



A Message from the Director

As we near the end of 2020, our state and nation continue to face unprecedented challenges and uncertainty, I want to acknowledge staff and extend a thank you to staff on behalf of agency leadership and its board of commissioners for their steadfast commitment to advancing our agency's mission and going the extra mile in the face of a pandemic to ensure agency operations never wavered for our constituents. With State Employee Recognition Week approaching next week, I want to publicly acknowledge staff for their individual and collective efforts over the past year. It is their commitment to conserving North Carolina's wildlife and wild places that is the foundational strength of our agency.

**Cameron "Cam" Ingram, Executive Director
N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission**



Delayed Harvest Trout Waters Open Oct. 1

Fall trout fishing begins in earnest on Oct. 1 when the Wildlife Commission will implement Delayed Harvest Trout Waters (DHTW) regulations on 36 trout waters in the mountains. Fishing these waters is a fun way to experience the thrill of catching — and releasing — brook, rainbow or brown trout since the agency stocks DHTWs from fall to spring with high densities of trout to increase anglers' chances of catching fish. While fishing on these waters, anglers cannot harvest, or possess any trout from Oct. 1 until one half-hour after sunset on June 4, 2021. They cannot possess natural bait and can fish only with artificial lures with one single hook. [MORE](#)

[Purchase License Online](#)



Youth Deer Hunting Day is Sept. 26

The Wildlife Commission has designated Saturday, Sept. 26, as Youth Deer Hunting Day for 2020 when youth 17 and younger may use any legal weapon to hunt deer (male or female) and are not required to be accompanied by an adult if they have completed a hunter education course. The Youth Deer Hunting Day provisions apply to both private and public lands. Hunters age 18 and older with a valid hunting license may use only the weapon that is legal for the type of season open in their county on this day. All hunters must wear blaze orange on Sept. 26, even if using archery equipment. [MORE](#)



Hunting From a Tree Stand? Wildlife Commission Encourages Safe Practices

Before heading to the field or woods, hunters should take simple precautions when using a tree stand to prevent injuries and ensure they return home safely. The Wildlife Commission recommends hunters:

- Before use, check the stand's belts, chains, bolts and attachment cords for damage and wear.
- Use a full-body safety harness properly at all times, and remain connected to the tree from the time you leave the ground to the time you return to the ground.
- Bring an emergency signal device, such as cell phone or whistle.

- Maintain three points of contact when climbing up or down a stand

[MORE](#)



Help Wildlife Commission Biologists Monitor Wildlife Populations

Northern Pine Snake Sightings Wanted in Western North Carolina

Wildlife Commission biologists are asking the public to help them learn more about the distribution of the northern pine snake in western North Carolina by reporting any sightings of these large snakes in the wild. Northern pine snakes are large and heavy-bodied, typically reaching between 4 to 5 feet, but can be as long as 7 ½ feet. If you see one in the wild, email pinesnake@ncwildlife.org with the following information:

- A photo (required)
- Date and time the snake was observed
- The location (GPS coordinates are best, but a detailed location description is acceptable)

[Learn more](#)

Deer Hunters: Report Observations of Game or Furbearer Species

Deer hunters who are still or stand hunting are asked to record an accurate count of game and furbearer species they observe on each hunt. Participants can enter their observations online in the field from any smart phone or small-screen device by using the survey link:

ncwildlife.org/HunterObservationSurvey

As an alternative option, new participants can request a [paper survey form](#) to be mailed to them. [MORE](#)

Deer Hunters: Submit Jawbones from Does and Bucks of All Ages

The Wildlife Commission is looking for volunteers for its annual Deer Jawbone Submission program. Jawbones from does and bucks of all ages, not just large deer, should be submitted so that biologists can estimate the age structure of the harvest. Hunters have two ways to submit jawbones this year. Participants will receive a report with the estimated age(s) of their deer next summer. [MORE](#)

Grouse Hunters: Submit Samples of Blood and Feathers

The Wildlife Commission is seeking assistance from grouse hunters this hunting season with its West Nile Virus Disease sampling and Avid Hunter Surveys. Grouse hunters are asked to submit feather and blood samples from their harvested birds to test for West Nile Virus. Recent research suggests that ruffed grouse are routinely exposed to West Nile Virus, and it appears this exposure could cause declines in ruffed grouse populations. Hunters who would like sampling packets mailed to them should contact Wildlife Health Biologist [Merril Cook](#).

