



PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION FISCAL 2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2022-JUNE 30, 2023

OPENING MESSAGE



The Pennsylvania Game Commission's 2023 Annual Report details the incredible work of the state's wildlife agency throughout the 2022-23 fiscal year.

We are proud to manage and protect wildlife and their habitats while promoting hunting and trapping for current and future generations. We continually strive to further our mission.

In this report, you'll find highlights of the work we've done to solidify Pennsylvania's reputation for premier wildlife and habitat

management, hunting, trapping, wildlife viewing, and outdoor recreation opportunities — all in line with our current strategic plan.

Pennsylvania is home to 480 species of wildlife, including 414 species of wild birds and 66 species of wild mammals. These include game, non-game, and threatened and endangered species.

The Keystone State is one of the top hunting states in the nation, where nearly one million hunters help to support wildlife conservation efforts by purchasing hunting and trapping licenses each year.

Pennsylvanians are truly blessed with the amount of quality public lands they have to recreate in nature. The Commonwealth's first game land was formed in 1920, and now the Game Commission is proud to manage 309 state game lands, which span more than 1.5 million acres, for wildlife habitat and hunting and trapping opportunities.

None of these efforts would be possible without our dedicated network of staff, Board of Commissioners, volunteers, and partners who share our vision to set Pennsylvania apart as a leader in proactive wildlife stewardship.

I encourage you to follow the agency on Facebook @PennsylvaniaGameCommission and Instagram @pagamecomm to stay connected and up to date on our latest projects. Thank you for your continued support of wildlife conservation here in our great state of Pennsylvania.

Bryan J. Burhans
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Game Commission

Kristen Schnepf-Giger
President, Board of Commissioners
Pennsylvania Game Commission

ONE TEAM. ONE VOICE. ONE PURPOSE.

MISSION:

Manage and protect wildlife and their habitats while promoting hunting and trapping for current and future generations.

VISION:

Recognized and respected as the leader in innovative and proactive stewardship of wildlife and their habitats.

STRATEGIC GOALS:

1. Manage Wildlife.
2. State Game Lands and Habitat Management.
3. Hunting, Trapping, and Wildlife Viewing.
4. Staff Recruitment, Development, Retention, and Support.
5. Agency Sustainability, Operations, and Customer Experience.
6. Agency Communications and Branding.

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YOUR STATE WILDLIFE AGENCY

NEARLY 
1 MILLION
HUNTERS

OVER
1.5 MILLION
ACRES OF STATE
GAME LANDS 

26 GAME 
MAMMALS

51 GAME
BIRDS 

 WILDLIFE
HABITATS **480**
FOR SPECIES

309 STATE
GAME
LANDS IN **65** 
COUNTIES





SGL 284

STATE GAME LANDS
PUBLIC HUNTING
PENNSYLVANIA
GAME COMMISSION

1565 ACRES

STATE GAME LANDS AND HABITAT MANAGEMENT

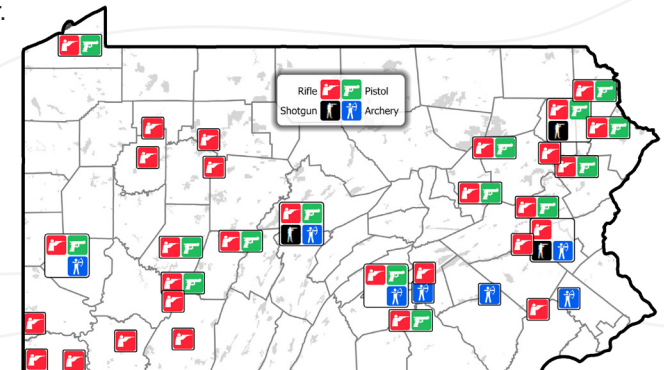
ADDING PUBLIC SHOOTING RANGES ON STATE GAME LANDS

The agency currently manages 36 public shooting ranges across the state. Shooting sports are imperative to wildlife conservation in Pennsylvania and across the U.S.

The federal excise tax dollars generated from the sale of firearms, ammunition, and archery-related equipment directly benefit our agency, our mission, and wildlife conservation.

INVESTING IN OUR HUNTERS AND RECREATIONAL SHOOTERS HELPS TO ENSURE THE FUTURE OF CONSERVATION IS BRIGHT.

- 2 new archery ranges were built on SGL 203 and SGL 230.
- 6 new shooting ranges were built in last 2 fiscal years.
- Another new archery range is completed and will soon open on SGL 50.
- Several upgrades to existing ranges are planned as well as 5 new archery ranges for the next year.



PRESCRIBED FIRE AND OLD FIELD HABITAT RESTORATION

- 8,800 ACRES OF AGENCY-MANAGED LAND MANAGED WITH PRESCRIBED FIRE.
- 59% FOREST.
- 41% GRASSLAND HABITAT.

The Game Commission continues to devote substantial effort at Letterkenny Army Depot to enhance old field habitat in preparation for northern bobwhite quail reintroduction in 2024 through methods such as prescribed fire, overstory removal, disking, planting, and herbicide applications.

Prescribed fire accomplishments for fiscal year 2022-23 exceeded 1,000 acres — the most since the start of the project — and provided a significant stride toward meeting target habitat goals.



MANAGING WILDLIFE HABITAT ON PRIVATE LANDS

More than 80% of Pennsylvania's landscape is privately owned, and wildlife doesn't recognize land ownership boundaries.

The Game Commission implemented various farm bill programs to improve wildlife habitat while sustaining agricultural production, in collaboration with Pheasants Forever and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

- **9 farm bill biologists** worked in **26 counties**.
- Outreach to more than **1,400 people**.
- Developed or modified **401 conservation plans**.
- Work impacted **13,028 acres**.

The Game Commission's private land forester assisted the Natural Resources Conservation Service in implementing farm bill forestry programs which benefit forest-dependent species.

- **76 site visits** across **22 counties**.
- Completed or reviewed **12 forestry plans** on **3,120 acres**.
- Conducted work on **4,300 acres**.

The Game Commission partnered with Pheasants Forever and Indiana University of Pennsylvania to successfully apply for a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to improve habitat for grassland bird species of greatest conservation need across three priority landscapes. Habitat improvements on public lands and surrounding private lands are scheduled for fiscal year 2023-24.

PGC regional biologists consulted **55 private landowners** and produced **44 management plans** for species of greatest conservation need on **5,491 acres**.



HUNTER ACCESS PROGRAM, A LEADER AMONG STATES

- **MORE THAN 10,105 LANDOWNER AGREEMENTS.**
- **1.8 MILLION ACRES ENROLLED.**

One of the nation's largest truly volunteer access programs, the Game Commission's Hunter Access Program strives to make participation convenient for cooperating landowners and provides them with a complimentary wildlife calendar, a subscription to Pennsylvania Game News magazine, annual seedlings, and wood products.

The agency is modernizing the Hunter Access Program mapping center to provide transparency and help hunters identify program properties.



INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATES

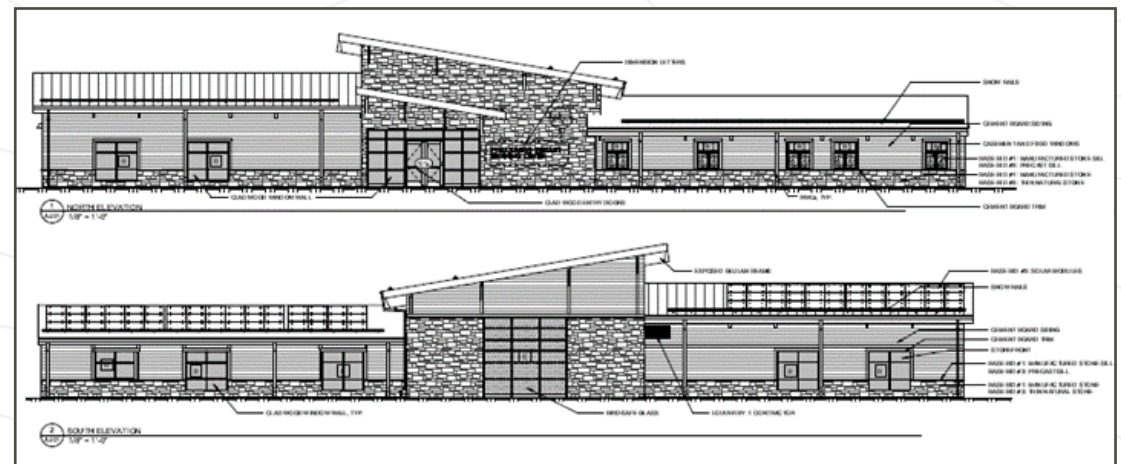
- 2 habitat crew headquarter buildings were completed.
- 1 habitat maintenance crew storage building was completed.
- 55 miles of PGC access roadways on 31 state game lands were created and/or maintained.
- 28 bridges were built to provide aquatic organism passage viaducts through watercourses.



The Southcentral Region has a new office! The office was replaced and is fully operational. Its grand opening was held in March 2023. Check it out at 8627 William Penn Hwy, Huntingdon, next time you're in the area.



The Pennsylvania Game Commission's headquarters building in Harrisburg is nearing construction, with additions for office space and in its training wing.



A new visitors center within the Pymatuning Reservoir area, which will focus on wildlife education with an emphasis on waterfowl, is slated for construction in 2024.

FORESTRY FOR WILDLIFE

- **TIMBER ACRES HARVESTED: 9,303.**
- **REVENUE: \$7,286,566.**

The prolonged decline in timber prices has caused many private owners to hold back on selling their timber. This has led to a noticeable increase in the number and price for many of our recent timber sale bids.

