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TENNESSEE OUT-OF-DOORS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE TENNESSEE WILDLIFE FEDERATION
WINTER 2010



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Managing Your Land For Ducks

Tennessee Wildlifers Stand Proud

Creating Favorable Conditions For Fish Growth



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OUT-OF-DOORS
WINTER 2010

The Ripple Effect; Better Pond Maintenance.



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The Tennessee Out-of Doors Magazine is the official publication of the Tennessee Wildlife Federation. Printed materials include natural resource and conservation news, outdoor recreation news and articles on pertinent legislation. All submissions are subject to editing or rewriting. All editorial, advertising and subscription correspondence should be mailed to:

Tennessee Out-Of-Doors
300 Orlando Avenue, Suite 200
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Tom Rice - President

Early last year, in January of 2009 I worked with TWF to establish the largest organized youth waterfowl hunt ever. Over 175 kids hunted on 12 different farms in 19 hunting blinds, all of whom were participants of the SCTP program.

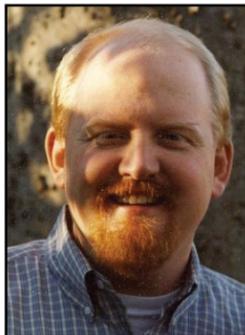
The event was a huge undertaking – but a rewarding one, as we introduced dozens to hunting. Thanks to event sponsors, we were fortunate enough to give a lifetime hunting license and two scholarships at the dinner the night before the hunt to deserving winners.

The Davis P. Rice Memorial Waterfowl Hunt was named in honor of my late son, Davis. Like his brother and me, Davis was an avid hunter and began his passion as soon as his mother and I would let him. He would have been so proud to see what we accomplished at the hunt, and the knowledge that we are introducing others to his lifelong passion of a love for the outdoors.

TWF is working hard to get our today's youngsters into the outdoors. Through the SCTP and GOU programs, we understand our next generation of leaders needs to experience and appreciate the out of doors in order to conserve it. Without this, the work we accomplish today is for naught.

As we begin preparations for our 2010 hunt in February, I encourage you to follow our lead and honor Davis' memory, by taking a young person with you as you head into the woods or onto the water. It doesn't have to be your children: nieces, nephews, grandchildren, your neighbor's kids even. Whether it be fishing, hunting, hiking or biking – we owe it to our planet to get our next generation of kids into the outdoors.

Tom Rice
President



Michael Butler - CEO

A "Right" to Hunt and Fish

Why this effort is one of the most important wildlife and conservation issues of our time.

Hunting, fishing and trapping have long been a part of Tennessee's history, lore and culture. Who

hasn't heard stories of Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett and their exploits across our state? The images are so strong that even to this day they persist with a public and visible force.

Take for example the pioneer dressed college student complete with muzzleloader and coon skin cap roaming the sidelines of Tennessee football games. Or consider the many a political gatherings throughout the spring named "coon supper" or "bird supper" referencing the traditions of hunting raccoons and quail respectively. There are even two hunts given in the name of the highest elected official in the state – the Governors Dove Hunt and Governor's One-Shot Turkey Hunt. And how

many small towns still hold "turkey shoots" as local fundraisers.

Thus, for many, the thought of Tennessee without the pursuits of chasing game or catching fish is foreign, even if they themselves are not active participants in the pursuits.

However, many are concerned about a future which may someday not allow for hunting, fishing or trapping. They point to successful efforts in Europe and Great Britain which have curtailed hunting traditions in the past 10 to 20 years. They despair over the limiting of hunting seasons in California for certain game species. The message they bring to the table is this, "Do not wait until you need a right to hunt and fish in your state. If you wait until you need it, you will already be too late."

In many of these examples, the debates over hunting or fishing have been as much about the differences between rural and urban culture

and values as they have been about hunting and fishing. Simply put, to people close to the land, hunting and fishing are largely an accepted part of life. However, to those with little to no connection to the land, or nature and its realities, these activities are not well understood. It is largely this lack of understanding that creates the fertile ground for efforts to stop hunting and fishing.

What is the Why?

For many, the most visible threat to hunting, fishing and trapping are the images of radical members of PETA, the Humane Association of the United States, the Fund for Animals, or the Coalition to Abolish Sport Hunting campaigning to stop hunting and fishing. Creating a right to hunt and fish is an obvious solution to address these challenges.

For others (from both people whom do and do not hunt, fish or trap) the question of "why does Tennessee need a constitutional amendment which provides for a right to hunt and fish?" is often the first words they have spoken on this topic.

This question is asked from two distinct perspectives; with the first being "Don't we already have a right to hunt and fish?" (hunter/

fisher perspective). The second being "Is it really necessary?" (typically a non-hunter/fisher perspective).

Why Does Tennessee Need a Right to Hunt and Fish in its Constitution?

Currently, Tennesseans do not hold a right to hunt and fish, although the average hunter or fisherman feels they do. In Tennessee, hunting, fishing and trapping are a privilege, not a right. This privilege is granted by the state through its authority as provided in Article 11, Section 13 of the Tennessee Constitution.

Given this reality, the most obvious need for such an amendment is quite simple, it helps Tennesseans preserve an important part of our history and a current set of recreation and wildlife management tools, and places the interests of citizens equal with that of the state. If laws can be created to allow for hunting and fishing, then logic would dictate that laws can be changed to prohibit hunting and fishing, leading to the conclusion that having a right to hunt and fish in the state constitution provides a stronger protection as compared to a simple law.

For example, if ever there was a successful challenge to a hunting or fishing season, manner or means, then the affected constituency (namely sportsmen and women of Tennessee) currently do not have the right to appeal such a case to the Tennessee State Supreme Court. Passage of this "right" will at the very least allow for such an appeal.

However, the importance of preserving the traditions of hunting, fishing and trapping go far beyond the effort to simply protect a particular recreational pursuit.

In Tennessee and across the United States of America, sportsmen and women are still by far the largest financial contributors to the conservation of fish and wildlife and their habitats. Through license sales, federal excise

taxes, sales taxes and other payments, sportsmen and women are the financial fuel that feeds "on the ground" fish and wildlife work.

