

# THE WILDLIFE INSIDER

## New CWD Unit Hunting Regulations Established to Aid Efforts for Disease Management

With Chronic Wasting Disease occurring in Tennessee, the TWRA has established the goal of keeping CWD from spreading, keeping the number of diseased deer in the affected area to a minimum and reducing disease rates where possible. To achieve that goal, the Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission established a CWD (chronic wasting disease) Unit with specific regulations to achieve our goals that are science-based and data-driven.

The aim of Unit CWD hunting regulations is to increase the deer harvest by empowering hunters to harvest more while targeting high-risk deer and allowing the agency to sample more deer to better understand the disease. Data collected to date indicates that bucks are twice as likely as does to have CWD. Older bucks are three times more likely to have CWD than younger bucks. Other research proves that bucks have a much larger home range so the likelihood of bucks transporting CWD to new areas is higher. For all these reasons, the harvest of bucks will help the most with accomplishing these goals; however the harvest of does is also very important since they can spread the disease as well.

The following hunting regulation changes were made to Unit CWD counties to accomplish the above-stated objectives:

- **Earn-A-Buck**

- Tennessee's antlered deer bag limit (2) did not change; therefore it still applies to hunters hunting Unit CWD as well as the rest of the state.

- Only hunters hunting in Unit CWD counties may earn additional bucks.

- Unit CWD hunters may earn up



**TWRA held a public meeting in Bolivar, Tenn., to better inform the public about CWD.**

to two bucks for harvest, in addition to the statewide antlered deer bag limit of two.

- Earned bucks are received by harvesting two Unit CWD antlerless deer, checking them in, submitting them for CWD testing and being notified by TWRA.

- Earn-A-Buck will increase the number of deer (does and bucks) harvested and the numbers of deer tested for CWD.

- **Replacement Bucks**

- Unit CWD hunters will receive a replacement buck if they harvest a CWD-positive buck and the lab result is confirmed by TWRA.

- There is no limit on the number of replacement bucks.

- Replacement bucks will encourage hunters to continue hunting and harvesting and be an added incentive for hunters to have their deer tested for CWD.

- **The August 3-day hunt allowed the use of muzzleloaders, in addition to archery, and applies to most public lands (Presidents Island in Shelby County is excluded).**

- **Muzzleloader season will begin on Oct. 28 in Unit CWD.**

- **Gun season will begin Nov. 9 in Unit CWD.**

- **Antlered harvest allowed during the January 5-day private lands hunt in Unit CWD (traditionally antlerless only).**

- **Mandatory physical check stations on Nov. 2-3 and Nov. 9-10 for Unit CWD counties except Harde-man and Fayette.**

The CWD hunting regulations only apply to Unit CWD which includes CWD positive counties Fayette, Harde-man, and Madison and CWD high-risk counties Chester, Haywood, McNairy, Shelby, and Tipton. Carcass export and wildlife feeding restrictions remain in place for Unit CWD.

## Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission Welcomes Five New Members

The Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission (TFWC) has welcomed five new members to serve on the governing body of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. Jimmy Granberry (Nashville) will represent TFWC District 5, Tommy Woods (Piney Flats) will represent District 1 and Hank Wright (Collierville) is the new District 9 representative. Steve Jones (Clinton) and Jim Ripley (Kodak) received statewide appointments.

Commissioner Granberry enjoys all aspects of being in the outdoors including hunting, fishing, farming and spending time with his family in various activities. He serves as Chairman/President of H.G. Hill Company.

He is involved with several organizations including the TWRF (Heritage Club), NWTE, NRA and AOPA. He also enjoys high school and college sports and following the Nashville Predators. He is a graduate of Hillwood High School and earned his BBA degree from the University of Mississippi.

Commissioner Woods resides in the Sullivan County community of Piney Flats. He is the owner and operator of Acorn Electrical Specialist, Inc., and also involved in farming. He enjoys hunting, skeet and trap shooting and fishing.

He is active in several organizations including Coalition for Kids, East Tennessee Youth Outdoors and Bristol Motor Speedway Children's Charities. He attended school at Sullivan East High School, Northeast State Community College and East Tennessee State University.