TIMBER SALES AND CONTRACTED SERVICES OFFERED FOR BID
YEAR TO DATE

Timbersales	Non-timbersale Forest Habitat Improvements	Total
8,378	16,237	24,884



Forestry Support Services is spearheading a major research collaborative between the Game Commission’s bureaus of Habitat Management and Wildlife Management, in conjunction with Indiana University of Pennsylvania and Penn State University, to evaluate the effectiveness of young forest stand treatments on habitat and wildlife. The first set of stands for this research have been identified and marked, and pre-treatment data has been collected.

- **109,180 acres treated by contracted applicators across 5 regions.**

The gypsy moth spray program was successfully completed in April and May 2023. Follow-up inspections have shown significant defoliation in areas of the state again this year outside of our spray blocks.



HOWARD NURSERY UPDATE

The Game Commission’s Howard Nursery, located in Centre County, raises bare-root seedlings for wildlife food and cover on state game lands, as well as participating Hunter Access cooperators, the Seedlings for Schools Program, and the agency’s conservation partners.

FISCAL YEAR 2022-23 TOTALS:

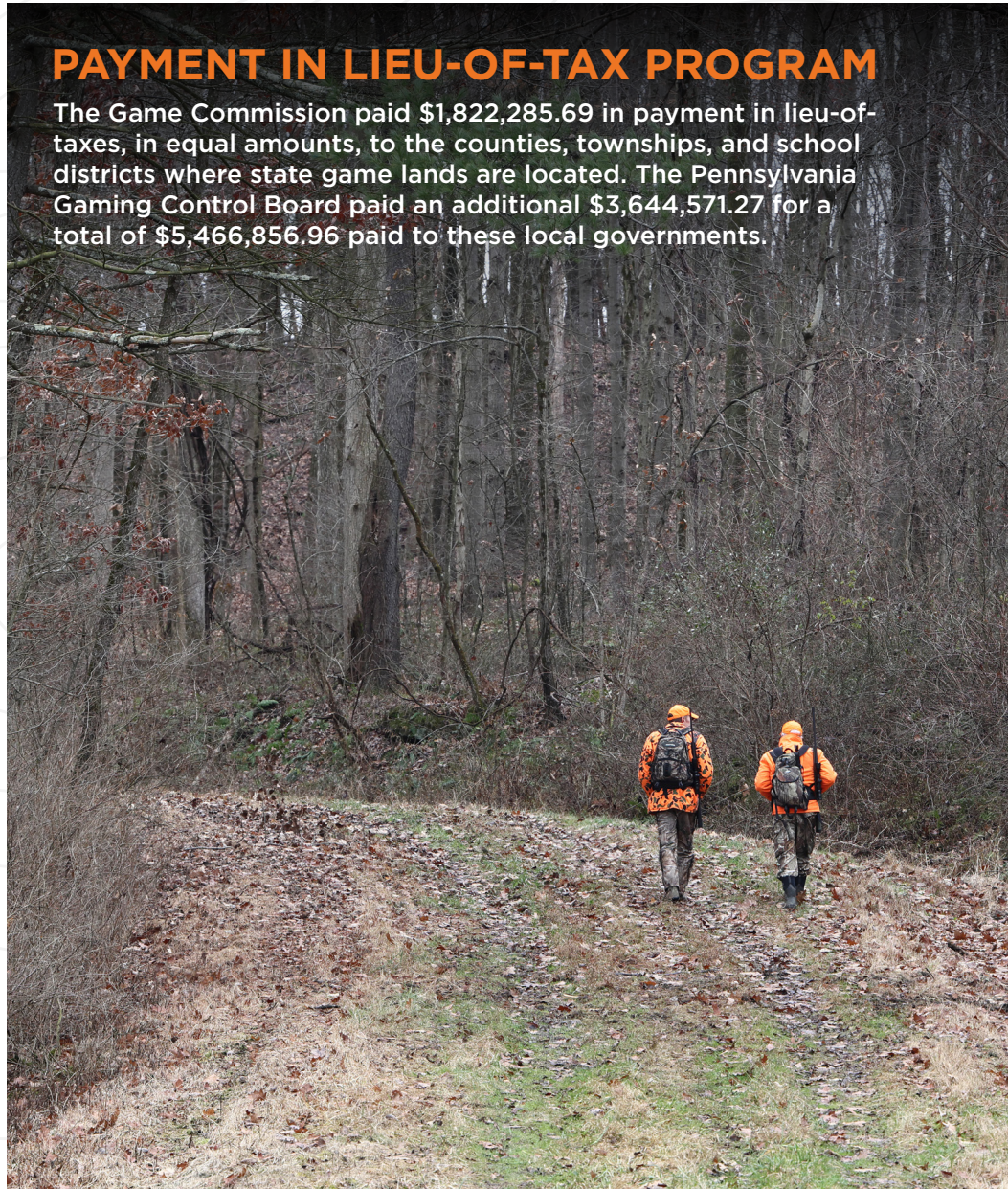
- Seedlings distributed to state game lands and partners: **322,025.**
- Seedlings for Schools Program: **144,725.**
- Seedlings sold to public: **153,175 for \$77,969.50.**
- Nest structures and signs distributed for Game Commission field use: **8,717.**
- Total nest structure sales: **626 items for \$13,185.77.**





PAYMENT IN LIEU-OF-TAX PROGRAM

The Game Commission paid \$1,822,285.69 in payment in lieu-of-taxes, in equal amounts, to the counties, townships, and school districts where state game lands are located. The Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board paid an additional \$3,644,571.27 for a total of \$5,466,856.96 paid to these local governments.



LAND ACQUISITIONS

- 3,509 acres added through 16 total contracts, including 2 donations and 2 interior parcels.
- 7 acquisitions completed through partnerships with land conservancies.

OIL, GAS, AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT

The Game Commission now manages 171 agreements that encompass 233,225 acres on state game lands for development of oil, gas, coal, and minerals. During fiscal year 2022-23, OGM revenues deposited to the game fund totaled \$319,958,836.23, an increase of \$140,918,999.53 from the previous year.

An additional \$2,277,672.16 was deposited into the restricted account for the purchase of wildlife habitats, lands, or other uses incidental to hunting, furtaking, and wildlife resource management.



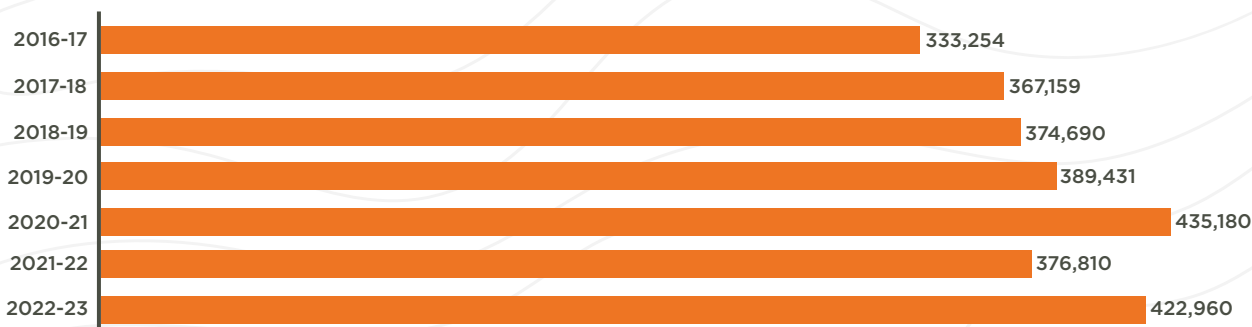


MANAGING WILDLIFE

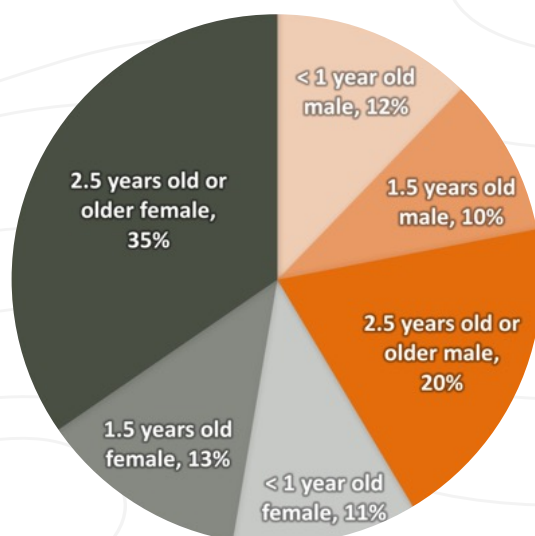
DEER HARVEST DENSITY

Pennsylvania has consistently been in the top three states in the entire country for both deer harvest and harvest density (where size of the state is factored in) for antlered and antlerless harvest in recent years.

ESTIMATED TOTAL ANNUAL WHITE-TAILED DEER HARVEST IN PENNSYLVANIA



PENNSYLVANIA DEER AGE DATA



More than **75 trained deer agers** were assigned to **31 teams** to visit more than **400 deer processors** throughout the Commonwealth, following the top harvest days, during the 2 weeks of the 2022 deer firearms season. Teams collected harvest data from **more than 23,000 deer**.

Along with other data sources, the harvest monitoring results are used to make management recommendations for the following year's deer seasons.

Thanks to antler-point restrictions, antlered deer aged **2.5 years or older** accounted for more than **60% of the buck harvest**.

CWD RESEARCH AND DIAGNOSTICS



Through the Wildlife Futures Program with Penn Vet, the Game Commission is working to improve the diagnostic capabilities of chronic wasting disease (CWD) testing by researching alternative testing methods and improving the turnaround time of 14-21 days from when the program started in 2019.

- 5-day turnaround time for hunter-submitted samples during 2022-23 season.
- 3-day turnaround time outside of hunting season.

