

New Hampshire Wildlife

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE WILDLIFE FEDERATION

The Mission of the New Hampshire Wildlife Federation is the preservation and protection of hunting, fishing, and trapping; and the conservation of and access to fish and wildlife habitats and resources.

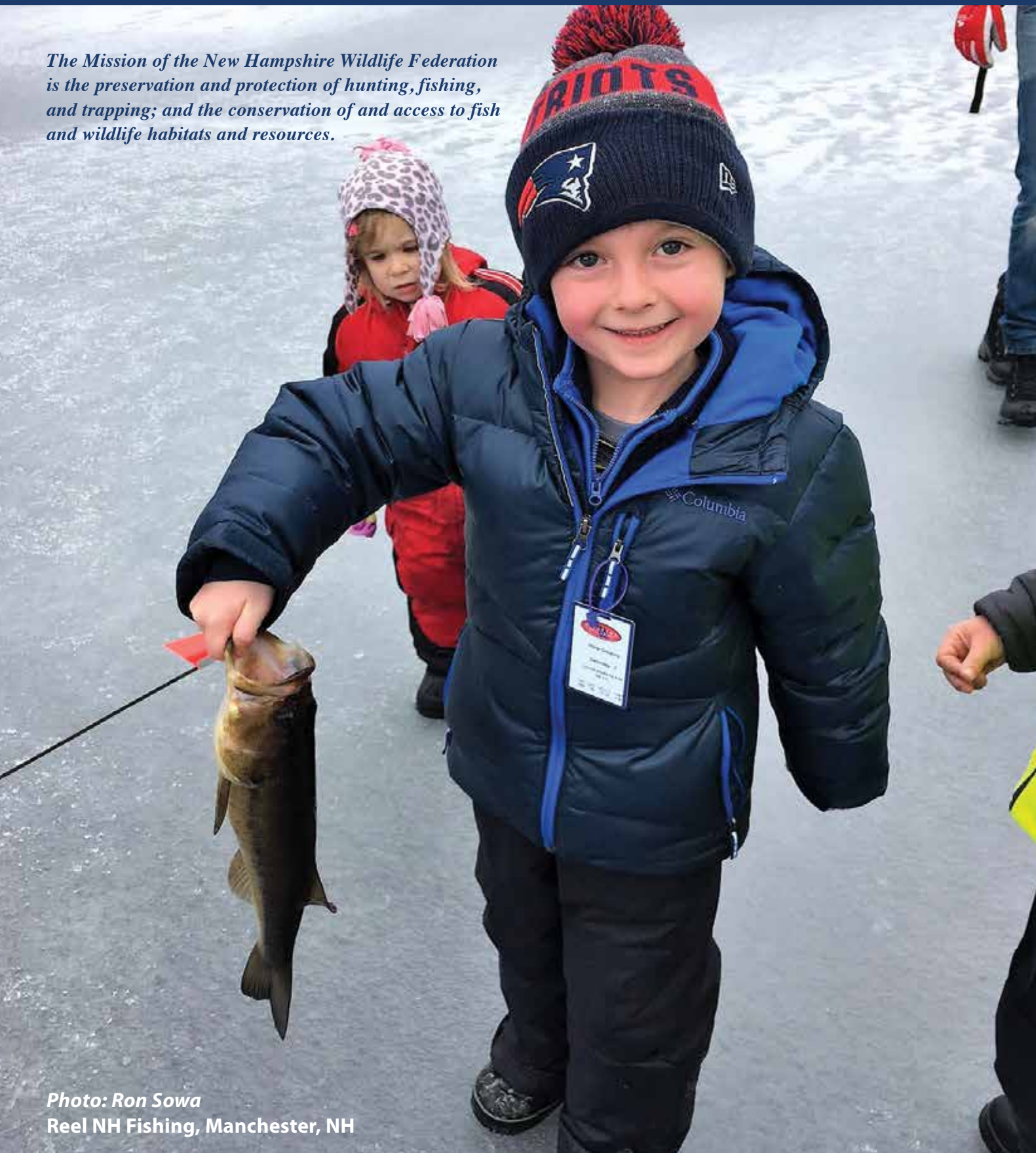


Photo: Ron Sowa
Reel NH Fishing, Manchester, NH

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Jim Morse

SHARE YOUR WILDLIFE & HUNTING STORIES & PHOTOS!

We want to hear about your hunting and fishing adventures. Be a reporter for the Northern or Southern areas and be published in our newsletter!

We LOVE photos of your outings, please send them in!!

Call the Editor at 603-224-5953 or email: ed@nhwf.org.

We truly welcome your comments, suggestions, and articles, and letters to the Editor. To be considered for our quarterly publication, please submit to ed@nhwf.org or contact Janice Boynton Exec. Director at 603-224-5953.

Submission deadlines: 1/15, 4/15, 7/15, 10/15.

