed bird with your firearm pointed in a safe direction. Never run with a firearm.

TURKEY HUNTING SUCCESS AND SAFETY



Hunt. Conserve. Share.



The best and safest way to kill a turkey is using a shotgun with number 4 or smaller shot to place a shot in the head and neck at 40 yards or less.

THINK SAFETY - HUNT SAFELY

Wild turkey hunting is one of the most exciting ways you can spend time with your family and friends outdoors. It's also one of the safest outdoor activities whether you're talking about team sports, other types of hunting, or hobbies such as mountain biking. Following, you'll find tips to help you become a more successful wild turkey hunter as well as guidelines to help make a safe sport even safer.

PRE-SEASON PREP

The first step is to find a place to hunt. Your state or provincial wildlife agency can help you identify public hunting land. Visit the National Wild Turkey Federation's Web site at <http://www.nwtf.org/AllAgencies.html> to find wildlife agency contact information. If you plan to hunt private land, make sure you get the landowner's permission before hunting or scouting.

Whenever you decide to hunt, make the most of your time ahead by spending time before the season learning the lay of the land and where the birds like to be. Once you pinpoint where the birds roost and where they head during the day to feed, plan a strategy that puts you along their travel routes.

TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT

Prior to the start of hunting season, wild turkey hunters need to head to the range and test their shotgun to ensure they're shooting a tight, dense pattern. Learning how to accurately judge number of yards and ensuring your load performs well at different distances can mean the difference in bagging a bird and watching one sail off into the woods.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

The secret to successful and safe turkey hunting is making sure you're wearing the right clothes. Wild turkeys have excellent vision so head to toe camouflage is recommended to help keep you concealed. Camo clothes provide a secondary safety benefit as well.

DECOY DECEPTIONS

Fields and planted wildlife openings figure prominently into any turkey hunter's strategy. Birds will often head to fields to feed and horns prefer to strut in open areas where it's easier to be seen, but up just inside the woods where you can remain concealed, but have a good field of view to spot approaching birds. If using decoys, establish a clear line of vision for at least 100 yards and then place them at a set distance—about 20 yards from your position—so that you can tell when the bird is in shotgun range.

While not every hunter swears by decoys, they can be an asset in many situations. Today's decoys are real enough looking that from a distance they could fool hunters. However, you'll stay safe by following some common sense guidelines on decoy use.

Decoy Safety Strategies

- Never transport decoys uncovered. Many of the new decoys fold up for easy storage in turkey vests.
- Make sure the decoy head is not sticking out of your vest.
- Always set up against a tree that is taller than your head and wider than your shoulders.
- Establish a clear line of vision for at least 100 yards and then set up the decoys 20 yards from your position on the line.
- If you see another hunter, call out in a loud, clear voice to alert them to your position. Never wave or make turkey sounds to alert another hunter.
- Always check carefully that no one is stalking your decoys before leaving your position.

CALLING BASICS

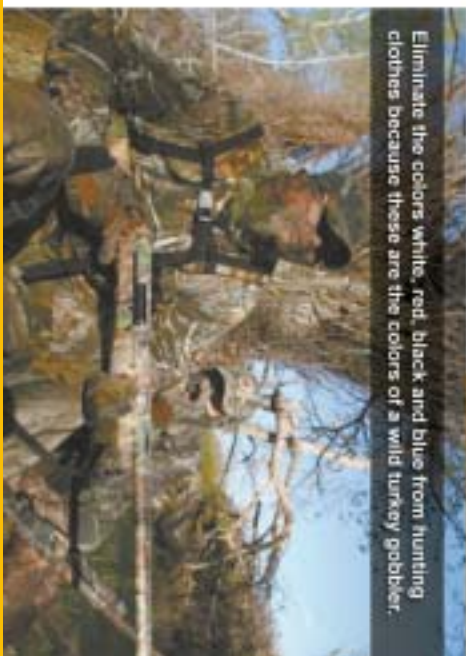
Communicating with a wild turkey to work it to the gun is a thrilling experience. And today's market offers a variety of calls—everything from mouth calls to box calls to pot and peg calls and more. Regardless of the type of call you choose, set aside some time to practice so you become a proficient caller. You can listen to recordings of real wild turkeys and get some calling tips by visiting the NWTF's Web site at http://www.nwtf.org/hunting_practices.html.

AW0200



CONCENTRATE ON CAMOUFLAGE

- Never wear bright colors, especially not red, white, blue or black because those are the colors of a wild turkey gobbler. Watch out for red, white or blue on your socks, t-shirts, hooded sweatshirts, hats, bandannas, etc.
- Wear dark undershirts and socks, and pants long enough to be tucked into boots.
- Keep your hands and head camouflaged when calling.
- When using a camouflage blind or netting, maintain a clear field of view.
- Camouflage your gun.



Eliminate the colors white, red, black and blue from hunting clothes because these are the colors of a wild turkey gobbler.



**PENNSYLVANIA STATE CHAPTER
2008 "TRIP OF A LIFETIME" RAFFLE**

TRIPS INCLUDE: LODGING, MEALS, AND GUIDE SERVICE

TRIPS DO NOT INCLUDE: AIRFARE, GRATUITIES, GUNS, TAGS, LICENSES, AMMO, TRANSFER FEES OR MISC. EXPENSES

3 WINNERS WILL BE DRAWN AT THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE CHAPTER OCTOBER 4, 2008 BOARD MEETING.
NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN.

TICKET PRICE: \$50.00—ONLY 400 TICKETS WILL BE SOLD!!

