A Message from Wildlife Commission Executive Director Gordon Myers

From the peaks, valleys, and cool mountain streams of the Appalachians to the shores and waters of our magnificent coast, and all of the wonders of nature in between, we are blessed to live in a state filled with a rich diversity of fish, wildlife, and opportunities to enjoy the outdoors.

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission has joined the conservation community in promoting the #ResponsibleRecreation campaign as an important reminder to encourage people to enjoy the outdoors safely and responsibly during the COVID-19 pandemic. In a time when the outdoors and its health benefits are, for many of us, more important than ever, it is critical to practice responsible recreation. This campaign is a great reminder of how we can all help to keep our public lands open for the public to enjoy during this stressful time.

We hope you will take advantage of the varied and numerous opportunities to recreate on public lands and waters and we thank each of you for all you have been doing to help us keep these opportunities open.

Gordon Myers
Executive Director
COVID-19 Related Closures, Cancellations and Postponements

Due to the COVID-19 virus, the sales office at the Wildlife Commission’s headquarters in Raleigh is closed. You are strongly encouraged to purchase your fishing, trapping and hunting licenses and to register your vessel online. Please note the Commission’s License, Vessel Registration, and Wildlife Helpline Call Centers are open from 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., Monday-Friday.

For the most up-to-date information regarding agency closures, cancellations and postponements, visit the Wildlife Commission's COVID-19 webpage.

Delayed Harvest Trout Waters Open to Harvest June 6, 2020

The Wildlife Commission will open 34 trout streams and two lakes classified as Delayed Harvest to trout harvest on June 6 until Sept. 30. From 6 a.m. to 11:59 a.m. on opening day, Delayed Harvest waters are open only to anglers 17 years old and younger. Waters open to all anglers at noon. During this time, anglers can keep up to seven trout per day with no bait restrictions or minimum size limits. Due to the fluid situation caused by COVID-19, some Public Mountain Trout Waters have not received normal stockings this spring. The full stocking schedule for the season has been temporarily removed from the Commission’s website; however, the agency is posting weekly stocking updates so that anglers may find locations of stocked waters by week. As a reminder, due to COVID-19 all anglers should practice social distancing and maintain a distance of 6 feet between themselves and others, and refrain from gatherings with more than 10 people. Read more
Wildlife Commission Sets 2020-21 Migratory Game Bird Seasons

The Wildlife Commission set season dates, bag limits and applicable regulations for the 2020-21 waterfowl, webless migratory game bird (including doves), and extended waterfowl seasons. Read the selected seasons, as well as some notable changes.

Headed to the Beach? Buy Online Before Casting a Line

The Wildlife Commission is reminding beach-bound anglers, particularly those headed to the coast for Memorial Day weekend, to purchase their saltwater fishing license before they leave home. A Coastal Recreational Fishing License is required for anyone 16 years and older to fish recreationally in the state's coastal fishing waters, which include sounds, coastal rivers and their tributaries out to 3 miles into the ocean. Purchase a fishing license.
Young Wildlife Abound: Look But Don't Touch

With spring comes a profusion of newborn and young wildlife, from fawns and fox kits, to newborn rabbits and nestling songbirds. If you see a young animal, the best thing you can do is to "look, but don't touch," unless absolutely necessary. In almost all instances young wildlife should be left alone because the mother is usually nearby and will return when she feels it is safe to do so. Deer and rabbits in particular use a "hider" strategy to keep their fawns and kits safe. Get tips on what to do if you find a fawn, baby rabbits or young songbirds.

Watch for Nesting Shorebirds This Summer
Beach-bound visitors are advised to "Share the Shore" with waterbirds this summer by giving them and their nesting areas a wide berth. Eggs and chicks are well camouflaged to protect them from predators, so they can easily be stepped on and crushed. Beach-goers should avoid walking or driving in areas where birds nest and raise chicks, such as the upper portion of the beach around inlets and remote and/or undeveloped beaches. Learn more on what you can do to help nesting shorebirds.

