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Game Commission finding success

By **JENNIFER JUDGE**
Dallas Post Correspondent

DALLAS TWP. - Jack Weaver has seen a lot of changes during the 30 years he's been with the Pennsylvania State Game Commission. "There were only one or two active bald eagle nests when I first came on. Now there are approximately 24 to 28 in Pennsylvania that are active and producing offspring," he said.

Bald eagles are just one of the organization's successes. The fisher, a fur-bearing animal that was wiped out in the 1800's, was reintroduced to the area by the game commission. Weaver said the reintroduction worked and now the animal is doing well in the area.

The Back Mountain is home to the Game Commission's Northeastern Regional Headquarters. The headquarters houses game commission supervisory and administrative staff. So what exactly does the Game Commission do? Weaver, who is Information and Education Supervisor for the region, explained, "The Game Commission's responsibility is to manage Pennsylvania's wildlife, which includes mammals and birdlife."

This explanation may sound simple, but the Game Commission's job is anything but easy. "We're trying to do a juggling act to maintain a balance," Weaver said. "You have to keep all these animals in control. There are no easy solutions to any of this."

Pennsylvania is broken down into six regions. The Dallas headquarters is located in the center of the northeast region, which encompasses all of Bradford County and goes as far east as the New York and New Jersey borders. The region's southern border reaches to Northumberland County. Weaver said the northeast region has the most acres of



Wildlife Conservation Officer James Jolley with just a few of the mounted specimens that are kept at the PA Game Commission office in Dallas. The mounts are of animals that were killed illegally or on roadways.

state gamelands of all the six regions. Part of the game commission's job is maintaining those state gamelands and providing wildlife habitat. "The forest is an ever-changing entity," Weaver said. "We try to keep a changing environment. This allows different types of animals places to live."

One of the ways the game commission provides habitat is by cutting trees. "We have a forester on staff," Weaver said. The person who oversees the planting and cutting of trees as well as the maintenance of buildings works out of the Dallas office. The cut trees don't just provide habitat for animals; The game commission sells the timber and the sales provide revenue to help the organization operate.

One of the commission's other jobs is to deal with animal nuisance complaints. "Animals usually take care of themselves," Weaver said. "The problem is usually people. People are now moving with the wildlife around them." And when people can't deal with the wildlife around them, the game commission steps in to give self-help advice or to actually go out and deal with the problem.

The Dallas office handles calls from all 13 counties.

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