



P.O. Box 145 • New Richmond, WI 54017 • (715) 246-4884 • www.willowriver.org

Willow River Rod & Gun Club News

A 3D Archery Shoot is scheduled for Sunday, February 14th with set up scheduled on Saturday preceding the event.

The upper trap will be replaced this year and expenses will be included in the club's capital expenditures. The trap house may have to be revamped to accommodate the new trap. Chris Polfus and Jerry Van Houten are coordinating this effort.

Planning for the 2010 Park Art Fair and New Richmond Fun Fest fund raisers are progressing. The Park Art Fair food booth application has been filed. Volunteers will be needed to work at the booth June 4th through the 6th. This is an excellent opportunity to get in your volunteer hours.

The new entry gate to our club land is now in operation and working perfectly! Feed back on its operation should be given to any of our Board of Directors. It certainly simplifies entry and exit to our facilities.

Star Prairie Fish & Game Association Notes

The SPF&GA 2010 budget has been finalized by the club's Board of Directors. Expense/income has remained about the same as 2009.

The election of SPF&GA Board of Directors included Dan Bygd, Mike Kelly, Bob Swanda and Jon Bush. Special Thanks goes out to Terry Zais for all his years of service on the Board.

The 2010 slate of officers includes President Dan Bygd, Vice President Chuck Magoon, Treasurer Stuart Nelson and Secretary Mike Kelly.

President Bygd will elect a chairperson for the Trout Farm Ad-Hoc committee.

Rest room facilities have been purchased for the McMurtrie Preserve.

Local scouts are looking for Eagle Scout projects. Club members may have some suggestions.

On January 31st, a 5th/6th grade girl's ice fishing outing was held on Middle Pine Lake. Jon Bush coordinated this very successful event.

Erv Erickson has a contact that will make a wood burner with the SPF&G logo. This burner will be used for various wood projects that are scheduled.

It was suggested that the club sponsor an eagle release from the Raptor Center. Money has been budgeted for Earth Day sponsorship.

Sponsorship was provided for the 4th annual Big Lake Ice Fishing Contest. All proceeds from this event goes towards stocking fish in that chain lakes.

Cavity Nesting Bird Workshop – March 6th

A birding workshop will be held on Saturday, March 6th starting at 10 am at the Somerset Town Hall located one half mile east of Somerset. Bluebirds will be the bird of focus along with a slide presentation, nest box exhibits with discussion on box styles, habitat, predation and monitoring. Box construction plans and other handout will be provided plus finished nesting boxes will be available for purchase. This event is free to the public. For more information contact Lowell Peterson at 715-247-3243.

Hunting/Fishing Expo – Prairieview Church – March 20th

The annual Hunting and Fishing Expo will again be held at the Prairieview Covenant Church on Saturday, March 20th from 9am – 4pm. The church is located just off highway 65 between New Richmond and Star Prairie. Admission is free but freewill offerings will be accepted. This is a great family event! Anyone can bring in antlers to be scored and there are a number of interesting seminars scheduled throughout the day. Wild game appetizers will again be part of the program along with a variety of displays. Door prizes will be drawn throughout the event and an auction will be held at 3 pm. Come early, stay late and plan for a delightful outdoor experience to break up those winter doldrums!

Bear harvest permits to increase 22 percent over 2009 Warden Paul Sickman

Wisconsin wildlife biologists have upped the number of available black bear harvest permits by 22 percent over 2009. A population research study cooperative effort

between the University, the DNR and the Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association indicated that the state's bear population was higher than previously thought. Accordingly, wildlife officials increased permit levels last year based on the increased population estimate and have done so again for the 2010 bear hunting season.

With a new population estimate of about 22,000 bears, and a current state bear population goal of 13,000 bears, biologists at the Department of Natural Resources have established a 2010 harvest quota of 5,235 bears and will issue 8,910 permits.

The deadline to have applied for a 2010 bear permit was Dec. 10, 2009. The drawing for permits will be conducted this week and successful applicants will be notified by mid February.

More than 32,000 hunters applied for the 7,310 permits that were issued for the 2009 season. That season resulted in a record harvest of 3,907 bears (based on preliminary harvest numbers).

The permit breakdown is as follows: Zone A 3,470 permits; Zone B 1,440 permits; Zone C 2,430 permits; and Zone D 1,570 permits. The 2010 bear hunting season runs Sept. 8 through Oct. 12.