Seeking Reporters: We are looking for a Northern and Southern Reporter for conditions and activities in your area. Short articles welcome—photos a plus!

***Editor's policy:** New Hampshire Wildlife is edited for the members of the NHWF. Publishing and editorial decisions are based on the editor's judgment of quality of writing, timeliness of the article, and potential interest to our readers. The views expressed in New Hampshire Wildlife are those of the authors and may not reflect the official policy of NHWF. No endorsement of those views should be inferred unless specifically identified.*

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RESIDENT MESSAGE



By James Morse

First of all I wanted to thank all the board and delegates for all the hard work and the progress we have made in such a short time. The Federation has hired a part time lobbyist and is more involved in legislative issues than we have been in the last 15 years. Our Website is updated and our Facebook page is more active than ever. We reach our members and constituents

through electronic means to stay current with the times as well as through our traditional newsletter that we mail quarterly.

Looking from the outside in, I believe the NHWF is making a difference and the general public is seeing it. My goal as President is to grow our organization in both numbers of members and affiliate organizations as well

as financially so that in the near future the Federation can fund a full time lobbyist and full time Executive Director. Both these will take more members and more clubs.

As most of you are aware, New Hampshire is dealing with issues in which the Federation will need to play a pivotal role. The New Hampshire Wildlife Coalition is trying to take power from the NH Fish & Game Commission, attempting to make the Commission merely an advisory role to the Executive Director of the Department. Other recommendations they have proposed are bringing animal rights activists onto the Commission and changing the name of the Department. These proposals all seek to weaken the role New Hampshire's sportsmen and sportswomen currently have in maintaining and regulating the high-quality natural resources we all enjoy in this State. The Federation believes this group is wholly off base, their proposals are wrong and our sportspeople must turn the tide of this fight.

I have reached out to several different organizations and have spoken in front of several clubs. So far I believe we are making the proper connections and will strive to bring more to the NHWF.

**15th ANNUAL
FLY FISH
NEW HAMPSHIRE
SHOW**

Indoor Venue, Door Prizes & Free Parking

Saturday February 25, 2017
9:00AM to 4:00PM
Executive Court Banquet
1199 South Mammoth Rd Manchester, NH

The indoor venue will be held at the Executive Court Banquet Facility
1199 South Mammoth Rd in Manchester, (TAX FREE) NH
Located next door to the Best Western Plus Executive Court Inn at
the junction of South Willow St. & South Mammoth Rd.

Doors Open at 9:00am to 4:00pm
Admission Only \$7 (under 12 free with Adult)

Plenty of free parking - Free Hourly Door Prize giveaways!!!!
End of Show Door Prize: Complete Fly Fishing Rod, Reel and Line Outfit.
Presentation and seminars all day long meet your fishing guide, fly shops,
where to fish something for everyone.

OVER 40
VENDOR
TABLES

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Merrimack River Valley Chapter #75

For a complete list of vendors and seminars visit: www.merrimacktu.org

Mark your Calendar

Capital Region Strutters
04/29/2017
Bass Pro Shops - Hooksett

Hooksett, NH

For more information call John Klucky
at (603) 848-1205 or email
kluckysoutdooradv@yahoo.com

Andover Fish & Game Club

WILLIS NOWELL MEMORIAL KIDS' ICE FISHING DERBY Our 33rd annual Kids' Ice Fishing Derby is to be held at Eagle Pond in Wilnot on Saturday, March 4th, with a bad weather date of Sunday, March 5th. This is open to all kids 15 years of age and under. Registration starts at 9am, and the derby will run from 9:30am to 12:00pm. As usual, there will be food, drink, lucky prizes, ribbons, and trophies. Spread the word. For questions, call 735-5311. NO TACKLE OR BAIT IS NEEDED

Grafton County Fish & Game Association

Indoor archery every Thursday night starting at 6:00 p.m. \$5.00 for non-members, \$4.00 for members and kids 18 and under shoot for free. This goes through March 30th.

Monadnock Rod & Gun Club

Apr 8th: **Excruciathlon VI** – Run & Three-Gun Mudder where endurance meets accuracy. A timed course run by two-person teams, where marksmanship is measured while under the stress of physical challenges. For more information go to mrgci.com event calendar

Cheshire County Shooting Sports Education Foundation

Those interested in bird and rabbit hunting are invited to join Cheshire County Shooting Sports Education Foundation in Open Trap Saturdays at 10:00 am and Wednesdays 12:00 noon. We also offer five-stand sporting clays on Saturdays at 10:00 am.

22 rifle shoots are held the first Sunday of each month at 9:00 am.

200-Yard Offhand Rifle Matches, Sundays, March 19 & 26, 8:00 am-12:00 pm.

Mike Blaisdell Trap Clinic, Friday & Saturday, May 5-6.

