

Rx FOR "X"ERS: HOW TO WIN GENERATION X TO THE OUTDOORS

Has Generation X been caught up in the "web?" Has the age of information empowered and, at the same time, entrapped these young citizens? Do the members of the newest segment of society attain to attitudes, consumption patterns and other behaviors unique to their group?

The generation following the "baby boomers" is often referred to as "Generation X." These young citizens matured in quite a different era than did their older counterparts. Baby boomers grew up in an era of unprecedented growth in which the United States had a trade surplus. Generation X grew up with a seemingly volatile economy with trade deficits, a growing national debt, and unbalanced national budgets. The baby boomers, as parents eager to share "fruits of their labors" with their offspring, were able to provide abundant material goods and learning opportunities to the generation that was growing up on the first crest of the computer age.

The 1996 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation (conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) reveals that 77 million U.S. residents 16 years old and older participated in some type of wildlife-related recreation activities in 1996. That includes participation in hunting, fishing or at least one type of wildlife-watching recreation activity including observing, feeding or photographing fish and other wildlife. These national surveys, conducted at approximate 5-year intervals since 1955, show that the number of anglers increased by 62 percent while the number of hunters decreased by 41 percent. Over this same 41-year period, the U.S. population increased by 62 percent. But most alarming, over the past six years there has been a significant decline in the percentages of hunters and anglers. There has also been a decrease in the percentage of people observing wildlife.

Four decades of changes in technology, social norms and living styles have certainly influenced how Americans think, act and spend their leisure time. Marketing to young citizens today

is extremely competitive. Growing up with the fantasies and mysteries of "Disney World" to become adults with "virtual realities" and "internet capabilities" has yielded a large population of creative and enlightened individuals who are also skeptical and analytical. To sell this generation on the outdoors requires strategies that evoke curiosity, excitement and mystery to the participant. The internet and computer easily offer all three stimuli and are enjoyed in the comfort of home.

The largest segment of Generation X either does not

provides a variety of specialized programs including Community Fishing, Project WILD, Aquatic WILD, Project WET and Youth Shooting Sports. Check with your local fish and game departments to see what's available in your area.

The third step in winning Generation X to the outdoors is to provide them training in outdoor skills such that they feel competent with these skills and can use them with confidence. Provide intense workshops with expert instructors. Be patient, supportive and basic with instruction. Design them for



feel compelled to, or does not know how to, use the outdoors for their leisure time. How, then, do we win Generation X to the outdoors? The first step in winning this group to the outdoors is to get their attention. Start with the internet. Stimulate curiosity, excitement and mystery. Design interactive programs with virtual realism. Make them want more. Make them want to experience the real thing.

The second step in winning this group to the outdoors is to show them how they are connected to the outdoors. Provide events that are fun, relaxing and informative about some aspect of outdoor recreation or the environment. Provide these programs free of charge, have them convenient to attend and offer them to families. Alabama Game and Fish Division

individuals or family members. Provide them with plenty of information as to how and where these new skills can be enjoyed.

The world for Generation X is built upon computers and the "information web." For "X"ers, these are necessary tools, not luxuries. And though these young Americans may value the outdoors and appreciate the need for environmental stewardship, many tend not to have the time or feel the need to experience wildlife and wildlife habitat firsthand. The connection to the computer, "the internet," will provide the means to reach out to this generation. Through the computer can come the information, the lure, the challenge for these young citizens to experience the outdoors in reality.

—ALABAMA WILDLIFE

OPERATION GAME THIEF OFFERS \$1,000 REWARD FOR INFORMATION ON KILLING OF DEER, ANTELOPE IN NORTHWEST COLORADO

The Colorado Division of Wildlife is offering a reward of up to \$1,000 through its Operation Game Thief program for information leading to the arrest of whomever is responsible for killing 43 deer and pronghorn in northwestern Colorado and leaving them to rot.

Wildlife officers found the 43 animals lying along roads. The animals had apparently been randomly shot, many over a two-day period. An investigation is underway to determine who killed the deer and pronghorn.

"This is a senseless, wanton act that shows total disregard for wildlife and ethics at the most basic level," Dave Croonquist, the Division's assistant chief of law enforcement. "Anyone with information about this crime should contact their local division office or call Operation Game Thief at (800) 332-4155."

Croonquist said callers may remain anonymous if they choose.

"From the air, this looks like a killing field," said Area Wildlife Manager Dan Prenzl. "These animals were scattered along 50 miles of road. But when you found one, you found bunch."

Prenzl said one pronghorn was still alive but could not stand up after lying wounded for five or six days. Wildlife officers destroyed the animal to end its suffering.

Killing big game and leaving the carcass to rot is

considered willful destruction of wildlife and is a class 5 felony. The penalty includes a fine of up to \$100,000 and a jail sentence of up to four years.

Division investigators said the animals were apparently killed about July 31 or August 1 on roads in Moffat and Routt counties.

—WILDLIFE REPORT, NEWS FROM THE COLORADO DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

FAILURE TO PAY CHILD SUPPORT COSTS PARENTS

Failure to pay court-ordered child support, as required by federal and state Parental Responsibility Acts, cost 31 men their New Mexico hunting and fishing privileges.

The State Game Commission revoked their license privileges on July 25. New Mexico's Human Services Department has a list of 17,000 persons who are behind on their child support. Those people are not entitled to professional, occupational or recreational licenses in the state.

Each month, Human Services and the Department of Game and Fish compare lists of licensed hunters and anglers to the list of those behind in their child support. Anyone who appears on both lists is notified and has 20 days to request a hearing. Those who do not request a hearing will be notified their hunting and fishing license privileges have been revoked.

—NEW MEXICO WILDLIFE NEWS

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