PROCEEDS USED TO BENEFIT THE NWTF WHEELIN' SPORTSMEN PROGRAM

WINNER #1 SELECTS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TRIPS:

- WYOMING ELK HUNT—6 DAYS
- UTAH MULE DEER HUNT—5 DAYS
- MEXICO COUES DEER HUNT—5 DAYS
- SOUTH AFRICAN SAFARI-(4 ANIMALS)—7 DAYS
 - ALBERTA MOOSE—6 DAYS
- COSTA RICA SPORT FISHING—6 DAYS

WINNER #2 SELECTS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TRIPS:

- SASKATCHEWAN TROPHY BLACK BEAR HUNT—6DAYS
 - ALBERTA TIMBER WOLF HUNT—6DAYS
 - FLORIDA OSCEOLA TURKEY HUNT—3 DAYS
 - NEW MEXICO ANTELOPE HUNT—2 DAYS
 - BRITISH COLUMBIA FLYFISHING TRIP—4 DAYS
- PIKE COUNTY ILLINOIS ARCHERY (NON-RUT) WHITETAIL HUNT—5 DAYS

WINNER #3 SELECTS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TRIPS:

- MEXICO LARGE MOUTH BASS FISHING—3 DAYS
 - KANSAS TURKEY HUNT—3 DAYS
 - SOUTH TEXAS WATERFOWL HUNT—3 DAYS
 - TEXAS WILD HOG HUNT (FOR 2 PEOPLE)—2 ½ DAYS
- FLORIDA PEACOCK & LARGE MOUTH BASS FISHING—3 DAYS
 - SOUTH DAKOTA PHEASANT HUNT—3 DAYS

NAME _____

CASH___CHECK___CREDIT CARD___

ADDRESS _____

CARD TYPE _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

CARD # _____

TELEPHONE _____

EXP DATE _____

Make Checks payable to: NWTF Wheelin' Sportsmen

Return application to: Ray Smith, 1133 Canoe Run Rd, Jersey Shore, PA 17740 or call (570) 398-0721

Who's Feeding Your Food Plot?

BY BOB SCHMID

NWTF HABITAT PRO STAFF

Once you complete the initial investment of time and money planting your food plots, it's not just a matter of sitting back and watching them grow. To keep those food plots producing quality forage for the wildlife you hope to attract, you need to plan for maintaining them year after year. Using some of the maintenance techniques outlined below, you should be able to keep your food plots productive for more than five years and not have to replant them after just a year or two. If you have ever had to replant a food plot, you understand that the time and money to constantly restart food plots becomes a burden. Here are some suggestions that will help get many years from your first planting.

Soil amendments

If you started your food plot project by doing the right thing and taking a soil sample, then you will be familiar with how a soil sample kit is used. If you haven't taken a soil sample and followed those recommendations, then you better take one soon. Many food plotters take that first soil sample, follow the recommendations for lime and fertilizer, but never consider repeating the process. The same natural forces that caused the soil to go acidic in the first place are continuing to work on your food plot. The plants are using the nutrients you initially placed in the soil when you fertilized, and these nutrients need to be replaced so that the plants can continue to be healthy and produce quality forage.

If you amended the soil in the first place, you won't need to take a soil sample every year nor will you need to lime every year. But an annual top dressing of fertilizer and a semi-annual application of lime will keep your food plot healthy. The only way to make sure you are putting down the correct nutrients is through a soil sample. With the cost of lime and fertilizer being what they are today, the small price you pay for a soil sample will ensure you are not wasting money by applying nutrients that are not needed.

Weed control

Again, if you started your food plot correctly, you should have taken measures to kill existing vegetation and weeds prior to your initial planting. But most of us do not realize that there is a huge bank of weed seed in the soil just waiting for the proper conditions to occur before they will germinate.



Usually these proper conditions include disturbing the soil, which is exactly what you did when you made your initial planting. If you have noticed weeds starting in your food plot just months after the initial planting, this is probably the reason.

If you are trying to maintain a clover plot, then you have a couple of products available to control weeds. The first step to weed management is to determine what type of weed is competing with your clover. If it is predominately grasses that are growing in your clover, then products like Poast, Vantage, or Arrest will control most types of grasses. If it is broadleaf weeds that you are competing with, the selection of herbicides is a little more difficult. Remember, clover is a broadleaf plant so general broadleaf control herbicides often kill clover too. I have found a product called Slay, available from Whitetail Institute, to effectively control broadleaf weeds in my clover plots. To identify the type of weed you need to control take a sample to an agricultural supply store and ask for help. I have found these stores ready and willing to help food plotters. They have the expertise in identifying the weed and providing you with the proper herbicide to correct the problem. Follow the instructions exactly, and I think you will find the products mentioned will get your weed problem under control.

Mowing

Mowing a clover plot is an effective way to control some types of weeds as well as "freshen" the plot. Mowing encourages new growth that can attract insects, which in turn attracts turkeys. New growth can also attract other types of wildlife, like deer, that you may be trying to attract. Mowing can

also remove weeds prior to them going to seed, which can help weed control. Several questions come up frequently at my food plot seminars concerning mowing. Most ask about timing: how often or when should I mow? Another frequent question is how high should I mow? Unfortunately, the answer is "it depends."

The worst time to mow is just before a long dry spell. Mowing too low in combination with a dry spell could stress your clover plot and cause severe damage. Another factor on mowing is how much pressure the local deer herd is having on your plot. Frequent mowing may not be required if the deer population is "mowing" it for you. I usually mow twice a year depending on the growing conditions for that season. The first mowing is usually sometime in June with another mowing later in the summer – August to early September – if I think the plot needs it. I usually set the brush hog at a height to take a couple inches off the top. Again it depends on how high the clover is at the time of mowing and whether or not I'm trying to take off some weeds at the same time.

Conclusion

Using these techniques, a well-established and maintained food plot should be able to provide quality forage for many years before it needs to be replanted. The time commitment and dollars invested in maintaining existing food plots is a lot less than starting over and constantly replanting your food plots.