Fishing From Permanent Shelters

This winter there has been an above average number of problems and issues with permanent ice houses/shelters in St. Croix County. These problems include:

Fishing from inside a locked ice house
No name on the permanent ice house, no address or improper display of name and address
Litter on the ice and around shelters

The doors of all enclosed fishing shelters, both permanent and portable, must be readily opened from the outside while someone is inside. The only time a fishing shelter can be locked is when it is not in use. Therefore, a permanent shelter cannot be locked from the inside when someone is fishing. Your shelter needs to be built or modified using a typical door knob/latch, a heavy duty spring or some other way to keep the door closed, but not locked while in use so it can be opened from the outside.

All permanent fishing shelters must display the owner's name and address (in English) legibly by painting or otherwise affixing on the outside of the shelter using block lettering a minimum of 1 inch and in contrasting colors. A name and city or phone number is not correct. Take the short amount of time to look at your shelter and get it into compliance if needed.

The main reason for this requirement is so law enforcement knows who owns the shelter for removal deadlines. In addition, Wisconsin does not want to license fishing shelters such as Minnesota so please follow the laws, be respectful and responsible so the laws stay the same.

For questions or comments call Warden Sickman at 715-684-2914 X 120. *Remember no ice is safe ice!*

Neotropical Migrants - USF&WS Tom Kerr

As the snow continues to fall around New Richmond, many of the birds that spend the summer here are winter-



Fisher at bear bait

ing far south of us where it is warm and sunny. Often referred to as "neotropical migrants", these birds breed in North America during the spring and summer and then winter in Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. There are over 200 species of neotropical migrant birds. Many of them depend on grassland nesting habitat that is found across the upper Midwest. Perhaps you have seen some of these species on Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA) in St. Croix County. The open prairie grassland habitat, once found across large areas of the county, is preferred breeding habitat for several of these species that do not like to nest near trees.

One of the most visible of these species is the bobolink. The males have a distinctive yellow patch on their heads and a white shoulder patch on their wings. In May and June, they were a common sight on the 75 acre St. Croix Prairie WPA which is located about 2 miles west of New Richmond. A walk on the mile and a half loop hiking trail on the WPA in May and June would give you a good opportunity to see the male bobolinks flying low over their territories singing their long, bubbly song. The females will nest in the prairie grass on the WPA, often laying 3-7 eggs which hatch 12-13 days later. The young grow quickly and will leave the nest 10 or 11 days after hatching. A few days after leaving the nest, they are able to fly. The diversity of prairie grasses and forbs in the planted grassland on the WPA is a great place for these birds to find insects and seeds.

As late summer approaches many of these birds begin their migration to their southern wintering grounds. Bobolinks have a round trip migration of over 12,000 miles to reach their South American wintering grounds and then return north to breed in the spring. To put that distance in perspective, it would be like driving from New Richmond to Orlando Florida and back four times. Much of the WPA habitat management that we do in the winter, whether it is seeding prairie grasses and forbs over the snow or removing invasive trees from the prairie will benefit many species of neotropical migrant birds as they return from their southern wintering grounds.

If you would like more information about the St. Croix Wetland Management District, visit our website at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/StCroix/>.



Trail cam photos before and after

Deer Hunt 2009

(From Wisconsin Wildlife Management Report - 2/12/10)

Although not all deer registration stub data is in the dataset, the numbers are getting close to final. The 2009 deer harvest total now stands at 327,484. The dataset shows a total buck kill of 133,677, down less than 3.5% from 2008. Buck kill is a major component of the Sex-Age-Kill model, which will be used to generate winter population estimates for many deer management units.

Despite a 9-day gun season that disappointed many hunters, the archery season produced the 4th highest archery buck harvest in state history...41,155 bucks entered in the dataset so far.

The total antlerless deer harvest was 190,634, dropping 37% from 2008. This reduction reflected DNR harvest prescriptions that were much more conservative in 2009 than preceding years. These prescriptions were a consequence of lower population estimates in 2009 and a desire from hunters to reduce the antlerless deer kill (for example: zero antlerless deer permits in northeast deer management units; reduced antlerless harvest quotas in many units; no earn-a-buck rule outside of the CWD Zone; and less herd control units).

Population estimates will be determined in time for the March deer herd status meetings that are open to the public around the state. Deer harvest quotas and season recommendations will then be prepared for the April Natural Resources Board. It is anticipated that some areas of the state will have deer populations below population goals, and harvest prescriptions and seasons will be aimed at growing the herds there. In some units, population estimates are expected to exceed goals.