These events all held at 19 Ferry Brook Road, Keene NH.

Archery shoots are held Tuesday evenings 7:00 pm, with practices Sundays 12:00-4:00 pm, at the Recreation Center, 312 Washington Street, Keene.

For more information contact:
<http://CCSSEF.org>, 352-8563

New Hampshire Trappers Association

February 17 & 18, 2017 The NH trappers will be at the NH Farm & Forest Expo, Radisson Hotel 700 Elm Street, Manchester, NH, Friday 9:00 am – 8:00 pm, Saturday 9:30 am – 4:00 pm

February 25, 2017 NH Trappers Association Annual Banquet, Alans of Boscawen, 133 N. Main Street, Route 3, Boscawen, NH 5:00 pm. For tickets call (603) 267-6947

March 4, 2017 Spring Meeting Trappers Association held at Belknap County Sportsmen's Association, 182 Lily Pond Road, Gilford, NH 9:00 am,

Sunday morning Wobble Trap at 10:00 am. Automatic traps will also randomly be used along side our wobble trap for added fun! \$7.00 for 25 clays

Sunday morning Running Deer at 10am. A paper deer target or other randomly selected animals move across our 50 yard range where you get 3 shots per turn. Great practice for shooting at moving targets! \$5.00 to shoot all morning. 16 years and younger are free.

New Hampshire Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation

<http://your.nwtf.org/events/flyer.php?id=290190-2017>

This link is the flyer for our upcoming NWTF Capital Region Strutters Hunting Heritage Event which is happening on Saturday, April 29th at the Hooksett Bass Pro Shops at 3:00pm. There will be games, auctions...both live and silent, and many gun raffles!!

New England Upland Club

Next 300 bird shoot will be on February 18th. It will be a Mardi Gras themed event. They will serve all the New Orleans favorites like Jambalaya with pheasant and andouille sausage, red beans and rice, okra, shrimp bisque, etc...

The last European style shoot for this season will be the St. Paddy's day event on March 18th and it should be a blowout. They will be making their own home cured corned beef brisket with all the traditional Irish sides.

For more information contact scott@newenglandupland.com or call 478-0099.

2017 MERRIMACK VALLEY NAVHDA

INDOOR CLINIC

Date: **Sat February 4th** or **Sat March 4th**
Time: 9:00a to 4:00p
Agenda: **Retrieving and Obedience**
Cost 10.00 per person - BYO Lunch/Drinks/Chair

Location: **Halona Stables** www.HalonaStables.com
113b Mountain View Rd, Deerfield, NH (off Route 43)
www.HalonaStables.com 603-463-3766

If you have questions or are interested in attending one of the sessions, please RSVP to:

David A Trahan
101 Coffetown Rd
Deerfield N.H. 03037
603/494/3802
davidt@onpointkennel.com


Dog Training Equipment for the Versatile Hunting Dog

Volunteers from NHWF spend considerable hours each year over at the Legislature working to ensure sportsmen and women maintain their right and abilities to hunt fish and trap. On January 21, 2017, we held our Wildlife Federation Annual Meeting at the NH Fish and Game Headquarters conference room. This meeting was attended by a large turn-out of members. We provided a lesson to all members present on how to monitor and follow Bills and LSR's on line and how to utilize the General Court Web Sites created for citizens to contact their Legislators and follow legislative progress. Following this discussion and demonstration we went through a number of pending legislative Bills currently being presented at the House and Senate for consideration. The lists below are the results of the votes taken and recorded regarding the Wildlife Federation Membership positions on these Bills affecting the sportsmen and women of the state.

Just as a reminder to all as the Legislative sessions get under way, Bills voted ***Inexpedient to Legislate*** (ITL) is defined as a defeated Bill voted not to pass. Bills can be ***retained*** which are Bills held by the different assigned committees to be worked on at a later date. Bills can be ***Laid on the table*** defined as a Bill that has been placed on the table as a result of a floor motion and the Bill will remain held until a floor vote takes it back off the table. And finally a Bill can be assigned to ***Interim Study*** meaning a Bill was sent back to the committee that heard it for further study. These Bills will be worked on in between the annual legislative sessions. ***Ought To Pass*** is a Bill supported by majority vote and sent on to be considered for law.

In the list below I will list the Bill number, a brief description of the Bill followed by the results of the votes indicating the Support or Opposition from the Wildlife Federation for each Bill.

HB 84—Relative to carrying loaded rifles, shotguns or crossbow in a vehicle or a boat, OHRV or snow machine. **Opposed** On January 31, 2017 this bill passed with an amendment that completely changes the bill.