For more information on creating food plots and other habitat management techniques log on to <http://www.panwtf.org/habitatcorner.php>

TRI-STATE GOBBLER BANDING PROJECT UPDATE

BY BOB ERIKSEN,
NWTF REGIONAL BIOLOGIST

Just when we thought the birds had stood us up on their date with destiny, four large gobblers appeared at the edge of the field. They seemed to come out of nowhere because the hillside to our south was extremely steep. The birds wasted no time racing for the baited trap site in the falling snow. As soon as they arrived at the bait, they began to feed. The gobblers were followed by a number of hens, but before too many hens got to the bait and the gobblers began to lose interest in cracked corn, we pushed the second button on the Handi-blaster dynamite detonating machine. When the smoke cleared, we had captured all four gobblers and three hens.

Falling snow has been rare this year in many parts of Pennsylvania, and turkey trapping has been a challenge. However, the thrill of a capture has not worn off for me even though January 22 marked the thirtieth anniversary of my first wild turkey capture. Trapping crews have been active in all six regions this winter, repeating the efforts they have made in the past three winters. Wildlife conservation officers, land managers, technicians, and biologists make up the crews, and there are three crews per region on average. Some of the crews use the assistance of volunteers to help with baiting to lure wild turkeys to trapping sites. Others shoulder all the responsibility themselves. However the crew handles the work, trapping turkeys is a difficult task. It requires many hours of preparation and often many more hours in a blind waiting for the fickle birds to decide to come to bait.

The trapping crews use cracked corn, scratch grain, and even the secret weapon – black oil sunflower seeds – to attract turkeys to trap sites. Bait trails are laid down lightly in places

that turkeys are frequenting. The birds find the light trail and follow the trail to the trap site, scratching along the way. Once the flock has found the main baited area, the crew discontinues the bait trail forcing the birds to come straight to the trap site. When turkeys have hit the bait for two or three days, the crew moves equipment in to catch them. However, the team has to evaluate the flock, sometimes without seeing them before making a capture attempt. With enough experience, a turkey trapper can estimate the number of birds in the flock by the sign they leave. Droppings, tracks (if there is snow), and feathers help turkey trappers to determine whether the flock is comprised of gobblers, hens, or a mixture of birds. Hen flocks hold no interest for the trappers involved in this study, but mixed flocks can help the team achieve their objective of banding gobblers.

In the old days, turkey trappers had to rely solely on field sign to determine when the flock visited the trap site, how often they were coming, and whether the flock consisted of toms or hens. By removing or squashing droppings, picking up feathers, and varying the times the trapper visits the site to check it, a general idea of timing can be developed. An experienced trapper can estimate the age of a dropping and the shape of the dropping can help the trapper figure out if gobblers or hens are using the site. There is no sense sitting in the blind all day if the turkeys are coming to bait in the afternoon. However, turkeys have minds of their own and schedules often change at the drop of a hat. These days digital trail cameras can be a big help to turkey trappers. But trail cameras are expensive, and you simply cannot leave a trail camera everywhere you trap (unless you don't mind losing one).

So turkey trappers establish bait trails and trap sites in a



number of locations. Each day the sites must be checked for turkey sign. Bait must be replaced because deer often find the bait and can make short work of it. That is one reason why turkey trappers prefer to use cracked corn rather than whole-kernel corn. Deer have an easier time finding and consuming every kernel of whole corn than cracked corn. The other reason is that turkeys are more likely to aspirate (inhale) whole corn when the rocket net blasts off and choke on it. Small grains such as wheat and oats can also be used. It is amazing how well turkeys can spot a few grains of cracked corn among the leaves or on top of the snow. Successful turkey trapping requires lots of preparation and lots of time. The Game Commission turkey trapping teams should be commended for the effort they have put into this project.

This winter is the third of four trapping seasons built into the Tri-State Gobbler Banding Project. In the past two winters, trapping success has been variable. The first year of the study (2006) was a mild winter with little snowfall. The second year was a “normal” winter with a good amount of snowfall and low temperatures. This winter has been a repeat of the first year, especially in the southern half of the state. The objective for all three states involved in the study is to live-trap and band 300 gobblers annually for a total of 900 birds. In the first

year, trapping crews in New York caught and banded 296 gobblers, Ohio captured 167, and Game Commission crews captured 246 for a total of 709 banded gobblers. In 2007 New York caught 383 gobblers, Ohio banded 274, and 334 gobblers were banded in Pennsylvania for a total of 991 gobblers. In those two years an amazing 1700 gobblers were banded! Of those, 849 were jakes and 851 were adult toms.

The trapping season ends in mid-March each year. At press time, 199 gobblers have been banded in Pennsylvania in 2008. It has been a difficult winter to catch turkeys. There seem to be plenty of turkeys, and there are lots of jakes in some areas of the state. Keeping the birds on bait long enough to make a capture has been the challenge this year with mild weather, light snowfall, and lots of rain. Turkey trappers will keep at it as long as they can and try to get as close as possible to the goal of 300 gobblers.

Dr. Duane Diefenbach of the Pennsylvania Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Penn State will do the analysis of the results of this work. It is too early to make any definitive statements about the results, but data has come in for the past two years. Bands are returned by hunters, and information is recorded awaiting the final analysis. The objective is to determine gobbler harvest rates

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The American Chestnut Foundation works to restore an important tree to the forests of Pennsylvania

BY SARA FITZSIMMONS

The demise of the American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) is likely one of the great ecological disasters of current time. Through the first half of the twentieth century, the species was virtually eliminated from the landscape by an Asiatic blight fungus (*Cryphonectria parasitica*) introduced on exotic plant materials imported by plant explorers in the late 1800s.

The chestnut was very densely populated with a range from Maine to Georgia. In Pennsylvania, the Blight Commission estimated that more than 25 percent of the state's hardwoods were American chestnut trees. In virgin forests throughout their range, mature chestnuts are storied to have averaged up to five feet in diameter and up to one hundred feet tall. Many specimens of eight to ten feet in diameter were recorded, and there were rumors of trees bigger still.

