



National Wild Turkey Federation

## SAVING POULTS

To grow the number of wild turkey poults, the use of rifles and pistols is not allowed during the 2021 fall turkey hunt.

By John Hayes  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

It isn't avian pox — which infects some 230 species of wild and domestic birds — that has depleted Pennsylvania's wild turkey population. It isn't West Nile virus, a disease that is devastating the closely related ruffed grouse. Or overharvest by a growing number of Pennsylvania turkey hunters.

The chemical that killed an estimated 7% of the state's wild turkey population over several years is referred to by scientists as a mononuclear oxygen hydride and inorganic hydroxy compound.

We call it water.

Excessive rain and snow melt during consecutive soggy springs created puddles. Fuzzy little poults walked in and drowned by the thousands. Add predation and other factors and, in 15 of Pennsylvania's 23 wildlife management units, turkey populations are below management goals.

A rebound may be in the air. Dry skies and minimal snow melt during the critical spring hatching weeks of 2021 could have been the start of a slow reversal of the trend.

When the fall turkey season opened Saturday across most of Pennsylvania, the Game Commission attempted to further correct the population decline without alienating hunters, whom the agency sees as the most effective wildlife management tool at its disposal. In addition to standard manipulation of hunting seasons at the man-

### Dry spring, gun rules needed to boost turkey population

#### Outdoors

agement unit level, during the fall turkey season rifles and handguns are banned from the hunt.

The spring gobbler hunt is exclusive to males, and when an alpha tom is killed, another will service its harem. In the fall, hunters take male and female turkeys, directly impacting the number of hens available to lay eggs.

Earlier this year, Game Commission turkey biologist Mary Jo Casalena said the practice of manipulating the fall season length in response to turkey population trends is growing in importance as the hunter-turkey dynamic changes.

A decade ago, the 10-year average turkey population was about 215,000 statewide.

"Right now, we have more turkey hunters [200,000 in the fall, 226,700 in the spring] than we have turkeys in Pennsylvania [estimated 196,000]," she said. "So it's really important that we do what is necessary to preserve the future of the resource."

Instead of limiting the hunt to roosters only, or further reducing hunting opportunity by trimming season

length, the Board of Commissioners removed the junior hunt and accepted Casalena's proposal to ban the use of centerfire and rimfire rifles and handguns during the fall hunt. The use of shotguns, archery gear and black-powder guns remains legal.

Rifles are unlawful to use during Pennsylvania's spring gobbler hunt. They are the sporting arm of choice among just 14% of fall turkey hunters yet are responsible for 33% of the fall turkey harvest, according to recent survey data collected by the agency.

Eliminating the use of long-shot sporting arms, it is believed, could reduce the statewide harvest by as much as 20% without impacting the routines of most turkey hunters. The restriction is expected to protect a large number of the all-important hens.

The regulation adjustment will change the strategies and tactics of some fall turkey hunters. No more scoping and dropping a bird at 100 yards or more, although some blackpowder hunters may be OK with those distances.

But fall season hunters unaccustomed to limiting their shots to the lethal ranges of shotguns or archery gear will have to beckon the birds closer using turkey talk appropriate to the animals' fall habits. The spring gobblers of a randy tom and a hen's poult assembly calls are likely to be less effective. When in doubt, make your calls simple, their quantity few and their volume lower.

It is not known how long the fall turkey rifle and pistol restrictions will continue.

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Edward DeArmitt/Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

PSO principal trumpet Micah Wilkinson delivers his first concerto with the orchestra on Friday.

### 'Boba Fett' trailer features Ming-Na Wen

By Joshua Axelrod  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Boba Fett has no desire to be feared. He just wants your respect.

That's at least the sentiment he expresses in the first trailer for "The Book of Boba Fett," the upcoming spinoff of "The Mandalorian" that is set to premiere Dec. 29 on Disney+. The show stars Temuera Morrison as the titular bounty hunter working alongside mercenary Fennec Shand — played by Mt. Lebanon High and Carnegie Mellon University graduate Ming-Na Wen — as they try to bring order to the remnants of Jabba the Hutt's criminal empire.



