GEORGIA FORESTWATCH
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Peak Deer Activity Season

Peak deer activity season has arrived in North Georgia. Please be extra vigilant as bucks looking for love are on the move, and neither sex is looking twice before they cross the road. Deer's normal caution during the rut is reduced, making them more susceptible to being hit by motor vehicles. Daylight savings time coming on Nov. 6 will also put more cars on the road at dawn and dusk when deer are most active.

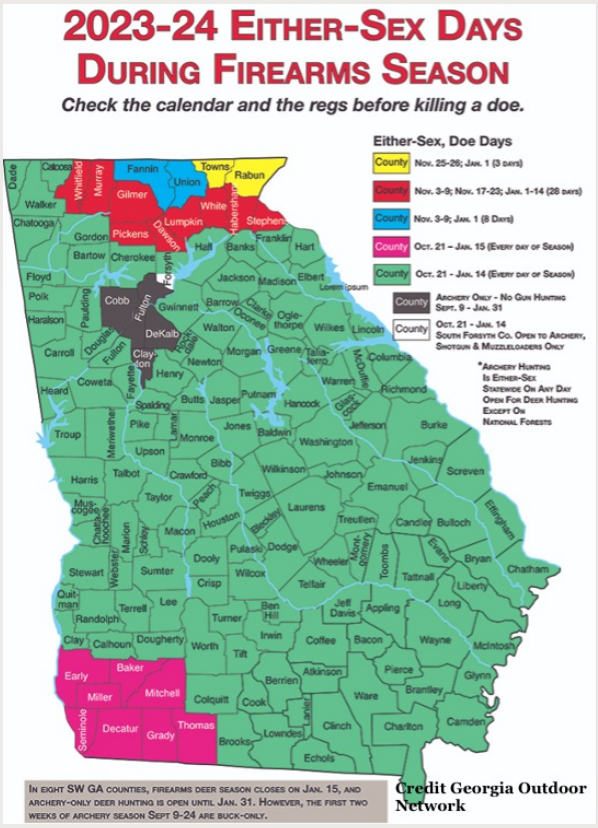
The GA Department of Natural Resources (DNR) offers **tips** to help motorists stay safe.

"While the ultimate goal is to avoid a collision, if one is imminent, never swerve to avoid hitting the animal," said Charlie Killmaster, state deer biologist with DNR's Wildlife Resources Division. "It is better to hit the deer than to lose control of your vehicle. Also, deer often travel in groups, so if you see a deer cross the road ahead of you, anticipate that others may follow and don't assume the danger has passed". Many drivers slow to watch a deer cross in front of them and into the forest, not anticipating the remainder of the herd is on the opposite roadside. Following the first deer's lead, the others bolt onto the road from the direction drivers are not paying attention.

If it is too late to avoid a collision, drivers are advised to slow down as

much as possible to minimize the damage — resist the urge to swerve to avoid the deer, as this may cause further damage, sending drivers off the road or causing a collision with another vehicle.

Georgia Hunting Season



Speaking of deer activity, we are into hunting season, and we want you to be careful while enjoying our national forest. Firearm deer hunts in the Chattahoochee National Forest (outside of WMAs) run from October 21 to January 1, 2024. In the Oconee Ranger District, the firearm deer season is October 21 to January 14, 2024.

In addition to deer, Georgia also allows the following autumn hunting seasons.

- Waterfowl (species differ) began September 2 and runs through January 28, 2024.
- Bear began September 9 and runs through January 14, 2024.
- Dove began October 8 and runs through January 31, 2024.
- Opossum & Raccoon (No Limit) runs year-round on private land and from August 15 to February 29, 2024 in the national forest.
- Crow begins November 4 and runs through February 29, 2024.
- Fox & Bobcat begins December 1 and runs through February 29, 2024.
- Grouse began October 15 and runs through February 29, 2024.
- Rabbit and Quail begins November 18 and runs through February 29, 2024.
- Squirrel began August 15 and runs through February 29, 2024.

While enjoying our public lands, please keep safety in mind during hunting season. While specific to the Appalachian Trail, here is an **excellent source of safety information** for hikers during hunting season.

Delayed Harvest Trout

Also, from GA DNR, beginning November 1, delayed harvest rules go into effect in Georgia's five Delayed Harvest trout streams. "While trout fishing can be found year-round in Georgia, there are five trout streams that are seasonally managed under special regulations called Delayed Harvest (DH) to increase angler success," said John Lee Thompson, WRD Trout Stocking Coordinator. "These streams have catch-and-release regulations from November 1 to May 14 and are stocked monthly by WRD and other partner agencies like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and South Carolina DNR. This stocking and catch/release combination allows for good trout catch rates and high angler satisfaction." Between November 1 – May 14, anglers on all delayed harvest streams are restricted to a single hook, artificial lures.