Dr. Wright serves as a veterinarian in Collierville in Shelby County. He grew up on farm and basically lives on one today with his family. He enjoys many activities including beekeeping, vegetable gardening, bluebird conservation and nesting, veterinary medicine, and spending time with his family.

He attended the University of Tennes-



Jimmy Granberry



Steve Jones



Jim Ripley



Tommy Woods



Hank Wright

see at Martin and the University Of Tennessee College Of Veterinary Medicine.

Commissioner Jones resides in his hometown of Clinton. He grew up on his parent's pick-your-own strawberry farm. He left his native East Tennessee for a time to serve in the United States Air Force where he maintained and flew on B-52 aircraft as an electronic warfare technician. While in the Air Force, he completed his Bachelor's degree at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University. After completing his service, he returned to East Tennessee with his family and completed a MBA at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

He has served on the Anderson County Farm Bureau Board for 20 years and was the region's Young Farmer of the Year in 1994. He is a member of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Quail Forever. He serves on the UT/Battelle Development

Corporation board of directors, the Tennessee Valley Corridor board of directors, an executive board member of the East Tennessee Economic Council and is chair of the Y12 Community Relations Council. He is the president of Steve Jones & Associates, LLC in Oak Ridge.

Commissioner Ripley is serving for the second time as a commissioner, previously serving 2012-17. An attorney in Sevierville, he is a member of the American Bar Association, Tennessee Bar Association, Sevier County Bar Association and American Board of Trial Advocates.

He is a past president of the Labrador Retriever Foundation and is a member of the Ducks Unlimited and the National Wild Turkey Federation. A graduate of the Webb School in Knoxville, he earned his B.A. and J.D., both from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

## Dr. Jeff Cook Honored for Time as TFWC Chair, New Officers Now Serving

The Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission officers are now serving for 2019-20. Dr. Jeff Cook was honored for his service as the commission's chair for the past year.

Kurt Holbert was named the TFWC's new chair. A resident of Decaturville, he previously served as the group's vice-chairman.

Brian McLerran, from the Clay County community of Moss, is the new vice chairman after serving as the TFWC secretary. Angie Box, from Jackson, is a new officer and will serve as the TFWC secretary.

Commissioner Cook, from Franklin, was recognized for his leadership the past year as he presided over his last meeting. He was presented a plaque of appreciation.



**Jeff Cook served as the chair of the TFWC for the past year and is with the 2019-20 officers elected at the February TFWC meeting. Pictured (from left) are Angie Box (secretary), Dr. Cook, Kurt Holbert (chairman) and Brian McLerran (vice chairman)**

## Five Commissioners Conclude Appointments

Five persons completed their appointment as members of the Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission earlier this year.

The commissioners concluding their tenures are Chad Baker (Bristol), Jeff Cook (Franklin), Bill Cox (Collierville), Bill Swan (Dunlap) and Jamie Woodson (Lebanon).

Mr. Baker was appointed as the District 1 commissioner in 2014. He served this past year on the Retention and Recruitment, Audit, and Boating and Law Enforcement committees.

Dr. Cook served as the TFWC chairman during the past year. He was appointed to the commission in 2015 as a statewide appointment.

Mr. Cox completed his second appointment as a commissioner, serving as the District 9 representative since 2012. He served as the TFWC chairman during his first appointment. He served as the chair of the Retention and Recruitment committee and was also on the Property and Infrastructure, Audit, and the Wildlife Management committees.

Mr. Swan was named to the TFWC in 2015 as a statewide representative.



**The five commissioners completing their service to the TFWC are (from left) Chad Baker, Bill Cox, Jamie Woodson, Bill Swan and Jeff Cook. They were honored during the TFWC February meeting.**

He served this past year as the chairman of the Audit Committee and also on the Fisheries Management, Retention and Recruitment, and the Budget committees.

Mrs. Woodson was named to the commission in 2012, representing Dis-

trict 5. She served as the TFWC chair in 2017-18. During the past year, she was chair of the Fisheries Management Committee and vice chair for the Wildlife Management Committee. She also served on the Budget and Government Relations committees.