Fieldwork began on a CWD research project in Bedford and Fulton counties, where CWD was first detected in free-ranging deer in 2012. About 90% of the state's known CWD detections and 1 in 3 adult deer harvested is CWD-positive in that area.

The multi-year study, in collaboration with the PA Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at PSU and the Wildlife Futures Program, will track deer with GPS collars to determine how CWD impacts movement, behavior, survival, and causes of mortality.

ELK CALF SURVIVAL STUDY

The Game Commission completed a 3-year study, in collaboration with Penn State University, to examine elk calf survival, which is one of the most influential factors affecting population growth. The results will help model how the elk population will grow over the next 10 years.

- 127 calves collared.
- 44 mortalities.
- 63% chance of survival.



Photo credit:
Rhonda Ottoviani.

BLACK BEAR RESEARCH AND HARVEST MONITORING

A research project through Oklahoma State University, studying female black bear resource selection and survival in Sproul State Forest, wrapped up during the fiscal year. The Game Commission will incorporate its results into future season and bag limit recommendations.

Another 3 research projects studying the sustainability of black bear management practices, genetic structure of the statewide black bear population, and prevalence of highly pathogenic avian influenza in black bears are currently ongoing.

Hunters harvested 3,175 bears during the 2022 season.

- 8 in early season.
- 738 in archery season.
- 712 in muzzleloader and special firearms seasons.
- 1,051 in general season.
- 666 in extended season.



WILD TURKEY POPULATION AND HARVEST

To better understand factors affecting wild turkey population and management, the Game Commission joined with Penn State University and Penn Vet in using GPS transmitters to track wild turkeys in 4 WMUs. Future data from Maryland, Ohio, and New Jersey will provide regional perspective.

- 271 hens marked between January 2022 and March 2023.
- 83 hens alive at the beginning of 2022 nesting season.
- 69 initiated nests.
- 47 nests failed.
- 6 nests had unknown fate.
- 16 nests hatched.
- 12 poults alive 4-weeks post-hatch.

Fall turkey seasons were changed for 15 Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) in 2021, and the 2022 seasons remained the same to assess potential population level affects.

- Statewide fall 2022 harvest of 7,600 (up from 6,800 in 2021).
- Fall hunter participation was 14% lower than 2021, but 11% of hunters harvested a turkey (up from 8% in 2021).
- Spring 2023 harvest of 39,500 (up from 35,700 in 2022).
- Spring junior season harvest of 2,200.
- Approximately 20% of 168,000 spring 2023 hunters harvest a turkey (up from 19% in 2022).





GROUSE GENETICS RESEARCH UPDATE

The agency began a cooperative study with Penn State University to better understand how decades of abundance declines have affected Pennsylvania's grouse population. DNA samples from 54 grouse wings (sent in by cooperating hunters across the state) indicated the population is one cohesive unit and not at a higher risk of extirpation.

Reduced habitat connectivity, however, is limiting grouse ability to disperse to new areas and successfully produce young, particularly in southern Pennsylvania.

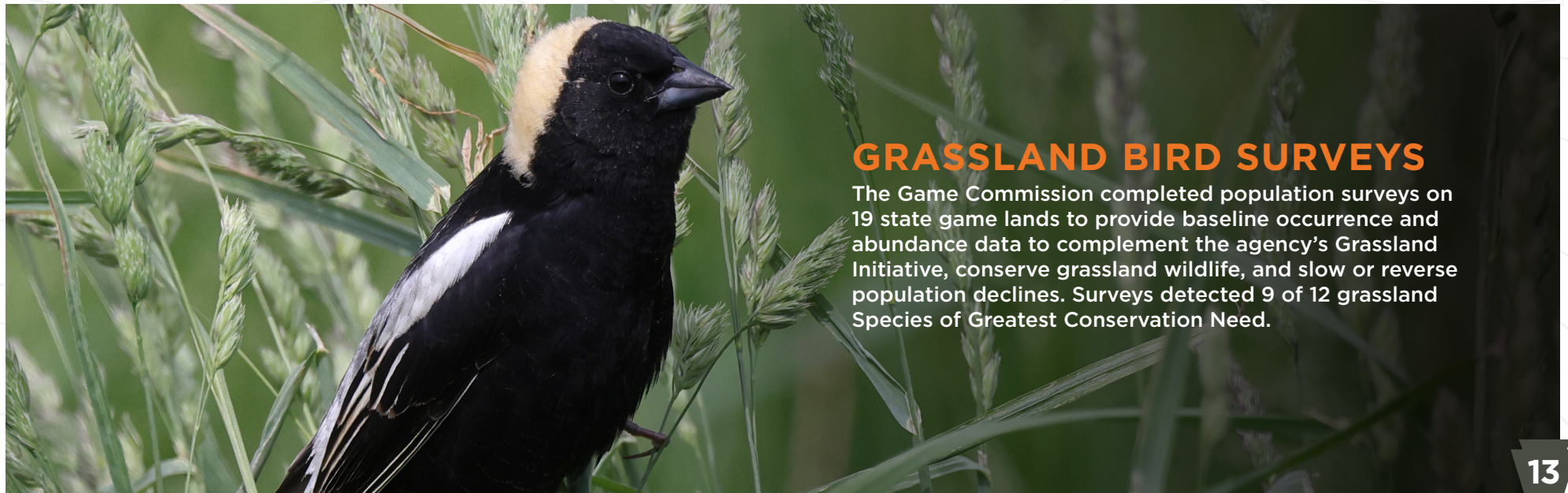
Future work will include partnering with surrounding states to assess genetic diversity and connectivity across the eastern grouse range and evaluate if grouse are becoming genetically resistant to West Nile virus.

PHEASANT PROPAGATION NUMBERS

Game Commission game farms in Loyalsock and the Southwest provided 226,821 pheasants that were released on 241 properties statewide, including 52,367 birds for 2 late-season releases. Additional planned investments in game farm infrastructure will promote further increases in operational efficiency and pheasant production.

PHEASANT HUNTING PERMIT NUMBERS HAVE BEEN STEADILY INCREASING SINCE 2018.

- 56,632 adult permits.
- 18,915 junior permits.



GRASSLAND BIRD SURVEYS

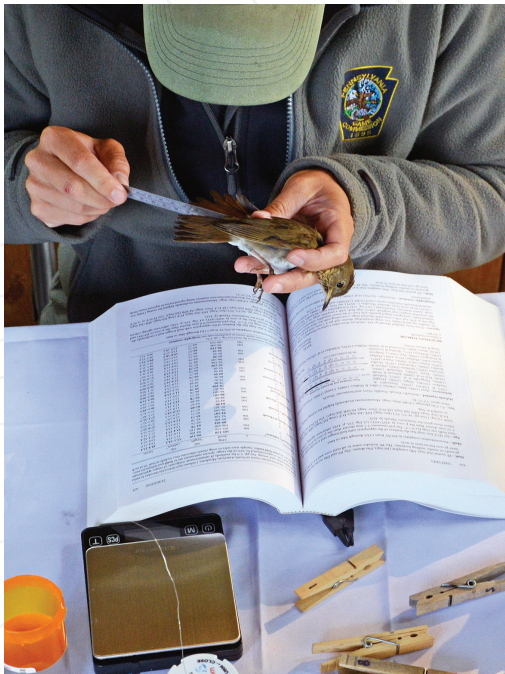
The Game Commission completed population surveys on 19 state game lands to provide baseline occurrence and abundance data to complement the agency's Grassland Initiative, conserve grassland wildlife, and slow or reverse population declines. Surveys detected 9 of 12 grassland Species of Greatest Conservation Need.



PIPING PLOVER RECOVERY

Only 80 Great Lakes piping plover pairs exist in the world. In Pennsylvania, these endangered shorebirds only nest on the Lake Erie shoreline at Presque Isle State Park. When predation and flooding jeopardized several nests, the Game Commission coordinated predator deterrence and nest rescue techniques to keep remaining plovers safe.

- Supported 4 piping plover pairs — 5% of the Great Lakes population and most since the species returned to the state in 2017.
- Contributed 10 fledglings to the population — 6% of chicks fledged in the Great Lakes basin.



“MAPS” AT MIDDLE CREEK

The Game Commission contributed to the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) program's North American data set through banding projects on a variety of bird species, including yellow-breasted chat pictured here. The vital rates collected provide insight into factors that drive population decline and solutions that could reverse these declines.

2022 RESULTS:

483 birds captured (406 new, 77 recaptures).
35% gray catbird (SGCN – responsibility species).
38 species.

2023 RESULTS:

437 birds captured (336 new, 101 recaptures).
47% gray catbird.
32 species (9 new species).



RECOVERING ENDANGERED BAT SPECIES

After white-nose syndrome wiped out more than 98% of Pennsylvania's cave bats in 5 years, the Game Commission's Recovery Division modified the microclimate of several bat sites to provide colder temperatures that lower impact of disease. The agency also launched studies to find new maternity colonies of these endangered species.

- 2 new habitats in the Poconos supporting northern long-eared bats.
- 18 new maternity colonies of little brown bats supporting over 1,200 adult females.
- 25% increase in known reproductive female little brown bats.



SNOWSHOE HARE HABITAT RESEARCH

Along with collaborators from the West Virginia and Pennsylvania Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units, the Game Commission compared snowshoe hare habitat and survival in northeastern Pennsylvania, where prescribed fire had been used to restore scrub oak barrens habitat.

Hares started using areas ≥ 7 years after burns occurred, and survival increased as the amount of time they spent in older burn areas increased. This information is critical to the effective management of habitats for species such as the snowshoe hare that benefit from early successional conditions.