Due to their abundance and enormous size, the American chestnut once ranked as the most important wildlife plant in the eastern United States. A large American chestnut tree could produce 10 bushels or more of nuts. Chestnut mast supported many species indigenous to Pennsylvania including: squirrels, wild turkey, white-tailed deer, black bear, raccoon, and grouse, which once depended on chestnuts as a major food source.

Because of the chestnut's capacity to regenerate from the root collar, the American chestnut continues to survive. Once the "king of the forest," the American chestnut is typically only found as a small stump sprout, rarely reaching over 20 feet in height. Although the tree has escaped the threatened and endangered species list because of its fairly numerous population size, the blight fungus typically kills those stems before they can reach sexual maturity, reproduce, or expand within the native range.

Though hundreds of thousands of sprouts are thought to exist throughout the original range, recent Forest Inventory Analysis data indicate a reduction in overall number of chestnut stems throughout the forests of the eastern United States. Different management strategies, the importation of other exotic and invasive species, and the influence of Pennsylvania's ravenous deer herd all have had an effect on the capacity of the chestnut to continue surviving simply through resprouting.

Connection to wildlife

It's been said that an adventurous squirrel used to be able to travel all the way from

Maine to Georgia, without ever touching the ground, and only on chestnut trees. Based on the density of chestnut trees in the 1800s, that may have been true, but I'm sure it's up for debate.

What isn't really up for debate is that our forested ecosystem in the Appalachian Mountains lost a huge nutrition source when the chestnut was lost. Besides the ability to fruit at an early age, the chestnut's main secret to success in masting is that it doesn't flower until late June, almost always beating late frosts. Oaks, on the other hand, tend to flower in mid-to late May, leaving many vulnerable to frost and thus a loss of crop.

Another strong component to the chestnut's importance to wildlife is its nutritive content. By dry weight, the fruit typically has the highest carbohydrate content of the mast producing species in the eastern US.

Restoration efforts

There are several efforts underway to restore the American chestnut involving both traditional breeding methods, simple conservation strategies, methods that would reduce the virulence of the blight fungus, as well as modern gene-transformation techniques. The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) dabbles in each method, but focuses primarily on classical breeding techniques. While the broadest goal is to restore the American chestnut species, the organization focuses on two major objectives:

1. introducing the genetic material responsible for the blight resistance of the Chinese tree into the American chestnut;
2. to preserve the genetic heritage of the American chestnut species by conserving the native germplasm throughout the original range before it disappears.

Each chestnut species – of which there are about seven – varies with regard to blight resistance. Blighted North American chestnuts typically suffer only cosmetic damage, if any at all. With that in mind, Chinese and Japanese chestnuts offer a potential solution to the American tree's susceptibility to chestnut blight through hybridization.

It is thought that chestnut blight resistance is controlled by a three-gene system acting in an incompletely dominant fashion. Based upon that assumption, a breeding system to create a true breeding, blight-resistant American chestnut population would require a minimum of six generations. The first generation crosses an American and a resistant species. The next three looks to increase American character with crosses

Project Update

The Pennsylvania Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation will start two new orchards on House Rock Rd, Lancaster County, on April 5 and 6. The National Wild Turkey Federation, Game Commission, Lancaster County Conservancy, and neighbors will be helping with this planting.

Plans are to plant a two-acre American chestnut hybrid demonstration orchard of about 1000 trees (planted as nuts) for reforestation, education, and game. This orchard will have fully blight-resistant (mostly) American chestnuts for growth and ecology studies, but they will not be "American" enough for general reforestation. Another orchard for the last breeding and selection generation of "fully American" chestnuts prior to release to the public will be prepared at this time, but the first planting in this orchard will be in 2009.

About 3,000 to 3,500 pine trees will also be planted as a pollen buffer and habitat hopefully. Consequently, Lancaster's contribution this year to the goal of 10 million trees will be about four thousand trees.

back to American chestnuts. And the final two generations work to increase resistance.

To avoid inbreeding and to maximize inclusion of regionally-adapted genetic complexes, TACF backcrosses different American chestnut trees from each of our sources of blight resistance at multiple locations throughout the native range of the chestnut tree. As a result, each backcross generation – of which there are three – requires the planting of approximately 2,500 trees each. Those straight backcross generations are grown for a minimum of 5 to 8 years before they can be tested and properly selected for resistance and American type. The intercross generation – or the fifth overall generation of breeding – requires the planting and selection among a minimum of 13,500 trees from any given source of resistance.

Plant pathogens frequently evolve to overcome plant defenses. Although the blight fungus is not known to have overcome the defenses of the numerous Chinese chestnut trees planted in the U.S, a future "breakdown" of resistance in blight-resistant

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Mountain Ash

BY JOE KRUG

My rubbery legs protested as my lungs struggled to extract oxygen from the thin mountain air of Colorado's high country. I paused momentarily to catch my breath and rest my fatigued body. My labored breathing began to subside as my eyes were drawn to patches of orange on the other side of the rock scree field in front of me. A peek through my binoculars revealed fist-sized clusters of brightly colored orange berries. Any tree capable of producing good volumes of fruit at such high elevations had to be quite hearty and worthy of investigating.

Picking my way across rocks that ranged from football-sized to car-sized tested both my ankle strength and balance as well. I started to climb on top of a very large rock for a closer look at the brightly colored berries, only to discover that I was not the only one to set foot here. Fresh elk droppings revealed the presence of an earlier visitor.

The big animal had demonstrated near goat-like dexterity and foraged off every clump of fruit that he could reach. Elk might be large, but they certainly aren't awkward. A closer inspection revealed that the small tree was western mountain ash. I was already somewhat familiar with this species, since I had been propagating its eastern cousin for several years in my backyard nursery.

