2011 Pheasant Stocking Takes A Hit from 10/11 Snowstorm

The NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife announced in early December completing a final inventory of pheasants remaining at its Rockport Game Farm after three weeks of statewide stocking. The last stocking brought the total number of pheasants stocked in 2011 to 35,670, which is 14,330 less than the goal of 50,000. Calls to New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania pheasant farmers to obtain the 1,000 pheasants needed for the last stocking confirmed the catastrophic impact of the October snowstorm along the entire storm track in the Northeast. Although it may be little consolation to New Jersey pheasant stamp buyers, many state pheasant farmers sustained even higher percentage losses of pheasants than were lost at the Rockport Game Farm.

Division of state Superior Court rejected arguments made by the New Jersey Animal Protection League and the Bear Education and Resource Group contending the DEP and State Fish and Game Council acted arbitrarily and/or in bad faith in creating the CBBMP, which includes an annual bear hunt as part of the state’s bear management strategy in 2010. Obstacles to the bear hunt were cleared away on December 1, when a legal decision upheld the validity of the management policy governing the hunt.

“The Division of Fish and Wildlife affirmed the science- and fact-based policy that we have adopted as part of a comprehensive approach to management and threats to public safety as key reasons for its decision to reconsider one aspect of the state’s bear management strategy in 2010.”

A three-judge panel in the Appellate Division of Superior Court rejected arguments made by the New Jersey Animal Protection League and the Bear Education and Resource Group contending the DEP and State Fish and Game Council acted arbitrarily and/or in bad faith in creating the CBBMP, which includes an annual bear hunt as part of the state’s bear management strategy in 2010. Obstacles to the bear hunt were cleared away on December 1, when a legal decision upheld the validity of the management policy governing the hunt.

Cross-section to New Jersey pheasant stamp buyers, many state pheasant farmers sustained even higher percentage losses of pheasants than were lost at the Rockport Game Farm.

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The Division of Fish and Wildlife appreciates the feedback received from hunters who recognized what was done in response to the storm and thanks hunters who purchased pheasant stamps this year knowing the potential impact the record storm could have on late season stocking.

On November 16, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was yet again petitioned by the Center for Biological Diversity and the two other anti-fishing groups, requesting that the agency regulate the sale and use of lead fishing tackle of certain sizes and uses under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). If approved, such regulation could result in a de facto ban of lead sinkers, jigs, and other popular types of fishing equipment.

This comes on the heels of a similar petition that the EPA dismissed in November 2009. The original petition also sought to ban lead hunting and fishing ammunition, which is exempted from regulation under TSCA. In dismissing the original petition, the EPA indicated that the “petitioners have not demonstrated that the requested rule is necessary to protect against an unreasonable risk of injury to health or the environment, as required by the TSCA.”

“The sportfishing community is once again asking the EPA to ban the use of lead tackle,” said American Sportfishing Association Vice President Gordon Robertson. “Such regulations will have a significant, negative impact on recreational anglers and the sportfishing industry.”

As a result of the government’s lack of credible science to back such a far-reaching request, they claim lead is not contributing to the death of the national loon population, threatening loons across the nation, but yet a hearing was granted and the EPA was asked to come up with a de facto ban of lead fishing sinkers. In November, 2010, the EPA denied the petition. Their ruling was made on the grounds of the petitioners’ lack of evidence. They denied the petition on the grounds that the petition is a de facto ban of lead fishing sinkers, jigs, and other popular types of fishing equipment.

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County Federation’s Sportsmen Clubs Information Directory