AMERICAN MARTEN REINTRODUCTION FEASIBILITY AND PLANNING

The Game Commission developed the American Marten Reintroduction and Management Plan, outlining a 10-year strategy for translocating the species back to the state and closely monitoring the reintroduction.

To increase awareness and solicit feedback on the potential reintroduction, the agency conducted extensive outreach and education, including:

- 74 public presentations.
- 20 print and radio interviews.
- 8 articles.
- 4 podcast episodes.
- 3 informational handouts.
- 3 public opinion surveys.

Following a 60-day public review and comment period, a decision on the potential reintroduction is expected from the Board of Commissioners in early 2024.

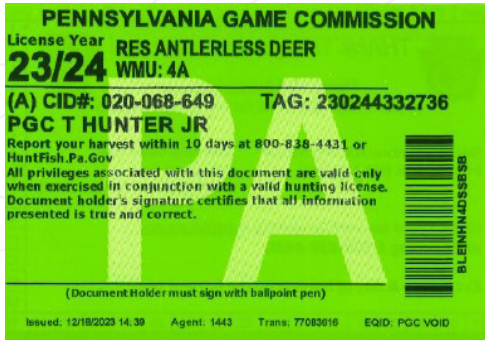




HUNTING, TRAPPING, AND WILDLIFE VIEWING



WHITE-TAILED DEER HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES



- Estimated 2022-23 harvest of 422,960, up from 376,810 in 2021-22.
- Antlered harvest increased an average of 13% from the 2021-22 season.
- Of the antlered deer harvest, 67% were 2.5 years old or older.
- 26% of deer hunters harvested an antlered deer.
- Antlerless hunter success rates remained around 27%.

The Game Commission modernized the antlerless deer license system by eliminating the pink envelope process and allowing hunters to purchase licenses online at www.huntfish.pa.gov or in-store at any issuing agent location throughout the state.

Hunters purchased a record-setting 164,702 hunting licenses and 590,000 privileges on the first day, despite widespread impacts, as a result of high demand.



Rachel Gillen shared a photo of her and her son, Bentley, and his 2022 buck he harvested during firearms season. Bentley stuck with it until the very last day of rifle season. His hard work and dedication paid off.

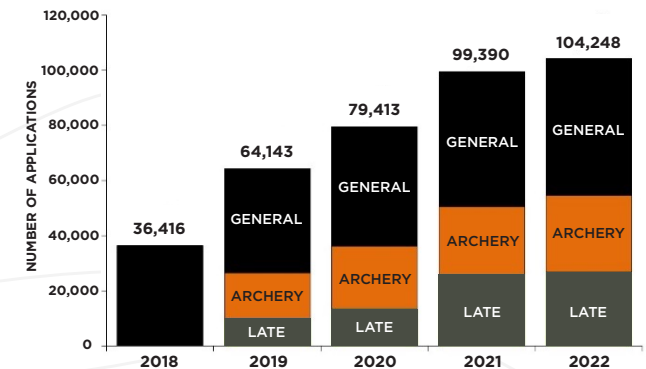
ELK HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES



Pictured here is David Kammerdiener, of Templeton, who harvested this 11x7 bull in Clearfield County, on Sept. 15, 2022. The elk scored 445-2/8", making it the second largest ever taken in the state and the new No. 1 in the nontypical archery category.

There was also a new No. 2 bull in the typical archery category, harvested in Centre County, scoring 350-4/8" and a new No. 1 bull in the typical firearms category, harvested in Clinton County, scoring 407-4/8".

The Game Commission expanded the elk application period to run from February 1 through July 16, 2023, from mid-June to late July in previous years, resulting in a 7% sales increase.



LICENSES ISSUED

Antlered	Antlerless	Total
60	118	178

HUNTER HARVEST

Antlered	Antlerless	Total
55	76	131

HARVEST SUCCES

Antlered	Antlerless	Total
92%	64%	74%



HUNTER-TRAPPER EDUCATION REPORT

HUNTER-TRAPPER EDUCATION CLASSES

- Certified 29,234 students.
 - In-person: 15,503.
 - Online: 13,382.

CABLE RESTRAINT CLASSES

- Students certified: 534.
 - In-person: 247.
 - Online: 287.

SUCCESSFUL BOWHUNTER CERTIFICATION

- Certified students: 341.
 - In-person: 26.
 - Online: 315.

ARCHERY SAFETY COURSE

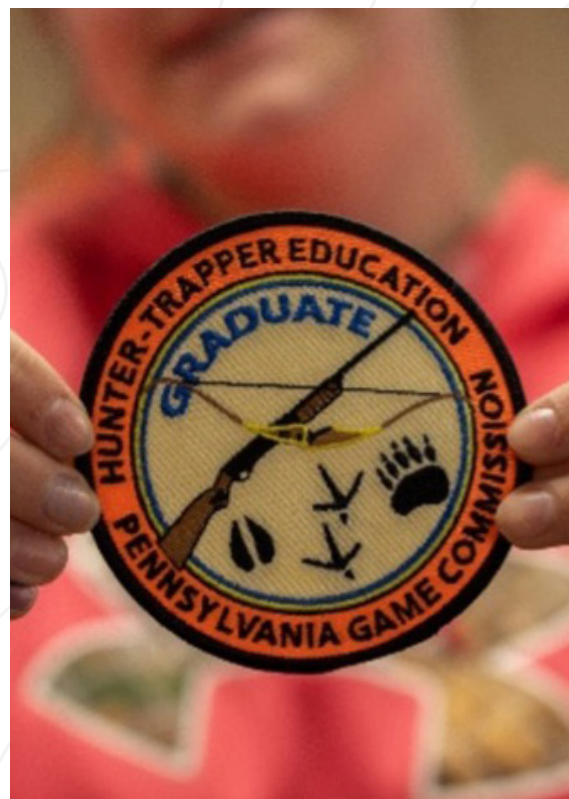
- Online (only): 178.

HUNTING-RELATED SHOOTING INCIDENTS (2022)

- Total: 14.
- Nonfatal: 14.
- Fatal: 0.

**Lowest number recorded in Pennsylvania since 1915.*

A total of **55 Hunter-Trapper Education classes** were taught in public schools across the Commonwealth to continue capitalizing on Act 27 of 2000, which requires school districts to make a classroom or instructional facility available for Hunter-Trapper Education.





“LEARN TO HUNT” WITH PGC

The Game Commission offered “Learn to Hunt” webinars on pheasant, squirrel, spring turkey, archery deer, and firearms deer hunting during the 2022-23 seasons.

The live webinars were recorded then made available on the agency’s YouTube channel where thousands of new hunters viewed the content.

- **1,166 individuals** registered for at least 1 webinar.



THREE SUNDAYS OPEN TO HUNT

During the 2022-2023 hunting season, Pennsylvania had three opportunities to hunt on a Sunday. This provided hunters with an extra day in the woods on these weekends.

All game that was in season was allowed to be hunted on these Sunday dates, except for turkeys and migratory game birds.

Raigan Fredericks, of Lycoming County, is pictured here with her buck, harvested on Sunday, Nov. 27, 2022.

MENTORED HUNTS IN PHILADELPHIA

Since 2019, the Game Commission has partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to provide mentored deer archery hunts at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge, in Philadelphia County.

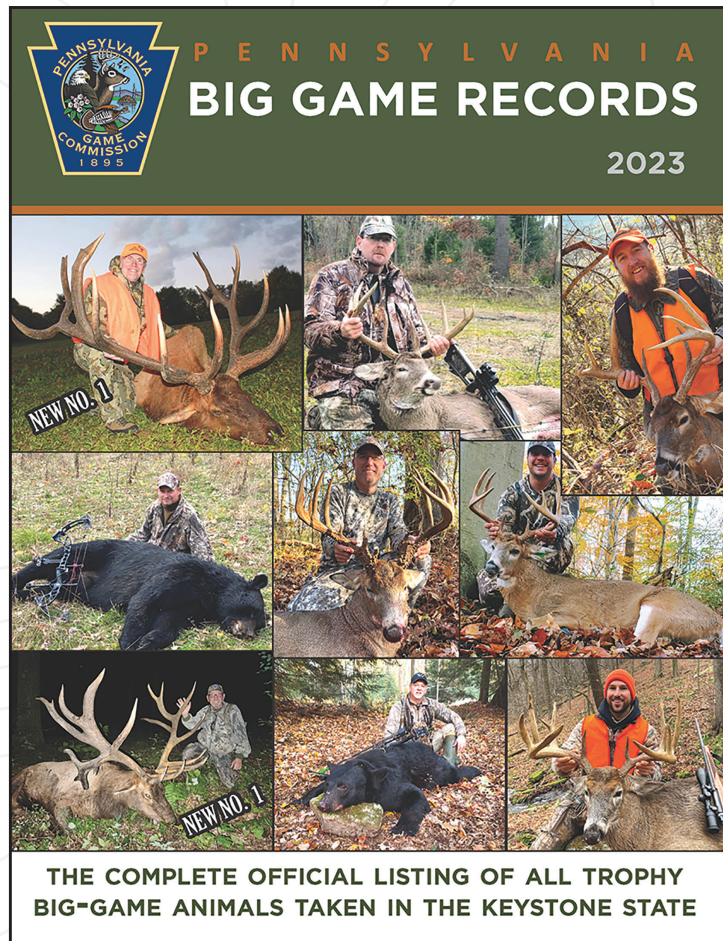
For 2022, the opportunities totaled:

- 4 mentored deer hunts at John Heinz.
- More than 40 new hunters.

To expand mentored hunt opportunities in the greater Philadelphia area, the Game Commission partnered with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to mentor 6 new hunters through a 2-day mentored deer archery hunt in Benjamin Rush State Park.