Don't Feed the Alligator and Other Tips to Co-Exist with Alligators

If you see an alligator in the wild, look but don't feed — and don’t touch, harass or poach the animal either. The Wildlife Commission reminds the public that alligators can become a nuisance when people either intentionally or unintentionally feed them, which causes them to associate humans with an easy meal. Learn more about alligators and ways to avoid conflict.
Don't Be A Statistic; Wear A Life Jacket While on the Water this Summer

National Safe Boating Week, which runs from May 16-22 this year, promotes safe boating practices as boating season begins in full force. Wildlife Law Enforcement Officers urge all North Carolinians to wear life jackets while on the water this summer. Wearing a life jacket is the most important thing a person can do to prevent drowning while boating. In 2018, 35 people lost their lives due to boating accidents and 29 of them were not wearing a life vest. Don't be a statistic in 2020. Wear your life jacket.
Interested in Becoming a Wildlife Enforcement Officer? Apply Starting May 18

If you are interested in a career conserving and protecting the state's wildlife resources and their habitats, applications for the 57th N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission's Basic Academy will open on May 18, 2020. The Basic Academy is scheduled to begin in January 2021. Visit the agency's Become A Wildlife Enforcement Officer page to read a general job description and learn more about applicant requirements, required physical capabilities and the application process.

National Law Enforcement Week: Honoring Our Wildlife Enforcement Officers

In honor of National Police Week, which runs from Sunday, May 10 through Saturday, May 16 this year, the Wildlife Commission would like to honor and thank its 200+ Wildlife Law Enforcement Officers who are in the field day in and day out, enforcing the laws that protect the public and the state's wildlife resources. Each year, throughout the United States, this is also the week to honor fallen law enforcement officers. Since 1930, 11 officers have given their lives in service to the Wildlife Commission and to the conservation of North Carolina's valuable wildlife resources. We recognize the officers we have lost and extend our deepest condolences to their loved ones.
Wake Responsibly: You Are Responsible for Your Own Wake

While wakeboarding on the water this summer, the Wildlife Commission urges you to follow the guidelines below to "wake responsibly:"

- Stay at least 200 feet away from the shoreline, docks or other structures
- Keep music at reasonable levels. Sound travels well over water. If it is loud enough to hear at 80 feet back, it is likely loud enough for homeowners and other to hear as well.
- Minimize repetitive passes on any one portion of the shoreline. Once you've run the same line for awhile, move on to another area.

Learn more
Sea Turtle Nesting Begins Along the Coastline

The 2020 sea turtle nesting season in North Carolina began in early May when a female loggerhead sea turtle laid her eggs on the beach at Fort Fisher State Recreation Area, in New Hanover County. Nesting will continue on North Carolina’s sandy ocean beaches through August, and hatchling turtles will emerge from the nests between July and November. In 2019, 2,358 sea turtle nests were laid in NC, which is the most ever recorded. Wildlife Commission biologists don’t expect another record year because individual female sea turtles rarely nest in consecutive years. Volunteers and cooperators participating in the NC Sea Turtle Nest Monitoring and Protection Project will continue to conduct daily surveys, protect incubating eggs, and submit data about hatchling production. However, due to the global pandemic, they have adapted their work and procedures to minimize spread of coronavirus and the agency asks that the public maintain adequate social distancing if they see them working on the beach.
No Evidence of Asian Giant Hornets in North Carolina

Asian giant hornets (aka “murder hornets”) have recently been spotted in Washington state; however, biologists with the Wildlife Commission and state entomologists say there is no evidence that these exotic insects are in North Carolina, or in anywhere else in the country other than the small area in Washington state. North Carolina is home to several large species of hornets that can be mistaken for Asian giant hornets, especially the European hornet, which is well established across the state. If you have any questions about an insect sighting in North Carolina, contact the NC State University Plant Disease and Insect Clinic, the leading authority on insect identification in the state.

Lake Norman Anglers Who Catch a Blue-Tagged Hybrid Striped Bass Should Release the Fish

Wildlife Commission biologists are asking anglers fishing on Lake Norman to release any blue-tagged hybrid striped bass they catch. Tagged fish are easily identifiable with the blue tag in the dorsal area (the top of the fish near the spines) and a thin antenna protruding from the side of the body. They are part of a study of hybrid striped bass, also known as Bodie bass, that agency biologists recently began to track the fish’s movements throughout the reservoir, particularly in the late summer months when water temperatures are high and
dissolved oxygen levels in certain areas of the reservoir are low.