

# Benefits of Hunting: Hunting Matters!

## Economic Benefits

Research by Southwick Associates, an organization specializing in quantifying the business side of fish and wildlife, provided insight into the 2006 economic contributions by hunters in North Carolina:

- Resident and non-resident hunters, age 16 and older, provided over \$1.6 billion to our state's economy.
- \$511,546,347 was spent on hunting-related expenditures alone.
- Our economic sectors were also stimulated by \$856,474,221 in sales, \$251,130,696 in net income, and 8,851 hunting industry-related jobs.



Hunter dollars not only benefit the hunting industry but also provide badly-needed revenue throughout many of the rural areas of our state. Many of the small “mom and pop” stores, motels, gas stations, and other establishments deeply appreciate hunter dollars.

## Conservation and Wildlife Management Funding

State wildlife agencies could not survive without hunters' financial contributions. Hunting-related spending supports wildlife agencies through license sales and the excise taxes on hunting equipment. For over 70 years, hunters, trappers, and anglers have provided nearly 70 percent of the financial funding that supports conservation and wildlife management initiatives. If hunting ceased, who would pay for wildlife management and conservation?

According to a 2005 document prepared by the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, *Potential Costs of Losing Hunting and Trapping as Wildlife Management Methods*, about 4 percent, on average, of the nation's 6.1 million auto accidents each year involve collisions with wildlife. If hunting were lost as a management tool, it is estimated that the percentage of deer-related collisions could increase 218 percent, which could also represent potential increases in human injuries and fatalities. Since deer control would be needed in some manner, the nation's taxpayer would likely foot the bill at upwards of \$9.3 billion annually. Wildlife-related crop damage could tack on an additional \$3 billion. Furbearers, including beaver, would require an estimated \$265 million to control and damage to homes another \$972 million. Estimates for healthcare and disease control for rabies was estimated at \$1.45 billion.

While hunting as a wildlife management tool does not eliminate wildlife-related issues, the loss of hunting could allow the problem to become far worse.

## Organic Lifestyle

Many in North Carolina are interested in living a healthy lifestyle, which often includes consuming organically-grown food. “Locally grown” is becoming an increasingly popular way to enjoy fresh fruit and vegetables and backyard gardens are seeing a resurgence. One of the driving forces for the “going organic” movement is related to concerns about chemicals and pesticides associated with mass production of our food.

Meat from hunting does not go through the chemical-related processes of grocery-store domestic meats. Hunting and eating wild game provides a lean, “free-range” protein product similar to that of organic food stores. Moreover, for those who hunt, fresh meat procured through hunting offers a “do-it-yourself” pride and satisfaction similar to that of growing your own vegetable garden.

## Altruistic Aspect

North Carolina hunters contribute in many ways beyond simple economics. Throughout the state, hunting organizations and clubs are often involved in community fund-raising events and field days that get families into the outdoors.



Hunters also help feed the hungry. North Carolina Hunters for the Hungry, and Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry are non-profit organizations that receive donated legally-harvested deer from hunters for feeding needy families across the state.

To manage our white-tailed deer population, the Wildlife Resources Commission encourages deer hunters to harvest additional deer in some areas. For hunters harvesting more deer than their families can consume, the excess deer can be donated.

Hunters transport deer to state-inspected meat processors where it is ground into burger and then donated to food pantries. Hunters are encouraged to make a small monetary donation to help cover processing costs. Many North Carolinians benefit from these worthwhile programs.

## Health-related Benefits

Hunters often reveal that being in nature provides time to clear the mind. In the woods, there is no rush, no schedule, and no deadlines; nature moves at its own pace. Hunting also offers a unique opportunity to interact with the natural world that is not possible through any other means. This interaction provides a deep spiritual connection with the land, the wildlife, and our planet.

A peer-reviewed article in *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, Spring 2002, written by John J. Daigle and Daniel Hrubes Icekajzen, reported that “experiencing solitude, time to think, relaxing and relieving stress, and getting exercise and staying in shape,” were significant outcomes, among other factors, associated with hunting.

Interacting with and learning about nature, getting fresh air and exercise, and the camaraderie of family and friends in the outdoors, all contribute to maintaining both mental and physical well being.

Hunting benefits our economy, provides funding for conservation and wildlife management, contributes to promoting a healthier lifestyle, has charitable characteristics, and directly connects us with life on our planet. It is no wonder why hunters wait patiently, year after year, to pursue this age-old passion!

# Hunting Matters!