2023 BIG GAME RECORDS BOOK AVAILABLE



The Pennsylvania Big Game Records Book is the complete official listing of all trophy big-game animals taken in the Keystone State. The book is updated annually with new additions.

Updates for 2023 includes 182 whitetails, 31 bears, and 11 elk that were added from the 2022-23 seasons. A new No. 2 black bear, in the archery category, a 22 8/16" bruin, was taken in Monroe County.

The book is available for purchase online at www.huntfish.pa.gov.

BIG GAME SCORING EVENT AT HEADQUARTERS



The Game Commission hosted a Big Game Scoring event at its headquarters building in Harrisburg in February, in conjunction with the Great American Outdoors Show, when many hunters from across the state were in the area.

Approximately 70 hunters brought white-tailed bucks to be scored at the event by official scorers, most of which are agency employees.

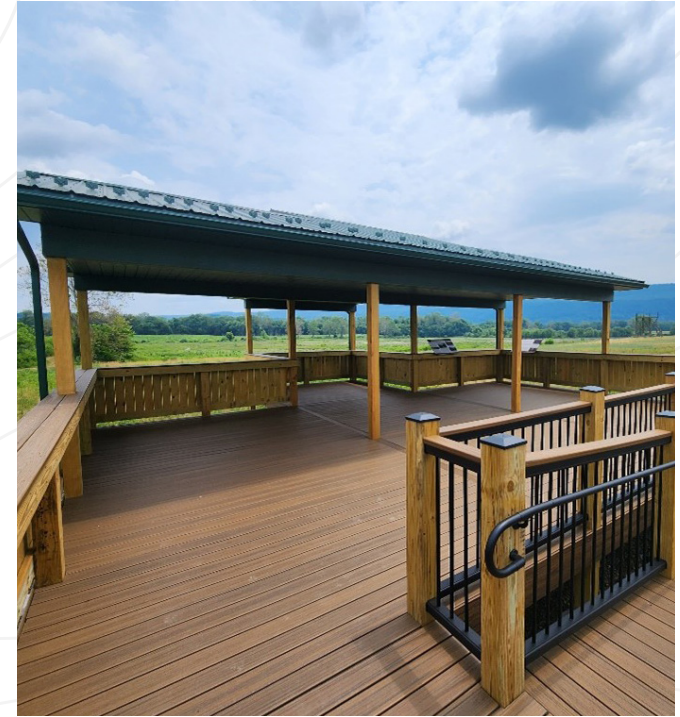
Any bucks scored at the event that met the state's minimum were entered into Pennsylvania's 2023 Big Game Records Book. Hunters also have the option to enter qualifying trophies in the Boone and Crockett and Pope and Young records using the official score sheets.





HALDEMAN ISLAND VIEWING PLATFORM COMPLETE

The Game Commission managed the construction of a walking path and 1,000 square foot wildlife viewing platform overlooking several impoundments on State Game Lands 290, Haldeman Island, in Dauphin County. This marks the completion of the vision goal for wildlife management areas in the strategic plan.



NATIONAL HUNTING AND FISHING DAY HELD AT MIDDLE CREEK

The Game Commission celebrated 50 years since the establishment of National Hunting and Fishing Day during its annual event at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, in Lancaster and Lebanon counties.

The event featured 40 vendors and thousands of attendees. Highlights included hunting skill demonstrations, archery shooting stations, habitat hayrides, and free fishing.

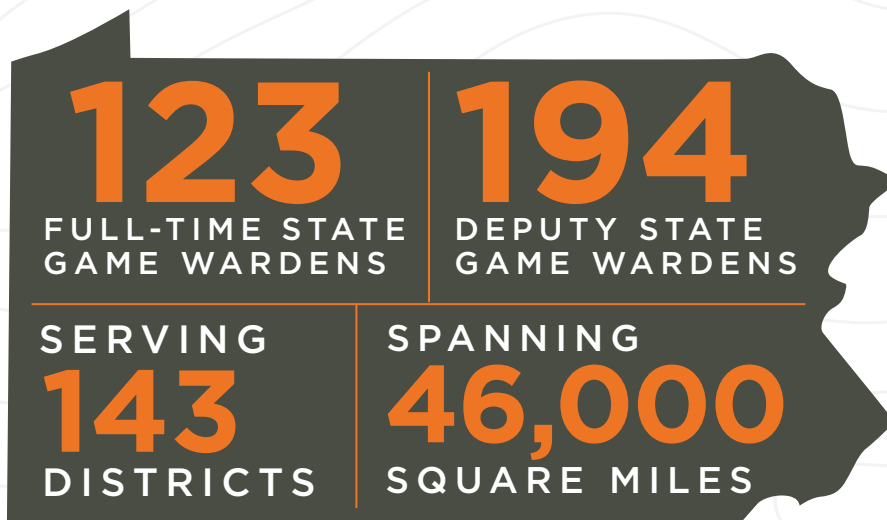




SUSTAINABILITY, OPERATIONS, AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

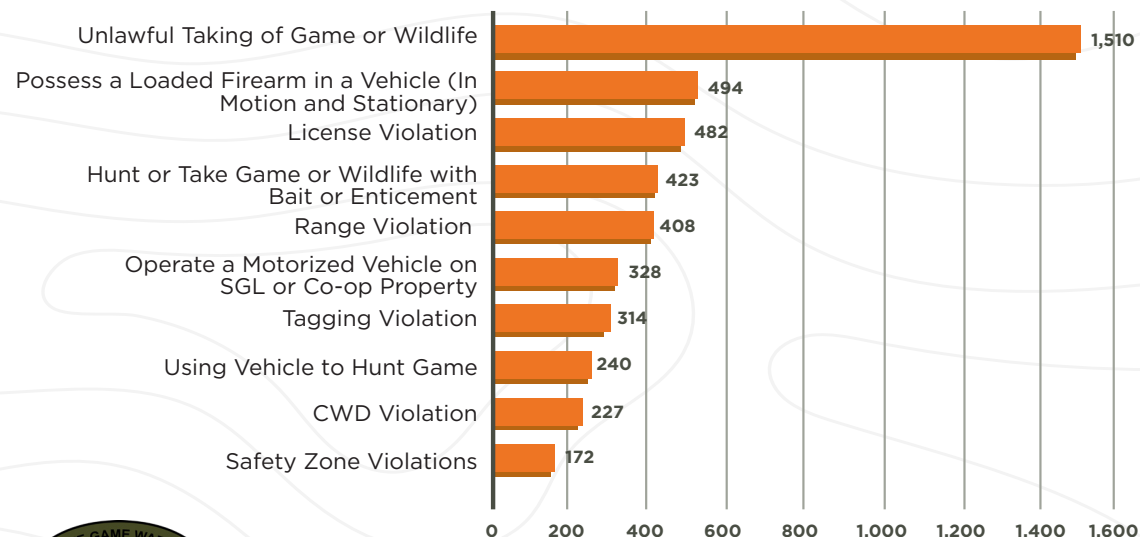


PROTECTING PENNSYLVANIA WILDLIFE



WILDLIFE PROTECTION CITATIONS, WARNINGS AND PROSECUTIONS

2022 TOP 10 VIOLATIONS



- Warnings: 5,567.
- Total for 2022: 6,911.
- Total successful: 6,034.
- Unsuccessful: 195.
- Dismissed and withdrawn: 887.
- Prosecution rate: 98.2%.



18 NEW GAME WARDENS ADDED TO THE RANKS

On Feb. 4, 2023, the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Ross Leffler School of Conservation graduated 18 new game wardens in its 34th class, bringing the total number of RLSC graduates to 770.

The 35th class of State Game Warden cadets began an intense 44-week training program, conducted by over 200 instructors, on March 26, 2023, and is scheduled to graduate in February 2024.

In July 2022, 12 deputy game warden candidates completed a 124-hour basic training course as one step in the long journey to be commissioned as deputy game wardens.



24

OPERATION GAME THIEF PROGRAM HOTLINE AVAILABLE 24/7

THIRD-BUSIEST PROGRAM IN
THE NATION, OF ITS KIND

- **1,304 submissions** for 2022-23.
- Under 20-minute turnaround from OGT tip to officer dispatched to the incident.
- Toll-free hotline available **24/7/365**.
- Call 1-888-PGC-8001 to report a wildlife crime.



WOODLAND TRACKING TEAM UPDATE

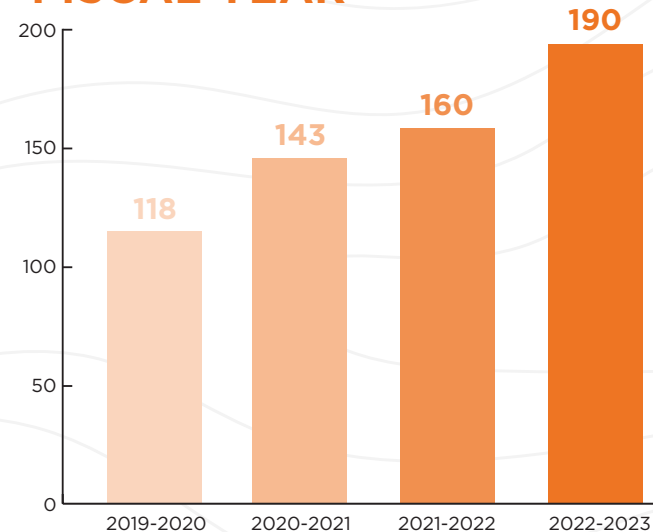
The Game Commission's Woodland Tracking Team has continued to increase its involvement in search and rescue incidents. The team had **22 deployments** in 2023. The team's specialized training in human tracking has been critical in resolving several search and rescue incidents.