Hellbender Sightings Wanted in Western North Carolina

Biologists are asking the public, particularly anglers, to report any sightings of hellbenders (water dogs) to the agency. They want to learn more about where hellbenders—gigantic, aquatic salamanders averaging 16 to 17 inches in length—are located and how their populations are faring. In North Carolina, hellbenders are found only in fast-moving, clean mountain streams in the

western part of the state. If you find a hellbender, please leave it alone but note the location (physical location or GPS coordinates) and take a photo, if possible, and email that information to Wildlife Diversity Biologist [Lori Williams](#). If anglers happen to catch one on hook and line, they should carefully remove the hook if it is safe to do so without harming the animal or cut the line as close as possible and return it back to the water. You also can call (866) 318-2401 and provide details of the observation.



Deer Hunters: Know Deer Carcass Importation Restrictions

The Wildlife Commission reminds hunters that the importation of whole deer carcasses is prohibited and 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 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.

[READ MORE](#)



Prepping a Deer (Cape and Skull Plate) for Importation to NC

CWD is a fatal disease that is affecting deer populations across the U.S. To help decrease the spread of CWD, the Wildlife Commission reminds hunters of its prohibition on the importation of whole deer carcasses and has restricted importation of some carcass parts. The Commission has posted a video [“Preparing a Harvested Deer for Importation to NC,”](#) on its [YouTube Channel](#), which features a demonstration by Taxidermist D. Price of Outback Taxidermy on how to properly prepare a deer carcass for importation across state lines.



Wildlife Diversity Program News

Citizen Reports Lead to New Rattlesnake Locations

In 2009, [N.C. Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation](#) developed a brochure called "[Rattlesnake Sightings Wanted](#)," While a few reports have trickled in over the years, during spring and summer of 2020, staff received over 50 records from the public, which have led to over 20 new rattlesnake locations for timber rattlesnake and pigmy rattlesnake, as well as one newly found gestation site. A gestation site (sometimes also called a rookery) is an area where multiple pregnant female rattlesnakes, as well as other snake species who have live birth such as Eastern Garter Snake, Northern Water Snake, and Copperhead, gather so that they can successfully bring their live litters to term (i.e., grow their offspring). These sites have optimal thermal qualities as well as plenty of areas for protection from predators. Wildlife Commission staff have been conducting rattlesnake surveys in both the Coastal Plain and in the Mountains, with work focused on locating gestation sites, so these citizen reports have been particularly helpful.

Islands Clean Up to Benefit Waterbirds

The Wildlife Commission's Waterbirds Team conducted its 4th annual Island Cleanup August 27-28 at Oregon Inlet. The team visited 5 islands and collected ~ 435 pounds of trash. Drink containers, food wrappers, and fishing line and lures were among the most common items. Removal of debris has become a regular part of the team's work to provide North Carolina's waterbirds with habitat where they can nest, rest, and forage.

[Learn more about the projects being conducted by Wildlife Diversity Program biologists on behalf of nongame fish and wildlife species.](#)





Gordon Myers Wins Lifetime Achievement Award

Wildlife Commission executive director Gordon Myers recently received the [Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies](#)' top honor, the Seth Gordon Award, for lifetime achievement in conserving North America's natural resources in the public trust and contributing to the programs of the Association. His leadership has improved policies, practices, and leadership within the agency; forged strong partnerships with federal leadership; and successfully advocated for conservation and recreation funding. [MORE](#)



Catch of the Day!

