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A monthly insight into whats happening at Nettleton Fox Hunting and Fishing Association



# March 2024



## Current Topics >>>

## Upcoming Events:

- **March 15:** Turkey Season Opens
- **March/April:** Lake Habitat Improvement Projects
- **May 15:** Spring Squirrel Season
- **May 18:** 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Club Day

## Custom Turkey Calls



A local call company, Pennington Brothers Game Calls, has created a custom glass turkey call with the club logo. Calls are \$60 each and come with a 2 pc diamondwood striker. If interested in purchasing one, contact Josh Ridings.

## 2024 Deer Herd Survey Results

*Following the 2023-2024 deer season, the Board and Fish and Game Committee, along with the assistance of participating club members, conducted multiple deer herd surveys. Data was collected and analyzed and results shown below:*

There were two surveys conducted over the last month. The first was a camera survey where 50 +/- cameras were placed across club in strategically gridded locations for a one week period. The other survey was conducted by Blake Henley with Drone Deer Recovery Mississippi. This involved Mr. Henley flying a drone across the entire club and analyzing our herd with a drone and similar grid strategy.

The findings produced approximately 193 deer observed on the club property. Between drone survey and camera survey estimate 2.5/1 doe to buck ratio. At that ratio, the club is estimated to have 116 does. Fawn recruitment for southeastern US is roughly .65. That would give an estimate of 75 fawns being born which at that recruitment rate would put us about 268 deer next year. This means the Club estimate would be 1 deer for every 10 acres. Statistics say a healthy population in our part of the country is 1 deer for every 8-15 acres. Mr. Henley, who flew the drone, said the highest density he has seen in his surveys in North MS was a 1 to 10 ratio and the least dense was 1 to 18. Continued on next page...



## 2024 Deer Heard Survey Results Continued >>>

Both surveys showed a very heavy presence of 1.5 year old bucks as compared to 2.5 and 3.5 or older.

We will be planting spring food plots this year and members willing to help could be of great assistance by putting mineral blocks out where they hunt this month. Your assistance in placing mineral blocks/sites in your hunting areas will help our bucks in their antler development. Please see page 3 of this newsletter for more information on developing and implementing a mineral site if you have questions about this process.

A few pictures of the drone survey are included here for your viewing.



## Timber Cutting on Club

Please be mindful of timber cutting ongoing on the Club! Currently, timber is being cut on the northwest corner of club along Lost Corner Road and Grant Taylor Road.

The area being cut is approximately 35 acres of mature 40 + year old pine timber. The last time this block of timber was cut was in the late 1970s or early 1980s.

There are multiple pieces of equipment in the area. Please take into consideration the work going on in this area if you utilize it for any reason during this process. Exercise caution with equipment, changing landscapes, debris, log piles, etc.





# Developing Mineral Sites for Deer

*Mineral sites have many important benefits for the whitetail deer population at the club:*

- **Nutritional Supplement:** Mineral sites provide essential nutrients like calcium, phosphorus, and trace minerals lacking in natural forage.
- **Antler Growth:** Adequate mineral intake supports optimal antler growth, leading to larger and more robust antlers.
- **Reproductive Health:** Minerals play a crucial role in the reproductive health of deer, contributing to healthier pregnancies and stronger offspring.
- **Immune System Support:** Minerals bolster the immune system of whitetail deer, helping them fight off diseases and parasites.
- **Enhanced Habitat Utilization:** By creating mineral sites, we can encourage deer to frequent specific areas, which can help in habitat management and monitoring deer populations.
- **Overall Health Benefits:** Regular access to mineral sites can lead to overall healthier deer populations with improved body condition and vitality.
- **Support for Fawns:** Pregnant does benefit from mineral sites, aiding in the development of healthy fawns and increasing the survival rate of young deer.



*With this in mind, here are some helpful tips on creating a mineral site for deer:*

- **Location Selection:** Choose a strategic location for the mineral site, ideally near natural deer travel routes, bedding areas, or feeding zones.
- **Clearing and Preparation:** Clear the selected area of vegetation and debris.
- **Mineral Selection:** Choose high-quality mineral supplements specifically formulated for deer, ensuring they contain essential nutrients like calcium, phosphorus, and trace minerals. You can also consult with employees at local feed and supply stores for their advice.
- **Placement:** Spread the mineral supplement evenly across the cleared area, avoiding clumping.
- **Monitoring and Maintenance:** Regularly monitor the mineral site to ensure deer are utilizing it and replenish supplements as needed. Adjust placement or supplement types based on deer activity and soil test results.
- **Documentation:** Keep records of mineral site locations, supplement types, and usage patterns for future reference and management decisions.