HB 126—Relative to prohibiting hunting on Willand Pond in Strafford County due to safety concerns. **Opposed** On January 31, 2017 it was voted **ITL**

HB 132—Allowing hunting adventure permits (Hunt of a Lifetime) to be used by certain non-resident applicants. **Opposed** On January 31, 2017 voted **ITL**

HB 190--- Relative to the wildlife habitat account and the fisheries habitat account. This Bill was to restrict money in these accounts to be spent for equipment to be used on these properties for maintenance. This Bill was amended by the sponsor to address allowing for equipment to be rented. **Support as amended** On January 31, 2017 voted and passed as amended by the sponsor.

HB 211--- Relative to temporary OHRV registrations for non-residents. This Bill would allow for this practice to continue to extend the authority for Fish and Game to allow this practice. **Support** On January 24, 2017 passed

HB 163—Relative to the responsibility of a municipality to enforce its ordinances. This Bill was to address towns and encourage their Police Departments to assist with the enforcement of OHRV laws within their towns. **Monitor** On January 24, 2017 passed

HB 224-FN This Bill repeals the law allowing non-resident full-time students to purchase a fish and game hunting or fishing license at the resident costs. **Opposed**

SB237—Establishing a committee to study helmet and restraint laws for youth operators and passengers of OHRVs and snow machines. **Support** On January 24, 2017 passed

HB 248—Relative to operation of OHRVs on trail connectors in Coos and Grafton Counties. This would modify the procedures for approval process of certain roads and trails. **Monitor**.

HB 315—Relative to persons who may accompany and be legally responsible for a youth operator of an OHRV or a snow machine. This would require that minimum age to move to age 25 years old. **Opposed**.

HB 381- Relative to cruelty to non-captive wildlife. This Bill was created by the Humane Society and was presented to address the cruel treatment to wildlife. **Opposed** On January 31, 2017 voted to **ITL**

HB 392- Relative to allowing all persons to hunt with a crossbow during the archery season regardless of any health conditions. **Opposed** On January 24, 2017 voted to **ITL**

HB 428 – Relative to hunting with a crossbow by persons 68 years of age or older for deer regardless of health conditions. **Support**. On January 31, 2017 passed as amended

HB 467 – Relative to the duties of the fish and game commission. Changing the authority of the NH Fish and Game Commission to that of advisory. **Opposed**. On January 31, 2017 voted to **ITL**

SB 12 - Repealing the licensing requirement for carrying a concealed pistol or revolver. Due to a language error in this Bill we voted to **Oppose as written**.

SB 48 – Establishing a commission to study changes to the fish and game commission and department. **Opposed**.

This is a complete list of all the Bills we reviewed, discussed and voted on at the annual January meeting, updated with any action taken as of January 31, 2017. We have written position papers and offered testimony on two different dates as the committee hearings on some of these bills have begun over the past two weeks. We will soon have an excel type spreadsheet available on our web site where the members can track these Bills as they move through the hearings and voting process at the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Your support as individual members and club support for the Wildlife Federation on these issues has never been more important. Please join us in our efforts to safeguard our rights to enjoy hunting, fishing and trapping for the future.

WITH SPRING PLANTINGS

By Charles Williams, Chair
NHWF Conservation Committee

The New Hampshire Wildlife Federation has a cooperative agreement with the state's Conservation Districts to encourage land owners to improve wildlife habitat on their property by planting a special selection of trees and shrubs this Spring. We are offering a \$ 25 subsidy to the first 20 applicants who sign up for this planting package that is being offered in Belknap, Coos, Cheshire, Grafton, Hillsborough, Merrimack and Strafford County Conservation Districts. Without our rebate the value of these quality bare root plants is \$ 200.

If you could find them locally the cost would be a lot more. Contact one of these county offices for more information. Orders must be received by March 17. Individuals or groups are encouraged to take advantage of this offer to enhance conservation on both private and public land.

2017 ANNUAL MEETING

The 2017 Annual Meeting was held Saturday, September 21, 2017 at Fish & Game Headquarters in Concord. There were over 50 people in attendance, the most in many years.

The Secretary's report from the 2016 Annual Meeting was approved and the financial statement for 2016 and budget for 2017 were approved. All committee chairs gave their reports for 2016 and Janice gave her Executive Director's report stating that we had 48 NEW members sign up this year and we now have a total of 35 affiliate clubs.

The 5 directors whose terms expired were re-elected for another 3-year term. They are Rolf Carlson, Dale Carruth, Kevin Jordan, Chris McRae and David Poole.



The remainder of the meeting was dealing with the Legislative process and taking a stand on Bills of interest to our group. That is included in the Legislative Report.



SUMMER CAMP

By Charles Williams, Chair
NHWF Scholarship Committee

It is not too early to be thinking about sending a youngster to this educational and fun filled camp. The NH Wildlife Federation will be again offering some partial "camperships" which cover one half of the cost of attending the session selected. First consideration will again be given to NHWF or affiliated club members.