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<th>County</th>
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<th>Location</th>
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<td>Atlantic</td>
<td>2nd Thursday of month, 8:00 PM except July and August</td>
<td>Germania Gun Club, 28 Hemlock Road, Livingston, N.J. 07039</td>
<td>Eric Gaupp</td>
<td>609-513-8542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bergen</td>
<td>3rd Thursday of month, 8:00 PM except July and August</td>
<td>Bergen County Communities Service Bldg., Rm 39, 23 Saunders Lane, Hackettstown, N.J. 08021</td>
<td>Frank Dara</td>
<td>973-523-2640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burlington</td>
<td>2nd Thursday of month, 7:30 PM except July and August</td>
<td>The American Legion, 39 Pemberton-Juistown Rd., Pemberton, N.J. 08068</td>
<td>Bill Schultz</td>
<td>856-235-3344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3rd Wednesday of month, 7:30 PM except July and August</td>
<td>Square Circle Sportsmen Club, 23 Saunders Lane, Hackettstown, N.J. 08021</td>
<td>Bill Schmeltz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cumberland</td>
<td>2nd Thursday of month, 7:30 PM except July and August</td>
<td>Manetico Gun Club, 23 Saunders Lane, Hackettstown, N.J. 08021</td>
<td>Bob Russell</td>
<td>856-327-2197</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>2nd Thursday of month, 8:15 PM except July and August</td>
<td>Bloomfield Civic Center, 23 Saunders Lane, Hackettstown, N.J. 08021</td>
<td>Carmine Minichi</td>
<td>908-964-5713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester</td>
<td>2nd Tuesday of month, 7:45 PM except July and August</td>
<td>George Ruch Building, 23 Saunders Lane, Hackettstown, N.J. 08021</td>
<td>Thomas Weeast</td>
<td>856-629-9465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunterdon</td>
<td>2nd Thursday of month, 8:00 PM except July and August</td>
<td>Northern District Office of Fish &amp; Wildlife, Rt. 173, Clinton, N.J. 08809</td>
<td>Lorenzo Robinson</td>
<td>800-782-1076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercer</td>
<td>3rd Monday of month, 7:00 PM except July and August</td>
<td>Sportsmen’s Center, US Highway 31 N, Borden, N.J. 08276</td>
<td>Rick Moore</td>
<td>609-488-1220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middlesex</td>
<td>1st Wednesday of month, 7:30 PM except July and August</td>
<td>Polish American Citizen’s Club, 28 Hemlock Road, Livingston, N.J. 07039</td>
<td>John Messerer</td>
<td>732-828-8347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monmouth</td>
<td>4th Wednesday of month, 8:00 PM except July and August</td>
<td>4 P’s Gun Club, 28 Hemlock Road, Livingston, N.J. 07039</td>
<td>Ken Ganson</td>
<td>732-566-0841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morris</td>
<td>1st Tuesday of month, 8:00 PM except July and August</td>
<td>Mine Hill American Legion Post 391, 23 Saunders Lane, Hackettstown, N.J. 08021</td>
<td>John Rogalo</td>
<td>973-691-9355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean</td>
<td>3rd Wednesday of month, 7:30 PM except July and August</td>
<td>Park Rod &amp; Gun Club, 28 Hemlock Road, Livingston, N.J. 07039</td>
<td>Billy Cooper</td>
<td>732-657-2259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passaic</td>
<td>Last Monday of month, 7:30 PM except June and July</td>
<td>The Wayne Civic Center, Room 3, 1006 Hamburg Tpke., Wayne, N.J. 07470</td>
<td>Richard Weber</td>
<td>973-697-1814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salem</td>
<td>Tuesday after 3rd Friday of month, 7:30 PM except July and August</td>
<td>Salem County Sportsmen Clubs, 28 Hemlock Road, Livingston, N.J. 07039</td>
<td>George Shively</td>
<td>856-426-2421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>2nd Wednesday of month, 8:00 PM except July and August</td>
<td>Somerset Fish &amp; Game Protective Assoc., 23 Saunders Lane, Hackettstown, N.J. 08021</td>
<td>Joe Griglak</td>
<td>908-526-9026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union</td>
<td>1st Monday of month, 8:00 PM except July and August</td>
<td>Union County Complex Building, 23 Saunders Lane, Hackettstown, N.J. 08021</td>
<td>Dwayne Sazdol</td>
<td>908-403-5789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>4th Wednesday of month, 7:30 PM except July and August</td>
<td>Quesa Trout Hatchery, Rt. 46, Liberty Twp., Wsp, N.J. 07039</td>
<td>Bill Engelhardt</td>
<td>908-625-9699</td>
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR  
may be sent by U.S. Mail (to 28 Hemlock Road, Livingston, N.J. 07039), or email (olshapiro@yahoo.com). Please include your town of residence, club or organization affiliation (if any).
At a recent meeting of the Town Council in the backwards municipality where I live, one of the council members was commenting on a hunt that a local parkland was holding to move its out-of-control deer population somewhat closer to manageable levels. Noting the fact that this particular activity had authorized the use of firearms rather than just bows, he stated, “And they aren’t just allowing firearms…they’re allowing shotguns!”

