

YOUTH HUNT EARNS KIDS KUDOS

Gray dawn was still seeping into the woods at 6:28 a.m. when a whitetail buck walked in front of Leah Rosenberg's deer stand. Legal shooting hours began two minutes later, but the buck had walked out of sight. A little disappointed but with her hunting ethics still intact, Rosenberg, 14, pulled on insulated overalls. The warmth generated by a mile-long walk into the woods was fading, and the 20° breeze danced with snow flurries.

Rosenberg and her guide, Mark Crawley, spent the next 15 minutes quietly scanning the woods. They heard leaves rustle as another whitetail was walking toward them, browsing on acorns.

"I never saw anyone more cool and careful to make a good shot," Crawley said later. "After a while I really wished she would pull that trigger."

When she did pull the trigger, the 7 point buck fell, kicked twice and was dead. Rosenberg's first deer kill was quick and clean — one that would make a veteran proud.

Rosenberg is a freshman at Fort Zumwalt South High School. She was among 56 hunters who took part in a special, two-day youth deer hunt November 6 and 7 at Weldon Spring Conservation Area in St. Charles County. She was one of 21 who bagged deer. It was the culmination of months of planning by Roy Grimes and other Wildlife and Protection division staff of the Missouri Department of Conservation.

One of the first things that the MDC learned was that a youth deer hunt was a very popular idea. They received 341 applications for the hunt. From that number, they picked 30 youths who had hunted before and 30 who hadn't.

"Our goal was to provide a quality, introductory hunting experience," he said.

All participants were required to complete a hunter skills clinic about everything from hunting ethics and safety to field dressing deer. They even had a chance to sharpen their marksmanship



LEAH ROSENBERG WITH HER 7 POINT WHITETAIL BUCK. PHOTO COURTESY OF JIM LOW, MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION.

at a shooting range.

More than a third of the youths killed deer. The largest deer was a 10 point buck checked by 11 year old Matt Bradshaw. But the emphasis on a quality hunting experience — regardless of whether they killed deer — apparently was not lost on the young hunters.

Rosenberg was still grinning hours after bagging her buck. "The first thing she said after she shot it was, 'What time is it?'" said Crawley. "After that, she just kept saying, 'I can't believe I shot a deer!'"

Grimes said he expects to offer the special youth deer hunt again next year.

— Missouri Department of Conservation

VERMONT MOOSE HUNT SUCCESSFUL

Vermont's first moose season in 70 years was a complete success, according to a spokesman for the state Fish and Wildlife Board.

Of the 30 sportsmen drawn by lottery to participate in the three-day hunt, 28 took a moose.

In June, a Vermont legislative panel vote 5-3 to allow the Fish and Wildlife Board to implement a limited moose season.

The Legislature's Administrative Rules Committee approved the request of the board to sanction a hunt for Essex County; an area where the moose herd has grown fast and needs thinning that only hunting can provide.

Both Vermont House and Senate members comprise the rule committee which is authorized to act for the entire Legislature. The committee considered the issue at the request of the board after the entire House approved — then rejected a next day consideration — a moose season.

The Sporting Alliance for Vermont's Environment (SAVE) was instrumental in the grassroots lobbying campaign to support a season.

A WLFA Protect What's Right club associate, the statewide conservation organization hosted numerous media events, including a "celebration of conservation success".

Such celebrations have been used to spread the good news of wildlife conservation, by Protect What's Right club associates nationwide.

WLFA State Service Director Thomas B. Addis is consulting with Vermont sportsmen-activists on expanding the moose hunting statewide.

— Wildlife Legislative Fund of America

HOW MUCH FOOD IS IN A DEER?

Ask successful hunters about their deer, and they will tell you how much the animals weighed field-dressed. But what do field-dressed weights tell about live weight and the amount of food in a deer? Here are rules of thumb for converting field-dressed weight to live weight and edible meat.

A deer that weighs 60 pounds field dressed would have had a live weight of about 80 pounds. Other conversions from field-dressed weight to live weight are: 70/90, 80/100, 90/115, 100/130, 110/140, 120/155, 130/170, 140/180, 150/190 and 160/205.

