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**VOLUME 14, NO. 2
SPRING 2005**

Talking Turkey

**Ugly Flies, Approach
is Critical and
Trout at High Noon**

Random Casts

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NOVA OUTDOORS

SPRING 2005

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Nova Outdoors

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of Anglers and Hunters



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Spring 2005
**STATEMENT
OF PURPOSE**

The Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters is interested in all aspects of the out-of-doors and is dedicated to the fostering of sound management and wise use of the renewable resources of the Province. We want to ensure that their economic, recreational and aesthetic values may continue for the benefit of this and all future generations.

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NSFAH Presidents Message

"A last kick at the can" the saying goes and so it is for me writing this message as president of the Nova Scotia Fed-



Gary Penney

eration of Anglers and Hunters. My term of office ends in March this year, and how quickly the past three years have gone. It seems that time past is now measured and recalled by events, occasions and memorable moments rather than years, months, and days past.

I am not going to try and recall the accomplishments or failures of my three years as NSFAH president, and I am sure there are some of both. However, I would like to say that during my three years as president, I met and worked with some of the most dedicated and sincerely interested people that could possibly work for the best interest of habitat and wildlife in Nova Scotia and beyond. From politicians, civil servants, salary personnel, to a vast network of volunteers, all have their heart in the right place when it comes to the welfare and enhancement of wildlife and habitat. With these people ever vigilant and committed to take appropriate action, I feel confident of a secure future for our heritage of hunting, fishing, and wildlife enjoyment for everyone.

On the other side of the coin, the awakening for me, was the number of people that take wildlife and habitat for granted or with an attitude of "who cares"? Now I know we all are not created alike (thank God), but disturbingly many of the population with this mind set are in some way involved with wildlife, sometimes to the point of themselves being a hunter or fisher person. I do believe they are not the majority, but the exception, which leaves still a number of people who are concerned but are reluctant to get involved. Some of this apathy can be at-

tributed to education and awareness of wildlife management and the important role wildlife clubs and organizations play in the conservation movement. We need to do a better job at promotion and education of our long standing conservation record as hunters and fisher organizations.

Volunteering can be a very rewarding experience and an opportunity to expand your own education through involvement with other people that share a common interest and goals. I know from personal experience, volunteering is sometimes not easy, juggling time between work, family, appointments, personal time and the unexpected, like sickness. As I said, if your heart is in it, you will manage the time, and the objectivity of accomplishment for which you volunteered somehow makes it all worth while. I encourage anyone, especially the young people, to get involved with volunteering, it can be a fun experience and educating at the same time. Make it a part of your lifestyle.

For my three years as NSFAH president, the experience has been rewarding to me, and along the way I hope to have made a contribution to wildlife and habitat with the support and help of the many volunteers and people who associate with the Nova Scotia Federation of Hunters and Anglers. My sincere and heartfelt thank-you!

Yours in wildlife forever
Gary Penney, President NSFAH

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Executive Director's Voice



By Tony Rodgers

I strongly believe that the moose poaching episode in Cumberland County in December has the ability to sicken other poachers. This action demonstrates a total disregard for nature at her weakest moment. Three moose from a depleted population were slaughtered on December 9, 2004 as "winter meat".

The three who stand accused are all locals. Terry Patterson, Dale Brown and Jamie Brown have been charged with a number of articles under the protected species legislation and will appear in court to answer these charges.

But regardless of whether or not it was them who did this (and until the court says so, they are innocent until found guilty) this is a senseless and unnecessary crime.

Nobody in Nova Scotia has to hunt for food out of necessity. Although I'll concede that some native groups may make this claim. However, the social welfare system in Canada and indeed Nova Scotia is designed to support anyone who is hungry.

What is interesting in many jacking or poaching situations, outside of this case, is that the person caught uses the excuse that he needed the food for his family to survive, yet the culprit is usually driving an expensive full sized half-

ton truck with an equally expensive ATV in the back.

What the truth may be is he can't afford to feed his family while providing himself with all the toys he needs.

For those of you who have read my column in past issues of Nova Outdoors, you may have observed that I don't have much time or sympathy for poachers, and prefer that the fine they receive for breaking game, fishing and trapping laws is complete removal from all forest areas of the province.

If you poach, you should be made to stay out of the woods. No hunting, no angling, no trapping, no trips for berry picking, no firewood cutting, no hunting camp stays, no cottage visits and especially no country drives, nothing, plus jail time for multiple offenses. You get the picture.

Unfortunately, wildlife crimes have never been considered a very serious offense by the courts, and often these criminals get off lightly. There are a few judges who appreciate the seriousness and apply proper punishments ... but we are a long way off from getting justice in these areas.

The Nova Scotia government turned chicken when it came to allowing the introduction of wild turkey into the province. After an exhaustive round of public hearings, public consultations, extreme

scientific scrutiny and the crossing of every T and the dotting of every I, it wasn't enough to get the introduction.

The National Wild Turkey Federation, especially Joel Peterson and the Nova Scotia wild turkey chapters should be proud of the work they did to prove their case for the legal, safe and healthy introduction of wild turkey into the province.

The argument back from the government was that there was fear, unfounded as it may be, that after the outbreaks of avian diseases in Asia and on the west coast that they didn't want to take a chance and harm the poultry industry in Nova Scotia. The fear being that the wild turkeys, that would be captured and transported here from Ontario, Canada, may bring diseases in with them. However, the real disease threat as I understand it would be to the new resident turkeys catching something from the local birds.

What is ironic in this whole matter is that the province has been allowing the importation of exotic birds into the province without any scientific support or apparent avian health concerns for quite a number of years, that is, until now.

Many farmers, some of which were objecting to the introduction of the wild turkey have themselves brought in emus, rheas, ostriches and a variety of game hens for food and eggs.

If the province is afraid of disease coming into the province, they may want to stand guard at provincial boundaries as flight after flight of birds migrating into the province this spring from all over South, Central and North America. Many of whom will land and feed in the same barnyards as the domestic birds they sought to protect.

The reality is that Nova Scotia will

Continued on next page.

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get an introduction of turkey into our woodlands anyway. That introduction will be illegal and most likely will happen with unhealthy birds brought in from and/or raised God knows where. By stopping the legal introduction, the province has forced the hand of those who will do it anyway. In February, I received a call from a fellow in Richmond County who was looking for advice on how to release 28 wild looking turkeys he raised in a pen. I tried my best to talk him out of it but I don't think I succeeded in convincing him it was a bad and dangerous idea. He and his buddies want to hunt them.

There are turkeys in New Brunswick and they will eventually head here. Hopefully the available habitat will not be polluted by poor Nova Scotia released stock by the time they get here.

Since I used the "H" word, I believe that this was the biggest fear of the people who opposed the introduction. They

were afraid of an eventual annual wild turkey hunt that would have injected thousands of dollars into rural economies. And some of the group who objected could not have stood for that. I only wish they had been honest with themselves.