## Regulations Detailed in 2019-20 Tennessee Hunting and Trapping Guide

The 2019-20 Tennessee Hunting and Trapping Guide features several important changes for this year's hunting and trapping seasons. The guide is available at all Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency offices, license vendor locations throughout the state and online.

Users may access the new interactive, mobile-friendly, e-regulations site, <http://www.eregulations.com/tennessee/hunting/> or download the full PDF document as in years past. Both options are available on the agency website at [www.tnwildlife.org](http://www.tnwildlife.org).

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) was detected in Tennessee in December 2018 in Fayette, Hardeman and Madison counties. As a result, a number of

changes apply to southwestern Tennessee counties and are outlined in detail in the guide.

New regulations on usage or possession of natural deer and elk urine while hunting will be in effect. Duck season dates and bag limits have been updated.

Sportsmen are urged to get the new-improved "TWRA On the Go" app and report harvests with or without cell phone service.



## Robert M. Hatcher Memorial Scholarship Awarded to UTC Grad Student Eliot Berz

Eliot Berz, a graduate student at the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, is the third recipient of the Robert M. Hatcher Memorial Scholarship. The \$1,000 scholarship is named in honor of Bob Hatcher, whose tenure with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency spanned 38 years, included a stint as the Non-Game and Endangered Species Coordinator from 1987 until 2001.

Eliot was selected for the scholarship based on his academic excellence and extracurricular activities in avian conservation. Eliot developed a deep interest in biology at a young age growing up in Chattanooga. After high school, Eliot attended and graduated from the University of the South (Sewanee) with a bachelor's of science in environmental science and a minor in economics. He was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa National Honor Society.

Eliot is now working with the Tennessee River Gorge Trust and, at the same time, pursuing a Master's of Environmental Science degree at UTC. The focus of his work is to evaluate the migration paths, movements and timing of the Louisiana waterthrush and worm-eating warbler located around the Chattanooga area.

Mr. Hatcher initiated the state bald eagle recovery efforts in the early 1980s. There are now more than 200 nesting pairs in the state. He also was responsible for reintroducing other species throughout Tennessee.



**Eliot Berz (far right) received the 2018 Robert M. Hatcher Memorial Scholarship. Pictured from left are TWRA Executive Director Ed Carter, TFWC Chairman Jeff Cook, TWRA Bird Conservation Coordinator David Hanni, the Hatchers' daughter, Terri Hatcher Goodwin, the Hatchers' son, Jerry, and Mr. Hatcher's wife, Betty. This marks the third year of the scholarship presented in Mr. Hatcher's honor.**

## Tulahoma's Ashley Scott Becomes First National Champ from State's NASP

Ashley Scott, a seventh grader at Tulahoma's East Middle School, became the first student from Tennessee's National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) to win a national championship. The individual honor came at the 2019 National NASP Tournament at the Louisville Ky., Fair and Exposition Center.

Ashley shot a 295 out of a possible 300, along with Madalyn Weiss, an eighth grader from Portage Central (Mich.) school. Both girls received first place honors for top shooter in the Middle School Division.

A record number of archers, just shy of 15,000 (14,946), competed in the Elementary, Middle and High school divisions. Each shooter competed in flights with a series of 30 scored arrows, 15 each from the 10-meter and 15-meter shooting lines.

Ashley's achievement put the finishing touch on an outstanding spring. She was the top overall female shooter with a 291 at the Tennessee NASP State Championships last spring in Murfreesboro's Miller Coliseum.

The NASP program, sponsored by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, began in the state in 2004 with 12 pilot schools participating in the program. More than 290 schools now participate in the program. NASP is a 2-8 week curriculum taught during school that teaches International style target archery.

**Ashley Scott, who was the overall top female shooter at Tennessee NASP State Championships, won first place in the Middle School Division at the NASP National Championships.**



## Bassmaster Classic Further Demonstrates Tennessee as a Top Fishing Destination

Tennessee anglers captured the top two places and posted two additional spots among the top seven in the 2019 Bassmaster Classic. The impressive performances capped off the three-day event in Knoxville.