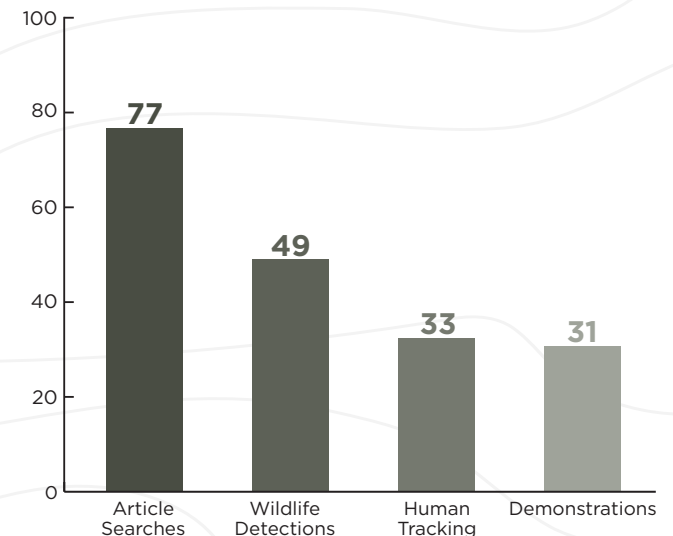
K-9 TEAM INCREASES DEPLOYMENTS

The Game Commission has 6 active K-9 teams across the state. The teams are located in each of the agency's 6 regions and consist of a Special Overt Investigator and a K-9. The Game Commission's K-9 Unit saw a total of 190 deployments, a number that continues to grow annually.

K-9 DEPLOYMENTS PER FISCAL YEAR



BREAKDOWN OF DEPLOYMENTS



K-9 Special Investigator SSgt. Larry Hergenroeder and K-9 Storm, pictured here, serve in the state's Northwest Region. All the Game Commission's K-9s are Labrador retrievers.



HUNTERS SHARING THE HARVEST SETS RECORDS

Pennsylvania's premiere venison donation program, Hunters Sharing the Harvest, reported Pennsylvania deer hunters fed the hungry in historic fashion during the 2022-23 hunting season, donating 235,532 pounds of venison from 6,201 deer and four elk. That's nearly a 25% increase from the previous hunting season.

The Game Commission is a proud partner and supporter of Hunters Sharing the Harvest. The program encourages hunting and filling tags, which is in line with the agency's mission of managing wildlife populations and promoting hunting.

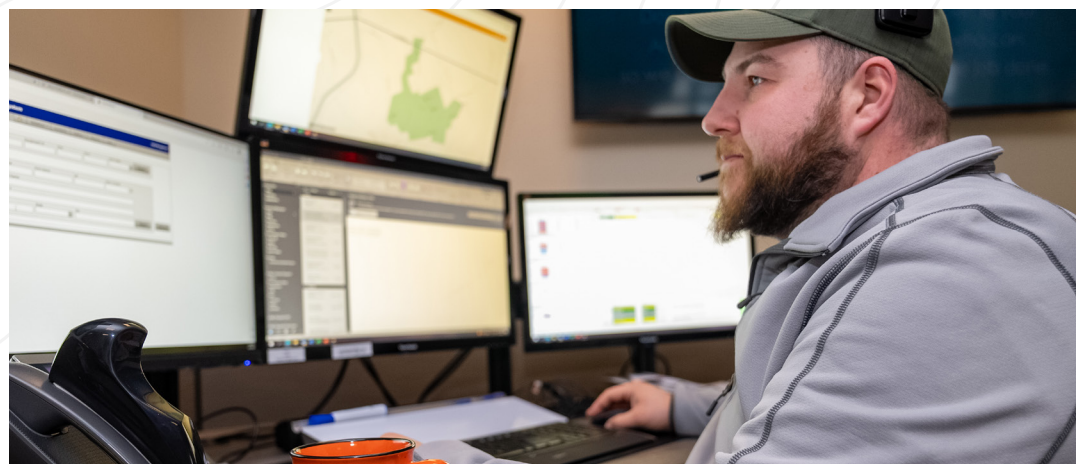
Southwest Region Information and Education Supervisor Seth Mesoras spoke on behalf of the agency at Hunters Sharing the Harvest's 2022 Kick-Off event in Pittsburgh.

DISPATCHERS AVAILABLE 24/7

The Game Commission's Centralized Dispatch Center is located at its headquarters building in Harrisburg. Dispatchers are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide operational coverage and support to game wardens, field staff, and the public.

2023 NUMBERS:

- 207,916 TOTAL CALLS RECEIVED.
- 82,301 TOTAL INCIDENTS CREATED.
- 99.16% ANSWER RATE.
- 3 MINUTES, 3 SECONDS AVERAGE TALK TIME PER CALL.
- 5.7 SECONDS AVERAGE CALLER HOLD TIME.



STATE GAME LANDS DRIVING TOURS HELD EVERY OCTOBER

Every October, the Game Commission hosts driving tours on state game lands across the state. In 2022, 9 tours took place on Sundays, between Oct. 2-16.

The tours provide a good example of the opportunities available on game lands statewide, while showcasing how habitat work being done on these tracts benefit wildlife.

All tours are free, held rain or shine, and open only to vehicles licensed for travel on public roads.



JUNIOR GAME WARDEN CAMPS HELD STATEWIDE

Six Junior Game Warden Camps were held across the Game Commission's 6 regions during the summer of 2023, where nearly 200 kids, ages 12-15, got an inside look on what it takes to be a state game warden.

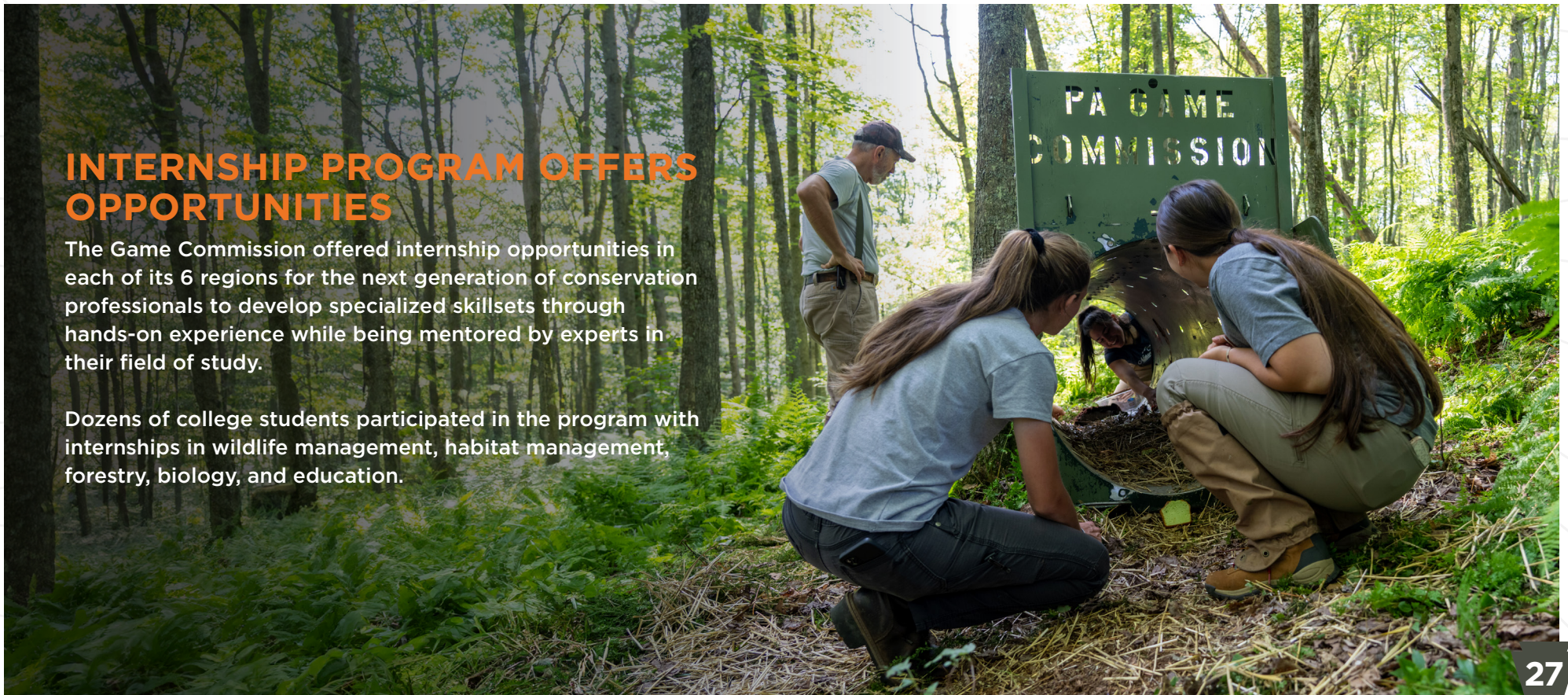
To gain insight into the job, campers joined game wardens in light physical fitness and confidence-building exercises and learned about wildlife forensics, wildlife-capture techniques, woodland tracking, and outdoor survival.



INTERNSHIP PROGRAM OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES

The Game Commission offered internship opportunities in each of its 6 regions for the next generation of conservation professionals to develop specialized skillsets through hands-on experience while being mentored by experts in their field of study.

Dozens of college students participated in the program with internships in wildlife management, habitat management, forestry, biology, and education.





COMMUNICATIONS AND BRANDING

"CALL OF THE OUTDOORS" PODCAST RELAUNCHES



Call of the Outdoors, the Game Commission's podcast hosted by Marketing and Strategic Communications Bureau Director Matt Morrett, releases monthly episodes on wildlife, hunting, trapping, and conservation.

Work was done in the early part of 2023 to update the logo and set and to add a video component before relaunching in September 2023. Episodes are available on www.calloftheoutdoors.com, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, iHeart, Spotify, and YouTube.