The system of fish and wildlife management developed in North America is considered to be the single most effective model in the world. This "North American Model" has produced tremendous results in recovering both game and non-game species of wildlife. However, one of the most significant aspects of this model has been that efforts to manage fish and wildlife, while being paid for by sportsmen and women, have dramatically and positively impacted those fish and wildlife which are not hunted or fished.

Thus, to weaken, challenge or attempt to halt fishing, hunting or trapping is to promote a fundamental attack on the North American Model of wildlife management and by association the myriad of benefits it has and continues to provide to both game and non-game species of fish and wildlife. Stated in the affirmative, to support the protection of hunting and fishing through a right to hunt and fish is also supporting the system that helps all fish and wildlife.

What is the task that lies before us?

Amending the constitution of Tennessee is not a simple task. First a joint resolution containing the amendment language must pass both chambers of the general assembly during one session (a two-year period) by a simple majority. Following this passage, and during the next immediate session, the resolution must pass the general assembly by 2/3rds majority vote. Then the language is advertised and subsequently placed on the November ballot as a referendum vote in the year in which a gubernatorial election is taking place. In the general election, the amendment referendum must then receive at least 50% plus one vote of the total number of voters voting in the gubernatorial election to become ratified.

In Tennessee, we are preparing for the 2/3rds majority vote which will quickly be followed by the amendment language referendum vote in November of 2010. We expect final passage of the general assembly in January with no difficulty. But then the real work begins.

In 2010 we will need your help in preparing the public to understand the importance of this amendment and the upcoming November vote.

If you are interested in helping in the campaign or can support it financially, please do not hesitate to contact us at 615.353.1133, ext 1 or e-mail me directly at mabutler@tnwf.org. Together we will be able to pass this very important referendum and ensure that the foundation of fish and wildlife management and conservation in Tennessee are protected long into the future.

Michael Butler
Chief Executive Officer

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YES ✓
For the right to hunt and fish
AMENDMENT

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MANAGING your lands for DUCKS in Tennessee

Matthew J. Gray, Ph.D., University of Tennessee Wetlands Program,
Institute of Agriculture, Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries,

Duck and geese frequently forage in harvested corn fields; however, research at UT found that most waste grain is gone after 2 months post-harvest. Delaying harvest can help preserve grain for waterfowl.
Photo by Matthew J. Gray

Thousands of waterfowl migrate through and winter in Tennessee each year. Most of these birds are produced in Saskatchewan (27%), Manitoba (19%), and Ontario (15%). During their long flight south, waterfowl burn lots of energy, often arriving to Tennessee nutritionally depleted and hungry!

Additional energetically demanding events occur while waterfowl are in Tennessee during winter, including accelerated heat loss on cold days and courtship activities. Waterfowl also need foods that are high in protein, because they replace some of their feathers in winter. Landowners in Tennessee can take an active role in providing food resources that waterfowl need to survive winter and return to their Canadian breeding grounds in good condition for another year of duckling production. Active management of your lands for ducks also can provide hunting opportunities for your family or additional revenue through hunting leases. The progressive landowner provides a combination of agricultural foods and natural wetlands when managing for ducks.

Ducks are seed eaters and readily consume agricultural grains. However, not all grains are nutritionally equivalent for ducks. Among the common crops, corn, rice and grain sorghum (milo) are nutritionally superior to soybeans.

Yields in unharvested fields and waste grain that is left behind by combines in harvested fields also differ among crop types. Research performed by the UT Wetlands Program indicates that average yields in unharvested corn and grain sorghum fields are 7300 and 2000 lbs per acre, respectively. These yields equate to having the ability to energetically sustain about 460 and 120 ducks per acre per day for 90 days during winter. Grain on the ground following harvest in corn, grain sorghum, and soybean fields was 270, 500, and 100 lbs per acre, which equates to the potential of sustaining 3, 6, and 1 duck per harvested acre per day for 90 days. Grain in harvested fields disappears rapidly due to germination, decomposition and consumption by wildlife other than waterfowl. Research at UT revealed that most waste grain is gone within 2 months post-harvest. Therefore, the best way to provide agricultural food for ducks and attract them to your land for hunting is leaving unharvested crops.

Ducks rarely land in unharvested fields that are not flooded; therefore, the capability to flood is necessary. Programs, such as the Tennessee Partners Project (contact: Tim Willis, 731-668-0700, twillis@ducks.org), will provide landowners financial and technical assistance to build levees and install water control structures on your land. Most often, strips of unharvested crops are left for waterfowl at the lower contours of a production agriculture field, where flooding is most feasible. It is recommended that fields are flooded from mid-November through February, during the period when



Scores of ducks respond to natural seeds and invertebrates found in shallowly flooded moist-soil wetlands.

Photo by Matt Kaminski (Ducks Unlimited).

waterfowl numbers are greatest in Tennessee. Ducks cannot survive on agricultural grains alone; therefore, the proactive landowner also manages for native wetland plants (often called moist-soil plants). Seed from moist-soil plants contain essential minerals and nutrients that are absent in agricultural grains. Also, when moist-soil plants are flooded, aquatic insects that are high in protein flourish, which ducks readily consume. Most often, a strip of moist-soil plants is managed at the lowest end of a field directly below a strip of unharvested crops that are left for waterfowl. At a minimum, a 30-ft wide strip of moist soil plants is recommended, with 30-60 ft of unharvested crops located directly above it. Additionally, landowners may promote growth of moist-soil plants within unharvested crops by increasing width between planted rows to 3 ft and limiting use of herbicide after crops are 12 inches in height. When this practice is performed in corn fields, waterfowl biologists call it “dirty corn.”

Management of moist-soil plants is simple given that seeds typically are naturally found in the soil. Management includes a combination of flooding, drawing down water, and periodic disking. When impounded water is lowered in late winter for preparation of annual field planting, it is recommended that at least 1 ft of water is left over the designated moist-soil zone. If water has not evaporated by the end of June, the remaining water should be drawn off. Moist-soil plants (e.g., barnyard grass, flat sedge and smartweed) will naturally germinate and establish during the remainder of the growing season. Natural germination can be supplemented by broadcasting seed from agricultural varieties of wetland plants (e.g., Japanese or pearl

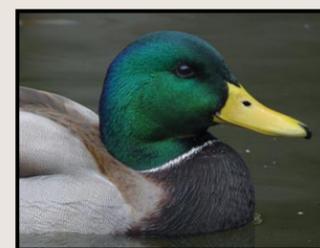
millet) following drawdown. Every three years, the moist-soil zone should be disked (2-3 passes) following drawdown to prevent trees, such as willows, from establishing. By providing a combination of agricultural grains and native moist-soil plants, landowners will provide a well-balanced diet for ducks, and be guaranteed to attract the greatest number of birds!