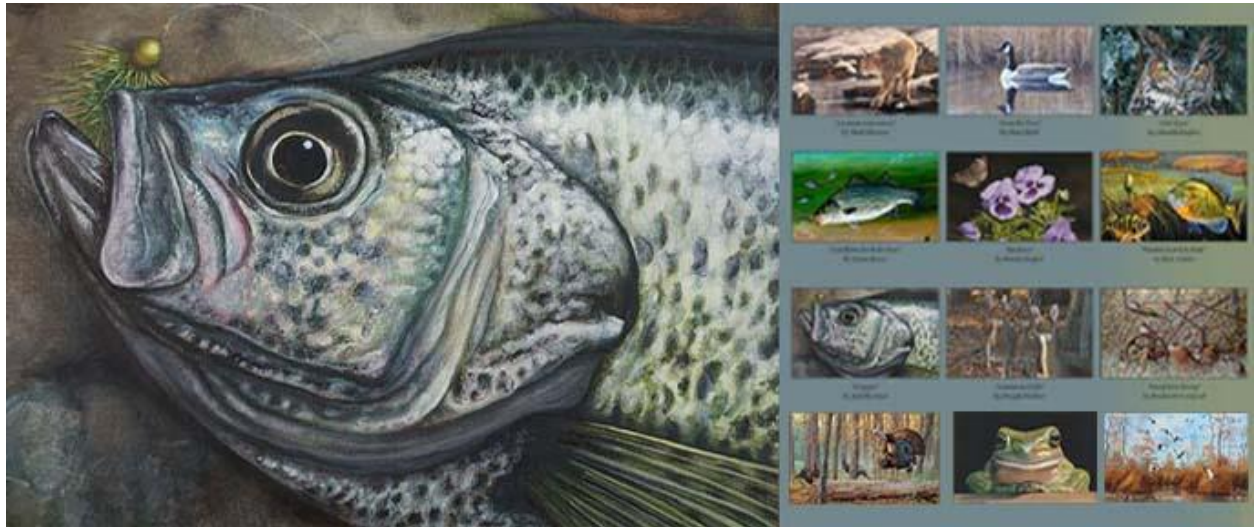


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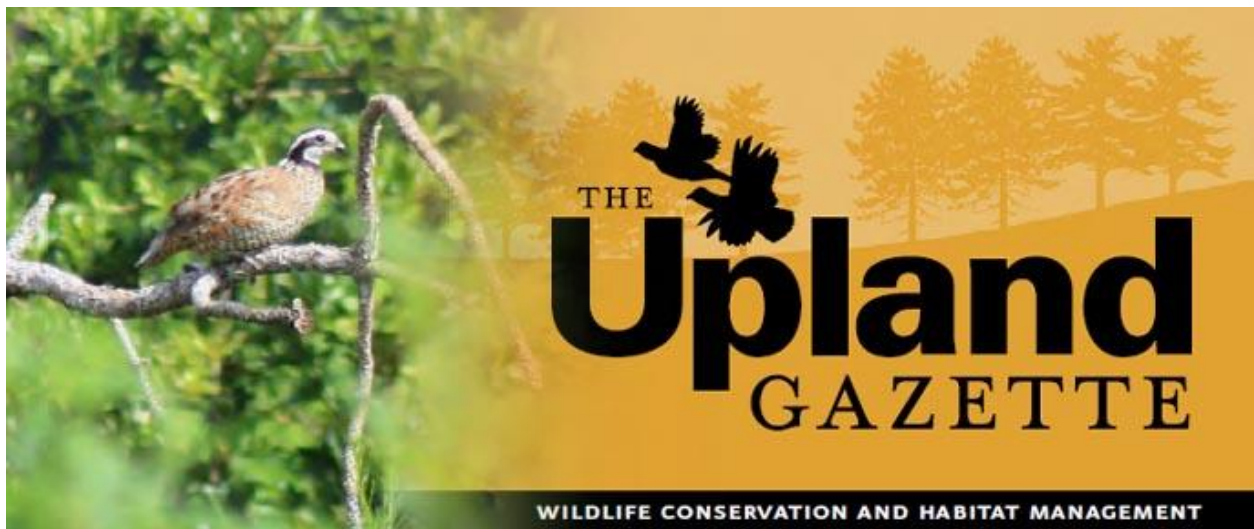
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2021 Wildlife Calendar Now Available! Get Yours Before They're Gone!

The 2021 Wildlife Calendar is now on sale. The calendar, which makes an excellent holiday gift, features outstanding wildlife art with profiles of each artist, fishing days with moon phase information, and more. Only \$9 each — get yours before they're gone! Visit the Wildlife Commission's [NC Wildstore](#) to purchase yours today.



Fall Issue of *Upland Gazette* is Now Available

The [Fall 2020 issue of *The Upland Gazette*](#) features articles on the importance of pollinators; hunting opportunities on Wildlife Commission game lands; creating optimal habitat for bobwhite quail; a red meat allergy brought on by ticks; an update on Quail Forever, one of the agency's key partners, among other articles. The fall issue, along with past issues, is available [online](#).