I guess I made something of a face at that point, as one of the other officials (knowing that I have a little knowledge of hunting and firearms) looked at me and asked me to comment on that, and I pointed out where the ill-informed councilman’s fallacy lay.

As we all know, hunting in general is one of the very safest activities in which a person can participate. One recent study to this effect has been completed by the National Shooting Sports Foundation, showing that hunting ranks third in safety compared to 28 other recreational pursuits, ranging from baseball to wrestling.

Hunting with firearms has an injury rate of 0.05 percent, which is about one injury per 2,000 participants. The only safer play pastimes on the study were camping (.01 percent) and billiards (.02 percent).

I also consider that golf has an injury rate of 0.16 percent (one injury per 622 participants), and tackle football topped the list of activities with an injury rate of 5.27 percent (one injury per 19 participants).

“Many people have the misconception that hunting is unsafe, but the data tells a different story,” observed Jim Curcuruto, NSSF’s director of industry research and analysis. “Comprehensive hunter education classes that emphasize the basic rules of firearm safety and a culture of hunters helping fellow hunters practice safe firearms handling in the field are responsible for this good record.”

This time of year is particularly advantageous to consider safety issues, as many of us try to establish and implement New Year’s resolutions. (This may be part of what inspired contributor Milt Rosko to submit his timely story, on page 6, on some safety practices that both hunters and anglers would do well to consider.)

I am well aware that safety concepts and concerns have been hammered into all of us over the years, but it is a message that is well worth hammering. Consider the impact on your spouse, parent(s), children, siblings, or whoever if one day you simply fail to return home after that outdoors excursion. Alternately, consider the impact on yourself if anyone from those named categories similarly failed to return home.

Besides looking out for yourself, your family, and your buddies, it’s also good to be able to talk knowledgeably about the truth and statistics of safety. If I’d had the NSSF data in hand (or mind) when I’d spoken to that ill-informed councilman, I could have taken advantage of the opportunity to provide additional information to him, further assuring him that his concerns over the deer hunt’s potential safety hazards were simply unfounded.

Finally…please allow me to extend my best wishes to all for a happy, healthy, prosperous – and safe – 2012.

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Please Support the Team That Defends Your Right to Hunt & Shoot! Ballots are in the February Issue of your NRA Magazine!


Advances in Rod Technologies Help All Anglers

by Pete Robbins

While the recessionary economy hasn’t been good for many people, it has provided a boon of sorts to purchasers of high-end fishing rods. At a time when rod improvements have spread from one manufacturer to another like wildfire, the price-point competition is also being fueled by most of these changes to be available to the average angler.

What if you fish in the salt, for walleyes, for trout, or for bass, most of these improvements are applicable to what you do. Lighter and stronger components will allow you to make more and better casts over the course of the day. If you’re throwing lures with a split grip rod you’ll be less fatigued, and this is equally true if you’re flipping a plastic worm for bass in lily pads.

Multi-species aficionados like Bassmaster Elite Series pro Bernie Schultz from Virginia have seen the crossover effect, and it has allowed them to catch more fish in each format. Schultz, who has fished professionally for over two decades, but who chased both bass and saltwater flats fish long before he started casting for cash, said that these improvements have trickled down to some of these improvements, but said that he’s been won over by many of them as he’s applied them on the water and noticed how much better the rods work. “I’ve started to use ‘micro-guides’ on their rods in place of the larger, more conventional rings. Now, four or five guides may be the equivalent in weight of what one old-school guide, and they may be used on both baitcasting and spinning rods.

Besides reducing weight, micro-guides reduce “line slap” on the rod as it leaves the reel, thereby increasing your casting sensitivity. They need to be properly spaced or else the rod will torque improperly on the fight (most rods with micro guides have more guides than do rods with conventional rings). One potential disadvantage is that you’re fishing in cold weather they may ice up more easily than larger guides. Similarly, they can become clogged with muck or debris more frequently.

Rotating Guides

Another development that has gained favor in some quarters is to spiral the guides around the rod blank as they go from butt to tip. Properly installed, these allow an angler to fish a line along the rod instead of from butt to tip. Installed this way, the guides are designed to be highly sensitive. They need to be properly balanced and aligned with each other. Particularly when lifting large fish, rods with micro guides have an advantage that would turn to work against each other. Particularly when lifting large fish, rods with micro guides have an advantage that turns to the benefit of the fish. A slight turn on the reel seat before you make the purchase.