If hunting occurs on your land, it is recommended that at least 3 days per week are designated as no-hunting. This will ensure that ducks have periods that are free of disturbance, and continue to use your land. Another strategy is not allowing hunting on parts of your land. It is recommended that one-quarter to one-third of your property is designated as a refuge if waterfowl hunting occurs greater than 4 days per week. According to federal law, hunting is allowed over standing crops or fields that are harvested with a combine. Hunting cannot occur over agricultural crops that are bush-hogged or knocked down, which constitutes baiting. Hunting over naturally germinated moist-soil plants that are subsequently mowed to create openings for ducks to land following flooding is permitted.

For more information or management guidance on your land, contact:

Dr. Matthew J. Gray

University of Tennessee - Wetlands Program
865-974-2740 • mgray11@utk.edu
<http://fwf.ag.utk.edu/personnel/mgray.htm>



2009 Waterfowl Survey Indicates Increase in Duck Population

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the preliminary estimate of total ducks from the 2009 Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat

Survey was 42 million, which is 13 percent greater than last year's estimate and 25 percent greater than the 1955-2008 average.

The Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey samples more than two million square miles of waterfowl habitat across the north-central and northeastern United States, south-central, eastern, and northern Canada, and Alaska. The survey estimates the number of ducks on the continent's primary nesting grounds.

Overall, habitat conditions for breeding waterfowl in 2009 were better than conditions in 2008. The total pond estimate (Prairie

Canada and United States combined) was 6.4 million. This was 45 percent above last year's estimate of 4.4 million ponds and 31 percent above the long-term average of 4.9 million ponds.

The annual survey guides the Service's waterfowl conservation programs under authority of the 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The Service works in partnership with state biologists from the four flyways – the Atlantic, Mississippi, Central and Pacific – to establish regulatory frameworks for waterfowl hunting season lengths, dates, and bag limits.

The entire Trends in Duck Breeding Populations, 1955-2009 report can be downloaded from the Service's Web site at: <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/>.



A Crowning Achievement

Tennessee Wildlifers Stand Proud *by Richard Simms*

It is an awe-inspiring, and somewhat humbling thing to have born witness to perhaps the greatest conservation achievement in Tennessee's history... or at the very least, in my history ... the return of a huntable population of elk to the great state of Tennessee.

Allow me to explain. I made the decision I wanted to work in conservation in 1968. I was 14 years old. I have been "professionally" involved with Tennessee conservation efforts since my first year of college in 1972. After I graduated, and for eight years I was paid by the hunting & fishing license buyers in the great State of Tennessee to protect and

enhance it's wildlife resources. For personal reasons, my career direction changed in 1984 and I left TWRA... but my heart never left the wildlife. I have been an outdoor freelance journalist since then, specifically so I could remain involved with the conservation effort.

In those many decades I have helped document the restoration of whitetail deer to parts of Tennessee never touched by a hoof before.

I have trapped and released wild turkeys that have since, at least in some places, become as prolific as starlings or crows.

The same is true of Canada geese.

I have ridden across the waters of the Chesapeake Bay photographing the capture of young osprey to restore the magnificent "fish eagle" to the waterways of Tennessee.

I have sat high atop cypress trees to photograph the very first wing beats of young bald eagles that helped return that incredible symbol of our nation from the brink of extinction.

I have watched the first tenuous steps of river otters, brought from Louisiana to Tennessee waters.

I have seen beavers go from a rare and almost unheard of wildlife oddity, to a nuisance.

As a youngster the sight of a great blue heron was the Holy Grail of birding. Now fishermen must take care to avoid them with their fishing lines.

We are likely on track for a record bear harvest in Tennessee this year.

The list of Tennessee wildlife success stories goes on and on. Not to belittle the momentous events that occurred before my time, but I am old enough to have been around for many of our greatest wildlife accomplishments. I am fortunate enough to have actually witnessed many of them first-hand with pen or camera in-hand, including the heart-racing, hoof-pounding and tumultuous release of elk into the mountains of the North Cumberland Plateau.

But in my humble opinion, Monday's final culmination of that effort... when Tennessee hunters legally harvested the first elk in a fair-chase scenario... was the crowning achievement of wildlife success stories in the State of Tennessee.

I spent the day in the North Cumberland WMA on an adrenalin-high that still hasn't worn off two days later. It was clear that I was not alone. The list of onlookers to the first elk killed in Tennessee read like a laundry list of Who's Who among wildlife and conservation professionals. There were only five hunters... but hundreds of people drove hundreds of miles just so they could be a small part of the remarkable event.

Millions of people who don't have "wildlife" coursing through their veins wonder, "What's the big deal?" Perhaps they are interested, or amused, to read the press about Tennessee's first elk kills in modern-day history. Perhaps they might even be one of the folks who visit Hatfield Knob... the elk sanctuary, designed and set aside specifically for wildlife watchers... to view elk in their natural Tennessee habitat. But still, their interest is often fleeting and will wax or wane based upon the temperature and wind chill factor.

But there are some... sportsmen, biologists, wildlife officers, private conservationists and others who care most deeply. These are the ones who will understand what a giant leap we have made. They will step out on Hatfield Knob, or anywhere else in the 145,000 acre North Cumberland WMA on a frosty October day and listen. If they listen long enough it is likely they will hear the quaking, but rising roar of a bull elk bugle. A massive 800-pound brute announcing to all the world that on this mountaintop, HE is the King of the Tennessee Beasts.