Delayed harvest trout streams include the following waterways (or portions of waterways):

- Chattahoochee River from Sope Creek to US Highway 41 (Cobb Parkway).
- Toccoa River is located on USFS land upstream of Lake Blue Ridge in Fannin County (from 0.4 miles above Shallowford Bridge to 450 feet above the Sandy Bottom Canoe Access).
- Amicalola Creek on the Dawson Forest Wildlife Management Area (from Steele Bridge Road downstream to Georgia Hwy. 53).
- Smith Creek downstream of Unicoi Lake (Unicoi State Park).
- A portion of the Chattooga River (from Ga. Hwy. 28 upstream to the mouth of Reed Creek) on U.S. Forest Service land bordering

South Carolina.

To view the interactive trout fishing map, see stocking lists, trout fishing tips, and other fishing info, **visit here**.

If you are interested in learning more about GA DNR, the next meeting of the **Georgia Board of Natural Resources** will be held at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, December 5, 2023, at Brasstown Valley Resort, Creekside Pavilion, 6321 Highway 76, Young Harris, GA 30582. This not-available-by-remote-viewing **public meeting** is the **only annual board meeting** held north of Atlanta. Agenda TBD.

Public Lands Support from Reverend Senator Raphael Warnock

Georgia ForestWatch recently discussed much-needed support for the USFS nationally, and specifically the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest (CONF), with Georgia's Reverand Senator Raphael Warnock. As you can see from his words below, we were pleased to hear from the Senator in support of our national forests and other public lands and who takes climate change seriously.

From the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Georgians have a deep appreciation for the outdoors. Our state's forests and natural landscapes are home to diverse ecosystems, improve air and water quality, and support countless opportunities for outdoor recreation. As a fellow outdoor enthusiast, I also appreciate the beautiful plants, trees, and wildlife that makes our state unique. I believe it is our moral imperative to take care of our forests and ensure that future generations of Georgians are able to enjoy these spaces.

As your U.S. Senator, I have taken actions to protect Georgia's environment and address climate change. I proudly joined my

colleagues in voting to pass the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which the President signed into law on November 15, 2021. This legislation provides critical funding to invest in our nation's infrastructure and natural resources, including $250 million for the U.S. Forest Service's Legacy Road and Trail program, $3.3 billion for wildfire defense and risk reduction, and $2 billion for ecosystem restoration on federal and private lands. I also joined my colleagues in requesting funding for relevant federal agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

We thank you, Senator Reverend Warnock, on behalf of our public lands and, most importantly, the Chattahoochee Oconee National Forest.

Upcoming GAFW Outings & Outreach

Wednesday, November 1 - Outing! **Metro ATL Midweek Walk** 6 pm.

Saturday, November 11 - **Tabling at Boy Scouts Conservation event**, 11 am- 1:30 pm

Wednesday, November 15th - **Outing!** **Geology Hike to Ravens Cliffs Falls with Bill**

Saturday, November 18 - **Save the Date!** Trail Maintenance with the Mountain High Hikers

Thursday, November 30 - **GAFW Book Club Meeting**, Zoom (*Literary Field Guide to Southern Appalachia,* Edited by Rose McLarney, Laura-Gray Street, and L. L. Gaddy)

Thursday, December 7th - Outing! **Warwoman Waterfall Hike with Clayton**

Thursday, December 14th - **Outing!** **Geology Hike along Johns Mountain to Keown Falls**

Thursday, December 28 - **GAFW Book Club Meeting**, Zoom (*The Lost Book of Eleanor Dare* by Kimberly Brock)

GAFW Outings on Meetup

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Thank You

Georgia ForestWatch is the only nonprofit organization with a mission solely dedicated to

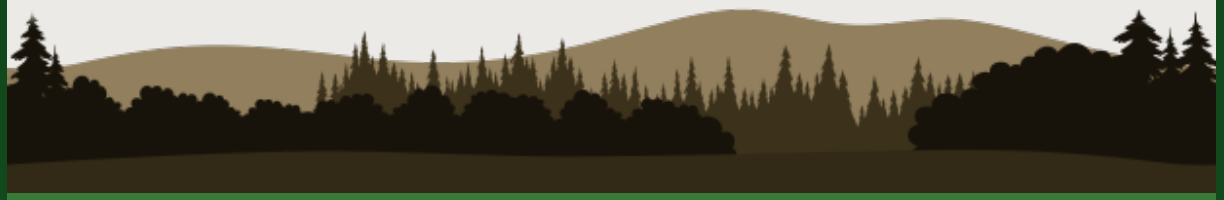
ensuring the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests remain healthy and available for future generations, and we can only pursue our mission with the support of the community.

Please support our mission by ensuring your **membership is up to date** and providing **additional support** as you are able.

On behalf of our entire national forests in our beautiful state, we thank you for your support.

Our Mission

Our mission is to preserve and protect our national forests.



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