Although native to Pennsylvania, I have only ever observed a couple of isolated specimens growing in our state. Knowledgeable woodsmen, however, have told me tales of

ridge tops in both Centre and Bedford counties that support appreciable numbers of these trees.

Mountain ash has all of the characteristics of a tree that is adapted to growing on dry locations such as ridge tops. It is nearly in fall leaf by the time our native hardwoods begin to break bud. Aggressive growth begins almost immediately and begins to slow before the warmer summer months bring it to a complete standstill. From this period forward, any nutrients gathered by the tree will go only into producing fruit. In my nursery, after the dog days of summer arrive, you can water it until the cows come home, and it will not grow an inch!

Pluck a young tree from its growing pot, and you can see where its roots avoid the moister soil close to the bottom of the container. It is quite obvious that this species prefers a well-drained soil. I planted my first mountain ash trees to enhance wildlife habitat about six or seven years ago. I am very impressed with the initial results, because these specimens have demonstrated aggressive growth and have produced fruit in their second year after planting. These ash trees also appear to be well adapted to acidic forest soils, and some I have observed are doing well in alkaline soils as well.

I wish I could tell you that there are not any problems associated with attempting to propagate mountain ash. Unfortunately, like most trees, this one has problems that are unique to the species. If you would like to establish mountain ash plantings, fencing your young trees is a must. I expect that

heavy foraging by whitetails here in Pennsylvania has suppressed this native specimen to the point of near extinction. Trunk borers are also problematic and will inflict mortality if control measures against these pests are not implemented.

And then there are the bears. They can reduce a tree to splinters overnight. Take heart, however; several years ago, an old bruin worked over an Asiatic crabapple planting really badly. I wanted to cry. Two years later, these same trees recovered remarkably well and carried a heavy load of fruit. Always remember, bears will be bears.

The mountain ash trees that are available at your local nursery are probably European mountain ash. I would expect them to produce results that are similar to our native mountain ash. Trying to determine the difference between these two species is probably splitting hairs. If you must have the native variety, you may consider checking out the Game Commission Web site. Their Howard Nursery may have some available for purchase.

In the short amount of time that I have worked with mountain ash, I have been quite impressed with the results. Deer, turkey, grouse, bear, and birds are just a few of the critters who would benefit from ash plantings. If you would like to do something good for wildlife, consider planting a couple of these trees in your camp yard. Also remember to planet where they have at least a half day of exposure to sunlight.

Good luck, and may all of your efforts bear fruit.

Gobbler Banding

during the spring season (what portion of the banded gobblers is harvested by hunters). Researchers will also be able to estimate annual survival rates (how many gobblers live through a given year) and get an idea of non-hunting mortality. In addition, the project is looking at retention rates for standard butt-end bands. Each gobbler is marked with a rivet band on the right leg and a standard band on the left leg. The rivet band will not come off, but the standard band may. Biologists have noted in the past that some bands are lost. Band loss can affect the outcome of studies so it is important to know what percentage of standard bands is lost by gobblers.

At this point in the study it appears that gobbler harvest rates are similar in all three states even though season structures are different. In other studies, gobbler harvest rates

have ranged from 25 percent to more than 40 percent. The overall harvest rates observed so far in this work have been between 25 and 30 percent. Adult gobblers are harvested at a higher rate than jakes. This is likely because of turkey behavior patterns and hunter selectivity. Overall, annual survival of gobblers is about 50 percent, but the survival rate of jakes is higher than that of adult gobblers. This trend is exactly what has been documented in other parts of the country. It appears, based on the results so far, that standard bands are not the way to go when marking gobblers. The loss of bands by gobblers is quite high.

Wild turkey biologists in these three states will learn a great deal from this study. What is learned will be put to use in the future in the planning of hunting seasons and determination of bag limits. The spring harvest

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data will also help biologists develop more accurate spring population estimates and provide better ability to evaluate wild turkey population trends. As an NWTF member, you can be proud of your contribution to this work. There is a significant investment of NWTF Grant-in-Aid Research dollars in this work, and the Pennsylvania Chapter is helping with equipment and supplies purchases. Your chapter has invested more than \$20,000 in the project so far. All the money invested by NWTF and the state chapter comes from the local chapter Hunting Heritage Super Fund banquets. You have a stake in this research and in hundreds of other projects ranging from habitat enhancement to outreach and support of our hunting tradition. Thank you for your support of our chapter and this research!

Will You Hunt Safely This Spring?

BY BOB ERIKSEN
NWTF REGIONAL BIOLOGIST

My friend and I set up in the dark on the first morning. We had permission to hunt the property we were on and decided to hunt the south side of the road. No one else had permission to hunt the property, and we knew there were a couple of gobblers there. It was one of those perfect mornings, cool and calm; the kind of morning when every gobbler in the county should sound off. One problem: the gobblers did not know the script! As the morning brightened and the birds began to sing, we were greeted with stone-cold silence from the gobblers. Jim and I stayed put for an hour or so to no avail.

After the first hour, Jim got up and eased over to where I was seated against a big oak. He said, "I've got something I'd like to try."

His latest trick was a life-sized gobbler silhouette, actually a photograph of a strutting gobbler on a collapsible hoop. The image of the gobbler was visible on both sides of this new-fangled decoy. The photograph looked real.

I replied, "Go ahead and set it up. It can't do any more than scare a gobbler away if there is one around!"

Jim went out about 25 yards and set the decoy up in front of us. The decoy with a photograph on each side both faced us and faced away from us. As soon as Jim set the decoy up, I was uncomfortable. After a few minutes, I said to him, "Jim, please turn that thing so that anyone approaching us from the front won't be able to see it. Turn it sideways to us so if anyone shoots at it they are shooting across in front of us and not at us."