Contributed by Bill Vander Zouwen and Keith Warnke

Deer Aerial Survey Technique

An aerial flight survey methodology called the “distance sampling method” is being evaluated this winter. Surveys began in early February. Flights will take place throughout the month of February, starting in the West Central Region and ending in the Northeast Region. The estimated number of flight days is seven in each region. Snow cover and weather conditions will dictate which days staff are able to fly and the duration of the survey period. Data gathered from the survey will be used to construct deer population models, which will be com-

pared to models that are currently being used.

Contributed by Jason Fleener

Deer Hunting Opportunity for Returning Soldiers

Legislators sought to find a way for returning soldiers to participate in a deer hunt, since they missed last fall's hunting season. While considering a bill to offer such a hunt, department staff offered a solution that could be offered immediately. Department staff are working to match interested returning soldiers with landowners who have deer shooting permits to address agricultural damage on their lands.

Contributed by Laurie Fike

Venison Donation

The final count of donated deer for 2009 is 3,914 deer, which resulted in about 176,000 pounds of ground venison for food pantries. Statewide, there was excellent participation with 133 processors in 60 counties. Dane County had the highest contributions at 476, followed by Buffalo with 258 and Columbia at 200. In the 10-year history of the program, hunters have donated 73,507 deer for a total of 3.3 million pounds of ground venison for food pantries.

For the 10th anniversary of the program, Laurie Fike designed a sticker to recognize hunters who donated a deer, and 10,000 stickers were distributed to the processors. Madison artist Tom Senatori designed a companion sign to boldly advertise "Donate A Deer Here", recognizing processors as program participants. Nearly half of Wisconsin's licensed meat processors participate in Wisconsin Deer Donation program, with many having participated the entire 10 years.

Also this year, the Green Bay Packers picked food pantries as the recipient of their annual charitable support campaign. Through the sale of blaze orange hats in their Hunting Down Hunger program, over 1 million dollars was raised to benefit food pantries. Our partner Target Hunger program has already received a check from the Packers. With the downturn in the economy pantry, volunteers expressed the great need both of these programs helped fill.

Contributed by Laurie Fike

Upcoming Events...

- February 28th (Sunday)Cottontail Rabbit season closes
- March 6th (Saturday).....Cavity Nesting Bird Workshop, Somerset Town Hall, Slide presentation, exhibits, plans and handouts,
No charge, Contact: Lowell Peterson 715-247-3243
- March 6th (Saturday).....Early Catch and release trout season opens, barbless
Hooks required, season runs through midnight April 25th
- March 7th (Sunday).....Game fish season closes (Check regulations)
- March 7th (Sunday).....Ice fishing shelters must be removed from inland waters south of highway 64
- March 10th (Wednesday).....2010-2011 hunting and fishing licenses go on sale
- March 11th (Thursday).....Willow River Rod & Gun Club's March Meeting,
7 pm, club land, Contact: Brian Headlee at 246-5322
- March 14th (Sunday).....Ice fishing shelters must be removed from inland waters north of highway 64
- March 15th (Monday)Star Prairie Fish & Game Association March Meeting,
6:00 Dinner & Social, 7:00 Meeting, Don Madsen's
- March 20th (Saturday).....Hunting/Fishing Expo, Prairieview Covenant Church,
9am-4pm, Contact: Nancy King 651-271-3360
- March 20th (Saturday).....Winter crow season closes
- March 22nd, 25th, 27th, 29th.....New Richmond Bow Hunters Education, Willow River
Rod & Gun Club, Contact: Ron Roettger 715-248-3883
- March 22nd-26th.....Remaining turkey permits not issued go on sale starting at 10 am
- March 23rd (Tuesday)St Croix County Alliance Habitat Banquet, Baldwin
American Legion Club, Contact: Mike Reiter 246-6643
- March 31st (Wednesday).....Hunting, fishing, sports and conservation patron licenses expire
- April 12th (Monday).....Conservation Congress Spring Hearing, 7 pm at St. Croix Central High School Commons,
1751 Broadway St., Hammond, WI, Contact: Mike Reiter 715-246-6643
- April 18th (Sunday).....Earth Day Celebration, YMCA Camp, Hudson, Contact: Aleisha Miller 715-684-2874 ex.125
- Comments, criticisms or input, please contact Mike Reiter 246-6643 or Jessa Nelson 246-0266
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