Those who listen and really know how to "hear" will smile. And perhaps like me, they will tremble a bit as a chill



TWF Partners with NGO's to Host "Elk Camp"

In an effort to provide the five elk hunt permit holders with the hunt of a lifetime, the Tennessee Wildlife Federation (TWF) partnered with several non-governmental organizations (NGO's) to host an "Elk Camp." The camp provided authentic western style tents for hunter and guide lodging, along with meals each day. The camp kicked off with a dinner for more than 200 hunters, guests, volunteers and government officials.

TWF Board Member Terry Lewis coordinated and hosted the Elk Camp. Mr. Lewis, also a member of the Campbell Outdoors Recreation Association (CORA), has been a long time volunteer and supporter of the elk program. In 2005, he partnered with TWRA to build the Hatfield Knob elk viewing tower which is now host to over 17,000 visitors a year.

The partnership sponsoring the camp consisted of CORA, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF), the Chattanooga Area Chapter of the Safari Club International (SCI), the Tennessee Wildlife Federation and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Foundation (TWRP). All groups have been staunch supporters of Tennessee's elk reintroduction program since its inception.

runs up their spine. Not because of the cold but because they understand, and have witnessed, the call of the wild. They will stand and remain stock still, no matter what the temperature or wind chill, and listen more.

Those are the people who understand that this day, this week, will be one of the greatest chapters ever written in a very special book of Tennessee's rich wildlife legacy.

And they will stand proud, as do these magnificent animals.

This article originally appeared in the October 21, 2009 edition of the Chattanooga.com. Richard Simms a freelance outdoor journalist providing material for Chattanooga newspapers and a wide variety of other outdoor publications. He also operates Scenic City Fishing Charters, Inc. in Chattanooga.

Backyard Habitat

By David Lukas



Though feeding wild birds is one of the nation's most popular hobbies, few studies have been conducted on avian nutritional needs; here are some of the most recent findings

AS THE WEATHER TURNS cooler, it's time for backyard birders to start cleaning out feeders and stocking up on supplies for winter feeding. Trying to decide which bird seed to buy? Surprisingly, the answer is not clear-cut. Despite our enthusiasm for backyard feeding—more than 50 million people feed wild birds in the United States alone—very little science has gone into understanding the nutritional needs of wild birds or even which seeds they like to eat.

According to David Horn, associate professor of ecology at Millikin University and a leading expert on the subject, "wild bird feeding is one of our most understudied wildlife management issues." To promote smarter decisions about bird seeds and how to feed wild birds, he recently established the National Bird-Feeding Society (www.birdfeeding.org). Many of the group's recommendations will be based on Project Wildbird, a 2005–2008 study led by Horn in which several thousand volunteers contributed observations from their backyard feeders. Among the study's results are that black oil sunflower, white proso millet, nyjer (thistle) seed and sunflower chips are the most highly sought after seeds for reasons that are only now being researched (see www.projectwildbird.org).

To stay healthy, birds must consume a mix of fats, proteins, carbohydrates and various vitamins and minerals to fuel a metabolism that can require up to a whopping 10,000 calories a day (equivalent to a human consuming 155,000 calories). A bird's inner furnace burns especially hot during flight and the breeding season and on the coldest days, which means the animals must make highly efficient choices about what they eat.

A backyard feeder is an especially efficient place to forage because it mimics what scientists call a "resource patch," a cluster of food much like a fruit-laden apple tree. But although a feeder offers an abundance of food, evolutionary pressures encourage birds to continuously sample a wide variety of foods because any bird that becomes dependent on a single patch or type of food will perish if it runs out.

This means you don't have to worry that birds will become overly dependent on your feeder. Indeed, in a classic study of black-capped chickadees, ecologist Margaret Clark Brittingham of the University of Wisconsin found that even when they have access to unlimited feeder food, these voracious seedeaters obtain 79 percent of their daily energy needs from a variety of wild sources. Birds are remarkably proficient at assessing potential food items for nutritional content and quality. If you watch your feeder closely, you may observe the animals lightly rattling individual seeds in their bills to weigh and taste them before deciding whether to drop them to the ground or eat them. Low-quality foods are discarded and a consistently low-quality food patch may be avoided for a while—a behavior called "neophobia" that explains why birds learn to avoid your feeder if you put out old, moldy or inedible seeds.

At the University of California–Davis, animal nutrition expert Kirk Klasing is studying how birds taste and assess the nutritional profiles of foods. He recently discovered that the animals "mostly taste umami," referring to the Japanese term for one of the five basic tastes, in this case a taste for protein. This benefits birds, says Klasing, because seeds high in protein are nearly always high in fat, and fat provides the energy boost that gets a bird through cold winter nights or the energetically demanding needs of flight. It's possible that birds may taste the fat content of seeds as well.



Project Wildbird also found that favored seeds tend to be high in protein and fat. In addition, studies have revealed that birds choose seeds that are easily handled and digested (like millet), emphasizing that for birds, eating is not only about nutrition but about consuming a lot of food very quickly while avoiding predators. Research has shown that given a choice between high-quality, cumbersome seeds or low-quality, easily handled seeds, birds consistently choose the latter.

Whichever seeds you buy, a growing body of evidence shows that backyard feeding helps wild birds—the animals' growth rates, survival rates, breeding success and clutch sizes all improve markedly when they have access to feeders. Putting out high-quality seeds, bought as fresh as possible and stored in a dry clean place, seems to offer seed-eating birds the best of all worlds: highly nutritious food that is also easily processed. And in the depths of winter, when a bird's food needs may increase up to 20-fold, that is nothing to turn your beak up at.

California naturalist David Lukas wrote about junco sex appeal in the February/March 2009 issue of "National Wildlife" magazine.

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Learn More About Bird Feeding



NWF's Certified Wildlife Habitat™ program provides homeowners with all the information they need to create quality outdoor spaces for birds and other wildlife using native plants as well as feeders.

To learn how you can receive certification and attract wild creatures to your property, visit www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife.

Check out the new TWRA Watchable Wildlife website at www.tnwatchablewildlife.org



Since 1946

Our Mission Statement:

To champion the conservation, sound management and enjoyment of Tennessee's wildlife and natural resources for current and future generations through stewardship, advocacy and education.

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Your support of the Tennessee Wildlife Federation is vitally important to our programs. Without your financial assistance programs like Great Outdoors University and Hunters for the Hungry would cease. We are working for you to ensure the future of wildlife conservation in Tennessee is protected.

