



Sportsman's News Roundup

April 1, 2010

Time for new licenses

April 1 is the start of a new year for New Mexico sportsmen – it's time to get your 2010-11 hunting and fishing licenses. A few changes are in store. Spring turkey hunters will get two tags instead of one (the change was inadvertently left out of the big game proclamation book). That season begins April 15. Several fishing rules changed, including a lower limit for striped bass (two per day) and no limit for brown trout in a stretch of the Rio Cebolla. Be sure to check the full list of new hunting and fishing regulations, which are available from license vendors and on the department Web site, www.wildlife.state.nm.us.

Check out your odds before applying for hunts

The deadline is looming to apply for big game hunts. The application period closes at 5 p.m. Wednesday, April 7. Don't get caught in the flood of last-minute applications, which in the past has jammed the Department of Game and Fish system. Before you apply, however, **check out the NMWF Big Game Draw Odds Report.** It will show you the approximate odds of drawing each hunt code. To get your copy, [click here](#). You'll have to fill out the information field, then click the "sign up button" at the bottom of the page. On the next page that pops up you'll find a link to download the file. Good luck in the draw.

Big game rules on Game Commission agenda in Albuquerque

Hunters can speak out on proposed big game rule changes when the State Game Commission meets Thursday, April 8, in Albuquerque. Department of Game and Fish staff will update commissioners on several issues, including recommendations for turkey and upland game rule changes and a new rule for javelina ([click here](#) to read the proposed changes). **The new rules would incorporate several changes proposed for all big game species**, including extending legal hunting hours to 30 minutes after sundown and allowing crossbows in hunts open to any legal sporting arms or muzzleloaders. The department also wants to change the rule review schedule to every four years instead of every two.

The presentation next week is the first in a new approach to adopting big game hunting rules. The department has broken up the big game rules into three parts, starting with turkey, upland game and javelina regulations. Those proposals, which are open for public comment now on the department's Web site, are expected to be voted on by the commission in June. The second set, which cover bighorn sheep, exotic species, elk, waterfowl and the Open Gate program rules, will be available for review and public comment on the department Web site later this month and will be presented to the commission in June. Proposals for deer, bear, cougar, antelope and the A-PLUS program will be on the Web site in July and presented to the Commission in August.

Also on next week's agenda are updates on the new aquatic invasive species rule and on the proposed reauthorization of the Habitat Stamp Program. The final decision on the invasive species rule is scheduled for June. The Habitat Stamp reauthorization comes up for a vote in July. Thursday's meeting runs from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Albuquerque Convention Center, La Cienega Conference Room. [Click here](#) to read the full meeting agenda.

If you have an opinion on any of the proposals or other thoughts to share with the commission, **attend the meeting and speak up.** ([Click here for a map.](#)) If you can't attend, you can always submit comments to the department by [clicking here](#).

CORRECTION: Furbearer rule timeline on tap

At the April 8 meeting, department staff also will present a proposed timeline for opening and review of the Trapping and Furbearers Rule. We incorrectly reported earlier that the department would open the rule at this meeting.

Saturday meeting scheduled for August

The Game Commission will meet on one Saturday in 2010, thanks to input from sportsmen like you. That meeting is set for Aug. 28 in Albuquerque. NMWF members and other sportsmen had advocated for Saturday meetings to allow more sportsmen to attend, but the remaining meetings of 2010 will be held on Thursdays, including in Gallup, Silver City, Ruidoso and Clovis. [Click here](#) for the full 2010 meeting schedule.

Supreme Court seeks more info in Whites Peak case

It will be at least another month – and perhaps much longer – before the state Supreme Court decides the fate of the proposed Whites Peak land trades. Both sides argued their case before the state's highest court on March 17. The justices peppered Assistant Attorney General Seth Cohen with questions as he argued that the trades were composed with a preordained outcome and that the process followed by the State Land Office was unconstitutional because of constrictions designed to avoid competing bids.

Northern New Mexico hunters packed the court chambers hoping for a positive outcome, but they'll have to wait. Chief Justice Edward Chavez said the hearing raised more questions than it answered and asked for more information. He told both sides to prepare supplemental briefs on two questions regarding the Land Commissioner's authority to conduct land exchanges, and gave them 30 days to comply, with additional time to respond to each other's brief. The court could schedule additional oral arguments, or it could make a decision based on the earlier hearing and the additional information. [Click here](#) to read the Santa Fe New Mexican story on the court case. [The Journal North](#) had an informative story on the legal background of the case, but you may have to watch a short advertisement first.

Antelope relocated from northeastern NM

The Department of Game and Fish captured 277 antelope on private land in northeastern New Mexico last month and relocated them to Mexico, Santa Ana Pueblo, a ranch near Grants and Bureau of Land Management property near San Antonio Mountain, the department said in a news release. Some of the animals, which had been damaging alfalfa fields, were sent to Mexico as part of an exchange for desert bighorn sheep rams. Others will augment growing pronghorn herds elsewhere in the state. The round-up required about 60 people, the department said. It involved building four miles of fencing and using a helicopter to herd the antelope into a funnel trap. The captured animals were trailered to their new homes.