Personally, my disappointment was not so much about the loss of the turkeys but rather the loss of the rejuvenation in the hunting community brought on by the prospect of hunting these weary birds.

A number of wild turkey chapters sprung up, fund-raising dinners took place and the enthusiasm for the project was electric. Frankly, I was jealous. I only pray for that level of desire in hunters to make something they want work. I was hoping for a spin-off of their success toward the hunting of other species and perhaps bring back some hunters who have given up on white-tail deer to give it another try.

Like a good bird dog, I'll have to heal and wait for the next flock to come in. Good ideas have a way of getting back to the table for discussion and the province did not close the door on this chapter without opening a future window of opportunity. Let's hope that the National Wild Turkey Federation has some seed money left when the province finally sees the forest for the trees.

Please renew your membership if has lapsed. We need your help and encourage others to join your Federation of Anglers and Hunters.

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Talking Turkey : Wild turkey that is ...

Trying to separate the facts from the fiction

"A series of deep-throated gobbles rattled my nerves and jump started my heart. By the sound of its gobble, I knew I was in the company of no ordinary bird. And as he emerged from the hardwood shadows, he was sporting springtime colours of chestnut, copper and bronze. I felt blessed to be in the presence of such a magnificent display of natural beauty. The majestic monarch of the woods; the eastern wild turkey," (excerpt from Turkey Call magazine, July 2004).

This experience could have taken place almost anywhere within the United States or the province of Ontario. One place that it is not likely to be experienced soon is Nova Scotia.

If you are one of the 96 per cent of Nova Scotians, who enjoy watching wildlife; or one of Nova Scotia's 100,000 hunters; you will have to agree that the decision not to allow the introduction of wild turkeys into the province was disappointing.

Despite four years of successfully jumping through bureaucratic hoops; enduring countless wildlife studies, and hav-

ing the public support of more than 84 per cent of Nova Scotians who responded (Nova Scotia public review August 2001). The wild turkey was declared a non-issue on December 3, 2004.

This is most unfortunate, as the National Wild Turkey Federation was prepared to invest a great deal of time, money and resources in this province to establish, improve and maintain habitat which would benefit all wildlife. Particularly since it would be at no cost to the province or its taxpayers. It appears the concerns and fears primarily within the agricultural community overshadowed what appeared to be sound scientific evidence in the decision making process.

Since 2001, biologists for the National Wild Turkey Federation, The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre, have participated in various independent scientific reviews assessing every potential impact wild turkeys could have here in Nova Scotia. The issues of concern were all adequately addressed according to the Minister of Natural Resources in a letter to the National Wild Turkey Federation in February 2004. A subsequent independent assessment of wildlife disease and parasite risk associated with an introduction of wild turkeys was also conducted by a panel of experts led by Dr. Ted Leighton in March of 2004. Their findings revealed that the wild turkey would pose minimal if any threat to any other



Photo courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

species; wild or domestic.

In reviewing the Minister of Agriculture's decision statement on the Department of Natural Resources web site (news release December 3, 2004) he stated three issues of contention played the major role for rejecting the proposal:

(1) wild turkeys are not native to Nova Scotia

(2) no established business in the province is dependent upon wild turkeys

(3) a significant number of organizations are opposed to the proposal

In dealing with the issue as to whether wild turkeys are native to Nova Scotia; their prior existence can be nei-

Continued on next page.




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ther confirmed nor denied scientifically at this point. Although reference to wild turkeys actively being pursued throughout history in areas along the eastern seaboard (as early as the 1600s) by the First Nations people and early pioneers would highly suggest the likelihood of their existence in Nova Scotia at some period. However, satisfactory evidence, beyond a reasonable doubt cannot be ascertained by either NWTf or NSDNR. This is why the National Wild Turkey Federation proposed an introduction rather than pursuing a process of reintroduction of the wild turkey to Nova Scotia.

As to the issue of "not native" being cited as a reasoning for rejecting the wild turkey. It should be noted that the white-tailed deer, Chinese ring-necked pheasant, as well as many game farm species here in Nova Scotia were in fact introduced and were "not native." To use this as a justification for rejecting wild turkeys would appear to be a bit of a red herring at best.

Secondly, although it would be correct to say that no established business in Nova Scotia is dependent on wild turkeys at this time; one must see the forest for the trees.

Once established in a province, turkey hunting and its related activities potentially create huge benefits for local economies. In Ontario last year, the wild turkey hunters alone spent in excess of \$8 million dollars on hunting licenses, equipment, lodging and related activities. This did not include the tens of thousands of dollars spent annually employing local expertise and labour for the various NWTf's habitat improvement projects. Millions of dollars have been invested in that province since the introduction of wild turkeys there in the 1960s. In the United States, wild turkey hunting is one of the largest sporting contributors to the economies of nearly all states having wild turkeys. On average, each turkey hunter spends over \$800 annually. The spin-offs of NWTf projects alone generate several millions of dollars annually. This would represent in excess of a billion dollars

yearly in economic benefits to the people of the United States.

Perhaps there is truth in saying "no business will become solely dependent upon wild turkeys" as a result of their introduction. However, the potential for growth within established businesses that already rely on associated hunting and recreational activities would get a much needed boost here in Nova Scotia. Furthermore, the indirect spin-off benefits to our economy would likely be substantial as a result of the wildlife enhancement projects that NWTf would undertake over time. It is inconceivable that this would be looked upon as a deterrent in the decision-making process without giving credence to the potential long-term benefits.

Finally and obviously, the most significant contributor and driving force in the decision to reject the proposal. The insistence that there was, "a significant number of organizations opposed to the proposal to introduce wild turkeys into Nova Scotia."

According to records released by the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources:

There were predominantly eight groups in favour and six groups opposed to the introduction of wild turkeys among interested associations or societies. Those in favour were primarily from hunting and wildlife associations. Those primarily opposed were from agricultural and naturalist affiliations. The actual membership numbers of those opposed versus those in favour were difficult to determine, as they were never made public. But all indications point to a larger percentage of the populous belonging to the associations being in favour of the proposal.

A two month public review resulted in a public's opinion of 84 per cent of respondents in favor of bringing the birds to the province.

A total of 161 written responses were received back in 2001. Of those 135 were in favor, 23 were opposed.

Those who are opposed have cited such things as: ecosystem disruption, problems to other users of the outdoors, aggravated problems with hunters on agricultural land and unknown risk of disease. Yet no clear evidence was ever put forward to substantiate these claims. To the contrary – the scientific data provided in defense of the wild turkey not only addressed all of these fears; it should have completely dispelled all their concerns. In the final verdict, unfounded fears and jumping to unjustified conclusions by a few obviously overshadowed sound scientific data and the will of the majority. Certainly the will of the majority of all Nova Scotians is an important part of any democratic process and should always be given the highest consideration reasonably possible before proceeding with any political decisions on their behalf.

A decision made based on sound data and facts will always be the right decision even if it's not a popular one. But a decision based on fear and emotion is never good.

