

Media Release



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To All Media

For Immediate Release

O.F.A.H. celebrates new Sunday hunting opportunities

This weekend marks a historic achievement for hunters and wildlife managers -- the expansion of Sunday gun hunting in about 90 municipalities across southern Ontario.

Not since the century old Lord's Day Act has hunting with a gun on a Sunday, during existing hunting seasons, been allowed in most communities south of the French River. However, times have changed, and with today's burgeoning populations of deer, geese and other species (not to mention today's busy work schedules and competition for family downtime), the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has recognized and supported the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters' push for more Sunday gun hunting.

"In the past two years, the provincial government, and in particular, the Minister of Natural Resources, have opened the door for the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters to pursue its vision for province-wide Sunday gun hunting," said O.F.A.H. Executive Director, Mike Reader. "We also appreciate outstanding support from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and a growing list of municipalities that recognize the multiple benefits of this previously untapped opportunity."

Recognizing the fact that wildlife causes some \$45 million in annual crop damage, and that vehicle collisions with wildlife have skyrocketed by 86 percent in the last ten years, the Ministry of Natural Resources (M.N.R.) has worked in partnership with the O.F.A.H. and the farm community to introduce new hunting opportunities as a valuable wildlife management tool.

Sharing the M.N.R.'s concern for wildlife management, the Canadian Wildlife Service (C.W.S.) which regulates migratory bird hunting, is also supportive of Sunday gun hunting. Recently the C.W.S. approved Sunday gun hunting for waterfowl in parts of central and eastern Ontario where municipalities in those regions have said yes to the M.N.R. proposal. An updated map of new Sunday gun hunting opportunities can be found on the O.F.A.H. website.

Starting this weekend, Sunday gun hunting will be allowed during existing seasons for waterfowl, and for big and small game species where municipalities and the CWS have approved it. At any time, municipalities may be added to the government's growing list of approved Sunday gun hunting areas.

The O.F.A.H. – the voice of anglers and hunters –reminds people to hunt safely and responsibly, and respect fellow hunters, landowners and others who enjoy the outdoors. No one, whether hiking, bird watching, fishing or hunting, has the right to use private land without permission, and landowner permission forms are available from www.ofah.org

...page two.

Media Release



O.F.A.H. celebrates new hunting opportunities
September 1, 2006
Page two

Background:

- ❑ Wildlife cause some \$45 million in crop damage each year, and the costs are increasing.
- ❑ Collisions with wildlife have increased by 86% over the last ten years.
- ❑ There is a reported motor vehicle/wildlife collision every 38 minutes in this province. 90% involve white-tailed deer.
- ❑ One out of every 18 reported motor vehicle collisions in Ontario involves some form of wildlife.
- ❑ In 2003 alone, 13, 729 collisions were reported. This resulted in 4 deaths, 500 serious injuries and millions in damage claims.
- ❑ Without the annual deer hunt, wildlife experts estimate that vehicle collisions with deer would increase by at least 300 percent.
- ❑ Ontario hunters have an exceptional safety record. All hunters must complete over 20 hours of training and pass federal and provincial examinations. The Canada Safety Council has reported that hunting is measurably safer than a number of outdoor activities including hiking, skating, boating, golf and cycling.
- ❑ Hunting in Ontario represents \$1.5 billion in annual economic activity which, in many communities, supports hotels, gas stations, grocery stores, restaurants and a number of other employment opportunities.

With over 81,000 members and 640 member clubs, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters is the province's largest nonprofit, nongovernment fishing, hunting and conservation organization.

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