Yes, I would like to support the future of Tennessee's land, water and wildlife by making a gift to the Tennessee Wildlife Federation in the amount of:

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Pond Chemistry: pH, Alkalinity and Lime

by Jeff Slipke, Ph.D., *Chief Biologist and Manager,
Southeastern Pond Management*



The need for lime is easily determined by an alkalinity test.



Crushed agricultural lime is typically the best material for increasing the alkalinity of a pond.

The practice of applying agricultural limestone to neutralize acidity and raise pH in soils is widely accepted as an effective means to enhance productivity in crop fields and wildlife food plots throughout the southeastern United States. Similarly, many fish ponds in this region require regular applications of agricultural limestone in order to increase total alkalinity and create conditions favorable for fertilization and maximum fish growth. Properly limed and fertilized ponds produce more, healthier and better conditioned fish than ponds which are not.

Total alkalinity is a measure of carbonate and bicarbonate ions in the water. The higher the alkalinity, the greater the buffering capacity of the water; or stated another way, the greater the ability of the water to neutralize acid and resist changes in pH. The pH is a measure of the acidity of the water and is measured on an inverse logarithmic scale, meaning that a change in pH from 7 to 6 indicates a ten-fold increase in acidity. A pH of 7 is considered neutral. Values lower than 7 are acidic, while values higher than 7 are considered basic or alkaline. Fish grow best in water ranging between 6.5 and 9 pH. Anything outside this range will negatively impact fish growth.

The affects alkalinity has on fish production and growth can be classified into two general categories: nutritive and physiological. Nutritive affects are those that impact fish production via the food chain; from the productivity of the water itself on up through to the phytoplankton, zooplankton, insects and ultimately the fish. Physiological affects are those that impact fish growth not by what or how much they eat, but rather by how fish utilize what they eat and how well they can maximize their growth potential.

Nutritive:

The limiting nutrient in most freshwater systems is phosphorus. Therefore, phosphorus must be added on a regular basis to maximize production. However, the phosphorus in fertilizer is relatively insoluble when the pH is too low, rendering fertilization ineffective. Raising the alkalinity above 20 parts-per-million (ppm), increases pH and makes phosphorus more readily available for the growth of phytoplankton, the base of the food chain in ponds. Second, higher alkalinity is associated with a higher availability of carbon, which also aids in the production of phytoplankton. Third, higher alkalinity is more favorable for the production and growth of zooplankton and aquatic insects which occupy the transitional level on the food chain between phytoplankton and fish.

Physiological:

In low alkalinity waters, pH can fluctuate widely on a daily basis. These fluctuations are stressful to fish and exact a certain amount of energy on the part of the fish in order to adjust; energy that would otherwise be used for growth. Conversely, when alkalinity is high, pH tends to stabilize and fish are not stressed. Fish living in low pH water are also more prone to disease, parasites and bacteria; all of which lead to reduced fitness and slower growth.

The acidity or alkalinity of a pond's water is largely determined by the soils; those upon which the pond is constructed or the soils that comprise the majority of a pond's watershed. Most ponds in middle Tennessee typically have naturally high alkalinity levels due to the abundance of limestone. Conversely, most ponds in east and west Tennessee are on the acidic range of the pH scale, and therefore, require the addition of agricultural limestone. However, there are many exceptions to this general trend. The best way to determine whether or not a pond needs lime is to test the water.



Specialized liming barges are the most efficient way to apply lime to existing ponds.



Lime should be applied to achieve a uniform and complete distribution over the entire pond.

The need for lime may be determined by water analyses of total alkalinity and/or total hardness. These tests are quick and easy, producing results within a minute or two. Total alkalinity is perhaps the most reliable indicator of the need to add lime. Research has shown that a total alkalinity concentration of at least 20ppm is necessary for effective fertilization. However, research also suggests that even higher alkalinities in the range of 50 to 100ppm are correlated to increased fish production and growth due to the reason stated above.

There are a number of suitable liming materials which may be more or less available depending on your geographic region. The most common materials which are suitable for liming fish ponds are calcium carbonate (agricultural lime) and calcium magnesium carbonate (dolomitic lime). Ground sea shells, flue dust, and wood ashes can be used in areas where more traditional materials are not available. Materials which should be avoided unless specifically required, include calcium oxide, sometimes called quick lime and calcium hydroxide, also referred to as slaked lime or hydrated lime. These materials raise pH quickly to levels that are highly toxic to fish. Generally speaking, regular agricultural or dolomitic lime provides the best option in terms of cost, effectiveness, and longevity.

There exists no magic formula to determine the amount of lime required to increase and maintain total alkalinity within the desirable range. Experience suggests that many ponds in the southeast will benefit from liming rates of 3-5 tons per acre. However, other ponds might benefit more by applying 1-2 tons per acre, per year in order to maintain conditions favorable for fertilization. Several factors, including the type and composition of the liming material as well as the amount of water flow-through, determine specific lime requirements. In any case, ponds will not be adversely affected by applying lime at high rates. To a large extent, the more you apply, the longer it lasts. Given the fact that the application of bulk lime to ponds is labor intensive and creates somewhat of a mess, liming at the higher prescribed rate is advisable. Again, experience suggests that liming at rates of 3-5 tons per acre lasts an average of 3-5 years.

Lime should be applied to existing ponds in the late fall or winter, after fertilization has ceased for the year. The application of lime during the growing and fertilizing season (March - October) may interfere with fertilizing efforts. However, in cases where lime is badly needed, fertilizer may be largely ineffective. In such cases, lime may be applied at any time of the year. New ponds may be limed prior

to filling with water. The required amount of lime should be evenly spread over the entire pond bottom; a disc harrow may be utilized to incorporate the liming material into the soil.