Was there in fact a realistic outcry from the majority of Nova Scotians? Was there a realistic threat to our province's wildlife or agriculture industry? Or was it simply a case of limited but powerful squeaky wheels getting all the grease?

We may never know at the expense of a magnificent bird known as the Eastern Wild Turkey.

Ray J. Lavin is the Media Relations Coordinator for the Truro Struttin, Gobblers Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation.

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Restoring Some Essential Forest-Wildlife Habitats

Winter is a good time to take stock, consider options and contemplate the coming year. I'd like to offer some ideas for improving the forest habitats available to wildlife, but first I'll tell you why.



Bob Bancroft

Two recent studies, one out of Stanford University, and the other an independent accounting by biologist Stuart Pimm, have concluded that as a species, humans are consuming about 40 percent of the earth's primary productivity - the plant material that grows each year. We are altering habitats to suit our land use purposes on such a scale that vegetarians might reconsider their claim to being kinder to animals. For example, 99 percent of the State of Iowa has been converted from wildlife habitat to farmland. What's left for a wild animal to live on or in?

Cheap oil energy allows North Americans to sit down to meals gathered and grown around the world. Wild animals, on the other hand, must search for food, shelter and many other prerequisites for survival in their immediate vicinity. In eastern woods and waters, some conservation-minded folks are helping wild-

life by restoring habitat elements that once were commonplace. Since we can't turn the clock back, landowners and land users can make essential habitats more common again.

Fire, hurricane-force winds and insect epidemics toppled portions of some eastern forests in the past. When this happened, dead wood left on the former forest floor, gradually decomposed and nutrients recycled into a new, more even-aged forest. Since glacial times, many eastern woods were rarely exposed to such violent, large-scale upheavals of nature. Over the centuries, these forests evolved into green alliances of tree species suited to grow on particular, shady sites. Individual trees ranging in age from the very young to the very old were found side-by-side. Changes came slowly and gradually.

Today's forests have often been repeatedly subjected to high grading (cutting the biggest and best), clear cutting or other abrupt forms of harvest. These don't mimic natural disturbances in that the wood fibre is trucked away rather than left on site. Regenerating cut-overs offer wildlife habitat opportunities to animals like mice, dark-eyed juncos, red-tailed hawks, snowshoe hare, white-tailed deer, and coyotes. But they woefully lack some fundamental habitats of the original forest, and severely shortchange many other wild animals.

Old trees like white pines and poplars often develop the kind of massive limbs that are capable of supporting the heavy nests of large hawks, owls, ravens and bald eagles. Black bears also took advantage of multiple large limb structures to build their own versions of nests high in the canopy of old hardwood forests. Sparing some old trees with the appropriate limb structure in a forest may induce some wild visitors to return.

Elder trees often exhibit old wounds that eventually lead to their physical undoing. Broken limbs and wounds in turn start a new life process, by creating hid-

ing holes in living trees of Acadian forests. Good-size cavities are rare in today's cut-over forests. A neighbour, cutting firewood felled a red maple one February day many winters ago. The maple trunk had a small hole which split open when it hit the ground. Thirty-five flying squirrels, one red squirrel and a bewildered bat spilled out of the ruptured hollow and scurried or crawled off seeking another hole in the forest for shelter and warmth from the bitter cold. Most likely they died. Large standing trees with hollowed trunks in Atlantic Canada used to host many species, including black bears, barred owls, raccoons, porcupines, otters, bats, bees, chimney swifts, and even four species of ducks. Woodpeckers play an important role in creating feeding holes and nest holes in decayed trees. Mice, squirrels, bats and saw-whet owls are examples of species that find and use these holes after young woodpeckers make a noisy exit in mid-summer. Nuthatches and chickadees excavate their own nest holes in dead trees that may be as small as 10 cm (4 in.) in diameter.

If no standing dead or partially dead trees exist on a property, one can construct and erect nest boxes of varying sizes to imitate the natural cavities in older trees. Books on nest box construction are commonly available. It may take time for potential nest box users to find them. We locate boxes where species like barred owls are hooting in March and April, or where flickers are spending time in May. As trees on the property begin to show their age, don't cut them down. Let them come down gracefully, at their own pace, creating those ancient hole habitats as they slowly decay. Eventually you will no longer need nest boxes! That's happening now with smaller species on our property.

Tall dead trees eventually topple onto the forest floor, creating more wildlife opportunities. Caves are scarce accommodations in parts of eastern Canada, but larger dead tree trunks on the ground gradually rot out sufficiently to become a

Continued on next page.

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potential bear den. Fisher, pine martin, otter, skunks and others also like to den in hollow logs. Insects that decompose wood and salamanders that feed on them can often be found on the moist undersides of large logs in the woods. If your property lacks hollow log denning habitats, you can import them. Woods workers frequently cut these trees down because of their safety hazard. Sometimes the hollow nature of a log may not become evident until a tree is cut. I wish those could be left standing. Rot means a low commercial value, so we arranged with a forestry contractor to collect some discarded hollow logs from his harvest operations and deliver them to us this winter. Otters have roamed our woods for years searching for den sites. So some hollow logs will be placed in the woods near a stream on our property. Others will be weighted, carried out on the ice, and eventually sunk into pond bottoms to provide fish with some escape cover from the otters! Culverts can be used to create den substitutes, but I prefer to use long-lasting, large, hollow hardwood logs when they're available. If a suitable seed source is nearby, new hemlocks and yellow birch seedlings will begin growing on those old trunks as they recede into the forest floor.

When an old tree hits the forest floor, not only the trunk provides more habitat. Rabbits (snowshoe hares), skunks, mice and others find hiding places under protruding limbs. These spots are often chosen as early spring nest sites or foraging areas for a range of birds like yellowthroat warblers and song sparrows. Larger windfalls can shelter white-tailed deer and black bear.

We create brush piles with the leftovers of our woods work, rather than burning or scattering the slash leftover from selective harvests around on the forest floor. My wife builds the brush pile shelters, covering larger structural limbs on the ground with finer branches in layers to create more inside space with a roof that will hold snow. She follows my chain saw work at a safe distance. Returning to continue work on some sites, we've discovered rabbits hiding in piles built the day before!

One other missing habitat should be mentioned - water. Long before trucks were used to transport wood, rivers were a standard way to move logs and pulpwood in the Atlantic provinces. Even small streams were dammed and dynamited each spring to provide a rush of water that sent pulpwood to the main stems of the river. Obstacles in waterways, where wood fetched up, caused trouble for the log drivers and were removed. Channels were straightened and shortened, many losing their energy-absorbing meandering pattern that slowed and re-directed currents. One of the many casualties, in straightening waterways into highways for wood, and clearing land along waterways for agriculture, was losing side channels and vernal pools.

Side channels are old sections of the river or stream that are often connected to the waterway at their downstream point, but are cut off at the upstream end. This leaves a quiet water area connected to the current of the new channel where fish in the river can take refuge under winter ice. Salamanders and frogs lay eggs in this quiet water during April and May. If you find the remains of a side channel,

leave it and the surrounding vegetation.