The image on the decoy was simply too realistic for my comfort level. It really looked like a gobbler out there in front of us. Jim complied with my request, and we sat back down and started calling.

Ten minutes later, I heard something walking in the leaves just out of sight down the hill in front of our position. The sound alerted me, and I began to concentrate on it. Whatever was walking in the leaves just out of sight crossed in front of us and began to circle to my right. Soon I saw a hunter ease up the hill about 40 yards from me. I called out to him, saying, "Hey, we're over here."

He looked startled and began to walk away. I stood up and walked quickly after him, catching up with him in a minute or two. I stopped him, requested his identification, and asked if he knew the property owner. He did not. Jim and I escorted him

off the land to a power line he had followed in. Apparently, he was walking the power line through private properties (a questionable practice) and heard us calling. Thinking he heard a flock of turkeys, he decided to circle downhill and try to sneak up on the birds. That's when we caught him trespassing.

No matter where you are hunting, whether or not anyone else has permission to be there, don't ever make the mistake of



believing you are the only one in the woods. Think about how you set up, especially if you are using decoys. Always place your back against a large tree or other object to break up your outline and give you cover so that anyone approaching your location from the rear will not be able to see movement. Never wear anything that is red, white, blue, or black. Wear complete camouflage, including a facemask and gloves. Make yourself comfortable, and don't try to hide in brushy area. Keep movement to a minimum, and be very careful using a gobbler call. Use crow calls, owl calls, or other locator calls rather than a gobble to get a response from that old tom. Never wave or use a turkey call to signal an approaching hunter. Call out to that person with a loud voice. Once you are certain that you have been seen, either talk with the individual or allow sufficient time for that person to move away before setting up again.

Most of the advice in the previous paragraph is aimed at keeping you from becoming a victim. Jim and I were set up properly. We honestly never expected another hunter to be there on that morning. That man had not seen our decoy. I hope that he would not have shot at it even if he had. Even though he was trespassing, he did not expect to see another hunter. He not only disrupted our morning hunt, but he could potentially have put us in an unsafe position. I was relieved that I had asked Jim to

reset the decoy.

Probably, for the ethical hunter, being the shooter in a turkey-hunting-related shooting incident is worse than being a victim. Most of the shooters in these situations cannot believe they have made such a drastic mistake; but the fact is they have erred and injured another hunter. How do these things happen? They happen when a hunter, experienced or not, allows excitement or peer pressure to overcome common sense. In most cases, the shooter hears or sees something that he misconstrues and comes to believe he is seeing or hearing a gobbler. Obviously, the shooter doesn't see a gobbler and does not properly identify that gobbler. Each of us has a responsibility to identify our target by carefully looking at the head of the bird (Is it bright red, white, and blue?), then checking for a beard, evaluating the color of the bird (Is it black or brown?), and finally making sure he has seen the whole bird and has a safe shot. In the case of a mistaken-for-game shooting incident, a circuit breaker trips, and the shooter makes an instant and absolutely wrong decision. It's a decision he will have to live with for the rest of his life.

Make sure you don't become the shooter in one of these incidents. Challenge yourself to be safety conscious every minute you are turkey hunting. Identify your target and what is beyond it. Set up properly and stay alert. Encourage your hunting partners and friends to do the same. Think Safety-Hunt Safely!

Your chapter has been committed to turkey hunting safety since its inception more than thirty years ago. This year the chapter has printed signs urging hunters to properly identify their targets. Those signs will be posted on signboards on state game lands, state forests, and other public lands. Billboards will be placed along highways in "Turkey Country" with the same reminder. A new "Turkey Hunting Success and Safety" brochure has been prepared and was published in "On Target," the newsletter distributed to every Hunter Education student. Another version of that brochure will be placed in the Game Commission Game Law Digest as a tear-out. Everyone who buys a 2008-2009 hunting license will receive the brochure. Local chapters will host spring hunting seminars to stress safe and ethical hunting techniques.

Go to a seminar. Talk with other turkey hunters about safety. Take a young hunter out and teach that young person how to hunt safely and ethically. Let's try to make the spring season of 2008 one of the safest on record. Think Safety-Hunt Safely!



Terrace Mountain Chapter Hosts Chris Bowser Wheelin' Hunt

BY BOB ERIKSEN
NWTF REGIONAL BIOLOGIST

On December 8, the Terrace Mountain Chapter and the Army Corps of Engineers at Raystown Lake hosted another well-planned and popular Wheelin' Sportsmen deer hunt. The folks at the Raystown Lake facility provide disabled hunters with a special place to hunt and the hunters are able to obtain DMAP tags for the annual hunt. The Terrace Mountain Chapter under the leadership of chapter president Chris Jenkins planned the event. Event co-chairs Frank Lane and Tara Whitsel did the most to make the event happen by working with Jeff Krause, Army Corps biologist, on planning, encouraging chapter members to look for donations, and "drafting" volunteers to make the 2007 Wheelin' hunt an extra big success.

Thirty-four disabled hunters participated in the 2007 hunt assisted by nearly 120 volunteers who did everything from serving as guides and dragging deer to cooking lunch. Everyone, hunters and volunteers included, was served a welcome hot lunch after the

morning hunt. Every disabled hunter received a cast aluminum Wheelin' logo license plate and each and every person present received a specially designed T-shirt featuring the logo for the annual event. More than fifteen raffle prizes were distributed to lucky hunters during lunch.

The grand prize at the event was a drawing for an expense paid Colorado mule deer hunt. The hunt was donated by Wild Country Outfitters of Crawford, Colorado, and Red Fox Taxidermy of Mount Union, Pennsylvania, will pick up the hunter's license fees. Anthony Sabitino was the lucky hunter drawn for the mule deer hunt, and he'll be heading west next fall on a hunt to remember!