The method of lime application is critically important to the effectiveness and longevity of the liming effort. Recommended liming materials such as agricultural and dolomitic lime do not readily dissolve in water; rather they sink to the bottom where they react with the pond's bottom mud. This reaction at the bottom of the pond is a slow one; in fact, it may take several years, depending on application rate, for all of the material to react. Coupled with the fact that the majority of the liming material sinks to the bottom immediately after it is applied, these factors suggest that proper application of lime involves uniform distribution of the material over the entire surface of a pond. This is best accomplished using a specialized boat called a liming barge. Bulk lime is loaded directly onto the front platform of the barge; it is then washed from the platform with water from a trash pump as the boat is slowly driven across the pond. In this way, uniform distribution of lime may be accomplished.

As traditional liming season approaches, consider that one of the important keys to a healthy and productive sport fish pond is liming. Given the wide range of benefits attributable to sufficient alkalinity, a lime application may be one of the best investments you can make in your pond. Southeastern Pond Management offers a complete and comprehensive liming service. Additionally, we'll be glad to perform a simple water test to determine the alkalinity of your pond on site or from a water sample sent to our office.



For more information or for a consultation on professional pond management, please contact:

Jeff Slipke, Ph.D., *Chief Biologist and Manager*
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Editors Note: This article originally appeared in the fall 2009 issue of the Hunter & Shooting Sports Education Journal. Though written for hunter education instructors, we felt the facts included here were important to pass on. Reprinted with the permission of the National Shooting Sports Foundation.

NSSSF Notes

By Ted Novin, *Director, Public Affairs*, and Glenn Sapir, *Director, Editorial Services, National Shooting Sports Foundation*

Feed Students the Truth History and a Federal Study Dispel Allegations Regarding Lead in Venison

You've been teaching proper field-dressing techniques to your students, maybe even telling them about butchering and preparing their game. After all, the satisfaction of eating what you've harvested is a tremendous allure of hunting, and having anyone try to suggest that eating venison is unhealthy might really throw some water on the spark that has motivated many students to become hunters.

So, when a North Dakota dermatologist, with ties to the Peregrine Fund

©iStockphoto.com/Victor Malle



Facts About Traditional Ammunition:

- Consuming game harvested with traditional ammunition has never been shown to pose a health risk to anyone.
- The Iowa Department of Health has been testing blood lead levels in children since the early 1990s and has never seen a case of lead poisoning attributable to ammunition.
- Participants in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study of blood-lead levels in hunters had lead levels lower than the national average and well below the level the CDC considers to be of concern.
- Children who ate game in the CDC study had lead levels that were less than half the national average and far below the level the CDC considers to be of concern.
- The CDC study showed a statistically insignificant difference between participants who ate game harvested using traditional hunting ammunition and the non-game-eaters in the control group.

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—an organization dedicated to eliminating the use of lead ammunition for hunting—claimed to have collected lead fragments from food banks, the larger outdoor community knew something was amiss. A long history of eating venison, in many cases with the blessings of doctors who recognized its lean, high-protein composition, made clear one of the true benefits derived from hunting.

But just as hunters started questioning the legitimacy of this dermatologist's study, state health officials, out of fear and an overabundance of caution, ordered all food banks to discard their venison. This move, which took high-protein, low-fat, organic food out of the mouths of the needy, was based on nothing more than the word of a compromised "study" by an individual who readily admits to serving on the board of an association seeking to ban traditional ammunition with lead components.

Naturally, many hunters are going to be concerned about any claim that brings into question the health of game harvested with traditional ammunition, even when the allegation is unscientific and unwarranted. Given this, it is imperative that hunter education instructors educate themselves on this issue.

The best place to start is a study conducted by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on blood lead levels of hunters and others who eat game in North Dakota.

The CDC study completely validates what hunters have always known: That consuming game harvested with traditional ammunition poses no human health risk.

In looking at the CDC study

results, the average lead level of the people tested was lower than that of the average American. In other words, if you were to randomly pick someone on the street to test, chances are they would have a higher blood lead level than those in the CDC study.

Also of note, the lead levels of children under age 6 who ate game—those who the Minnesota Department of Health deem "the most at risk"—had a mean of just 0.88 micrograms per deciliter of blood. That's less than 1 part per billion and less than half the national average. Children over 6 had even lower lead levels. The CDC's level of concern for lead in children is 10 micrograms per deciliter of blood.

Let's be clear: The only health risk concerning traditional ammunition is high-protein food being taken out of the mouths of the hungry.

For more than a century, hundreds of millions of Americans have safely consumed game harvested using traditional hunting ammunition, and despite there being no scientific evidence that consuming the game is endangering the health of individuals, special interest groups like the Peregrine Fund and anti-hunting groups are continuing to press for a ban on this common, safe and effective ammunition.

These politically driven groups understand that while an outright ban on hunting would be nearly impossible to achieve, dismantling the culture of hunting one step at a time is a realistic goal. Banning traditional ammunition is the first step of this larger political mission.

Anti-hunting groups and health zealots are insisting, contrary to science, history and basic physiology, that any amount of lead exposure, no matter how minimal, is a "concern." These entities are already working with state legislators and regulatory bodies to ban traditional ammunition.

As influential members of the hunting community, hunter education instructors have a key role to play. The CDC results concerning the safety of traditional ammunition are conclusive. It is imperative this information be spread. Will you help? **IHEA**



TWF's Tennessee Scholastic Clay Target Program Has Stellar Year

Tennessee's Scholastic Clay Target Program continues to grow exponentially while leading by skill and example, evidenced by a stellar year of national and state competition.

Breaking through over 1500 national competitors, 352 Tennessee athletes competed at the July Nationals in Sparta, Illinois. Tennessee teams brought home their sixth win in five years, with the Hoodlum Alley Clay Busters of Bedford County shooting an impressive two day total of 863/1000, winning the Rookie Division for their first National Championship.

In trap, Blake Triplett of Puryear and Linly McClain of McKenzie were the only two competitors to shoot perfect individual scores of 200. TNSCTP later presented the Jeanette C. Rudy Cup to these outstanding athletes for their best overall performance.

In the skeet competition at Nationals, TNSCTP teams also earned one second and two third place finishes, as well as a second place award in the High School-High Overall division.

Earlier in the summer, 1,106 athletes competed in the 2009 TNSCTP State Championships and 130 athletes competed at the 2009 TN Junior Olympic State Shotgun Championships. Five graduating seniors from the

program received higher education scholarship awards totaling \$5500, and 10 additional scholarships were awarded for \$500 each.