Habitat project ideas sought

Hunters and anglers are invited to meet with their regional Habitat Stamp Citizens Advisory Committees and talk about proposed projects for the Habitat Stamp Program. The committees, appointed by the State Game Commission, make recommendations on where to conduct habitat improvement projects using the fees paid by sportsmen every year. The committees' final recommendations will go to the Game Commission on July 8. In the meantime, sportsmen can speak out at any of the following regional meetings:

April 6 – Santa Fe: 4 p.m. at the Bureau of Land Management office, 301 Dinosaur Trail.
April 13 – Albuquerque: 1 p.m. at the Department of Game and Fish office, 3841 Midway Place N.E.
April 19 – Farmington: 1 p.m. at the BLM office, 1235 La Plata Highway.
April 21, 22 – Truth or Consequences: 9 a.m. at the Black Range U.S. Forest Service office, 1804 N. Date Street.
April 24 - Cloudcroft: 10 a.m. at the Sacramento Ranger District U.S. Forest Service office, 4 Lost Lodge Road.

Conservation figurehead passes away

Stewart Udall, a champion of conservation and conservation-minded sportsmen, died in Santa Fe on March 20 at the age of 90. Udall was an Arizona congressman when President John F. Kennedy selected him to be Secretary of Interior in 1961, a position he held for eight years under two presidents. Under his tenure, the National Park Service grew by more than 60 sites, including Canyonlands National Park in Utah and the Appalachian Trail. He also was one of the architects of the Wilderness Act, which ensured that sportsmen will always have places off the road system. Udall saw the connection between environment and economic expansion, and warned, "We cannot afford an America where expedience tramples upon esthetics and development decisions are made with an eye only on the present." He also said, "Plans to protect air and water, wilderness and wildlife are in fact plans to protect man." Udall, whose son Tom now represents New Mexico in the U.S. Senate, moved to New Mexico in 1989. [Click here](#) to read an excellent remembrance in High Country News. [Click here](#) for an Associated Press story.

Las Cruces Shooting Fair features top entertainment

A superstar of shooting will be in Las Cruces on Saturday, April 24. Tim Bradley, part of the renowned Team Benelli shotgun exhibition, will be the featured performer at the Las Cruces Shooting Fair. Sponsored by the city of Las Cruces, the Department of Game and Fish and Picacho Gun Club, the event will feature shooting opportunities and demonstrations, fly-casting, information from local sportsmen's groups, food and more. Gates open at 8 a.m. at the Butterfield Trail Shooting Range, with the Bradley exhibition scheduled for 1 p.m. Bradley is known for such feats as tossing eight targets into the air and hitting all eight before they reach the ground. He also is expected to have Benelli's "try-me" table, giving shooters an opportunity to fire various Benelli shotguns. For more information, visit Picacho Gun Club's Web site, www.picachogunclub.com.

In the news

NBC's Nightly News outlined another reason why Congress should rewrite the 1872 Mining Law, as proposed by Sen. Jeff Bingaman. The news story, part of the network's "The Fleecing of America" series, explains that mines on federal land don't pay a penny in royalties, despite taking billions of dollars worth of minerals in return. Bingaman has proposed a massive rewrite of the law that would implement stronger protections for public land and water, establish a mechanism for cleaning up abandoned mines and charge mining companies a royalty for the minerals they take. [Click here](#) to watch the story. To read Bingaman's bill, S. 796, [click here](#).

We've all seen stories about the experiences of a first-time hunter. The New York Times Sunday Magazine had a great one recently about an 82-year-old New York City woman - blind in one eye - who goes deer hunting with her son in Montana. It's a wonderful tale. [Click here](#) to read it.

On the calendar

The Santa Fe Fans chapter of National Wild Turkey Federation holds its annual banquet at 5 p.m., Saturday, April 3, at the Lodge at Santa Fe. For tickets or information, call (505) 470-4630.

The Las Cruces chapter of Ducks Unlimited will hold its annual fundraising banquet at 6 p.m. Friday, April 16, at the Mesilla Valley Inn and Convention Center. For tickets or information call Mike Meredith at (575) 522-1478.

If your group has an event coming up, drop us a line at nmwildlife@nmwildlife.org or call (505) 299-5404 and we'll put it in the New Mexico Conservation Calendar.

And finally

If you appreciate receiving these monthly news updates, please share them with a friend and ask them to get involved by joining our Sportsman's Alert network. New Mexico sportsmen need to stay involved to ensure our hunting and fishing traditions continue. **And please make a donation to NMWF.** With sportsmen like you, we can continue to make a difference. [Click here to donate now.](#)

About the New Mexico Wildlife Federation

Founded in 1914 by sportsman and conservation pioneer Aldo Leopold, the New Mexico Wildlife Federation is New Mexico's first and most effective conservation advocate. We are dedicated to protecting New Mexico's wildlife, habitat and outdoor way of life. We spearheaded permanent protection of our hunting and fishing rights in the Valle Vidal, and stopped cold the previous sell-off of your public lands. We believe that the best way to get things done is to build consensus with common goals.

Our key priorities are: Opportunity Habitat Youth

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