Micro Guides

In the quest to reduce rod weight even further, many manufacturers have started to use “micro-guides” on their rods instead of the larger, more conventional rings. Now, four or five guides may be the equivalent in weight of what one old-school guide, and they may be used on both baitcasting and spinning rods.

New Jersey Chapter Conducts Tribute To Rich Guadagno

Wildlife for waterfowl identification training for new hunters, college students, and new students in the beginning stages of their careers. This is exactly how Rich envisioned that these mounts be used.

James (Jim) Applegate, retired Cook College professor, read an abridged speech entitled, “Reflections on a life well spent” that he delivered on November 17, 2001 by James Hook, US Fish and Wildlife Service at the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex in Corvallis, Oregon. Rich’s family asked that the tribute be included as part of the NJTWS’s tribute ceremony.

In 2011, the New Jersey Chapter of The Wildlife Society (NJTWS) held its fall meeting at the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife’s Law Enforcement Training Center on the Colliers Mills WMA in Jackson. The Wildlife Society is an international non-profit organization and educational association dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education. The meeting topic was “The Role of Law Enforcement in Wildlife Management in New Jersey” and included presentations from state and federal wildlife officials.

As part of this meeting, NJTWS held a tribute ceremony to honor its first president, Rich Guadagno. Rich served as President of NJTWS from 2002 to 2008, when he retired from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service after a 31-year career. Rich served on the management staff of Swamp and Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuges in New Jersey before moving to the West Coast. After completion of his refuge duties, Rich had training in Law Enforcement and graduated from the West Coast Law Enforcement Training Program.

Given the recent 10-year anniversary of September 11, 2001, and that the focus of the fall meeting was on Wildlife Law Enforcement, it seemed only fitting that NJTWS members reflect on Rich’s life and honor his ultimate sacrifice.

As part of the tribute ceremony, as Program Chair of the NJTWS, I was privileged to deliver a PowerPoint presentation highlighting Rich’s wildlife career. I knew Rich while he was Refuge Manager at Supawna Meadows NWR in Pennsville, NJ. Much of the presentation was prepared and graciously loaned by Eric Nelson, Project Leader at Humboldt Bay NWR.

In addition, Humboldt Bay NWR loaned several items which are displayed on Rich’s Guadagno Memorial table at the refuge’s Visitor Center to NJTWS. These items, along with an American black duck and Atlantic brant taxidermy mounts that were prepared by Rich nearly 25 years ago while in New Jersey, were on display at the meeting. Although Rich could have adorned his bookshelf or end table with these mounts, they preferred that he be recognized for the benefit of others. These taxidermy mounts were used for over 20 years by the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, and included several items that are now available for you to build the exact rod you want. This has been made easier by a revolution in software, too. It’s one of the world’s largest guide manufacturers, has developed “Guide Placement Software” (GPS) to provide a starting point for guide placement. This software allows anyone looking to manufacture a rod to use their preferred components and then benefit from mathematical formulae to maximize rod performance by minimizing line slap while maximizing power and sensitivity. The program, along with other helpful tutorials, can be found at http://anglerresource. source askills.com/GuidePlacementSoftwa re.aspx.

As noted above, most of the major rod manufacturers have adapted some or all of the techniques to different lines. The beauty of it is that you don’t need to spend three, four, or five hundred dollars to get the top of the line regular use rods that cost under a hundred bucks, even though they have more expensive rods available to them. And you don’t have to hunt out secretive custom builders to get exactly what you want anymore. These days, many mainstream rod builders have interfaces on their web sites where you can pick from your exact specifications… not just specific brands and models.

The Pflueger 7430CBQ Arbob Spinning Fishing Rod/Reel Combo is one of many examples of a split-grip rod. Photo courtesy joestportngoods.com.
Dieseling, A “Candy Store” Trip, and Another New Book

According to Webster’s dictionary, the definition of “dieseling” is “the continued operation of an internal combustion engine after the ignition is turned off,” and the first known use of the word was “circa 1955.” It is an automotive experience we’ve all, at one time or another, experienced. Among muzzle-loading shooters, however, the word has been adopted for a different, and far more dangerous, experience: when residual powder in an empty gun unexpectedly explodes during cleaning as a patch of powder is rammed down the barrel. This is a rare occurrence? It certainly is, and I have never had it happen to me, but a report in the November issue of Muzzle Blasts, the National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association’s journal, described an incident that occurred during the organization’s June, 2011 National Shoot at Friendship, Indiana.