It is strongly suggested that initial camp application/registration be done early to insure the youngster gets the week at camp they desire because some weeks fill up rapidly. Contact your local county extension 4-H office or go on line for details. The applications for our NHWF Camperships are available from the office (information on our web site.) The deadline for our campership applications is March 1, 2017. The scholarship committee will review the candidates and make their recommendations to the board of directors for final approval.

Our campership award winners will be notified in April and funds sent directly to the 4-H Foundation office where they will be applied to the proper individual account.

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Cody has been my nephew and hunting buddy for years. He shot his first bear when he was 13 and when asked what his favorite food is he says "bear."

We scheduled some time to deer hunt during the Youth Weekend. I was flying back to NH from a business trip and arrived home at 11:30PM Saturday night. His Dad, my brother was in China on business until after Thanksgiving. I spoke with Cody's Mom and she inquired "what time and what gun." I told her to have Cody ready at 6:00AM and the Savage 308 bolt action. This is a rifle I bought him after he shot his bear two years earlier.

I awoke early and as I checked my gear I got the feeling I should bring an extra gun in case there was a problem with Cody's. I went to the gun safe and retrieved my Browning BAR in .270 caliber, clip, and four shells. On my way to pick up Cody I received a text from his Mom that read: "we are up and ready he's missing one glove but more importantly he doesn't have any shells for the .308". I laughed to myself and sent her a note telling her not to worry.

I picked him up and he was excited to get to the family land we have in Hillsboro. We parked the truck at our 200 acre wood lot and it was still dark. I showed Cody the rifle and reviewed safety and how to handle and load the rifle. We discussed the Leopold scope and how to change the magnification. I explained that every time he squeezes the trigger it will fire and to always be safe. I also explained that even I still get very excited when I see a deer, so I make a point of looking through the scope after the shot and being ready for a follow-up. I had a bad habit of lifting my head and missing and he thought that was quite funny.

I then showed him my Binoculars and told him they were one of the top three most important tools to have with you because it allows you to pick apart the area you want to hunt without bumping game. I told him it can be a slow process but the likelihood of getting an ethical shot versus seeing the tails of fleeing deer is much better.

It was starting to lighten up and I told him the plan was to sneak up to the long field with the wind in our face. When we got into position I would use the binoculars to see if there were any deer in the field. If we found nothing, we would make our way to the big cut and pick it apart the same way.

We arrived at the long field and nothing was in it so we slowly made our way to where the logging road drops down a steep hill to a 10+ acre cut. We could glass about 85% of the cut and I patiently examined the area. Cody whispered, "Are there any deer up here Uncle Mark? We've never seen one." I laughed and said, "I've missed plenty, I've passed on some and I've seen plenty."



After repositioning, I put the binoculars back up and almost dropped them! I couldn't believe my eyes! A beautiful buck was feeding on what I thought were raspberry tops. I turned to Cody and said, "Cody, I am not lying there is an awesome buck feeding $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way across the cut, get in position to look for him." I got him to where he had a good view but he couldn't see the buck in the scope, so I gave him the binoculars and turned his head to where I thought he would see the deer, but nothing. I then told him to look with a naked eye and look for white bone going up and down as he walked and fed. Within seconds Cody found the deer and looked at me and said, "He's huge!" I whispered for him to get in a shooting position and try to find him in the scope. After a few moments Cody noted he "had him." As I counseled Cody on staying calm and the next moment the woods erupted with a "BOOM! BOOM!" as the Browning roared. I was shocked and couldn't see the deer. I suspected I knew which way he was going, or perhaps he dropped it in his tracks at about 120 yards into the cut.

Cody was so excited. I asked if the shot felt good and he said "yes" and that "he doesn't miss" to which I thought neither did I until a nice buck is standing near me! We decided to take wait and let things calm down and then we would walk to where we thought it was standing. I told him to stay to my left side, in case the deer jumps up. We navigated to where we hoped it was and as I looked to the right where I thought may be heading and all of a sudden Cody says "There it is Uncle!" And then another "BOOM!" I turned quickly to see a deer and "BOOM!" then it disappeared in some saplings and down a little hill.

I looked at Cody and asked if that was "the buck" and he said it was, and that he saw the rack. I told him I didn't see the rack but the first thing I need to do is look where he first shot (number 1 and 2). I spent a good amount of time searching the area and didn't find hair or blood. So I told him I was going to go to the area he took the second rounds of shots (number 3 and 4) and to guide me to where he felt he shot. As I searched I found hair and called Cody. It was about 50 yards I had him stay there as I searched for the next sign. Within 30 yards I found great blood sign and again called Cody over to show him. I explained it looked like lung blood and was very optimistic we would find his deer. The blood trail was thick and easy to follow and within 50 yards I saw the deer lying dead and it was indeed the buck. I went to the deer and examined the animal. He had two wounds, one directly behind the shoulder and the second in the rear leg.

