

Rabbit and Quail Season 2000

The start of rabbit and quail hunting season used to be an event all over the state of Kentucky. Factories shut down, business closed and farmers did not tend fields or livestock. Everyone was in the field chasing rabbits and quail.

During the tough years of the depression, there were record drought all over the plains states and the southeast. Although the Dust Bowl of the Great Plains is the starkest memory in people's minds of this drought, conditions in the southeast and Kentucky were just as bad. These areas were losing valuable topsoil from wind erosion and from the washing of extremely dry topsoil by the very infrequent rains.

Authorities promoted the planting of the hardy plant fescue, a cousin of the corn plant, to counteract soil erosion. Fescue was developed for its soil holding capacity and resistance to trampling by livestock," explained Chris Garland, upland game biologist for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR). "It does the job very well, too well, as far as wildlife is concerned. Fescue grows in a thick mat with little room for other plant species or the movement of wildlife. The structure of fescue also provides very poor winter cover. The fescue is easily flattened by snow and freezing rain making the entire field like a desert for quail and rabbit. Fescue is infected with an endophyte which is thought to effect rabbits with lowered reproduction, decreased overall health and lower body weight."

The populations of these species declined in the decades after the Depression, especially quail, as a result. Yet, more recently the management plans just resurrect populations of these species are now paying big dividends.

The outlook for the 2000-2001 rabbit and quail season is excellent. "Expectations are high," Garland said. "We have had an excellent spring with a tremendous quail hatch and great rabbit reproduction."

"The best quail numbers have been and continue to be in the western half of the state," he continued. "The central portion also supports good quail numbers with the eastern third of the state having more isolated pockets in the river bottoms and unclaimed mine lands."

Garland said rabbit population densities are the opposite of quail. "Rabbit numbers are more evenly distributed statewide with numbers from our mail carrier surveys showing the highest numbers in the eastern coalfield portion of the state. The hills of the bluegrass and knobs region also have higher than average rabbit numbers and the western peninsula would be the next best area for rabbits."

Garland said it would be wise to hunt the cover for rabbit and quail. Cover becomes increasingly important as the season progresses. Good areas to find the necessary cover are grown up old fields, briar patches, very young woody growth and overgrown fence rows. Cedar thickets are always good throughout the year, but are excellent during the coldest parts of winter because of the windbreaks and protection from snow they provide.

Blaze orange requirements will be extremely important this year be-

cause rabbit and quail hunters and modern gun deer hunters will be in the woods at the same time in mid-November. Garland recommends asking the landowner where other hunters are located and to be sure of your target and anything beyond it before pulling the trigger.

If you plan to participate in any small game or upland bird season, KDFWR biologists are requesting participation in hunter surveys. This program monitors small game populations through hunter harvest surveys and wing collection surveys. The survey is a hunting log where the hunter records the date of the hunt, county of the hunt, hours hunted and animals seen or harvested. The log is easily kept on the refrigerator, in your hunting jacket or in the glove box. Wing envelopes are provided for grouse and quail hunters and asks the same type of information as the hunting log. Wings of the quail and grouse and the tail feathers of grouse provide biologists with important data on population dynamics, hatch dates, age and the sex of the birds. Hunters simply follow the provided instructions and send in the logs and wing envelopes at the conclusion of the season.

The hunting logs and wing envelopes are available from a state wildlife and boating officer, private lands biologists or by contacting the KDFWR at 1-800-858-1549. The logs are available in the 2000-2001 Kentucky Hunting and Trapping Guide. You may also access the logs from the KDFWR website at www.kdfwr.state.ky.us where they are available in a printable format. You are helping provide better hunting in the years to come by participating in the hunter cooperation program.

Those participating will receive their old log, a new log for next season, the results of the survey and a hunter cooperation license plate.

The rabbit and quail season started November 13 and runs through February 10, 2001 in the counties west of and including Hancock, Ohio, Butler, Warren and Allen. The season runs from November 13 through January 31, 2001 in the rest of the state.

The daily bag limit for rabbit for the 2000-2001 season is four with a possession limit of eight. The daily bag limit for the 2000-2001 season for quail is eight with a possession limit of 16.

Deer. Jaws needed by KDFWR
Those who deer hunt are asked to submit the lower left jaw of their deer to the KDFWR. The information obtained from deer jaws directly impacts deer hunters. "This information is used to help set deer zones for next year," said David Yancy, assistant deer program coordinator for the KDFWR.