Ott DeFoe put the finishing touches on a storybook performance in his hometown. The Knoxville angler was the overall champion with a total of 49 pounds, 3 ounces. He earned the title after a sixth place finish a year ago.

Harrison resident Jacob Wheeler came in second place in his third B.A.S.S. tournament. He had a three-day total of 45-5. Brandon Lester claimed sixth place. The Fayetteville native had a three-day total of 40-3. Right behind in seventh position was Spring City's Wesley Strader with 39-8 to give all the Volunteer State's anglers competing top 10 finishes.

The Classic showcased Tennessee as one of the nation's top fishing destinations. A record attendance of more than 153,800 were in attendance at the tournament venues, including the daily afternoon weigh-ins at Thompson Boling Arena, the Classic Outdoors Expo at the Knoxville Con-



**Spectators watch as fishermen competing in the Bassmaster Classic leave the launch area to head out for the day.**

vention Center and World's Fair Exhibition Hall, and the morning takeoffs at Volunteers Landing. The Saturday takeoff drew 6,500 while Friday's was 5,500, both new records.

Fishing is big business in Tennessee. With 1.8 million anglers and an

economic impact of more than \$1.1 billion in Tennessee, fishing drives tourism throughout the state and supports close to 10,000 jobs. The Classic alone had an economic impact of more than \$25 million in and around Knoxville.

## TWRA Offers Helpful Tips on Helping Wildlife in Tennessee

Have you ever asked yourself, “What can I do to help wildlife in Tennessee?” The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency has a few helpful suggestions.

1. **Buy a fishing or hunting license (even if you don’t fish or hunt)** - License dollars are the main source of revenue for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency that conserves and manages more than 1,400 species of wildlife in Tennessee. Especially for those who don’t hunt or fish, there is now a “Friend of Wildlife” license package available at [GoOutdoorsTennessee.com](http://GoOutdoorsTennessee.com) that is a good investment in wildlife conservation. Your purchase will help continue wildlife conservation and development of recreational opportunities for future generations.

2. **Let wildlife stay wild** - Some animals might seem like they need help, but they don’t need rescuing. Babies of some species are left alone all day and rely on camouflage for protection. If you do happen upon a truly injured animal, there is a list of wildlife rehabilitators at [TNwildlife.org](http://TNwildlife.org).

3. **Avoid feeding wildlife** - Feeding wildlife can lead to serious problems. Human food is not healthy for wild animals and they do not need it to survive. Wild animals have specialized diets and can become malnourished or die if fed the wrong foods. Also, animals cannot distinguish food from wrappers or foil and can get sick eating these items.

4. **Don’t litter** - Most people know



litter is bad for the planet, but also bad for unsuspecting wildlife. Everyday items such as drink cans and plastic bottles can be deadly for animals, even dogs and cats. Animals of all kinds often mistake trash for food or shelter.

5. **Turn your yard into good habitat** - Creating habitat in your home’s yard is beneficial to wildlife. Habitat is a combination of food, water, shelter, and space arranged to meet the needs of wildlife. Even a small yard can be landscaped to attract birds, butterflies, beneficial insects, and small animals. Trees, shrubs and other plants provide shelter and food for wildlife.

6. **Appreciate the biodiversity of**

**Tennessee!** - We are blessed in Tennessee with lots of wildlife to see. From more than 300 bird species to the 320 different types of fish, we are the salamander capital of the world (56 different kinds), and 22 different frogs and toads. Get outside and look and listen for all of these Tennessee residents.

The TWRA is a diverse operation. From hunting, fishing, and boating, to protecting non-game species and creating watchable wildlife opportunities, the TWRA serves the citizens of Tennessee. Our website ([www.tnwildlife.org](http://www.tnwildlife.org)) is a great reference point for more in-depth information on what people can do to help.

## Tennessee Wildlife Subscription Makes for a Thoughtful Christmas Gift

The 2019 holiday season is on the way and a gift subscription to Tennessee Wildlife magazine makes for a great and a very cost-friendly Christmas gift.