Emma McIntyre/Getty Images

In "The Book of Boba Fett," Mt. Lebanon High School alumna Ming-Na Wen stars as mercenary Fennec Shand.

"The Book of Boba Fett" was first revealed in an end-credits scene after the season two finale of "The Mandalorian," where Boba

and Fennec took over leadership duties of the underworld

SEE **TRAILER**, PAGE C-2

## Haydn concerto highlights PSO principal trumpet

By Jeremy Reynolds  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

#### Review

If Tchaikovsky hadn't been good at improv, the Symphony No. 2, "Little Russian," as we know it, might have been lost forever.

According to biographer David Brown, the Russian master claimed to be a prince once to convince a reluctant postmaster to hitch his horses to his coach. Later, after his luggage — which included sketches of the second symphony — went missing, Tchaikovsky returned, still in character, to chat with the postmaster until he handed over the luggage in question.

The music itself, capably performed by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra at Heinz Hall on Friday, couldn't be farther from royalty as it's largely based on several Ukrainian folk tunes. Guest conductor Kirill Karabits, the chief conductor of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in England, led the orchestra in a technically solid but somewhat restrained performance for his debut with the PSO. Karabits led with a clear, almost nonchalant style that generally complemented the sym-

phony's rugged textures. Overall there wasn't enough dynamic contrast, however. Softs could have been much softer and vice versa.

The first half of the evening featured a significantly reduced orchestra. PSO principal trumpet Micah Wilkinson stepped to the front of the stage to deliver Haydn's Concerto in E-flat Major for Trumpet and Orchestra, Wilkinson's first solo outing with the orchestra since joining in 2017. The character of his playing was delightful, with sublimely, lyrical phrases and a bright, nimble approach to the quicker bits. Haydn's concerto is still perhaps the best-known and most important such work for trumpet, the first for the keyed trumpet, which allowed trumpet players to play chromatically for the first time instead of only a limited range of pitches. Wilkinson's familiarity with the work and forethought was evident. There were occasional slips of intonation, easily forgivable given the overall quality of the playing.

SEE **PSO**, PAGE C-2

## Local authors publish books on history, families

By Thandi Weaver  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Western Pennsylvania has many authors who have recently published books. Here is a sampling of them, along with information on the authors and where the books can be purchased. This feature appears occasionally in the Magazine section of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

Sam Kidder believes Americans often overlook the achievements of John Bingham, the Mercer County native and U.S. representative from Ohio who drafted the 14th Amendment guaranteeing all Americans citizenship rights and equal protection under the law. Kidder chose to focus on one aspect of Bingham's distinguished career as U.S. ambassador to Japan in his book, "Of One Blood All Nations: John Bingham: Ohio Congress-

man's Diplomatic Career in Meiji, Japan (1873-1885)." The author is a Harvard graduate who served as a Foreign Service officer in Tokyo and now lives in Mercer County. (Piscataqua Press, \$16.99 at riverstonebookstore.com)

Readers are able to follow Gemma Stemley's search for home in her book, "Finding Home: A Sentimental Journey." The Wilkins resident was inspired by talks with her great-grandmother, who left Martinique to later marry in Trinidad. The book raises questions such as: What defines a homeland? Is there such a thing as an adopted homeland? Is there such a thing as disloyalty to one's homeland? (Gemma Stemley, \$19.99 at penguin-bookshop.com)

Julie Tulba's book, "The Dead Are Resting," is a historical novel that focuses on a Holocaust survivor's daughter, Becky, who

lives in Pittsburgh. Trying to work through her rocky relationship with her secretive father, Becky begins to question his true identity. Tulba, a Cranberry resident, is a librarian who loves to travel and also wrote "The Tears of Yesteryear." (Julie Tulba, \$14.99 at sparkbooksppgh.com)

"Drawn to Home" is a comic book whose nine stories chronicle the experience of homelessness. Pittsburgh illustrator Nate Taylor worked with Jay Poliziani, Peter Harvey and other local artists and illustrators to spread awareness of the issue and the people it affects. To receive copies and for more information, go to drawntohomecomic.com.

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