Multiply the field-dressed weight by .65 to calculate how much meat you will get from a deer. With this formula, you can estimate that a 120 pound field-dressed carcass will yield 78 pounds of meat.

Careful handling of your deer will ensure maximum enjoyment of the meat. For information on proper field-dressing and other meat handling tips, write for the free booklet, "Missouri Deer Hunting," Missouri Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180.

—Missouri Department of Conservation

In The NEWS

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT MARKS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

Two decades ago, the bald eagle, American alligator, gray whale, and peregrine falcon seemed destined for extinction. Twenty years have passed since the Endangered Species Act became law, and today the alligator no longer needs the protection of the act. The bald eagle, gray whale and peregrine show great promise of returning to healthy numbers.

"The Endangered Species Act is one of this country's most successful conservation laws," said Mollie Beattie, director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Interior Department agency charged with

implementing the Act. "Without the Act in place, we might have lost our national symbol along with many other lesser known species and with them many important ecosystems."

In fact, four species have recovered to the point that they no longer need the Act's protection, while 17 have been upgraded from endangered to

the less serious, threatened category. And more success stories are on the way.

Other species that once teetered on the brink of extinction are responding well to efforts to save them. The whooping crane, down to only 16 birds in the 1940's, now numbers more than 250 in wild and captive flocks. Found only in zoos for a number of years, the California condor once again soars high above the mountains of southern California. And the red wolf, which had to be rescued from extinction through a last-minute removal of ani-

mals from the wild, is again roaming native haunts in the Southeast.

Black-footed ferrets, small mammals that once inhabited vast stretches of the Great Plains, were thought to have become extinct by the 1970's. But in 1981, a farmer's dog killed a ferret, leading biologists to discover a tiny remnant population near Meeteetse, Wyoming. Ten years later, captive breeding programs paid off with a re-introduction of black-footed ferrets into the wilds of Wyoming's Shirley Basin.

"What we've come to understand over the past 20 years is that this country's economic vitality is ultimately dependent on its overall environmental health," said Beattie. "When we list a species, regardless of what that species is, we're getting a clear signal that the natural resources we ourselves depend on — clean air, adequate water, a healthy diversity of life — are truly in jeopardy. By ensuring the continued existence of endangered species, we ultimately ensure our own survival."

— U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

THE NUMBERS ARE IN AND HUNTING REMAINS SAFE

The statistics don't lie. Hunting remains the safest outdoor recreation-related activity. Far safer to the participants than football, baseball, soccer, bicycling, skateboarding, horseback riding, ice skating and even fishing, golf, tennis and swimming!

According to the National Safety Council, only eight injuries per 100,000 participants are posted by hunters. This is based on 1991 statistics, the most recent year for which numbers are available.

That number pales by comparison to swimming, the next lowest injury-related activity, which accounts for slightly over 93 injuries per 100,000 participants. Fishing is even more hazardous, say the statistics, as over 141 out of every 100,000 report injuries.

What about fatalities? You're still safer walking through the woods with a gun than you are staying around the house. Less than one in every 100,000 hunters was killed in 1991, ac-

cording to statistics. Just over eight out of 100,000 deaths are attributed to home accidents. Get in a car, and your odds of dying shoot upward, as the death rate is 18.6 per every 100,000 people.

You're more likely to die from poisoning, falls, fires or suffocation than from a stray bullet during the hunting season.

— Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

BIGHORN SHEEP TAKE UP RESIDENCE ALONG DESCHUTES

Watching a bighorn sheep jump and climb up a near vertical cliff is a thrill only a few Oregonians will experience. However, with the introduction of 35 California bighorn sheep to the lower Deschutes River canyon, thousands of rafters, wildlife viewers, hunters and anglers will now have that chance.

The bighorns were released Wednesday, December 22 by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife as part of an ongoing drive to reintroduce healthy populations of bighorn sheep to the state. Bighorns were extinct from Oregon in the 1930's and 1940's due to disease from domestic sheep and unregulated hunting.