Vernal pools are wet places in the forest where shallow pools form each spring. They usually are fishless, and sometimes appear when ground water comes to the surface, or where small springs flow from shady hillsides. They can be located in wet riparian zones close to larger bodies of water. These pools are important breeding and overwintering sites for turtles, frogs, toads salamanders and snakes. Agricultural and forestry activities may have inadvertently dried up many of these sites or cut the side channels off. A small amount of digging, by hand, backhoe or excavator, can recreate these habitats. Plant or maintain shade and groundcover nearby. Last year we built several ponds on wet, formerly-agricultural land for a very low cost. Over the spring, summer and fall the salamanders, frogs, and toads moved in and helped control the mosquito population. We even have four-toed salamanders, a species at risk, breeding in one pool!


Recreating these forest habitats can help many wild animals that once used them. Most of these old forest habitats can be re-established on lands bordering waterways, which absorb and slow the flow of groundwater and keep it cool. Maritimers have not converted 99 percent of the land as in Iowa, but our cumulative affect has been profound. We need more folks willing to assist wildlife species that have been hindered in the past by our own human quest for survival.


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Gun Registry Not Effective at Telling Police Where The Guns Are

By Garry Breitkreuz, MP

Not only has the federal firearms program cost taxpayers two-billion dollars when the government adds in enforcement costs, compliance costs and economic costs, but it also doesn't do what the Liberals promised it would. On May 20, 2004, Public Safety Minister Anne McLellan reported that one of the primary purposes of the registration scheme is to: "provide police with important information to help prevent injuries and investigate firearm-related crimes."

But every time we ask the government a question about the real effectiveness of the gun registry, they duck the question by trotting out statistics claiming the police "query" the system 2,000 times a day.

Conveniently, the government doesn't have any statistics about how many times the police are actually getting any useful information from the system. We suspect very little because the program does a very poor job at telling police where most of the guns are.

It was recently reported in the media that the Canada Firearms Centre mailed out more than 773,000 free firearm license renewals and more than 46,000 envelopes were returned as "undelivered." How can the Minister claim police know where all the guns are when the federal government can't even tell police where they live? But this wasn't the first time the Liberal brain-trust lost track of tens of thousands of gun

owners. In 2001, they lost track of 38,600 owners of rifles and shotguns. In 2002, another 24,600 long-gun owners and 11,800 registered handgun owners went missing from their files.

In addition to losing track of more than 120,000 gun owners, here are a few more problems that Minister McLellan fails to acknowledge in her vain attempts to defend her two-billion dollar boondoggle:

1. Police do not know where the guns are because the government does not require the 176,000 most dangerous persons who are already prohibited from owning firearms to report their change of address to police;

2. Police do not know where the guns are because the government does not keep track of the 37,000 persons with restraining orders against them or the 13,500 gun owners that have had their firearms licences refused and revoked;

3. Police do not know where the guns are because there is no legal requirement for gun owners to store their registered firearms at their home addresses or tell the government where they are stored;

4. Police do not know where the guns are because the government does not keep track of registered firearms that are loaned between licensed firearms owners;

5. Police do not know where all the guns are because as of last August, more than 315,000 handgun owners had failed to re-register more than 600,000 handguns;

6. Police do not know where the guns

are because between 400,000 and one million gun owners failed or refused to obtain a firearms licence and can't register their guns without one;

7. Police do not know where the guns are because according to Statistics Canada firearm import and export records and previous Liberal estimates, the government still has upwards of 10 million guns to register; and finally,

8. Even if police do find the guns, there are so few identifying characteristics on the gun registration certificates that it is practically impossible to verify that they are the firearms registered in the system. For example, all of the 6.9 million registration certificates have been issued without the owners' names, and five million guns in the registry still need to be "verified" in accordance with police demands. The last time we checked, there were more than three million blank and unknown entries on the gun registration certificates that have been issued – including almost three-quarters of a million that didn't have serial numbers.

It is simply not credible for the Liberals to claim that their two billion-dollar registry is of any significant value to police when it is missing so many guns and so many gun owners have gone missing. So taxpayers should be demanding that the Liberals answer these two questions: 1) How long is it going to take to fix all these problems? And 2) How much is it going to cost us?

Garry Breitkreuz is a Member of Parliament for Yorkton-Melville.



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Ugly Flies, Approach is Critical and Trout at High Noon – Tactics for Successful Summer Trout Fishing

By Jason LeBlanc, Fisheries Biologist

Some fisherman are perfectly content to approach fly fishing for summer trout in a few simple ways: tickle a mayfly over calm water, let what little current exists drag their favorite nymph through their favorite run, jerk a woolly buggie through a ripple until their arm hurts or and when nothing has produced results, stay home. “It worked in May, shouldn’t it work today?” is often the premise that leads to another disappointing day on the water. The old saying that ten percent of anglers catch ninety percent of the fish may be true, but what makes the minority so consistently successful is not the latest and most expensive tackle, new fly patterns or even the luck of the Irish. It is simply how they go about their day’s fishing.



Flies should be designed to catch fish, not to win human applause e.g. “Mystery Muddler” (photo by Don MacLean)

The way in which you approach a day’s fishing can mean the difference between success and failure. Fishing tactics and time proven locations that hold fish can change regularly and that “hot spot” where you had such great success on your last visit will not necessarily deliver on a different day. Speckled trout can be very mobile in mid-summer, seeking out cool water, preferably below 20° C. Rainbow trout and white perch in lakes (both in summer and winter) are constantly changing locations with changes in temperature, light, barometric pressure and structural preferences associated with all three.

I often see anglers fruitlessly fishing all day long in the same place, hoping fish will eventually find them. With some patience and a good book for the down time between takes, this methodology may be somewhat effective for sea-run speckled and brown trout on rivers with tidal influence or the afternoon nap on a calm lake when catching fish is the least of one’s