The quarterly magazine of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, a Tennessee Wildlife gift subscription for one year (four issues) is only \$10, and includes the always-popular summer calendar issue. If you wish to make the gift last longer, a two-year subscription is just \$17 and three years is available for the bargain price of \$25. Those persons receiving a gift will be notified with a card from the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.

Each issue of Tennessee Wildlife

includes feature articles and topics relating to hunting, fishing and boating in the state. Articles are accompanied by outstanding photography. In addition, the Insider section of the magazine highlights news and human interest items.

The calendar issue has photographs entered in the annual Tennessee Wildlife



Photo contest.

Subscription forms are available on the TWRA website: [www.tnwildlife.org](http://www.tnwildlife.org).

## Regional Manager Alan Peterson Concludes Long Agency Career

Alan Peterson has retired after 34 years of service to the TWRA. He served the Agency in several capacities during his career.

Alan received a bachelor's of science degree in fisheries and wildlife from the University of Missouri and a master's degree from Tennessee Tech in 1985. He began his TWRA career that same year as a wildlife officer in Chester County, where he served for seven years.

During his career, he was WMA manager, Information and Education specialist, wildlife biologist, assistant regional manager and finished his career as the regional manager for West Tennessee's TWRA Region I.

Throughout his career, he was deeply involved in species restoration projects including those to restore turkey, ospreys, Mississippi kites, alligator gar, alligator snapping turtles and elk.



**Alan was recognized and presented a plaque of appreciation at TFWC meeting for his years of service. He is flanked by former TFWC Chair Jeff Cook and Executive Director Ed Carter.**

## Spring Turkey Harvest Show 11 Percent Increase From 2018

Tennessee's 2019 spring turkey season harvest was up 11 percent from the previous year, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency reports.

The total harvest for the 2019 season is 31,193. In 2018, the harvest fell below the 30,000-mark for the first time in 15 seasons. The 2019 harvest number was down 3 percent from the previous 5-year average.

Regionally, despite the flooding in West Tennessee which comprised TWRA Region I, the 2019 harvest was

virtually unchanged from the 5-year average. The other three regions all saw improvements over 2018, but still down from their respective 5-year averages, ranging from 3.3 to 4.3 percent declines.

Maury County was the top county with a harvest of 1,034, up 97 turkeys from the 2018 season. Dickson County was second with 837, followed by Greene 810, Giles 672, and Montgomery 638 for the top five.

Rounding out the top 15 counties

were Robertson 603, Rutherford 583, Hardin 551, Weakley 546, Sumner 541, Hickman 537, Humphreys 534, Henry 518, Hawkins 512 and Stewart 489.

All the counties in the top 15 had increased harvests from 2018 with the exception of Greene County, which had four less turkeys harvested and Weakley, which had six less.

Giles County had the sharpest increase with 164 more birds harvested this spring. Dickson County saw an increase of 142.

## Legislative Amendment Affects Motorized Watercraft Renters

An amendment passed in the Tennessee General Assembly this year requires persons who rent motorized watercraft be given an orientation for the specific type of vessel being rented.

The renter of the watercraft must sign off in acknowledgement after completion of the orientation. The marina or any other rental entity will keep the acknowledgement on file for at least a 30-day period.

Tennessee residents who have successfully completed a monitored National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) exam and hold the

TWRA-issued wallet certification card are exempt from this orientation. Any out-of-state visitor who holds a NASBLA-approved boating safety education certification is also exempt, as is any person who holds a United States Coast Guard operator's license.

Tennessee residents born after Jan. 1, 1989 are required to pass a boater education exam administered by an approved representative of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency in order to operate any motorized vessel over 8.5 horsepower. Out-of-state residents born after Jan.

1, 1989 must show proof of successful completion of NASBLA approved boating safety course. Non-resident certification may be from their home state or any state issued course.