One of the highlights of the 2007 Wheelin' hunt at Raystown Lake was the renaming of the event to honor Chris Bowser who founded the annual event. Chris is now working out of state as a wildlife biologist, and it was great to have him back for the event. Chris was deeply moved by the chapter's decision to name the event after him, and he thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the day's activities.



Of course, what would a Wheelin' hunt be without successful hunters? The 2007 hunt boasted 50 percent hunter success with 17 deer taken by 34 hunters. Seeing smiles on faces of hunters and the fellowship experienced by the volunteers and hunters was worth every minute the chapter and Army Corps invested in the event. Way to go Terrace Mountain Chapter! This is one great outreach program.

Orange for spring turkey hunting is gone

Now it's up to you!

BY JON PRIES, PA NWTF PRESIDENT

For many who fought the battle to eliminate the requirement to wear orange while moving during spring turkey hunting, it has been a long slow grind. Countless hours of phone calls, meetings and hallway conversations have finally led to the elimination of the word "mandatory" in the regulation. Make no mistake, there is not one single member of the National Wild Turkey Federation that does not consider safety as "priority one." But over the years, as Pennsylvania remained the only state in the nation to require orange while moving during spring gobbler season, statistics did not bear out that the use of orange was making any difference in the number of hunting-

related shooting incidents. In fact, the numbers actually took a slight trend upwards right after the implementation of the orange requirement over a decade ago. Thus, at the January meeting of the Board of Game Commissioners, the regulation was discussed one more time, testimony was given one more time, and finally, "mandatory" orange was reduced to "voluntary" by a unanimous vote.

What does this really mean to the responsible and ethical turkey hunter? Very emphatically it means that the burden is on our back – each and every one of us. It really always was; but now, even more so. When mandatory orange was around, there are those who might have been suckered into thinking that just because they didn't

see orange; it must be OK to shoot. Wrong. Positive target identification has always been paramount to safe hunting and safe shooting. Take your time. Watch long enough to make sure that it is a turkey you are watching, that it is a gobbler, and that it has a visible beard. After all, a great portion of the fun of being out there is in watching and observing the habits of the game you are hunting. So take your time; make sure not just of your target but also of the surroundings and that the area behind your target is well clear. The long-term success of the removal of "mandatory" orange is strictly up to you.

Remember: "Think Safety, Hunt Safely" and "Positively Identify Your Target – and Beyond."



2008 Pennsylvania Events

Do you enjoy activities in the out of doors? Would you like to learn outdoor skills or brush up on old ones, and network with other women who enjoy the same outdoor activities as you enjoy?

Then come and participate in a National Wild Turkey Federation's Women in the Outdoors event! You will learn outdoor skills in a non-competitive environment. Skills that you can take home and share with family and friends. Make new friends and maybe take up a new hobby.

Come and join the fun!

April 19 – Allegheny Valley Chapter

Heather Wells: 724-265-4883, HeatherWells531@msn.com
Bullcreek Sportsmen's Club, Tarentum (Allegheny County)

April 20 – North Boros Double Beards Chapter

Cathy Schmid: 412-766-7687, schmidcathy@hotmail.com
Kimberly Lehnhardt: 412-867-1937
North Side Sportsman's Association, Warrendale (Allegheny County)

May 2-4 – PA State Chapter and Carlisle YMCA

Tammy Mowry: 724-284-9201, tammynwtf@zoominternet.net
Bonnie Berk
717-243-2525, ext. 222, bonnieberk@comcast.net
Camp Thompson YMCA Camp, Gardners, PA (Adams County)

May 10 – Penns Woods Spurs Chapter

Danielle Straley: 412-798-2965, dstraley2@comcast.net
Trafford Sportsmen's Club, Trafford (Westmoreland County)

May 16 & 17 – PA State Chapter and Black Moshannon State Park

Michelle McCloskey: 814-342-5960, blackmoshannonsp@state.pa.us
Tammy Mowry: 724-284-9201, tammynwtf@zoominternet.net
Black Moshannon State Park, Philipsburg (Centre County)

May 31 – Kinzua Allegheny Chapter

Jessica Arnold: 814-436-1048, duckdog@outdrs.net
Chapman State Park, Clarendon (Warren County)

May 31 – Sherman's Valley Strutters Chapter

Judy Bitting: 717-834-5908, judybitting@hotmail.com
Duncannon Sportsmen's Association, Duncannon (Perry County)

June 14 – Jerry Zimmerman Memorial Chapter, Walking Purchase Chapter, and Pocono Mountains Chapter

Katrina Skrapits: 610-760-1689, kskrap@ptd.net
Ontelaunee Rod & Gun Club, New Tripoli (Lehigh County)

June 14 – Red Rose Chapter

Judi Brosey: 717-892-3543, broseyj@yahoo.com
Tammy Kauffman: 717-354-0457, tkuffman@frontiernet.net
Milton Grove Sportsmen's Club, Elizabethtown (Lancaster County)

June 21 – Wilhelm Chapter

Annette (Sis) Tobin: 814-734-1691, lattobin@peoplepc.com
Meg LeSuer: 814-734-5029
Lake Edinboro Sportsman League, Edinboro (Crawford County)

June 21 – Keystone Sportsmen's Club Women in the Outdoors

Tammy Parks: 724-354-3595, tspjat@icubed.com
Keystone Sportsmen's Club, Creekside (Armstrong County)

June 21 and 22 – PA State Chapter and Sinnemahoning State Park

Jackie Flynn: 814-647-8401, jaflynn@state.pa.us
Sinnemahoning State Park, Austin (Cameron County)

July 12 – Moraine Chapter

Tammy Mowry: 724-284-9201, tammynwtf@zoominternet.net
Butler City Hunting & Fishing Club, East Butler (Butler County)