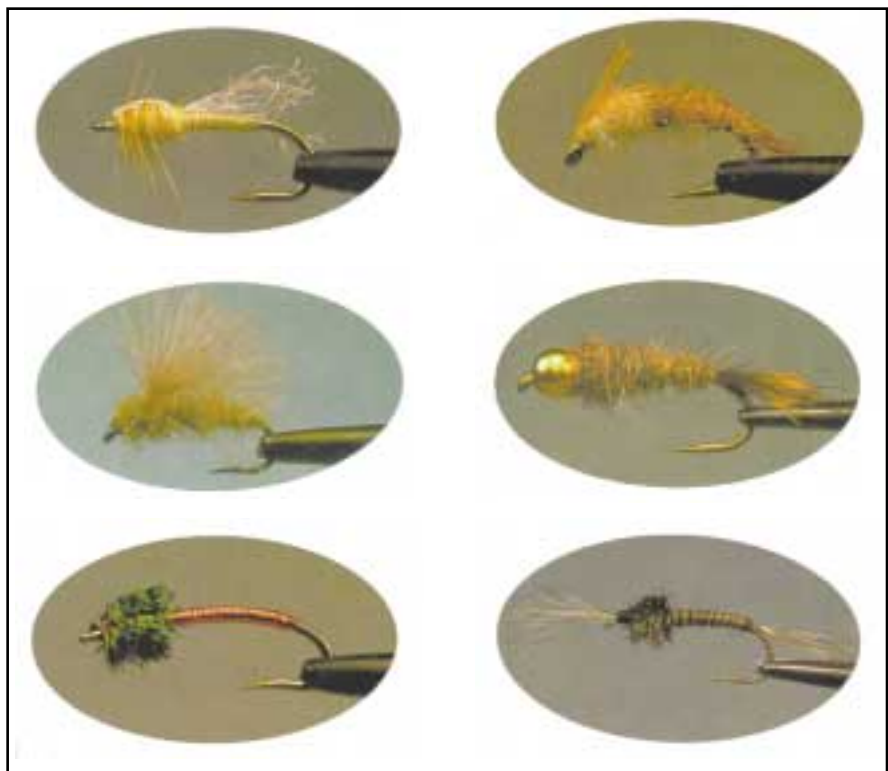


Many anglers prefer trout fishing at dusk and disregard the potential for mid-day success. (photo by Jason LeBlanc)

priorities. However, more often than not, a simple move to another spot would yield results. Ask yourself if your intention is catching fish, would you stay in one spot on the lake the whole day? Of course not, when fly fishing summer trout streams

mobility is equally important.

Upon reaching a new location, do you grab your rod with the same line and fly that worked so well last time; walk to the water’s edge (race if you are fishing with your buddy) all the time peeling line



Six Flies for Summer (courtesy of The Umpqua Encyclopedia)



High Noon - Mid-summer speckled trout. (photo by Jason LeBlanc)

off the reel as you go and fire towards the middle of the run or pool? Relax and take a couple of minutes to consider your surroundings; the weather, any obvious hatches that could help your fly selection, the position of undercut banks, rising fish,

etc. There are almost always trout close to the bank and subtle hints that can help formulate your approach. Stay back from the water and make a few casts close to the bank. Starting at the edge of the bank will often scare fish out from cover and

subsequently out of reach. There is as much food, if not more, close to the bank so it's a good idea to stand well back and target trout there before extending your casts farther out.

If you had to select a time for your first cast on one of the best stretches of water you have ever fished, it is unlikely that you would choose the middle of the afternoon in mid July or August. Your rule of thumb has always been to fish in the early morning, have a midday nap and get that last hour of active feeding at dusk that has been so rewarding over the years. May I suggest that you never rely on the evening rise for summer trout. For the tactful fish-

erman, the fascination with locating rising trout during the day, especially at high noon, can be a very rewarding experience.

But finding rising trout is only part of the fun. In mid summer, the choice of a fly is often less important than at other times of year when fish are preoccupied with big hatches of a single species (e.g. mayfly). However nymphs, caddis, midges and emergers often deliver the best results. High riding dry flies such as Black Gnat, Adams and an assortment of mosquitoes also work well in summer, particularly in active water. A fly dressed in a particular style can make all the difference. This often reminds me of a particular early summer trip, with a colleague, to a lake that local knowledge suggested was not worth the trip once the annual spring mayfly hatch had finished. We successfully hooked sixteen healthy Nova Scotia speckled trout that day, on a gorgeous lake, void of other anglers and on what were some of the ugliest flies I have ever tied. My "Mystery Muddler" proved most effective; the fly that looked like the deer hair was trimmed with a pair nail clippers and the wings were purposely left off; both were true. Since that trip I have intentionally tied and used this fly successfully; it has proven to be excellent for fast, deliberate retrieves and trolling.

Daytime fishing in mid-summer can be demanding, but always remember the trout are still there and are likely feeding on something. Even then, the fish will sometimes leave you puzzled, questioning your approach, your knowledge and your tact. That is why it's called "fishing" rather than "catching". Approach summer water conditions and trout behaviour intellectually – think about how you will go about your day's fishing and do not rule out the unlikely (ugly flies and tactics for demanding summer conditions) and you too may find yourself in the angling minority. Please be cautious, though, that increased summer water temperatures and resulting lower oxygen levels can increase stress on hooked fish. Careful handling such as quick retrieval, avoiding the eye and gill areas, and keeping the fish in the water to remove the hook can increase the chances of survival of released fish. Reap the rewards of mid-summer trout fishing by substituting your nap for high noon nymph fishing.

Jason LeBlanc is a Fisheries Biologist with the Inland Fisheries Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries in Pictou, NS.

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New Conservation Fee Contributes To Fish Habitat

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

Nova Scotia anglers will contribute directly to the province's recreational fishery through a new Sportfish Habitat Fund. The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries is introducing the fund and a \$5 habitat fee on fishing licences for the 2005 angling season.

"This new fee allows anglers to share in the restoration and protection of fish habitats, and helps to sustain a healthy sport fishery," said Chris d'Entremont, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries. "Community volunteers carry out most of the project work and this fund will provide them with money to continue their excellent work."


The fee will be part of general and salmon fishing licences. However, seniors 65 years and older do not have to pay the \$5 fee when they acquire general fishing licences. The primary goal of the fund will be to support the conservation and enhancement of fish habitats and to improve public access to resources.

Through the Sportfish Habitat Fund, projects will be funded up to 50 percent of the total project cost. An advisory committee will be established to review all project proposals and they will recommend to the minister which projects to approve. The committee will consist of a representative from the Nova Scotia Salmon Association, the Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Trout Nova Scotia and the Canadian Associa-

tion of Smallmouth Anglers. A staff person from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries will also be on the committee.

The four provincial angling organizations requested the conservation initiative and are partners in the establishment of the new sportfish fund.

Draw for License of a Lifetime Lottery



Darlene Caldwell, 1st Vice President of the Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters (NSFAH) shares a laugh with Hon. Richard Hurlburt, Minister of Natural Resources and Gary Penney, President of the NSFAH while drawing for the 2004 winners of the License of Lifetime Lottery. The winners are Burton Baker of Maitland, Hants County and Arnold D. Johnson of Coldbrook. The License of a Lifetime provides the winner with his small game and deer license as well as his general angling license every year for life. The contest is sponsored by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and the NSFAH. (Photo courtesy of Shirley Robb, Communications Nova Scotia.)



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Random Casts

Bright Flies for Spring Fishing

By Don MacLean

The water was high and dirty with spring run off and I rooted through my fly box for something that the trout would be able to see. I selected a big muddler minnow with a fluorescent orange body. I cast the fly with some confidence that at least the fish would see it, the rest would be up to the trout. I use a lot of fluorescent material in my flies and I am not alone. A trip to the local tackle shop will

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Although the words are often used interchangeably, 'phosphorescence' and 'fluorescence' actually mean two different things. Fluorescent material emits light only in the presence of light, so it is less effective during low light periods such as early morning or dusk. Phosphorescent materials, on the other hand, will emit light in total darkness, often for a considerable length of time. Anglers use a light source such as a camera flash to illuminate the material before putting it in the water. Lures and flies with phosphorescent material are often used when night fishing, but they would also be an advantage during low light conditions such as dawn or dusk as well as under the ice.