Tennessee residents born after the Jan.1, 1989 can purchase a Type 600 Exam Permit online or from any hunting and fishing license vendor for a cost of \$10 and go to a testing location to take the exam or take a class. Locations for testing and for classes can be found on the TWRA website under the boating section. For study materials, telephone (615) 781-6682.

# The Habitat Corner

## **CRP Bobwhite Habitat Practice: Working for Wildlife and Landowners**

**Mark Gudlin & Chris Hunter – TWRA Habitat Biologist**

The Tennessee CRP SAFE (State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement) Bobwhite Habitat Restoration practice is targeted to help restore native quail habitats that benefit bobwhites and other early successional wildlife. TWRA coordinated with the USDA-Farm Service Agency to conduct a survey to assess landowner perceptions and experiences with the habitat practice.

The SAFE practice is allowed on eligible acres of entire fields or portions of fields that meet certain cropping history, consists of establishing native grass and forb mixtures and a required native shrub component of 2.5 to 30 percent of the contract acres. Up to 10 percent of the acres can be in a wildlife food plot. The native grass and forb cover is primarily for brooding, nesting and roosting cover while the shrub component is utilized by quail for escape cover. Twenty-eight counties are open for SAFE Bobwhite enrollments.

The surveys were mailed to 126 SAFE enrollees that had active contracts for at least four years of their 10-year contract. Completed surveys were returned by 73 participants for a response rate of 58 percent. Most respondents (91 percent) managed their SAFE contracts themselves. On average contracts were active for seven years and were 52 acres in size, while ranging from five to 527 acres.

Some respondents indicated they ran into some barriers establishing the SAFE contract, which included the availability of seed, shrub and trees to be planted (18.5 percent), and weather (12.3 percent).

Respondents were satisfied with the technical assistance provided by TWRA, NRCS or Quail Forever biologists that developed their plan (86.4 percent).

The most frequent management practice applied to SAFE grass acres was mowing prior to strip disking (88.7 percent), followed by strip disking (72.7 percent), herbicide application (64.1 percent), prescribed burning (18.8 percent), and legume

inter-seeding (10.9 percent). Mowing is allowed as a precursor to ease the implementation of the required mid-contract practices and was used by 60.6 percent of respondents. Not surprisingly, controlling unwanted woody vegetation was identified as the most common management problem (80.4 percent).

Once SAFE vegetation was established, respondents most frequently reported increased populations of cottontail rabbits (66 percent), white-tailed deer (58 percent), wild turkey (50 percent) and songbirds (42 percent). Just under half (49.2 percent) of respondents indicated bobwhite populations had increased while only 6.2 percent reported a perceived

decrease in populations. Most participants (82.8 percent) indicated they would recommend the SAFE Bobwhite practice to others.

Slightly over half (52.2 percent) of respondents categorized themselves as active hunters, and of these 91 percent hunted deer, 70 percent hunted turkey and 14 percent hunted bobwhites. The vast majority of participants managed for wild bobwhites, as only five

released pen-reared bobwhites on their SAFE tract. Only 14.7 percent of respondents allowed hunting of bobwhites, but 69 percent allowed hunting of other wildlife on their SAFE tracts.

The Tennessee SAFE Bobwhite Habitat Restoration practice holds potential for positively impacting bobwhites and other popular wildlife where implemented. Other USDA programs can be implemented on farm, forest and wetlands on private lands to benefit wildlife and other natural resources.

For further details on whether your land meets cropping history to qualify for the CRP SAFE Bobwhite practice or other USDA habitat programs, contact your local USDA Service Center. Also, you don't have to participate in a USDA program to improve your land for wildlife. Free information and technical assistance from professional biologists are available. Check out: <https://www.tn.gov/twra/wildlife/habitat.html> or call your local TWRA office.



**Landowners with managed CRP Bobwhite habitat are seeing positive responses by popular wildlife, including bobwhites.**

*“Helping Landowners and Wildlife Through Habitat Enhancement”*

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency has Private Lands Biologists that will assist you in developing a management plan for your property and a strategy to implement it. See [www.TWRAprivatelands.org](http://www.TWRAprivatelands.org) for who to contact for technical assistance and other useful information on habitat management and programs.