Those who send in their 2000-2001 season deer jaws will be entered in a drawing to win either a rifle scope or a bow. Please indicate on the envelope whether you desire to be entered in the rifle or bow drawing and mail it no later than January 15, 2001. Only one entry per jawbone submitted. All of the information on the envelope must be completed in its entirety to be eligible for the drawing.

Wing envelopes are available by calling the KDFWR at 1-800-858-1549 and requesting them.

Record holiday travel projected by AAA

A record 38.9 million Americans plan a Thanksgiving holiday getaway of 100 miles or more from home, according to AAA. Thanksgiving travel is expected to be up four percent over the 37.4 million people who took a trip a year ago.

AAA estimates 31.6 million travelers will go by motor vehicle, a five percent rise from the 30.1 million who traveled last Thanksgiving. Of over 7.3 million Americans will travel by airplane, train or bus, the same total as last year.

"Expect record travel this Thanksgiving despite soaring fuel costs that make travel more expensive for drivers and fliers," said AAA Blue Grass/Kentucky spokesman Dan Dickson.

The average cost of gasoline is up more than 25 cents a gallon from one year ago and airfares have risen an

average of 13 percent since last Thanksgiving as ticket prices have been raised five times so far this year.

"Thanksgiving is a special time for Americans and higher travel costs won't discourage them from visiting family and friends or taking a four day holiday vacation," Dickson said.

AAA's holiday travel projections are based on a national survey of 1,300 adults by the Travel Industry Association, which conducts special research for AAA.

The greatest number of Thanksgiving auto travelers will originate in the Southeast with 9.3 million. The most popular destinations during the Thanksgiving holiday will be towns and rural areas at 40 percent followed by cities at 34 percent. A total of 59 percent intend to stay overnight with relatives or friends while 24 percent expect to stay in a hotel or motel.

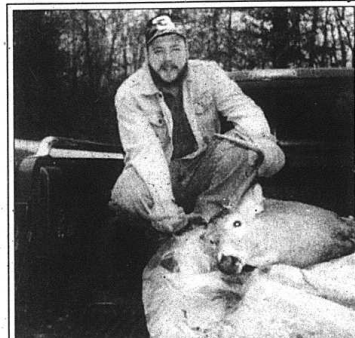
representatives were on hand to cover the event. Many students worked as debate volunteers.

Abney is the son of Paul and Ann Abney of Wildie and is a graduate of Rockcastle County High School.

At Centre, Abney is part of a diverse student body that represents 38 states and nine foreign countries.



This 10 point buck was taken by Roger Baker in Fayette County.



Jimmy Thomas killed this nine point buck in Rockcastle on November 18th.



Wesley McHargue, 13-year-old son of Howard and Lucille McHargue of Mt. Vernon, shot his first deer on Nov. 11th on Chesnut Ridge. The 9 point buck field dressed 175 lbs. We're proud of you, Wes.

Expect increased patrols from KSP this holiday

The Thanksgiving holiday is here and as more motorists take to Kentucky's highways, Kentucky State Police are urging drivers to slow down and use courtesy when traveling the state's roadways. Also, be sure to allow additional time to arrive at your destinations and to buckle up and use child safety restraint devices. If a motorist is observed with a child under 40 inches tall that is not properly secured in a child restraint system, the driver will be cited - no warning, no exceptions.

There were 10 fatal crashes and 11 fatalities on Kentucky's roadways during the Thanksgiving holiday in 1999. Two of the crashes and two of the fatalities were alcohol related. Of the 10 people killed, only four of the motorists were wearing seatbelts. Those fatalities also included one motorcyclist, one bicyclist and one pedestrian.

In an effort to reduce fatalities and injuries on the state's roadways, Kentucky State Police troopers will be working overtime during the holiday period to target intoxicated drivers and speeders. The KSP will also kick off the Home for the Holidays effort, which will continue through the New Year's holiday to reduce traffic fatalities and crashes.

The official Thanksgiving holiday begins at 6 p.m. Wednesday, November 22 and ends at 11:59 p.m. Sunday, November 26.

Motorist can help law enforcement officers by reporting erratic drivers to the KSP hotline at 1-800-222-5555. Callers will remain anonymous and should give a description of the vehicle, location, direction of travel, license plate number and state, if possible.

King selected for Who's Who at Georgetown

A Georgetown College student from Mt. Vernon, Talona Kay King, has been selected to be in the 2001 edition of *Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges* as an outstanding campus leader.

She is among 43 students from Georgetown College, who will be included in the publication. Nationally, students come from more than 2,300 institutions of higher learning.

The students are selected based on their academic achievement, service to the community, leadership in extra-curricular activities, and potential for continued success.