Other news:

- Over 10 new teams are looking to compete in the upcoming season.
- TNSCTP.org is being redesigned to create a more user-friendly experience for coaches and athletes.
- Two coach training sessions will train and certify 40-50 new coaches in early 2010.

For more information, visit www.tnsctp.org or contact **Matt Simcox at 615.353.1133.**

Check out TNSCTP's new online registration software for coaches and athletes (www.tnsctp.org). Event registration & squad building are both component in the new system.

The Tennessee Wildlife Federation, in partnership with RIO Ammunition, is now a distributor for shotgun ammunition, offering quality shotgun shells at affordable prices. This exclusive pricing is limited to TNSCTP teams and is available only to registered athletes.

Orders will be accepted periodically throughout 2010 through scheduled order dates. For more information, subscribe to TNSCTP's online newsletter to stay up to date.

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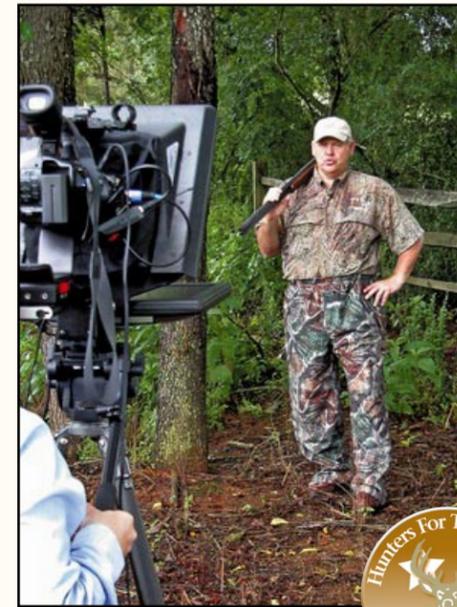
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Hunters for the Hungry Has Successful 2009/2010 Season



Coach Philip Fulmer filming a PSA for the Hunters for the Hungry program. See the spot on our website at www.tnwf.org.



The Hunters for the Hungry program is in full swing for the 2009/2010 hunting season, with 69 processors in 54 counties now participating in the program. That is six more processors over last year.

Twenty of those counties have funding to accept deer for free processing. TWF keeps a list of funds available for processing on our website at www.tnwf.org. The list is updated weekly. Processors who have not been adopted typically offer discounts on donated deer to the hunter. Check with your local processor for details.

New this year, Former UT coach and football legend, Philip Fulmer, has lent his voice in support of the program; filming

several PSA's to encourage hunters to donate to the program. Airing on radio and television spots around the state, Fulmer's support will help us reach our goal to receive 75,000 pounds of venison this season, resulting in 300,000 meals.

We encourage you to donate a deer, a pound or two of your own harvest, or funds to the Hunters for the Hungry program. With the state of our economy, and one in six people in Tennessee going to bed hungry each day, our work has never been more important. For some soup kitchens, venison donated through this program is the only meat source for the year – meaning every pound received makes a difference.



Madison County Chapter of TWF Raises Money for Hunters for the Hungry

The Madison County chapter of the Tennessee Wildlife Federation (TWF) hosted the first annual Madison County Sporting Clays Challenge over the summer in an effort to raise funds for the Hunters for the Hungry Program. The event sold-out quickly and raised over \$12,000 to provide venison to hungry families in Madison County.

"We are very excited about the response to this event, as it should go a long way towards fighting hunger in Madison County," said Trey Teague, chapter president and former NFL star. Sponsors for the event included Promatic Trap Machines, Gamaliel Shooting Supply, the Great Outdoor Store, Southern Concrete Products, Central Distributors/Budweiser, Tripp Tucker/Edward Jones, Signs First and Mossy Oak.

Money raised at the sporting clays challenge is providing funds to participating meat processors in Madison County to process deer into

venison. "Having quality deer processors like Latham's Meats and Three Way Deer Processing makes the program even stronger", added Teague. "We couldn't do it without them." The venison is distributed to hungry individuals, families, and other non-profit agencies in the local community. 10,000 pounds of meat is needed this year alone to meet the needs of Madison County's hunger relief effort.

The Madison County TWF chapter has partnered with Regional Inter-Faith Association (RIFA) and the Salvation Army to distribute the donated meat. These ministries are the frontline on combating hunger and collaborating with them makes the program more effective in helping those in need. For more information about RIFA or The Salvation Army, please visit their websites at www.rifarifa.org or www.salvationarmyusa.org.



Photos from the August 2009 Event



Great Outdoors University Expands

The past year has seen growth barely imaginable for TWF's Great Outdoors University (GOU) program.

With programming now up and running in Nashville, and the addition of two new full time staffers, what was once a dream on paper is now a full agenda.

Expanding from Memphis, GOU Nashville has been up and running since April and has already provided 13 days in the field. Trips have included 10 day trips, one weekend trip and one canoe training day. That means 250 outdoor experiences for children and adults of our partner organizations.

GOU Nashville has partnered with five youth organizations so far: BSA Scoutreach of Middle Tennessee, Oasis Center, PEN Pals, Youth Encouragement Services and Youth Villages. For 2010, the program is planning on adding several more partners, including Big Brothers Big Sisters of Middle Tennessee.

In addition to program partners, GOU Nashville has contracted with 12 instructors to provide services on trips. Training for them was provided at a staff meeting and training session at Warner Parks in September. TWF has also met with university societies, including Vanderbilt's Wilderness Skills society and Tennessee Tech University to recruit volunteers for 2010 trips.

Anna Ransler was hired to be the Program Coordinator for the Nashville program. Anna became familiar with GOU and its mission during the summer of 2008 when she interned for TWF and wrote grants for the program. She is a graduate of the University of the South (Sewanee) and previously worked for the Tennessee House of Representatives and clerked for the Environment and Conservation Committee, Higher Education Subcommittee, and Wildlife Subcommittee.

In Memphis, where the program began in 2006, TWF has brought on Kate Friedman to serve as the GOU Memphis program coordinator. An environmental educator for more than 18 years, Kate's experience and enthusiasm for getting kids outdoors has helped the program achieve record capacity for 2009.