I called to Cody and told him I had his deer it was dead but it was actually a doe the buck must have gotten away he said that's ok at least I got my first deer as he walked to me. I was hiding the deer's head as Cody approached and he said, "Wow, that is a huge doe!" When he was about ten feet away I moved out of the way and as Cody's eyes opened wide I said "I agree it is a HUGE...7 POINT BUCK!!!!!" We later weighed him in at 162 pounds.

We whooped and hollered for some time, thanked GOD for everything that he has created and has done for us and thanked the McClintocks (my mother's maiden name) for keeping and passing this land down from generation to generation.

After we tagged and cleaned the buck, I took the time to back track the blood thus helping him piece the entire puzzle together.

When we got the deer to the truck Cody said, "Uncle is this what you did when you were guiding?" I said, "Exactly but it was never as much fun as this morning!" He thought that was "cool."

FEDERATION UPCOMING EVENTS

Fly Fish New Hampshire Show – Saturday, February 25, 2017 at the Executive Court Conference Center, Manchester, NH. 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Trinity Baptist Church Sportsmen's Show, Saturday, April 1, 2017. 80 Clinton St., Concord, NH

Thursday, March 30, 2017 Dine to Donate Fundraiser Night at Texas Roadhouse, evening meal, South Willow St., Manchester, NH. 15% of purchases made that evening will be donated back to NHWF.

Saturday, April 8, 2017 – 35th Annual Conservation Banquet. See Page 11 for details.

SMILE AND SUPPORT THE NHWF

Recently, board member Chris Turner uncovered a unique program Amazon.com has to support the nonprofit community. It's called the AmazonSmile Foundation. If you purchase items through Amazon today, you can support the NHWF by simply logging on to your Amazon account from their "smile" website located at: <http://smile.amazon.com>. (Note; there is no "www.") After logging into your account you will be prompted to select your nonprofit organization. Search "New Hampshire Wildlife Federation" and you will find us. Then proceed to shopping as you normally would. Bookmark "smile.amazon.com" as your new "Amazon" page.

It does not cost you anything and does not change your shopping experience, and the Amazon Foundation pays the NHWF 0.5% of all purchases made through their Smile website. To date Amazon has paid out more than \$34 million to the nonprofit community. More details can be found on the Federations Facebook page.

FEDERATION AFFILIATE CLUBS

As of January 31, 2017

Andover Fish & Game Club, Andover, NH
Androscoggin Valley Fish & Game Association, Berlin, NH
Belknap County Sportsmen's Association, Laconia, NH
Bradford Fish & Game Club, Bradford, NH
Cheshire County Shooting Sports Education Foundation, Keene, NH
Contoocook Valley ATV Riders, Henniker, NH
Deering Fish & Game Club, Deering, NH
Elkins Fish & Game Club, Elkins, NH
Farmington Fish & Game, Farmington, NH
Grafton County Fish & Game Association, West Lebanon, NH
Horseshoe Fish & Game Club, Merrimack, NH
Horse Pond Fish & Game Club, Nashua, NH
Kinnicum Fish & Game Club, Candia, NH
Londonderry Fish & Game Club, Inc., Londonderry, NH
Merrimack River Valley Chapter Trout Unlimited, Manchester, NH
Merrimack Valley NAVDHA, Deerfield, NH
Monadnock Rod and Gun Club, Jaffrey, NH
NH Antler and Skull Trophy Club, Raymond, NH
Mt. Cardigan Fish & Game Club, Canaan, NH
Nashua Fish & Game Club, Nashua, NH
New England Upland Club, Hillsboro, NH
NH Bear Hunters Association, Berlin, NH
NH Chapter Ducks Unlimited, Bedford, NH
NH Chapter of National Wild Turkey Federation, Newport, NH
NH Guides Association, Tilton, NH
NH Trappers Association, Charlestown, NH
Pemigewasset Chapter Trout Unlimited, Campton, NH
Pemigewasset Valley Fish & Game, Plymouth, NH
Peterborough Sportsmen's Club, Peterborough, NH
Pinnacle Mtn. Fish & Game Club, Lyndeborough, NH
Pointer Fish & Game Club, Manchester, NH
Raymond Sportsman's Club, Raymond, NH
Sunset Mt. Fish & Game Club, Canterbury, NH
Watanic Bowmen, Merrimack, NH

Bold Indicates newly-affiliated clubs this year



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SOUTHWEST REGION REPORT

By Jack Zeller

Read Jack's deer camp blog at: longridgedeercamp.blogspot.com

The Southwest Region certainly had a decent and long hunting season...the bear harvest was way up, with 69 taken from this region, up some thirty from last year. Once the season was over, I still had lots of bear and cub pictures coming in, and as I write this in mid-January, the boars still haven't hit the rack, but are raiding bird feeders in this area. As long as there is little snow cover, and plenty of food, the males will not hibernate...

