



A Message from the Director

A year unlike any other, 2020 posed a number of unprecedented challenges. Yet, in the midst of all the uncertainty, a silver lining emerged — a renewed love of the outdoors. Since May, when the stay-at-home orders were lifted, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission has seen a 23 percent increase in inland fishing and hunting license sales. This additional funding helps the agency fulfill its mission and is reinvested in conservation efforts right here in our state.

As 2021 approaches, our agency will continue to encourage and promote an appreciation for the outdoors and North Carolina's vast wildlife-associated recreational opportunities. When planning your next adventure, purchase or renew your hunting, fishing, or trapping license by visiting ncwildlife.org. Keep in mind the Wildlife Commission provides more than:

- [2 million acres of game lands](#) for public hunting, trapping, fishing and other wildlife-associated recreation.

- [500 Public Fishing Areas](#)
- [500 fish attractors](#) in over 50 water bodies.
- [200 Boating Access Areas](#) to over 100 water bodies.
- [8 agency-owned or operated shooting ranges](#)

Wishing you a healthy, happy New Year,

Cameron "Cam" Ingram, Executive Director

N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission



Public Hearing on Proposed Regulations Will Be Held Online Jan. 21

Because of ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, the Wildlife Commission will conduct one virtual public hearing on Jan. 21 beginning at 6:30 p.m., to hear comments on proposed changes to regulations related to wildlife management, inland fisheries and game lands for the 2021-2022 seasons. Of statewide interest to hunters are proposals to allow [Sunday hunting on select game lands](#). The comment period will be open until midnight on Friday, Feb. 1, 2021. Details on all proposed regulations, how to register to attend the virtual public hearing, and

how to submit comments can be found on the agency's [Proposed Regulations page](#).



Hunting (or Fishing) for a Last Minute Gift?

Give the gift of outdoor recreational opportunities through the purchase of a fishing and/or hunting license. The Wildlife Commission offers a variety of options at different price points.

Purchase License Online



Hunting Over the Holidays? Follow These Safety Tips

With two of the most popular hunting days — Christmas Eve and Christmas Day — right around the corner, the Wildlife Commission reminds hunters to follow these safety tips:

- Let someone know your whereabouts and an approximate return time.
- Always practice firearm safety and point the muzzle in a safe direction.
- Be aware of your surroundings, especially when preparing to shoot. Ensure that there aren't any houses, vehicles or people in front of or behind your target.
- Wear an article of clothing featuring blaze orange. When boating, always wear a floatation device.
- Do not consume alcoholic beverages before or during hunting or boating.

Learn more by visiting the agency's [Home From The Hunt](#)™ webpage.





Surplus Trout Stocked in Western and Piedmont Impoundments

The Wildlife Commission once again has expanded seasonal angling opportunities by stocking surplus trout in select impoundments across central and western North Carolina. Since Nov. 30, Inland Fisheries Division staff have stocked 38 impoundments in western and Piedmont counties with brown, rainbow and brook trout. When fishing in these waters, anglers can harvest up to seven trout per day — with no bait restrictions and no minimum size limits. Anglers need only a basic fishing license. [Buy online here.](#)

[See the stocking schedule and plan your trip today.](#)



Hybrid Largemouth Bass Stocked in Lake Norman

In October, Wildlife Commission fisheries biologists tagged and stocked 2,000 hybrid largemouth bass into Lake Norman, to address a nearly two-decade decline in the Largemouth Bass population in the lake. The hybrids, called F1 Largemouth Bass, are a cross between a pure strain Northern Largemouth Bass and a pure strain Florida Largemouth Bass. In other reservoirs, these hybrid Largemouth Bass grow faster and to larger sizes than their pure strain counterparts, so biologists are hopeful this stocking will, over time, improve the Largemouth Bass fishery in the lake. The fish were donated by a group of Lake Norman anglers and stocked in four locations in the lake, which were selected based on appropriate habitat, past survey results and stocking logistics. Learn more about the stocking and future Largemouth Bass management plans, as well as the effects the introduction of Alabama Bass in Lake Norman have had on the Largemouth Bass population, by visiting the agency's [Lake Norman Black Bass Management and Research webpage](#).



Deer Hunters: Know Deer Carcass Importation Restrictions

With deer season in full swing, the Wildlife Commission reminds hunters that the importation of whole deer carcasses is prohibited and that strict processing and packaging regulations must be followed to import specific carcass parts from anywhere outside of North Carolina. These deer carcass importation restrictions apply to every state, including South Carolina, which was partially exempt from restrictions in 2019, as well as any foreign country, to help prevent the spread of [Chronic Wasting Disease](#) (CWD) into the state. CWD is a transmissible, always

fatal, neurological disease that affects deer and other cervids such as elk, moose and reindeer/caribou. [MORE](#)



2020 Wild Turkey Observation Survey Summary Now Online

The Wildlife Commission recently released its 2020 Summer Wild Turkey Observation Survey Summary Report, which agency biologists use to gauge hunting pressure and population trends across the state. A few highlights include:

- The number of poults seen with hens this year was the lowest on record, which may result in fewer turkeys seen, heard, and harvested over the next few years.
- The ratio of gobblers per hen in this year's survey was comparable to what has been observed for much of the last decade.
- More than 1,500 people helped with the survey this year and collectively reported seeing more than 42,000 wild turkeys! Nearly all parts of the state were well represented in the survey.