GOU Memphis had 54 days in the field in 2009 and has provided partner organizations with outdoor experiences that included 107 bus loads of attendees for Saturday day trips, week-long day camp trips, weekend overnight camping trips and family experience days. A whopping 2,406 experiences for children and adults in the great outdoors was provided in Memphis last year.

The Memphis program also received a prestigious Plough Foundation grant. The Plough Foundation was established in 1960 by Memphian Abe Plough and funds only Memphis and Shelby County programs. The grant will provide \$90,000 over two years to help sustain GOU-Memphis, as well as to expand trips and activities with one of GOU's main partner organizations, the Boy Scouts of America's ScoutReach program.

Contract staff in Memphis now includes 15 naturalists, as well as student volunteers from the Wildlife Society of the University of Tennessee at Martin. Additionally, there are six volunteers from the Brownsville area who assist with fishing trips. In 2009 the program provided four opportunities for staff training including a gathering at Winchester Farms in October for a day of sharing ideas and peer mentoring.

"We are thrilled by the growth this program has experienced over the past three years but we are not content to see it end here," said Martha Lyle Ford, TWF's Educational Programs Director. "Taking the Memphis model and successfully expanding it to Nashville sets the groundwork for growing the program to Chattanooga, Knoxville and beyond."



Photo: Thy Senser (National Wildlife Federation)

When Words Become ENDANGERED

By Anne Keisman

The removal of numerous nature terms from a revised edition of a prominent children's dictionary spurs a debate about language and learning in a high-tech age.

NOTED WASHINGTON NATURALIST Robert Pyle once asked, "What is the extinction of a condor to a child who has never seen a wren?" In other words, if children can't recognize the common wildlife in their neighborhoods, why would they care about endangered animals that live miles away?

Ironically, the word "wren" was removed not long ago from the Oxford Junior Dictionary. In fact, the newest edition of this prominent children's learning tool no longer defines more than 30 nature words, including "dandelion," "otter," "acorn" and "beaver." In their place, a child will now find definitions for such terms as "MP3 player," "blog" and "cut and paste."

Though the latest edition was published in 2007, no one seemed to notice the changes until late last year when an outraged woman

told a reporter about the additions and omissions. According to the British newspaper The Daily Telegraph, Lisa Saunders, a mother of four in Northern Ireland, was helping her son with his homework when she realized that words such as "moss" and "fern" were not in his dictionary. Certain Christian terms, including "chapel" and "saint," also were gone.

When it was published online last December, the Telegraph article drew hundreds of vitriolic comments from readers. Bloggers took it from there, and outrage spread across the Atlantic. Which leads us to another irony: The Internet had become a tool for protesting the saturation of digital technology into all aspects of modern life—especially children's education.

In response to the criticism, Oxford University Press released an official statement: The dictionary "is not designed for children to use as they progress higher up

the school years, and should be regarded as an introduction to language and the practice of using dictionaries." The words included in it, the statement continues, are selected based on the "language children will commonly come across at home and at school." The books also must include words "covering the main religious faiths" and must now pay special attention to computer-related words. These concerns, says the company, must be balanced with keeping the book small enough to be accessible for children between the ages of 8 and 11.

For many naturalists and educators, however, the omissions raise a different set of concerns. "Making room in the junior dictionary for a new lexicon of technology and communications may be a good thing for children, provided they are not also denied definitions as basic as that of the flower growing on their own lawn," says Kevin Coyle, NWF vice president for education and training. "Several of the words removed to facilitate participation in the virtual world were cut at the expense of some creatures such as the otter that have been struggling for survival in the real world."

The revised book could be viewed as another example of adults contributing to the growing disconnection between children and the natural world—a trend that was identified by a study conducted a few years ago by two zoologists at Cambridge University. Reporting in the journal Science, the researchers revealed that a typical 8-year-old could name 78 percent of the 150 characters in the popular video game Pokémon, but could identify less than half of the common British plants and animals in pictures.

Which brings us to one final irony: The concept of the Pokémon universe stems from the hobby of insect collecting, a popular pastime of the game's inventor when he was a child in Japan.

Anne Keisman is an NWF education media coordinator.

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If you feel we have left off your name in error, please contact us at (615) 353-1133.

Thank You



AFFILIATE SPOTLIGHT

Safari Club International

Working quietly behind the scenes, the Chattanooga Area Chapter of Safari Club International, a TWF affiliate, has been racking up quite a list of accomplishments.

The chapter partnered with TWF and others to help sell the recent elk tag permit for the first Tennessee Elk Hunt in over a century and helped fund the Elk Camp dinner and events held for the hunters, government officials and volunteers at the hunt. Overall, they have donated \$13,000 of a \$20,000 pledge to the elk reintroduction program – more than any other organization since the elk were released.

With a membership of slightly more than 100, they have provided TWRA and Georgia's Department of Natural Resources with 10 robo-deer, four robo-turkeys and a wild boar decoy to catch poachers shooting from area roads. With just the most recently donated deer, seven arrests have been made so far, one of which resulted over \$5,000 in fines.

"Prior to our donations, the total of Region III's TWRA office had one stationary decoy deer to share amongst the areas," said Bill Swan, chapter president. "With the additional resources no less than

25 convictions of poachers have been made. We are proud to help provide the tools law enforcement needs to ensure that sportsmen and women behave responsibly and ethically," he continued.

TWRA has also received Garmin GPS units, digital DVD cameras, water hydration backpacks, trail cams, and seismic sensors to nab trespassers from the SCI chapter.

The group gives back to the community as well. They have volunteered to feed the less fortunate at Chattanooga's Community Kitchen and have donated self inflating live vests to the local fire department's river unit. Support has also been extended to the Chattanooga Zoo and area animal shelter. Currently work is underway to take a wounded soldier from the Chattanooga area on a deer hunt to Texas as part of the Wounded Warrior Project.

To join the Chattanooga Area Chapter of SCI, visit their website at www.chattanoogaclubsci.org and to download a membership form. You can also lend support by attending their annual fundraising banquet on February 6 at the Chattanooga Choo-Choo. Reservations can be made by calling Angie at (423) 838-9114. New members who join before the banquet will be put in a drawing for a Winchester Model 70 customized rifle.