A shooter had already loaded a charge of powder down the muzzle of his flintlock rifle, and went to fire at a target at 30 yards. Since he had not followed the charge with a ball, he simply inverted his rifle, dumped the powder charge into the barrel, and then ran a wet patch down the bore and left it resting against the breech. After 15 minutes, when the range was clear, he withdrew the patch, reversed it, and ran it down the muzzle again. A sudden loud noise was followed by the heavy brass cleaning rod flying 15 feet in the air. It hit another competitor on its descent, but was fortunately not running into a crowd. The competitor lost the rifle and sawed his hands blackened but suffered no injuries either.

Ricky Roberts, writing for Muzzle Blasts, attributed the incident to the fact that the gun had a touchhole that had a “sizeable cone” on the powder side. The patch drove some powder grains into the chamber and, once removed, left an “air-tight plug … in place around the bullet,” and running the patch back down created “the conditions for a flash.” Fortunately, only a few grains of powder were involved, preventing what could have been a tragedy.

Roberts' advice for prevention is sound. When a command to fire hot rounds into the berm is given while you are loading, continue the process and then fire the loaded round – especially if using a flintlock.

A Trip to Queens

Like the proverbial kids in the proverbial candy store. That was me and fellow black-powder shooter Steve Garratano of Eatontown on our recent trip to S&S Firearms, in Queens, New York, the famed mail-order antiques gun parts emporium that seems to get better and better as the years go by.

I had not been up to see Phil Siess of S&S in a couple of years, and so when Steve needed a couple of parts for the Model 1851 Cadet musket he was building and suggested I tag along (better him driv- ing in NYC than me) as co-pilot, I jumped at the chance. It turned out to be an easy trip, and we were marked down good luck from the Jersey Shore, leaving after rush hour and, fortunately, not running into a traffic jam. Phil gave us a tour of the place and we came across some guy with no pants on coveting along the way. The Porcelain Patoways can turn tighter and-a-half ride into a three- or four-hour nightmare.

Of the great bits of nostalgia that really grabs me at S&S is the display case filled just inside the front door, which once stood in the famed New York City emporium of Bamberman & Sons. I pressed my hands and nose up against that case for the first time in 1955, when, as a 12-year-old, I dis- covered what then appeared to me to be the Valhalla of 19th century military artifacts all wrapped up in a romantic and picturesque arena of dusty leather.

While Steve checked out his parts, I took the writer’s privilege of rummaging around and took some shots of boxes of original parts for Sharps, trapdoor Springfield, Krag Jorgensens, and other iconic American arms. Phil is always acquiring new/old stock, so if you’re look- ing for parts for an original or reproduction black powder military or cartridge gun and don’t see what you need in the catalog or website, just give him a call. (www.sofirearms.com)
The protection provided by hunting and effective selective culling can make a difference in managing game and catching a fish. Just being in the outdoors is perhaps the healthiest thing a person can do, especially on a hot, sultry day. But before you go, be prepared to face the dangers that are out there. For in many parts of the United States, there are dangerous situations in the water that can deviate from the usual routine of the day and put you in harm's way.

Let's begin with wading, whether it is in the ocean, a bay, or even the river. Wading is a great way to get close to the water and see what's going on. But make sure you have the proper equipment. Waders are a must. And always check the weather before setting out. High winds can create large waves, and cold temperatures can make it difficult to stay warm. It's also wise to keep a first-aid kit handy, especially when you're working in water. Even small cuts can become infected if not treated properly.

When you're in the water, be aware of your surroundings. Keep an eye out for boats and other watercraft. And always have a plan in case you get into trouble. It's never too late to learn to swim, especially if you're spending time near the water.

Another concern is the risk of drowning. Drowning is the second leading cause of death for children under the age of 14. So always be aware of your surroundings and take proper precautions.

In conclusion, the great outdoors is a wonderful place to be, but it's important to remember that there are dangers lurking in the water. By being prepared and taking proper precautions, you can enjoy the outdoors safely.
IN ADVANCE

Maryland Can Make Your Day

The Travelogue

The Kitty Knight Inn proved to be a real bonus on my trip. Dating back to 1775, the Inn had old sailing ships early on, then young deck hands scrambling on the yardarms. Instead, I saw sleek fishing boats with huge outboards.

Rates are also reasonable. Mark charged $550 for half day and $750 for a full day. He can easily handle seven charges.

Need Extra Papers?