[Read the report here.](#)



***Wildlife in North Carolina* Magazine Makes an Excellent Gift for Any Reason in Any Season**

Wildlife in North Carolina magazine is the perfect gift for any season or for any reason. If you, or a loved one, is interested in hunting, fishing, conservation, nature photography or any outdoor activity, then this is the magazine for you. And at just \$12 for a year's subscription, the price cannot be beaten. Visit ncwildlife.org/winc for more information and to view sample articles.

[Purchase yours today!](#)



See a Mudpuppy? Let the Wildlife Commission Know

The Wildlife Commission is asking the public, particularly anglers, to submit any sightings of mudpuppies to the agency. The mudpuppy is a relatively rare salamander that shares a similar appearance and habitat to its larger cousin, the [eastern hellbender](#) — both species are entirely aquatic salamanders found in western North Carolina. Agency biologists want to learn more about the mudpuppy's distribution in North Carolina. Reported sightings are critical to biologists who know relatively little about this state-listed amphibian. Anyone who finds a mudpuppy is asked to leave it alone and email [Lori Williams](#) with the location (physical location or GPS coordinates) and a photo, if possible. [MORE](#)



Species Spotlight: Milkweed and Monarchs

This fall, staff from the Wildlife Commission's Private Lands Program and Habitat Conservation Division distributed milkweed plants to key conservation projects across the state. Through a partnership with the N.C. Pollinator Conservation Alliance, plants were grown by BASF at no cost to the Commission. Three species of milkweed—butterfly, common and swamp—were planted. Milkweed is the larval host plant for the monarch butterfly, a species of greatest conservation need. Monarchs are currently being considered for listing by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Endangered Species Act. Milkweed is disappearing from the landscape due to clean farming and development.

On the coast, 220 plants were placed on 19 different locations in Bladen, Sampson and Duplin counties. In addition, another 100 went to Pitt County for the Greenville Utilities Commission. In the Piedmont, 330 plants went to Davie, Moore, Randolph, Stanly and Stokes counties. An additional 20 plants were potted to be used in school gardens next spring. In the mountains, 50 plants were added near a vernal pool on McDowell County game lands, and about 200 were planted as part of a habitat restoration project in Madison County.

[Sign up to take the #MonarchChallenge](#)

[Learn more about the N.C. Pollinators Conservation Alliance and how you can plant pollinator habitat.](#)



Wildlife Commission Offers Paid Internships for Summer 2021

Interested in wildlife conservation as a potential career? If so, the Wildlife Commission is offering two paid internships for college students this summer. The first, which will be located at the agency's Pisgah Wildlife Education Center in Brevard, will teach wildlife education programs to children from pre-school through high school. Programs include fishing, stream investigations, among other topics. The second internship, located at the agency's headquarters in Raleigh, will conduct mark/recapture surveys to track box turtles. Selected interns will work 10 weeks for up to 40 hours per week. Deadline to apply is Jan. 4, 2021. [MORE](#)



Nominations Sought for Nongame Conservation Award

The Wildlife Commission is now accepting nominations through Jan. 31, 2021 for the 2021 Thomas L. Quay Wildlife Diversity Award. The agency presents this award annually to people who have demonstrated a long-standing commitment to, and leadership in, promoting the conservation of nongame species and sustaining nongame diversity in North Carolina. Nongame species are animals that have no open hunting, fishing or trapping season. Nominators must submit a [completed nomination form and a detailed essay](#) of the nominee's contributions to nongame wildlife conservation in the state.



Boating Access Fees Imposed by New Virginia Legislation Will Not Affect North Carolina Boaters

Virginia has passed new [legislation](#) to impose a fee at its boating access sites and has posted signage at these sites to make people aware of the new legislation, which goes into effect Jan. 1, 2021. Although this new law will not affect North Carolina licensed anglers and registered boaters on waters that North Carolina and Virginia manage together, N.C. Wildlife Law Enforcement Officers have received questions from North Carolinians who access these areas and want to know if this legislation will affect them. A comprehensive list of boating access areas is being finalized and will be posted on the Wildlife Commission's [Boating webpage](#) by Dec. 31.



Species Conservation Plans Now Available Online

The Wildlife Commission has available online four Species Conservation Plans, which were developed by the agency's Wildlife Diversity Program, for animals listed as Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern. These conservation plans include life history information, as well as analysis of the factors that have been identified as causing the decline of the species and the measures that can be taken to restore the species. [Read the Species Conservation Plans here.](#)



OTHER NEWS

[Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education Offers Free Programming in January](#)