As far as deer season went, statewide, the count was down slightly by 2%. In the SW we took about 1600, which is slightly off last year. At our camp we did see 46 deer while hunting, but only two hunters took bucks. I never saw a single one, not even a spike. Interestingly enough, I only had a four point and a spike on camera all fall. Very strange. What did please me is that almost all the does I saw had twins, and some several, triplets. Fawn recruitment is high right here, and I attribute that to the lack of coyotes. The bears do take a lot, but usually if the fawns reach several weeks unharmed they can avoid the bears. In addition to lots of numbers, the does were huge, and fat. The fawns were very large for their age this fall. With an abundant mast crop, and this easy winter so far,

I expect the herd in the SW to flourish once again. But where are the bucks!

If I haven't mentioned it, I do an area deer census here at Long Ridge Deer Camp every year. My numbers generally come in quite close to the biologist's estimates, so I believe my method is reasonably accurate. Here is how I do it...

At the top of one of my fields there is about a half acre of Christmas tree plantation which someone planted some forty or fifty years ago. The trees are 30-50 feet tall now, and provide a great cover for deer. Between the trees and the stonewall years ago I cleared of trees, and made a ¼ acre open spot. Starting December 15th each year I begin to feed cracked corn. I put out about 8 to 9 piles of several cups each. Make this SMALL piles, we want to attract deer, not make them sick. (use cracked corn, not whole, or the deer consume it too fast). I put out cameras, and pull the cards usually about once a week. Typically, if a camera is set to 30 second intervals, I will have well over 2500 images to pour over. Better to set at minute intervals.

After the first several weeks I can clearly discern the different groups that come to feed. They come from



different directions, and at different hours. If there is snow they form serious trails into the plot. For example, this year I have four separate groups coming in almost exactly from the four points of the compass, and several bucks that come from anywhere.

Once their incoming (and egress) trails are thoroughly beaten, I follow them to their bedding/alternate feeding areas. If they are within a half mile of the camera, they are within our 'square mile area'. Count the individuals in each identified group, and there you have a deer count per square mile (for your area). So far this winter I have a group of eight that regularly come in from the South, a group of three from the North, and a group of six from the East. In addition, there are several bucks and an occasional wanderer. So far it looks like we have about 15-18 resident deer in our square mile this winter. I believe if there was not quite so much available mast left, I would be seeing more on camera. This census is a ball park guess, but fun to do, and educational. And because I can identify so many individual animals, I even get to name them. Now, the biologist's estimate that my area carries about 12-15 deer per square mile. So while my number is somewhat higher, I believe it is more accurate. There is an average number. Mine is a count. Understand that these numbers can fluctuate depending on season, but are helpful in determining the health of the herd. And folks, if we have 18+ inches of snow on the ground? Stop feeding and let the deer yard up. Best for them over the long haul! Have fun!

Jack Zeller is an avid hunter, a Benefactor member of NRA, a part time trapper, member of GONH, and a career police officer. Jack posts a deer camp blog at Longridgedeercamp.blogspot.com He hosts yearly deer camps in the Connecticut River Valley, and can be reached at jackzeller@myfairpoint.net Comments and questions are welcomed!

WOOD DUCK BOXES AVAILABLE

We have duck boxes available for sale to the public. Continued loss of wetland habitats and the wooded areas around them plus the lack of suitable nesting sites have adversely impacted the wood duck population. If you have land suitable for supporting wood ducks, please consider creating a nesting site to attract one of the most beautiful waterfowl in America.

These wood duck boxes are available through the NHWF office at \$79.99 each plus shipping. Each box comes with a one-year membership to the New Hampshire Wildlife Federation.



UNDERSTANDING AND HELPING THE WOOD DUCK WITH NESTING BOXES

The wood duck is considered by many to be the most beautiful of all the American waterfowl. However, a number of years ago for various reasons, their population dropped to very low levels. But through the efforts of federal and state agencies, dedicated sportsmen, and conservation organizations they have made a dramatic recovery. However, there are still some problems for wood ducks. The most significant are the continued loss of wetland habitats and the wooded areas around them plus the lack of suitable nesting sites. Unlike most ducks, they prefer to nest in a hole in a tree. The concern is that there are just not enough trees around with cavities. Biologists have determined that wood ducks will nest in artificial structures and often will prefer them and return to them in subsequent years. Female wood ducks tend to seek nesting sites close to where they were hatched, thus it may take some time to seek out locations far from established populations. Once a nest site has been selected in Spring, the hen will start laying an egg a day. A wood duck clutch usually contains 9 to 15 eggs. Incubation begins after the last egg is laid. The eggs hatch in about 30 days. After about 24 hours the hen will fly out and call the duckling from the nest. In about 5 weeks they are quite independent from the hen. Their early diet consists largely of insects, aquatic invertebrates, small fish and other high protein animal matter. After about six weeks they will switch to vegetative items, primarily aquatic plants and algae. Wood ducks are a type of dabbling ducks that forage on the surface of water (and on forest floors) for food as opposed to diving to the bottom to feed. Young wood ducks will mature in a year and begin the courtship ritual and breeding cycle once again.