If your club, organization, or county needs extra copies of the Federated News for an upcoming event or display, please contact the Editor of this publication (973-533-1260; olshapiro@yahoo.com). AT LEAST SIX WEEKS IN ADVANCE of the date in question.

from Tackle Ban, p. 1

Two of the three petitioners are currently engaged in a lawsuit against the EPA's dismissal of the original petition to ban lead fishing tackle. "The petitioners are taking advantage of our federal government, ignoring the decision that the EPA made just a year ago and working around the ongoing litigation that they filed shortly after that decision," said Robertson. "This is a gaming act," he says. The petitioners are asking the EPA to reconsider its decision to ban lead fishing tackle. "The petitioners are taking advantage of our federal government, ignoring the decision that the EPA made just a year ago and working around the ongoing litigation that they filed shortly after that decision," said Robertson. "This is a gaming act," he says. The petitioners are asking the EPA to allow the use of lead fishing tackle.

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Price: $40; limited tickets available
Club Membership Opportunities are Available as Well
Beer and Soda included with dinner; cash bar for other liquor
For information, please contact: AHAOFNJ@gmail.com

Back Issues

The Travelogue

January 2012

NEW JERSEY FEDERATED SPORTSMEN NEWS
Page 7
Some Thoughts On Those Who Would Stop the Bear Hunt...

It seems everybody has an axe to grind these days, and the anti-bear-hunt people are no different.

Fortunately, after all the hoopla and escapades of the “Bears are People Too” crowd, combined with the aptly-named New Jersey Animal Protection League, and their wearisome, albeit ever-predictable efforts to once again block this year’s hunt, a three-judge appellate panel on December 1 made its decision. The panel concluded that biologists with the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife had appropriately submitted scientific facts concerning the Garden State’s black bear population, and thus cleared the way for the 2011 hunt to proceed.

Of course, there’s another way of looking at the court’s ruling. Forget that the three-judge panel found division biologists had presented a factual case. The converse side is that the court found the information submitted by attorneys for the anti-hunt groups was either in error or, at best, insufficient, or both. ‘Nuff said?

Now, don’t get all fuddy-duddy merely because the court found in favor of this year’s hunt. It would be my guess that New Jersey sportsmen and women, as well as division biologists, will have to go through this tedious legal battle every year, and one of those years the antis will do some “judge shopping” and finally find someone in a black robe sympathetic to their cause.

Still, attempts to halt the hunt through the courts has become as common as politicians nannying about how they are going to save this nation, when in fact not a single one of them has the foggiest idea about how to achieve that cure. What we have here is a group of “adults” who take umbrage at the thought of a hunt, and act like over-sized grade-schoolers trying to bully the rest of us because their sensibilities are hurt. That’s about where their scientific expertise ends, at least as far as black bear management goes.

As to these so-called sensibilities of the anti-hunt people, my take is - tough! Division biologists had their acts together, and gathered what the court wanted: facts. That was precisely what the court ordered the last time we went through this tiresome and costly charade. The best the anti-hunt, anti-gun, anti-everything crowd could come up with were T-shirts proclaiming that “Bears are People Too,” and they pled a case based primarily on one, single element: “Secure your garbage.” That’s about it, plus some other sentimental claptrap with a strong dose of male bovine excrement thrown in for good measure. The courts didn’t buy it.

Tight Lines and Straightaway Shots

by Robert Brunisholz

According to an early-December press release from the state’s Department of Environmental Protection, the latest population estimates for New Jersey black bear sits at approximately 3,400 bruins, all of which reside in a 1,000-square mile hunting area “…north of Route 78 and west of Route 287, with the population highest in the northwest corner of the state which has one of the highest black bear densities in the nation.” The release went on to say there is an “uncounted number of bear in the rest of New Jersey’s 21 counties, with reports of bear sightings occurring in the past few years in rural eastern and central portions of the state.”

For New Jersey to host one of the highest black bear densities in the nation would, or should, tell anyone with a modicum of common sense that a hunting season is needed, if only because this state also holds the nation’s record for “packed with people” densities. Combine the two and it’s a recipe for disaster… as a few pet stories and livestock owners will gladly attest, not to mention a few near-catastrophic run-ins with bruins by livestock by livestock of the two-legged variety.