While lures painted with phosphorescent material have been available for some time, fly tyers haven't been able to

use this technology in their flies until recently. Several manufacturers now make thread, floss, yarn and tinsel, which are all phosphorescent. One benefit fly tyers have over lures is that they can control the amount of fluorescent or phosphorescent material in the flies. You can add only a tip or butt of this material or the whole body. In Nova Scotia, no one is allowed to use a light or flame of any kind when fishing inland waters. This

includes light emitting lures which have their own source of light. It does not apply to types of paint or fly tying material used to make a lure or fly.

One fly which I use this technology on is the muddler minnow, the fly which I use most often during the fishing season. The muddler is perhaps the most popular streamer fly in the world, and with good reason. From trout to salmon, bass and perch, it will catch them all. Famed angling writer, the late Joe Brooks, was a great fan of the fly. Brooks called the muddler minnow the best all-around fly of its kind that he had ever used and he always carried an assortment in his vest from No. 10 all the way up to 1/0.

Whether you fish the original or design your own, make sure you have an assortment, in a variety of sizes, in your fly box. Day in and day out it will bring fish to the net.



Fluorescent Muddler Minnow
 Thread: Black

Tail: Small section of turkey quill

Body: Fluorescent red, orange or yellow floss wrapped over 2/3 of hook shank

Wing: Underwing of grey squirrel covered with paired strips of turkey quill

Head: Deer hair, same colour as the body, spun and trimmed. Clip front to shape and leave a collar of hair at the back.
 Tight Lines.

Don MacLean is a Nova Scotia biologist who writes on sport fishing topics. His book, Discover Nova Scotia Sport Fishing, was published in 2003.

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Ministers Regan And D'Entremont Sign Fish Habitat Agreement

The Honourable Geoff Regan, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Honourable Chris d'Entremont, Nova Scotia Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Fish Habitat Management. The agreement will increase federal-provincial cooperation in protecting and enhancing fish habitat in Nova Scotia.

The MOU formalizes procedures for the two levels of government to work together to protect fish habitat in the province. It applies to all fish habitats in Nova Scotia and will help to sustain the province's fisheries resources. Priorities under the MOU include:

- Measures to improve client service and streamline regulatory reviews.
- Improved information sharing and increased cooperation on habitat stewardship.
- Exploring new opportunities to enhance fish habitat.
- Agreement on seeking new opportunities to enhance scientific support for habitat research and monitoring.

"The MOU builds on a long history of collaboration on fish habitat between DFO and the province and provides a framework to increase cooperation and results for fish habitat and for Nova Scotians," stated Minister Regan. "It is good news for fish habitat and for the many community groups committed to habitat restoration in the province."

"Habitat restoration is important for ecological and economical reasons. Our cooperative efforts, which support the many volunteers who work to protect our province's fish habitat, is a positive accomplishment," said Minister d'Entremont. "The signing of this MOU will complement the new habitat fund that has been established for implementation in 2005. Volunteer groups will have access to this fund to help them carry out their work."

The Canada-Nova Scotia MOU is key to the implementation of the Environmental Process Modernization Plan that the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers strongly supported at its September meeting. It makes an important contribution to the government's Smart Regulation Agenda.

This is the fourth federal-provincial fish habitat management MOU, joining

the Canada-BC MOU signed in 2000, the Canada-PEI MOU signed in 2002, and the Canada-Manitoba MOU signed in 2003. The Government of Canada is currently in discussions with the other provinces and territories on similar fish habitat agreements.

The Canada-Nova Scotia Memorandum of Understanding on Fish Habitat Management is available on the Fisheries

and Oceans Canada website at: www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/canwaters-eauxcan/infocentre/publications/index_e.asp.

For more information, contact the Communications Branch of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Maritimes Region by phone at (902) 426-3550 or by e-mail at

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National Wildlife Week "Explore and Embrace a Special Wild Place"

April 10 - 16, 2005



*Honourable
Richard Huriburt,
Minister*

This year, during *National Wildlife Week* we ask Canadians to consider the special "wild" places where they go to relax, have fun, admire nature's beauty, or just get away from it all. We in Nova Scotia are fortunate to be able to experience a variety of wild places – forests, parks, beaches, wetlands, sanctuaries, and trails.

As Minister of Natural Resources, I encourage you to explore and embrace these special places. Go bird watching, camp in a provincial park, spend a day at the beach, hike along a trail. Discover more about nature and wildlife through the programs offered by our environmental educators at the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park or the Natural Resources Education Centre in Middle Musquodoboit.

You can also foster a special "wild" place in your backyard by planting fruit-bearing trees and shrubs to encourage wildlife.

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A Walk In The Woods

What to do when Bambi becomes a nuisance

"Not what we give, but what we share, for the gift without the giver is bare."

—James Russell



When recently asked about how gardeners can keep deer out of their gardens, I was reminded of how common this problem is; it is experienced by people who enjoy homes or cottages near wooded areas. Although most people get a thrill out of viewing deer in the wild, these same people often consider them quite differently after they have lost their much loved garden flowers or produce to deer browsing.

Life history and habitats

According to Ross Hall, Wildlife Biologist with the Department of Natural Resources, the white-tailed deer, which is found in woodland habitats throughout Nova Scotia, is often referred to as an animal of edges. They thrive on the borders of farmlands, small cutovers, woodlots and wetlands. Deer prefer grazing on succulent green plants, but by necessity in winter, browse the twigs of assorted woody vegetation.

Deer have distinctive summer red and winter gray-brown coats. Females (which are called does) usually have one or two white-spotted fawns in spring. Bucks grow antlers that are shed each winter.

Severe winters cause hardships for deer. To avoid deep snow and chilly winds, deer move to lower elevations and into mature softwood forests. In spring, hungry deer will often damage ornamental shrubs, young orchards and blueberry vines. In summer they may damage home

gardens and commercial vegetable crops.

White-tailed deer evoke many emotions. To some people they are a gentle herbivore, perceived to have human values, qualities and behaviours. To hunters they are a challenging quarry. To crop owners they are a source of financial loss and frustration. There is a public reluctance and opposition to killing nuisance deer. Instead, peaceful ways are sought to keep deer away from gardens and crops.

Evidence of deer damage clearly signals their presence by tracks and droppings. Deer do not have front teeth in the upper jaw, so twigs browsed by deer are distinguished from those browsed by snowshoe hare or porcupine by a part bite and jagged tear pattern, rather than a clean cut. It is not unusual to see deer feeding in gardens and crops. Often their nearby footprints are easily recognized.