CELEBRATING PENNSYLVANIA'S HUNTING HERITAGE



When it comes to Pennsylvania's hunting heritage, we are fortunate to have so much to celebrate. The Game Commission visited the state Capitol, in Harrisburg, in September 2022, to celebrate all that makes our state an amazing place to live and hunt, including:

- **NEARLY 1 MILLION HUNTERS.**
- **MORE THAN 1.5 MILLION ACRES OF STATE GAME LANDS.**
- **311 STATE GAME LANDS, LOCATED WITHIN 65/67 COUNTIES.**
- **26 GAME MAMMALS AND 51 GAME BIRDS.**
- **WILDLIFE HABITATS SUPPORTING 480 SPECIES (GAME AND NONGAME).**

Game Commission staff talked with state legislators, staffers, and Capitol visitors about the mission of the agency and the work we do as your state wildlife agency.

Legislators recorded public service announcement videos to share on their social media pages and emails to constituents to help ensure hunting remains one of the safest forms of outdoor recreation.

UPGRADED TRADE SHOW PRESENCE

The Bureau of Marketing and Strategic Communications unveiled its new trade show booth at the Great American Outdoor Show in February.

The agency upgraded to a bigger booth space in the Outfitter Hall, sold Pennsylvania elk hunting applications, and led 8 informational seminars throughout the world's largest outdoor show.

The agency also hosted a Hunter-Trapper Education Instructor Retreat, a Hunter-Trapper Education Course, the NASP IBO 3D State Tournament, and a Big Game Scoring Session during the nine-day event.



NATIONAL ARCHERY IN THE SCHOOLS, NEW RECORDS SET

- 313 SCHOOLS ARE CURRENTLY OFFERING ARCHERY CURRICULUM.
- MORE THAN 100,000 STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN FISCAL YEAR 2022-23.
- NASP IBO 3D STATE TOURNAMENT GREW BY 28%.
- 268 ARCHERS COMPETED AT THE GREAT AMERICAN OUTDOOR SHOW.

The NASP Bullseye State Tournament moved to Spooky Nook Sports Complex, in Lancaster County, in March 2023, and resulted in the best event to date, where multiple teams set new state records.

Pennsylvania sent 180 students to the national tournament, where Ava Castrogiovanni of Montrose beat 6,692 other archers to become the state's first national champion. The runner-up spot was also claimed by a Pennsylvania student, Grace Tomlinson of Upper Dauphin.



STUDENTS TEST WILDLIFE KNOWLEDGE AT ENVIROTHON



Each year, the Game Commission designs wildlife station tests and provides resources for high school Envirothon competitions.

The 5-member teams participate in a series of field station tests focused on soils and land use, aquatic ecology, forestry, environmental issues, and wildlife. Teams that score highest in county competitions throughout the Commonwealth move on to the state event.

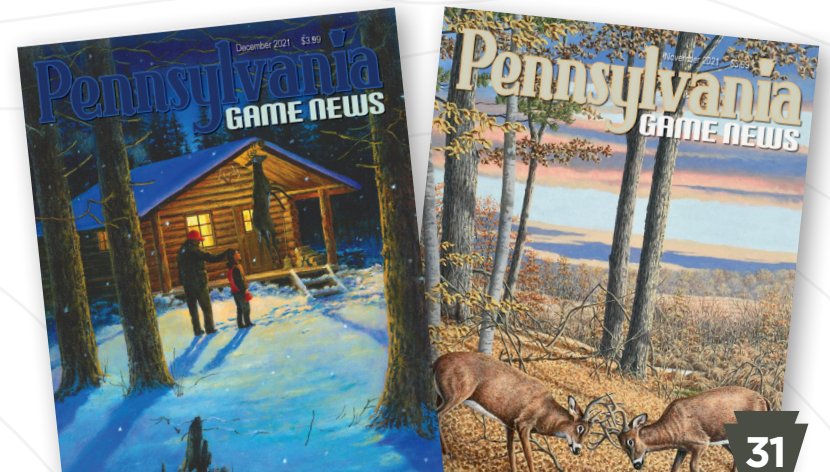
In May, students from more than 50 counties participated in the 39th Pennsylvania Envirothon State Competition, held at Camp Mount Luther, in Union County. After winning the state event, Penncrest High School, from Delaware County, went on to compete against 48 other teams from the U.S., Canada, China, and Singapore, and took second place at the international event.



PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS



- **71,000** total circulation.
- **23,376** free yearly subscriptions for individuals who successfully completed a Hunter-Trapper Education course.
- **9,215** complimentary subscriptions to **9,215** Hunter Access cooperators, **3,967** libraries, **197** deer processors, and **1,977** Hunter-Trapper Education instructors.





“PA WILD WOMEN” PROGRAM GOES LIVE

The Game Commission’s Hunter Education and Outreach Division recruited ambassadors and laid the groundwork for its latest R3 initiative — PA Wild Women — during fiscal year 2022-23, before officially launching in July 2023.

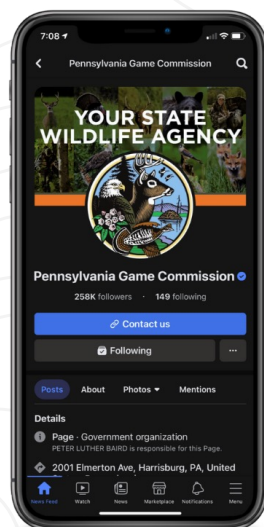
The PA Wild Women Facebook Group is designed to connect outdoorswomen of every experience level and encourage them to participate in hunting, trapping, fishing, hiking, kayaking, and other outdoor recreation activities.

Members receive access to online workshops, weekly tips and tactics, and notifications of in-person events.

INCREASED, MORE LOCALIZED FACEBOOK PRESENCE

In addition to the Game Commission’s official Facebook page, each of its 6 regions — Northwest, Southwest, Northcentral, Southcentral, Northeast, and Southeast, — as well as Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, now have a dedicated Facebook page where followers can get the latest news, stories, and information at a local level.

Search for the pages on Facebook or get the links at www.pgc.pa.gov.



2023 SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWING

FACEBOOK

Number of followers, as of Dec. 12, 2023.

- Pennsylvania Game Commission: 275,663.
- Operation Game Thief: 12,547.
- Pennsylvania National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP): 3,184.
- Northwest Region: 2,703.
- Southwest Region: 1,669.
- Northcentral Region: 2,023.
- Southcentral Region: 3,346.
- Northeast Region: 1,791.
- Southeast Region: 1,119.

INSTAGRAM

@pagamecomm: 41,778.

YOUTUBE

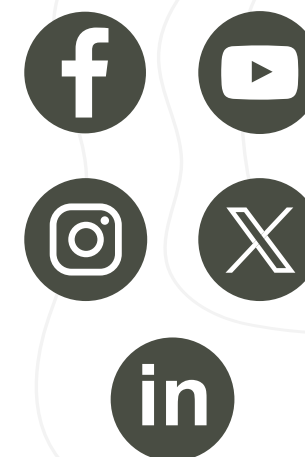
PA Game Commission: 37,400.

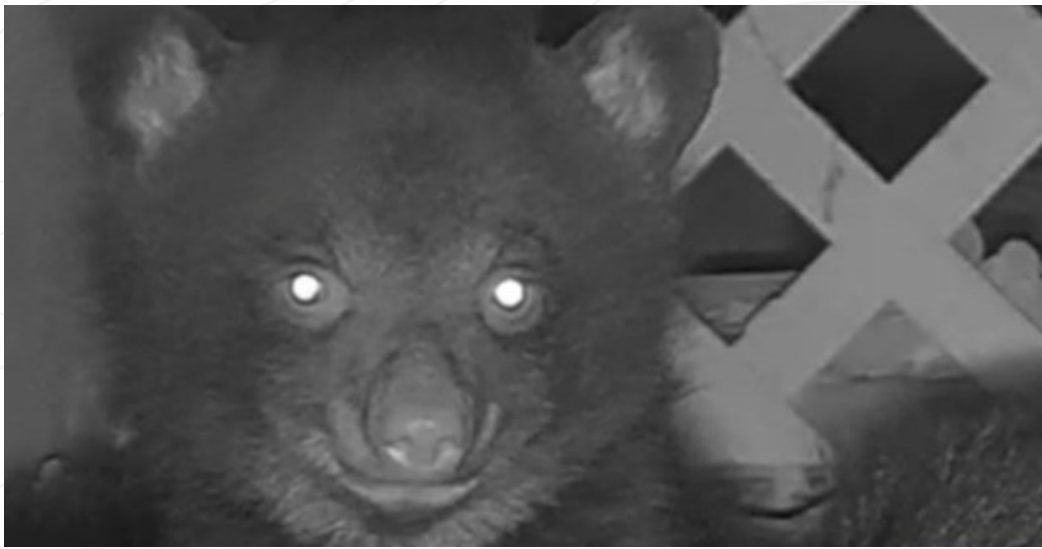
TWITTER

@pagamecomm: 16,800.

LINKEDIN

Pennsylvania Game Commission: 3,555.





WILDLIFE CAMS REACH MILLIONS

The Game Commission offered livestreams for viewers to get an unfiltered look at wildlife in their natural settings. The agency partners with HDonTap to provide the opportunity. All livestreams are available online at www.pgc.pa.gov.

2023 LIVESTREAM NUMBERS:

- **Bear Den: 1.8 Million**
- **Hanover Bald Eagles: 622,000**
- **Farm Country Bald Eagles: 377,000**
- **Elk: 621,000**
- **Middle Creek Snow Goose Migration: 120,000**

PHOTO CONTESTS FOSTER ENGAGEMENT

The Game Commission hosted several photo contests to engage the public and showcase Pennsylvania's plentiful wildlife, diverse habitat, and unique hunting heritage.