Locating a Duck Nest Box

Though wood ducks may nest a distance from water, the ideal location for a nest box is in or at the edge of a permanent body of water near areas that provide adequate cover and a food source for brood raising. Consider rural marshes, smaller lakes, beaver ponds and flows, and slow moving streams with back water pools. Optimum brood habitat is an interspersed of open water (25 to 50% of area), flooded shrubs (30 to 50%), herbaceous emerging plants (40 to 60%) and flooded trees (up to 10% of the area). The location should hold water through August in a normal summer. Farm ponds usually do not make good sites for duck boxes because they often have steep sides and deep edges with little emergent vegetation for the ducklings to hide from aquatic or aerial predators.

Boxes should be placed one per acre of suitable area. They should be placed in at least 3 to 4 feet deep water. Next boxes should be placed so that there is at least a 40 foot flight line in front of the box that is free from any obstacles. If the box is to be located near the shoreline, be sure to aim the opening in the box towards the open water.

Erecting a Nest Box

A wooden pressure treated 10 to 12 foot long 4"x4" post or a 2" diameter metal pole can be used to mount the nest box. The bottom of the box should be at least 3 or 4 feet above the surface of the water. Consider any potential future flooding conditions. Erecting off shore boxes can often be more easily done in the winter by driving the support through a hole in the ice into the mud below. If mounting on a live or dead tree, consider providing an anti-climb guard to prevent predators from reaching the box.

Wood ducks do not collect nesting material. Once the box is mounted it should be lined with 4 to 6 inches of wood shavings. Do not use sawdust, leaves, or grass, etc. The nest box must be cleaned out each winter or very early Spring, even if the box has not been used. This will ensure a dry sanitary base to attract a hen in the new year. Maintaining the box is often easier from a solid ice surface. NOTE: Once in a while a wood duck nest box might also be used by owls, wood peckers, starlings, kestrels, wasps and golden eye and merganser ducks.

You can help insure the future of the wood duck in our area by installing nesting boxes in suitable locations.

The NH Wildlife Federation Cordially Invites you to attend the 35th Annual Conservation Banquet

Saturday, April 8, 2017

At The Grappone Conference Center, Concord, NH

4:00 PM Social Hour followed by Dinner at 5:00 PM

The Banquet features a Live Auction including an African Hunting Trip and African Photo Safari, as well as other hunting and fishing trips, wildlife art and many surprises!

Local businesses and individuals have donated dozens of prizes and services. Raffle tables include Women's Table, Youth Table, Fishing and Hunting Tables, Getaway Table of mini-trips and vacations and lots more!

**Traditional Drawdown for Valuable Prizes
with the Grand Prize of \$10,000**

**Door Prizes
Wall of Guns Raffle
Silent Auction of Unique Specialty Items
Four Seasons Raffles
Sponsor Member Raffle
Special Gun Raffle**

The 35th ANNUAL CONSERVATION BANQUET

Platinum and Gold Sponsors will receive recognition and will have a plaque presented to them at the Banquet. Platinum Sponsors will receive 8 dinner tickets for the Banquet. Gold Sponsors will receive 4 dinner tickets. Both also will receive special recognition in the banquet program.

All sponsors will be listed in our newspaper, on our website, and will receive special mention at the banquet as well as being listed in the banquet program!

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Platinum \$10,000 .. Grand Prize Sponsor

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Sportsman \$ 500-\$ 999

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Sponsor hors d'oeuvres \$2,500

Sponsor bottle(s) of wine at each table

Seating is limited, make your banquet reservation now!

To reserve your seat call 603-224-5953 or via email at: ed@nhwf.org. All reservations must be received by Friday, March 24, 2017. If you would like to attend, please complete the following and mail check to: NHWF, 54 Portsmouth St Concord NH 03301.

I/We will be delighted to attend: Please reserve:

____ # Conservation Drawdown Tickets at \$100 each

____ # Admission/Meal Tickets at \$65 each (includes a membership and 5 general raffle tickets)

\$115 per couple (includes 1 membership and 10 general raffle tickets).

Please indicate number and choice of meals: ____ Beef ____ Chicken ____ Vegetarian

My check, payable to *NH Wildlife Federation*, is enclosed or charge my VISA/MC

Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

NOTE: If you have a paid group of 10, you may request a reserved table and have your name entered in a drawing for a



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Return to: New Hampshire Wildlife Federation - 54 Portsmouth Street, Concord, NH 03301

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