July 19 – PA State Chapter and Cowans Gap State Park

Beth Garner: 717-485-3948, NRCowansEEPrograms@state.pa.us
Cowans Gap State Park, Fort Loudon (Franklin County)

August 1 and 2 – Muncy Creek Chapter

Clare McWilliams: 570-323-7947, hurwitzbatteriesqcm@verizon.net
Nancy Craft: 570-482-4364, rockrun@dishmail.net
North Mountain Sportsman Club, Muncy Valley (Sullivan County)

August 9 – Mt. Pisgah State Park

Nicole Carman: 570-297-2734, nicolecarman@yahoo.com
Mt. Pisgah State Park, Troy (Bradford County)

August 9 – Lower Bucks Longbeards Chapter

Dawn Secrest: 267-253-9002, girlshunt2@comcast.net
Langhorne Rod & Gun Club, Southampton (Bucks County)

August 23 – Bald Eagle Longbeards Chapter

Mary Probst: 570-748-3339
Western Clinton Sportsmen's Association, Hyner (Clinton County)

2008 National Event

September 25-28
10th Anniversary Celebration
"Learn, Laugh, and Lighten Up"
NWTF Headquarters
Edgefield, SC
Contact Tammy Mowry, National Coordinator—
(724) 284-9201; tammynwtf@zoominternet.net, or go to our website: www.womenintheoutdoors.org

Events will continue to be scheduled throughout the year, be sure to check back often to see what events have been added.

Registration fee for each event includes: Your choice of classes, equipment, literature, 1-year subscription to the Women in the Outdoors Magazine, complimentary 1-year membership to the National Wild Turkey Federation (or extension of current membership), meals, door prizes.

For a current list of events or more information, contact: Tammy Mowry, National Coordinator at 724-284-9201 or by e-mail at tammynwtf@zoominternet.net. Visit the NWTF Web site at www.nwtf.org, www.womenintheoutdoors.org, or the Pennsylvania Web site at www.panwtf.com or www.pawito.com

2008 Hunting Heritage Banquets

March through August

Date	Chapter	City	Contact
March 18	Shenango Valley Beards & Spurs	Hermitage	Ferrare
March 20	Laurel Highlands Committee	Greensburg	Mowry
March 22	Ten Mile Valley	Washington	Mowry
March 22	Cascade Thunderin' Toms	New Castle	Mowry
March 28	Allegheny Valley	Cheswick	Mowry
March 28	Southeast Silver Spurs	Kulpsville	Smith
March 29	Fort Chambers	Fayetteville	Mowry
March 29	Endless Mountains	Sayre	Ferrare
March 29	Lake Region Longbeards	Hamlin	Smith
March 29	Lower Bucks Longbeards	Morrisville	Smith
March 29	Nittany Valley Longbeards	State College	Ferrare
April 2	Allegheny Sultans	Titusville	Ferrare
April 5	Kinzua Valley	Mt. Jewett	Ferrare
April 5	Tamarack Turkey Talkers	Corry	Ferrare
April 5	2nd Chance Tom's	Ambridge	Mowry
April 5	Foothills Spurs	Rimersburg	Mowry
April 5	Susquehanna Chapter	Clearfield	Ferrare
April 10	Arnie Hayden Memorial	Whitneyville	Ferrare
April 12	Armenia Mountain Spurs	Troy	Ferrare
April 17	Northwest Thunderin' Toms	Meadville	Ferrare
May 3	Juniata Gobblers	Breezewood	Mowry
May 10	Wilson F. Moore Memorial	Montrose	Smith
May 17	Northern Counties Full Fan Ch.	Carbondale	Smith
May 17	Shippensburg Strutters	Shippensburg	Mowry
May 31	Brush Valley	Shamokin	Smith
June 12	White Deer Jakes	Allenwood	Ferrare
June 13	Southern End Strutters	Holtwood	Smith
June 13	Yellow Creek	Indiana	Mowry
June 14	Mason Dixon	Emigsville	Smith
June 14	Central PA Limbhangars	Houtzdale	Ferrare
June 14	Kit-Han-Ne	Kittanning	Mowry
June 14	Whitehorse Mtn. Longbeards	Somerset	Mowry
June 18	Allegheny Plateau	Johnstown	Mowry
June 19	North Boro Double Beards	Pittsburgh	Mowry
June 20	Tussey Mountain Strutters	Martinsburg	Mowry
August 17	Western PA Regional	Wampum	Mowry

Contact information: Phil Ferrare – philnwtf@hughes.net or 814-796-6983

Carl Mowry – cmpanwtf@zoominternet.net or 724-283-5708

Ray Smith – rsmithnwtf@suscom.net or 570-398-0721

Take A Number!



The Pennsylvania Chapter WT registration license plates are still available. Promoting the Pennsylvania Chapter and the National Wild Turkey Federation with our license plates is a great way to show your support and love of the wild turkey. Send a self-addressed stamped envelope with your membership number and phone number to Skip Sanderson, 6063 Glatfelters Station Road, Seven Valleys, PA 17360-8416. A signed application will be returned to you. Complete the application and send it with a check for \$20.00 to PennDot. Your plate should arrive in two to three weeks.

JOIN THE NWTF — THE RESOURCE NEEDS YOUR HELP!

YES I'd like to join the National Wild Turkey Federation, a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of the wild turkey and the preservation of the hunting tradition. This membership also enrolls me in my state and local chapters.

Sign me up as: (check one)

- Regular Member - \$30
- Women in the Outdoors Member - \$25
- Sponsor Member - \$225
- JAKES Member \$5
- Wheelin' Sportsmen Member - \$25

Charge my: Master Card; Visa

Credit Card Number: _____

Exp. Date _____

Name: (please print) _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

(Make checks payable to the NWTF)

Send completed application to:

Tammy Mowry, 288 Crisswell Road, Butler, PA 16002



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