Signs like the one to the left have been posted at Lake Thomas and the skinning shed to notify fishermen to not return any fish to Lake Thomas. Also, a log sheet has been placed under boat dock to record all fish caught.

This will help determine future fish management practices. In conjunction with this, the lake has also been lowered through winter months and will be limed this year.

The Board and Fish and Game Committee are also working on automatic fish feeders and supplemental bait fish stocking for select lakes. More information to come.

# Turkey Season Changes for 2024

*As spring nears, many of you may be gearing up for the chase of turkeys at the club in 2024. There are not many things that can rival the sound of a gobbler waking up the forest as the sun begins to rise, and our hope is many of us will experience this on the club this season. As you prepare for turkey season, please remember a few changes at the club related to turkey hunting. These changes are noted below:*

- 1. All turkey harvest must be reported at the skinning shed (same process as reporting deer harvest).*
- 2. No supplemental feeding allowed during turkey season. Note, if you have any feeders on the club property, please make sure they are clean and clear of any feed by March 1, 2024.*
- 3. A new target stand has been added at the Club Shooting Range for shotguns at the 25 yard mark. If you plan to pattern your shotguns for turkey hunting, please make use of this new addition to save the rifle/pistol targets from unnecessary damage/wear.*



## *Spittin' and Drummin'*

### *A look into the 2024 Turkey Season Forecast*

Each year, MDWFP puts out an annual turkey season forecast for the state of Mississippi broken down by geographical regions. This year's summary for North Mississippi can be found below:

*The northern third of the state is an ideal mix of hardwoods and fields, and unsurprisingly has been home to some of Mississippi's highest turkey harvests in recent years. Overall turkey observations in the region have trended upward the past two years. Jake sightings last spring were nearly 40% above the average of the past decade. Sightings of legal gobblers should be up this spring as a result and hunters in this region should expect a very good 2024 season.*

Like with weather forecast, we know they aren't necessarily always correct for our area, this is exciting news to hear from our state's wildlife agency. Club success has varied in recent years with success on the decline recently, but with a few good hatches and our attempts to help preserve our population and support hatches, hopefully the club will see increased success in years to come.

Part of the data used to develop the Spittin' and Drummin' report each year comes from hunters observations in the field. If you aren't already participating in the Spring Gobbler Hunting Survey, please consider doing so. More information on the survey can be found by visiting <https://mdwfp.com/wildlife-hunting/turkey-program/spring-gobbler-hunter-survey/>. On top of helping improve data for our Wild Turkey Program in MS, you also can win a shotgun by participating!



# Prescribed Burn Update

Over the past month, the club has successfully completed prescribed burns on approximately 350 acres. If you have been on the club lately, you have probably noticed some of these areas. Prescribed burns have numerous benefits for our wildlife, our timber, and other resources, as well as mitigating risk for potential wildfires to start especially during the hot dry months we often endure each year.

John Gruchy, MDWFP Private Lands Program Coordinator, was involved in the early phases of the Club's decision to do perscribed burns. Here are comments he had in a video interview he did with MDWFP a few years back: *Perscribed burning can be important for a variety of reasons.... With the absence of fire, our forest would cease to be as productive as they could be for a variety of wildlife.... Prescribed burning is probably our best tool to set back plant succession, to freshen up browse, to remove litter so that small wildlife like rabbits or bobwhites can move around.... It is also probably our best tool for managing wild turkey habitat.... and managing deer forest in the upland.* (source: <https://www.mdwfp.com/wildlife-hunting/habitat-and-predator-management/habitat-and-predator/why-is-prescribed-burning-important/>)

These habitat management efforts could not have been possible without the help of several members and volunteers. To each person who played a part in this effort, thank you very much!! A special thanks is in order to club member Davis Lovelace for his efforts in helping establish a plan and acting as burn manager for the first round of burns, as well as Michael Huey with the forestry commission for his assistance in securing the grant to perform around 300 acres of this year's burns. These two gentlemen were instrumental in the Club's ability to bring the idea of prescribed burning to life!





# Final thoughts...

If you have any recommendations for the website, newsletter, or for anything related to the improvement of the club or it's resources, please contact Russell Taylor at 662-507-8161.

Below are a few pictures submitted by club members recently.