Benefit Singing
for
Bro. Jim Leger & Loretta
at Brush Creek Holiness
Sat., Nov. 25th - 7:00 p.m.
Special singers

While Preparing Game

Health precautions offered to hunters

Submitted by Clara Patton, R.S. Environmentalist, Rockcastle Health Dept.

With hunting season approaching, Kentucky health officials are offering sportsmen a few tips about what to do after they get home from their hunting trip.

Wild game that is to be eaten such as deer needs to be prepared properly so it will not cause illness. "We know Kentucky's regulations on harvesting deer have been stringent this year to allow for an increase in harvest to better safeguard the herd. Because more deer may be harvested this year, there will be a lot of hunters with venison to cook this season," said Guy DeLina, manager of the department's food safety branch. "Venison is a good source of lean meat, with little fat and plenty of protein, and should be safe for your family meals if the following guidelines are followed."

Field Dress and Cool Game Quickly

Be sure to field dress your game as soon as possible. After field dressing, be sure to cool the carcass promptly. If taken to a processor, the processor will cool the entire carcass until the processing is conducted. If you process your own meat, skin and thoroughly wash the animal, then cut into small sections which may be refrigerated promptly. Meat left at warm temperatures will allow rapid harmful bacteria growth and may lead to spoiling of the meat.

Wash Processed Game Thoroughly Before Registration and Freezing

Thoroughly wash (rinse in clean potable water) all processed meat before refrigeration and freezing. After cutting smaller portions of the meats, be sure to wash off the meat before cooling/refrigerating or freezing. Rinsing the meat will dislodge loose particles of undesirables and will remove a lot of the bacteria from the outer portion of the meat.

Refrigerate or Freeze Promptly

After washing in clean potable water, refrigerate at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or cooler, or freeze at 0 degrees or colder. The quicker we refrigerate or freeze the processed meat

the safer it will be. Dangerous bacteria grow slower under refrigeration temperatures.

Practice Thorough Hand Washing

The cook's hands must be clean before and after handling raw meats. If a cook's hands are not clean before handling the raw meats, harmful microorganisms may be introduced into the meat. Hot water, soap and paper towels are the tools needed to adequately wash hands before cooking. Unclean hands contaminate food. After starting with clean hands and then handling, processing, or cooking venison, be sure to wash your hands after you handle the raw meats. You will spread the bacteria of the raw meat to other surfaces in your home if you don't wash your hands after handling.

Cross Contamination

Be aware of cross contamination when other items come into contact with the raw meat such as knives, cutting boards, counter tops, plates or pans. The meat could leave bacteria on the surfaces and these items should be washed and sanitized thoroughly before being used for any other food. To sanitize a food contact surface you may use 50 parts per million (one teaspoon of 5.25 percent bleach per gallon of water/75 degrees) to soak, spray or wipe on clean food contact surfaces. This will kill any unwanted bacteria.

Cook Meats Thoroughly

Cooking meats to the right temperature should destroy any unwanted food related organisms. This is probably the most important step to the safety of your meal. No matter how you processed your venison, when it comes time to cook your meat, be sure it is cooked thoroughly to an internal temperature (inside the meat) of at least 165 degrees.

If you follow these simple food safety guidelines in handling and preparing venison, your family meals should be safe and nutritious.

For further food safety information, please call the Food Safety Branch at (502)564-7181, or your local Health Department food safety inspector at (606)256-2242.

Subscribe to the Signal
(606)256-2244

21st Century Community Learning Center at RCMS

Spanish Wednesdays 3:30 - 5:30
Computer Basics Tuesdays 4:00 - 6:00
Quilting Class Mondays 4:00 - 6:00
GED Course Every Tuesday 4:30 - 6:00

Wreath Making Class
Every Thursday at Rockcastle Middle School
Class taught by Melanie Gray - Call 256-5118 to enroll

We would like to invite everyone out to our Community Learning Center for classes we are offering. Other classes will be added as we are made aware of needs in the community that we can assist in meeting. If you would like to attend a class, or if you have a suggestion for classes to offer, please contact Anthony Coffey or Terry Parkey at Rockcastle County Middle School at 606-256-5118.

Thank You

I would like to thank the voters of Roundstone, Conway and East Mt. Vernon for their support in my successful school board race.

Mike Burdette and Family

Paid for by candidate

Abney enrolls at Centre

Stewart Abney, of Wildie, has enrolled this year at Centre College. Abney and other Centre freshmen arrived on campus as the college was thrust into the national limelight. Centre hosted this year's only presidential debate, held October 5 on campus. More than 2,200 media