The scenario reminds me of high school chemistry. When a solid or semi-solid ingredient is introduced into a liquid, it’s bears with people” densities. Combine the two and it’s a recipe for disaster… as a few pet stories and livestock owners will gladly attest, not to mention a few near-catastrophic run-ins with bruins by livestock of the two-legged variety.

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Lehigh Valley a Fun Course

It’s been called “golf with a shotgun.”

I don’t know about that comparison, but there are times when you shoot a round of golf so pathetic I would have liked to shoot my bag of clubs as well as the gatflug through its skinny handle at me on the 430-yard dogleg-left par-four over water that should rightfully be a par-ax for us duf- fers.

The game called “sporting clays” might be likened to golf, since you position yourself in the tee box or shooting stand all alone, prepare for the shot, imagine where your shot will go, and fire away. The golf ver- sion is in front of the rest of your four- some, and subject either to quick shots, or to muffled groans at your Shank, slice, hook, warm burner, topped ball, or otherwise miserable evidence of your lack of talent.

In sporting clays the same situation occurs, but you don’t have so many ways to make a fool of yourself. Either you hit the clay bird or you don’t.

Miss-shots or whiffs on a golf shot are usually met with the aforementioned et- cetera requiring silence in consideration for the hacker golfer. But on a sporting clays outing with your alleged pals, they are generally welcomed with gloe, gag- faws, scorn, and the inevitable suggestion that you might not be skilled enough to hit a barn door – from inside the barn.

There is no mercy in this game.

To their credit, your companions, will mutter (if of a generous mood) “nice shot” on a particularly difficult high flying crossing bird, and the same goes for a well-played even iron from 150 yards out (my range) that plops down six feet from the hole. But the comparisons end there.

The golfer cannot tolerate a hiccup from the gallery during his backswing, whereas the sporting clays shooter hears gunfire blasts from nearby stations, the following group yakking it up, and the sound of his own steps to follow.

The “quiet, please” sissy golfers should try to concentrate under these con- ditions.

And so it was five of us took the ride over to the Lehigh Valley Sporting Clays course in Coplay, Pennsylvania recently for a round of shooting fun. It’s difficult to get five shooters, some of whom have real jobs, for a date acceptable to all, but we made it to the course, which had as many as New Jersey license plates in the parking lot as Keystone State tags, about an hour and a half from the greater Lehigh Valley area.

It’s a course that’s becoming increas- ingly popular with sports around here, just as the game of golf is, and “it’s an outing for many who go early to shoot the course and then drive over on another blend to the Rod & Gun Club in Monmouth County.”

Mae was reinforced while pheasant hunt- ing in Wall Township, and she was about 20 yards take refuge. She was definitely working that bird.

“That’s it Mag” I shouted, “Leave it, c’mom” as I turned and headed for a cover plot that was on the way to the truck. After walking a short distance I realized that Maggie was not following. She was still hard at work inside the brush pile. I could see her tail flailing wildly so I stopped short to watch and see what was happen- ing.

She was definitely working that bird. I caught glimpses of her body and the whipping tail. Her movements caused the brushes to rattle. She was now quite a bit forward and stems moving independently from her.

I checked her for position with the shotgun, and she was following, but her tell-tale halting motion, air scenting, and whip- ping tail made me suspicious enough to stop and watch and see what was happen- ing.

So for a second time I had trusted her. She was definitely working that bird.

Back on the truck I related the story to a fellow hunter who remarked “The dogs always seem to know, and it’s their nose that knows.”

Bottom line? When the going gets tough, trust your dog.

A trained hunting dog is a most valu- able asset to any upland bird hunter or waterfowler. A trained dog from a good hunting line can help conserve game by finding, flushing, and retrieving birds. As a bird dog owner, you will want utilize your dog’s abilities to the fullest, and that means trusting him or her to do the right things in order to get the job done.

A sporting dog’s nose is an important part of its makeup, enabling the dog to locate birds from scent, even when the bird is hidden from view. Depending on your canine companion to get birds for you means trusting your dog, and among other things that means trusting your dog’s nose.

While you may envision a pheasant hiding behind a nearby clump of weeds, don’t be surprised if your dog’s head in the opposite direction toward a lash mound of honeysuckle, or that thorny hedgerow you were hoping to avoid.

In most cases your dog’s nose knows, so trust him.

My trust in my chocolate Lab Maggie was reinforced while pheasant hunt- ing on land leased by the South Orange Rod & Gun Club in Monmouth County recently, it was the Saturday after Thanksgiving, a bright sunny day almost too warm for hunting. I had one bird in my vest-bag and Mag and I were working our way across a cropless open field, heading toward a bush of cover. I had a slight idea of the likely spot in which a bird or two might take refuge.