Scare devices

People have tried scaring deer in many ways. Often they do not work, or work only temporarily. They are more practical for home gardens than for larger commercial crops.

An important concept to understand is conditioning. For example, crows become so accustomed to road traffic that they stay at the roadside as traffic speeds by. A scarecrow in a garden will initially make deer nervous, but they will soon overcome any fear. Scare devices must be moved regularly. It helps to use a variety rather than relying too much on one type. Early action must be taken. Once deer have an established habit, they will be more difficult to discourage.

Scare devices can relate to sight, hearing, taste, or smell. There are classic scarecrow structures that resemble human forms.

Fertilizer bags inverted over stakes in gardens might bring relief for a week or longer. Try aluminum pie plates, streamers, balloons, and other unusual objects. Use your imagination.

Noise-producing devices might include a radio turned to an all-night station and placed under a protective cover. There are gas exploders, but these may be too expensive and irritating to neighbours for the average garden owner. Deer quickly become accustomed to gas exploders, so they have limited value on large crop fields.

Repellents

There are various home remedies and trade name repellents that relate to taste or smell. Ground chicken feathers (feather meal), naphthalene (mothballs), creosote, human hair clippings from barber shops, dried blood from slaughterhouses (blood meal), tankage from rendering plants (meat meal) and Magic Circle (bone tar oil) are area repellents applied near the plants to be protected. Contact repellents are sprayed directly on the plants. Hinder (ammonium soaps of higher fatty acids) can be applied to edible crops. Others, such as Big Game Repellent (putrescent whole egg solids) and several products based on the fungicide Thiram are for use on ornamental trees and shrubs and dormant fruit trees. Hot Sauce Animal Repellent (capsaicin) and other home-made hot, spicy concoctions are used similarly to Thiram on dormant growth.

Repellents are not practical for row crops or other large areas. Results of research to test the effectiveness of repellents has not been encouraging. Success is measured in reduction, not elimination of damage. Rainfall will wash away some repellents. In times of food stress, deer are likely to ignore either taste or smell repellents.

Keeping deer out

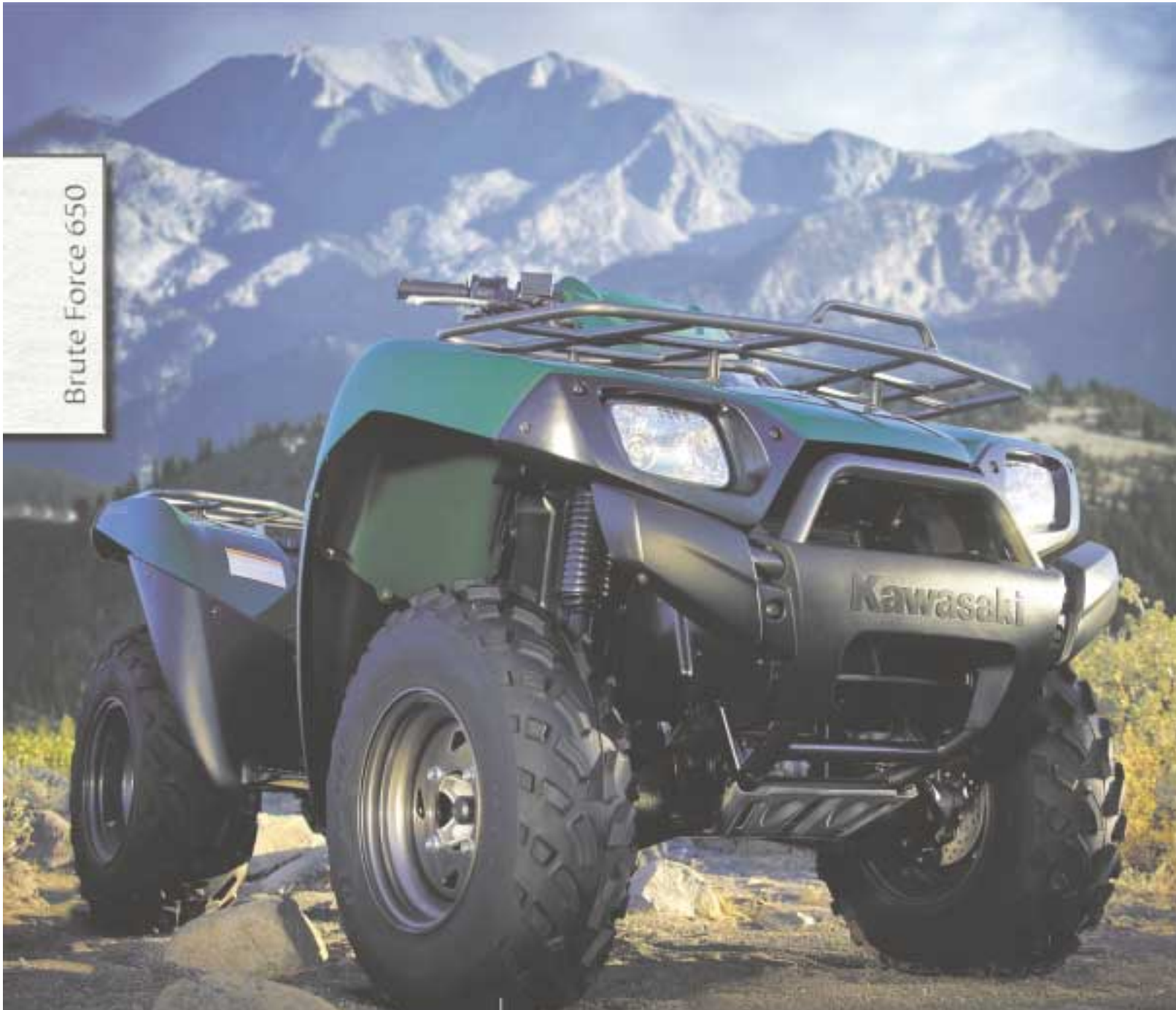
The sure way to keep out deer is to build a deer-proof fence at least eight feet (2.4 m) high, ground tight and of woven wire. The high cost is perhaps justified only to keep deer out of very high value or high risk areas such as airport runways or commercial enterprises. For small gardens, one might improvise with discarded ground fisherman's net or snow fence. Deer feel insecure inside fences that obstruct visibility. Fences that slant outwards are reported to thwart deer from jumping over them.

Like scare devices, exclusion devices should be used before deer get the habit of feeding in your garden or crop. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is certainly applicable when dealing with nuisance deer. There are electric fences designed specifically to exclude deer. They are less expensive than a wire mesh barrier. They require more maintenance, but electric fences do work.

Don Cameron is a Registered Professional Forester.

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Hunter Education Instructor Of The Year

Department of Natural Resources

Clarence Grondin of the Lunenburg Rod and Gun Club is the 2004 Nova Scotia Hunter Education Instructor of the Year.

The award was presented by Richard Hurlburt, Minister of Natural Resources.