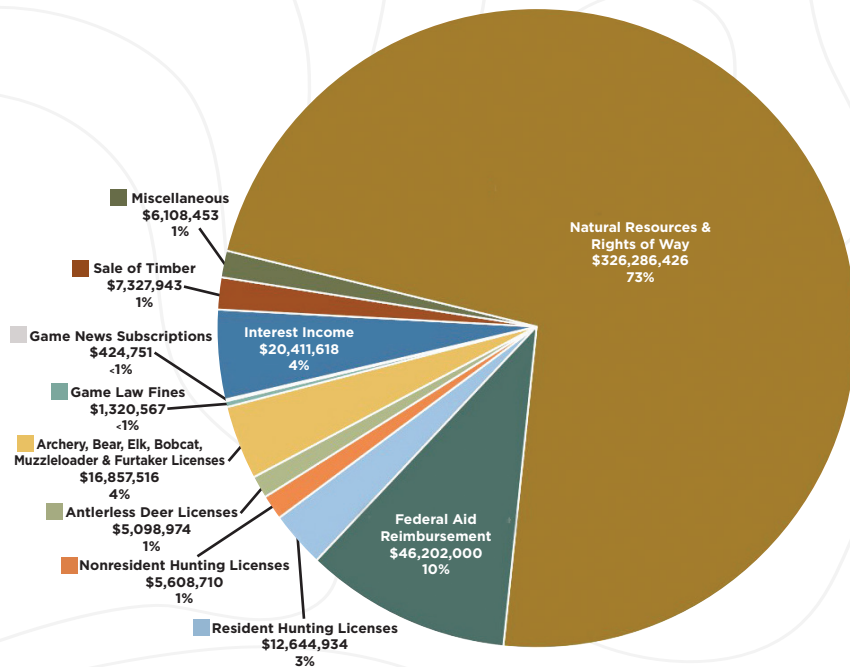
The contests generated hundreds of entries, dozens of finalists, thousands of votes, and three lucky winners who were awarded PGC prize packs.



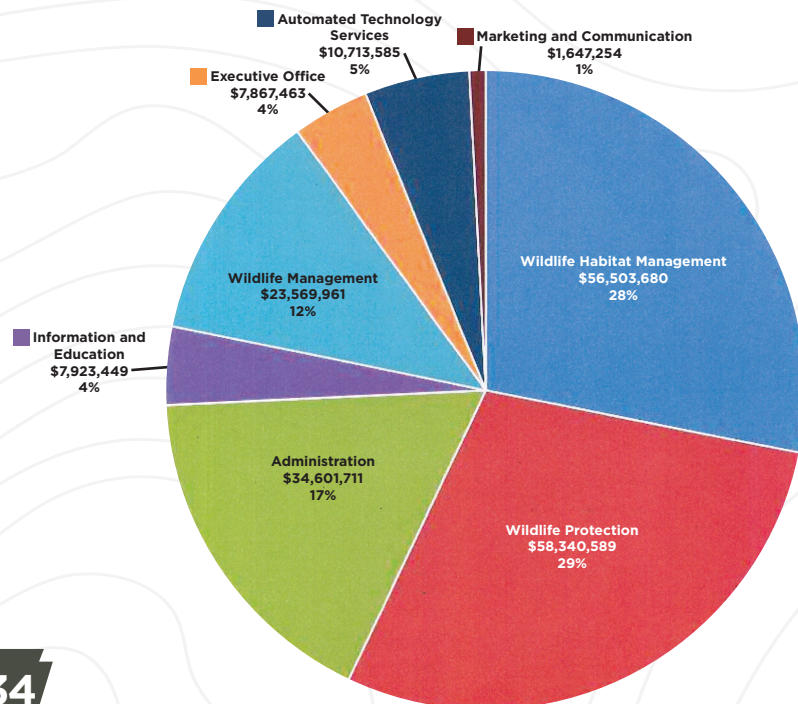
Spring Gobbler Photo Contest Winner: 8-year-old Willow Duff shot her first turkey with her dad and uncle.



GAME FUND | 2022-2023 REVENUE FISCAL YEAR END JUNE 30, 2023



GAME FUND | 2022-2023 EXPENDITURES FISCAL YEAR END JUNE 30, 2023



PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2022 TO JUNE 30, 2023

The accompanying Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance, as well as the Balance Sheet, were prepared using the modified accrual basis of accounting, whereby revenues are reported when they become both measurable and available to finance expenditures of the current period. Expenditures are recognized when the fund liability has been incurred; that is, they will be paid with current financial resources.

Using this method, revenues for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2023, were \$448,291,892. This represents an increase of \$181,759,584 (68.19%) from the prior year's revenues of \$266,532,308.

Revenues from gas and oil lease royalties were \$306,864,414 this year, up \$134,964,955 from the prior year revenue amount of \$171,899,459. The increase correlates with a worldwide increase per unit of energy prices. The increased energy prices have also incentivized the opening of more wells and increased production from existing wells. Revenues from gas and oil lease ground rentals increased \$6,528,466 for the same reason.

Sales of adult nonresident hunting licenses increased this year, up \$32,703 over last year, or 0.62%. Revenue from adult resident hunting licenses fell \$30,963 this year.

Sales from the Federal Duck Stamp (eDuck), which allows residents and nonresidents to hunt migratory waterfowl within Pennsylvania and any other state, were \$871,164 this year, a 5.08% increase from last year's amount of \$829,025.

Total expenditures for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, were \$201,167,692. This represents an increase of \$45,236,878 (29.01%) over the prior year's expenditures of \$155,930,814. There was a \$12,575,808 increase in specialized services expenditures, which is the result of additional wildlife habitat restoration work completed by the agency. Federal Pittman-Robertson revenue increased and is required to be spent within 2 fiscal years. The largest expenditures were for building and maintaining state game lands roads.

Purchases of equipment and machinery were down in the previous year due to global supply chain problems. This resulted in an increase of \$10,387,780 including orders initiated in previous years being fulfilled in this year.

Salaries and wages and state share employee benefits increased \$15,159,563. This increase is due to raises and an increase in staffing by filling open positions.

The Game Fund's Restricted Fund Balance was \$500,262,896 at the fiscal year end on June 30, 2023. This represents an increase of \$247,124,200, or 97.62% from the June 30, 2022, balance of \$253,138,696. The increase is attributable to the increase in revenues from gas and oil lease royalties.

Act 138 of 2002 amended the Game Code sections relating to mandatory spending. The Game Code stipulates that a minimum of \$4.25 from each resident and nonresident license, and a minimum of \$2 from each antlerless deer license issued for which the full fee has been paid, is to be used for habitat improvement, development, maintenance, protection and restoration conducive to increasing natural propagation of game and wildlife on all lands under the control or operations of the Commission, including lands enrolled in the Commission's Hunter Access program and other public lands open to hunting under agreement with the Commission. The monies collected for the above are deposited into a separate account.

The Game Commission reported that during fiscal year 2022-23, the number of resident and nonresident licenses sold totaled 1,472,880, and the number of antlerless deer licenses sold totaled 939,927. This level of sales mandated that a minimum of \$8,139,594 be expended and appropriated into a separate restricted account for the above-mentioned habitat improvement purposes. This year \$9 million was committed in the restricted account, an excess of \$860,406 over the requirement.

During fiscal year 2022-23, \$5,524,867 was transferred from the Miscellaneous Revenue - Other account to the Restricted Revenue account for agency construction projects. This transfer caused the balance of the Miscellaneous Revenue - Other account to be negative \$2,826,801 at year-end. Though revenue moved between the nontax revenue and restricted receipts & revenue categories, overall revenue in the Game Fund remained the same.

GAME FUND STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

REVENUES

Licenses and Fees.....	\$51,085,525
Intergovernmental	46,202,000
Charges for sales and services	328,477,587
Investment income	20,412,075
Miscellaneous revenue	2,083,495
Capital Lease/Installment Purchase	31,210
TOTAL REVENUE	\$448,291,892

EXPENDITURES:

Recreation and cultural enrichment	177,204,534
Capital outlay	23,957,910
Interest	5,248
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	201,167,692

NET CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE	247,124,200
FUND BALANCE JULY 1, 2022	253,138,696
FUND BALANCE JUNE 30, 2023	\$500,262,896

GAME FUND BALANCE SHEET | JUNE 30, 2023

ASSETS

Cash.....	\$1,183,244
Temporary investments	73,320,189
Long-term investments	469,484,648
Accounts receivable.....	443,769
Due from other funds.....	350,797
TOTAL ASSETS	\$544,782,647

LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE

Liabilities:

Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	17,576,873
Securities lending obligations.....	23,686,462
Due to other funds	2,018,831
Due to political subdivisions.....	12,952
Due to other governments.....	99,941
Due to fiduciary funds	331,352
Unearned revenue	793,340
Total Liabilities	44,519,751

Fund Balance:

Restricted Fund Balance-Environmental Protection	500,262,896
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TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE	\$544,782,647
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THIRD-PARTY OBLIGATIONS

The Game Commission is the beneficiary of third-party obligations to mitigate damages or otherwise provide funds for projects or research. In the majority of these instances, the obligation is for land. The IBAT obligations are specifically subject to United States Fish and Wildlife Service control and approval.

OBLIGATION: Balance

IBAT	\$815,000
Rice Poseidon (LOC)	\$510,000
TOTAL \$1,325,000	



EXECUTIVE STAFF

Bryan J. Burhans, *Executive Director*

David Mitchell, *Deputy Executive Director*

Deana Vance, *Deputy Executive Director*

BOARD OF GAME COMMISSIONERS

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