Under normal circumstances, Maggie works close, and she was about 20 yards ahead of me when she started to increase the distance. She was proceeding in a fast distance, and she was about 20 yards

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A Tale for the New Year

by Bob Brunisholz

I would hazard a guess that one could title this “Lessons Learned the Hard Way,” or perhaps even “Growing Up Right.”

Back sometime during the Jurassic period, I don’t think there was any law requiring youngsters to take a hunting education course before they could obtain their junior license. How far back this goes, I haven’t the foggiest. I still have some of my earlier licenses, and they were combination licenses, covering hunting as well as trapping, and the license was made of a hard cardboard, probably waterproof, that had a series of small holes along each side to enable the hunter to sew the license to his/her jacket.

I mention this only because this incident probably preludes any hunter education course.

If that is true and I didn’t take the course, rest assured that my father would have had established regulations covering anything that was in the course, plus a few of his own. I wasn’t going to get away that easy.

On this particular day, my dad and I had just pushed out a swamp in the hope of putting up a ringneck or two, when a very large egret or heron flew nearly directly overhead. Instinctively, I shouldered the scattergun and simply tracked the bird. Of course, he had the shaggyplume egret/22s, and handguns, but I was intrigued with the rifles.

His other avocations were chuck hunting and upland running, but he allowed me to accompany him on his quest for long, challenging shots at “whistle pigs.” I came to love the bark of the “bug bore” gun and wished for all the world that he’d let me shoot one.

I had a modest J.C. Higgins .22 bolt-action with a 4x scope that I was allowed to bring along, but only after checking with my parents and my parents in turn spoke with the man who was to become my rifle-shooting and Chuck-hunting mentor.

My second run-in was probably one of the more baneheaded stunts I pulled as a youngster, and it resulted in yet another prohibition (this one from chuck hunting), and in this instance, it hurt. The farm at which I earned by pit-stone work, the man who was to become my "see ya' laters" to my parents, and then end with the jury (my father and mother) to pass sentence upon my young, foolish butt.

But no one said a word. Bill Cullen said his “see ya' laters” to my parents, and they in turn said “okay, stay in touch,” and that seemed to be the end of it. Little did I know that my punishment would be much worse than any woodshed whipping I could have conjured up.

For the following two weeks, Mr. C would park his car in the usual spot, pop the trunk, and as usual remove one of my many rifles and then walk down the center aisle of the barn towards the fields he was going to hunt. A couple of times I'd go with him the next time he hunted, and the usual response was usually two or three words at most.

Fraid not,” he’d say. Or, “not today.” Or, “maybe sometime,” and he’d continue to walk through the barn. Each refuss was like a bootied kick in the stomach and it seemed I’d had my last chuck hunt with a mentor of whom I’d grown quite fond.

Even then my parents never mentioned the incident, but it was apparent they knew what was going on before, and how C and their fabricating son.

Nearby three weeks went by like this, and I’d given up asking when I could go chuck hunting with Mr. C. But then I was leaving the barn after completing my chores and there I was: Mr. C's Packard, parked in the usual spot, and he was standing at the open trunk with a rifle in his hand.

“Bob,” he called. I turned and walked toward him when he reached into the open trunk and hefted a canvas gun case from which he withdrew a scope-mounted Winchester Model 94 in 30-30. He held it toward me and asked “think you can handle this today?”

Finally it was over. I’d not only done my penance but was finally going to get to shoot a centerfire rifle, but not before the obligatory lecture from Mr. C. Concerning the act of lying. And said something I’ve never forgotten. “Once you gain a reputation as a liar, the only punishment you’ll be able to associate with later in life are other liars.”

I, like most others on this blue marble we share as home, am a sinner. And I’ve told lies since. But because of the influence on my life that people like Mr. C and my parents, as well as others have had, I hope things will be consequenceal. Of the common garden variety and nothing that would ruin anyone’s reputation or put a major dent in their lives.

Mr. C was spot-on right, and I’ve at least tried to live up to his expectations. I’ve tried to live up to what he taught me, not because I consider myself a saint or better than anyone else, but because I hope to meet Mr. C again, and I hope it’ll be me fire his centerfire rifles. And because it’ll be worth doing.

Happy New Year to all.
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