"I am pleased to be able to recognize the contribution Mr. Grondin has made to hunter education in Nova Scotia," said Mr. Hurlburt. "His work, together with the work of volunteer instructors like him, is invaluable in promoting safe hunting, responsible hunter-landowner relations and public safety."



Hon. Richard Hurlburt, Minister of Natural Resources presents Clarence Grondin the 2004 Hunter Education Instructor of the year.

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Mr. Grondin has taught hunter safety to many Nova Scotians and has 21 years of experience. He is one of more than 160 instructors across the province who work through non-profit service clubs to deliver hunter education programs year-round.

"Hunter education works and the proof is in the pudding," said Tony Rodgers, executive director of the Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters. "In the last five years alone, there have been no fatalities."

The Department of Natural Resources has presented the Instructor of the Year award since 1994 to recognize volunteer instructors who have made an outstanding effort to promote hunter education in Nova Scotia.

For more information, contact Mary Anna Jollymore at the Department of Natural Resources by phone: (902) 424-2354, fax: (902) 424-7735 or e-mail: jollymmt@gov.ns.ca.

An advertisement for J.D. Irving, Limited. The background is a photograph of a fly fisherman in a white vest and hat, standing in a shallow stream surrounded by lush green trees. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image. At the bottom, there is a logo for IRVING J.D. IRVING, LIMITED.

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Canadian Hunting Heritage Accord

Whereas hunting is the lawful and responsible pursuit of wildlife, including the opportunity to harvest animals for food, clothing and cultural purposes; and

Whereas hunting remains a relevant and enduring part of our culture and heritage, providing sustenance for the human spirit and a vital link to understanding and appreciating an ever-changing natural world; and

Whereas hunting provides a continuing and sustainable source of healthy natural food that enriches the body, as well as the soul; and

Whereas early leaders of the hunting community - Audubon, Seton, Thoreau, Roosevelt, Leopold, Clark and others - recognized and promoted the need for conservation policies and programs to benefit all wild creatures in Canada; and

Whereas the hunting community has always been in the forefront of ensuring the continuing welfare of all wildlife and their habitats; and

Whereas the hunting community generates many billions of dollars annually in support of habitat conservation, restoration and enhancement that has benefited all wildlife; and

Whereas hunting is carefully regulated to prevent the endangerment of wildlife populations; and

Whereas hunted species continue to be sustainable in response to science-based management, careful regulation and habitat conservation; and

Whereas the hunting community stands ready to work cooperatively with all groups whose goal is to ensure the well-being of all wildlife populations; and

Whereas the hunting community strives to improve understanding among all participants including aboriginal peoples; and

Whereas the hunting community and government agencies have developed and implemented hunter safety and education programs that have reduced accidents to a rate which is lower than most other outdoor activities;

Therefore Canada's hunting community and the agencies that regulate the activity, hereby declare their support for and agree to take action on the following articles. By these undertakings, the activity of hunting will continue to be ecologically sustainable, safe, lawful, responsible and true to the hunting heritage of our forefathers:

Article 1: Canada's hunting community pledges to conduct itself in a responsible manner that will maintain and strengthen public acceptance of hunting and hunters.

Article 2: Canada's hunting community and associated agencies and organizations will work cooperatively and constructively in the funding and delivery of hunting-related programs and in the collection and use of science-based information to manage wildlife populations and their habitats.

Article 3: Canada's hunting community will develop, articulate and personally adhere to responsible hunting practices before, during and after the hunt.

Article 4: Canada's hunting community will maintain and strengthen its long-standing commitment to the conservation of wildlife and its habitat, through the funding and support of ecologically sustainable initiatives.

Article 5: Canada's hunting community will participate, as appropriate, at the global level, in the support of wildlife conservation, including the consumptive uses of wildlife that are legal and ecologically sustainable.

Article 6: Canada's hunting community will continue to support initiatives that promote natural resource conservation and public safety, and preserve hunting cultures and traditions.

Article 7: Canada's hunting community will support a balanced approach to hunting that considers the impact on the resource, the experience, the application of skills and the maximization of opportunities for the hunter.

Article 8: Canada's hunting community, associated agencies and organizations that finance, deliver and regulate hunting programs will ensure staff are knowledgeable of the richness and diversity of our hunting culture and heritage.

Article 9: Canada's hunting community and associated agencies and organizations, will develop and implement initiatives that retain and recruit participants.

Article 10: Canada's hunting community will share the rich history and traditions of hunting in all its forms with future generations in a manner that reflects respect for the quarry and the responsibilities of the hunter.

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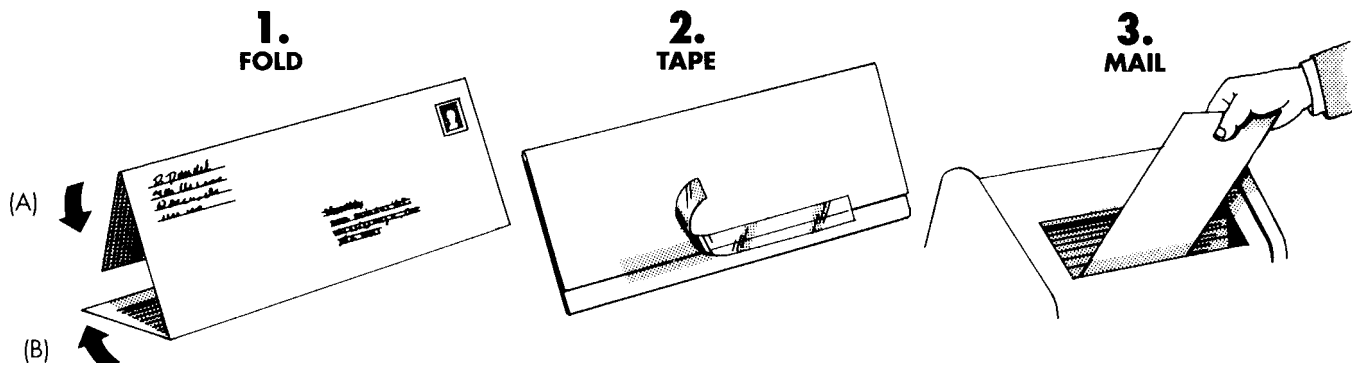
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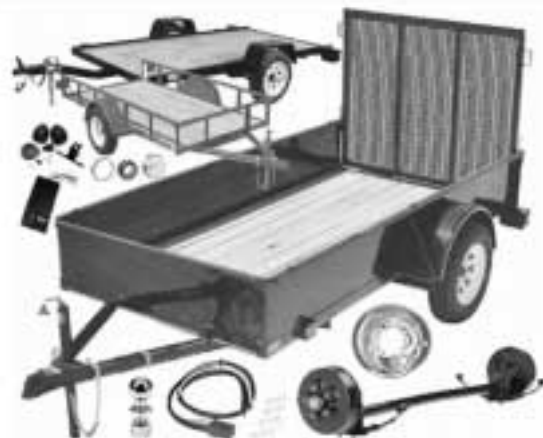


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