"This historic range," said biologist Jim Torland. "It's the northern most range of California bighorn sheep in Oregon. We know that they were here historically by talking with people who were here before, particularly the Indians. They were a big help to us and we've worked with the tribes in reestablishing this particular group of sheep."

The day of the Deschutes River release was also Torland's birthday. He's worked for years to make this happen - the idea was born in 1985 and much cooperative groundwork between the department, Bureau of Land Management and local landowners and sportsmen's clubs.

Short-sleeve weather, clear blue sky, and a spectacular performance by the bighorns as they headed into the steep cliffs made for a near perfect release.

— Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife



TAKE PART IN THE SAFEST OUTDOOR ACTIVITY... HUNTING! THIS HUNTER ENJOYS HIS DAYS AFIELD IN HELL'S CANYON, IDAHO. PHOTO COURTESY OF GEORGE A. BETTAS.



INVESTIGATORS TRACKING LEADS IN THIRD COUGAR SHOOTING

Cougar T-36 is dead — the third to be shot since 10 cougars were released into the wild near Lake City early this year.

Wildlife researchers at Gainesville monitor the cats' movements by tracking the radio signals transmitted by the animals' collars. On Tuesday, November 23, they began to suspect T-36 was in trouble because the 165 pound male cougar had remained in the same spot an unusually long time.

"Our people went into the area Wednesday," Tom Logan, head of wildlife research for the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission said. "The cat tried to crawl away from them on its front legs, but its back legs were paralyzed from a shotgun wound to its back."

The badly injured animal was located and taken to the Commission's wildlife research laboratory in Gainesville where veterinarian, Dr. Mike Dunbar, determined the cougar's injuries were too severe to save it, so he euthanized the cat.

Logan said the latest incident is a serious blow to the experiment, which is a crucial step toward eventual reintroduction of endangered Florida panthers into the area.

"Hunters — especially organized hunters — can play an important role in helping us put a stop to this kind of crime," Logan said.

Meanwhile, wildlife officers from the Commission's Lake City office said they have uncovered some

leads in the case, and their investigation is progressing.

Anyone with information that leads to an arrest in this case could claim a reward of up to \$2,000 by calling the Wildlife Alert Hotline at 800-342-8105. Callers can remain anonymous and still claim the reward.

— Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission

BISON GET SKYJACKED

Last week, 28 American bison were transplanted from their Henry Mountain home to historical range on the Books Cliffs in northeast Utah. They came off the mountain one by one, suspended upside-down from a cable beneath the whirling rotors of a Hughes 500 helicopter. The huge beasts sailed from their Henry Mountain home to waiting ground crews and horse trailers.

The operation went something like this: The chopper located the animals from the air, and swooped down on top of the stampeding herd. The gunner singled out an individual and jettisoned a net over its back. The bison promptly entangled itself in the deployed net and rolled to a stop. The chopper sat down, and the air crew jumped out, hobbled the animal, and hooked it with a cable. After lift off, the wide-eyed bison was whisked into the

PHOTO COURTESY OF FLORIDA GAME AND FRESH WATER FISH COMMISSION.

air. Upon reaching the base of operations, the bison was swung into a small corral where it was ear-tagged, unhobbled and loaded into a waiting horse trailer for its ground trip to the Ute Indian Reservation.

"This was the first time something like this has ever been done," said Jim Karpowitz, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources regional game manager who masterminded the operation. "We were on pins and needles the whole time, worrying about the safety of both the bison and crews. They're too big to take for granted. One kick or shove and it's all over!"

The transplant served several purposes. The Utes had provided hunters with access to the Book Cliffs Roadless Area along the Totem Pole Trail this year. The exchange was in part a pay back for the tribe's good will on behalf of Utah's hunters. Also, herd size on the Henry Mountains is negotiated with the BLM. The herd has exceeded the agreed upon population ceiling and needed cutting back. Removal of animals through hunting, natural mortality and the recent transplant is expected to bring the bison population to the negotiated limit.

— Utah Wildlife

PHOTO COURTESY OF STATE OF UTAH, DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES.



In The News