

# Delaware Division of Fish & Wildlife

## PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

Wildlife Program Services and Funding

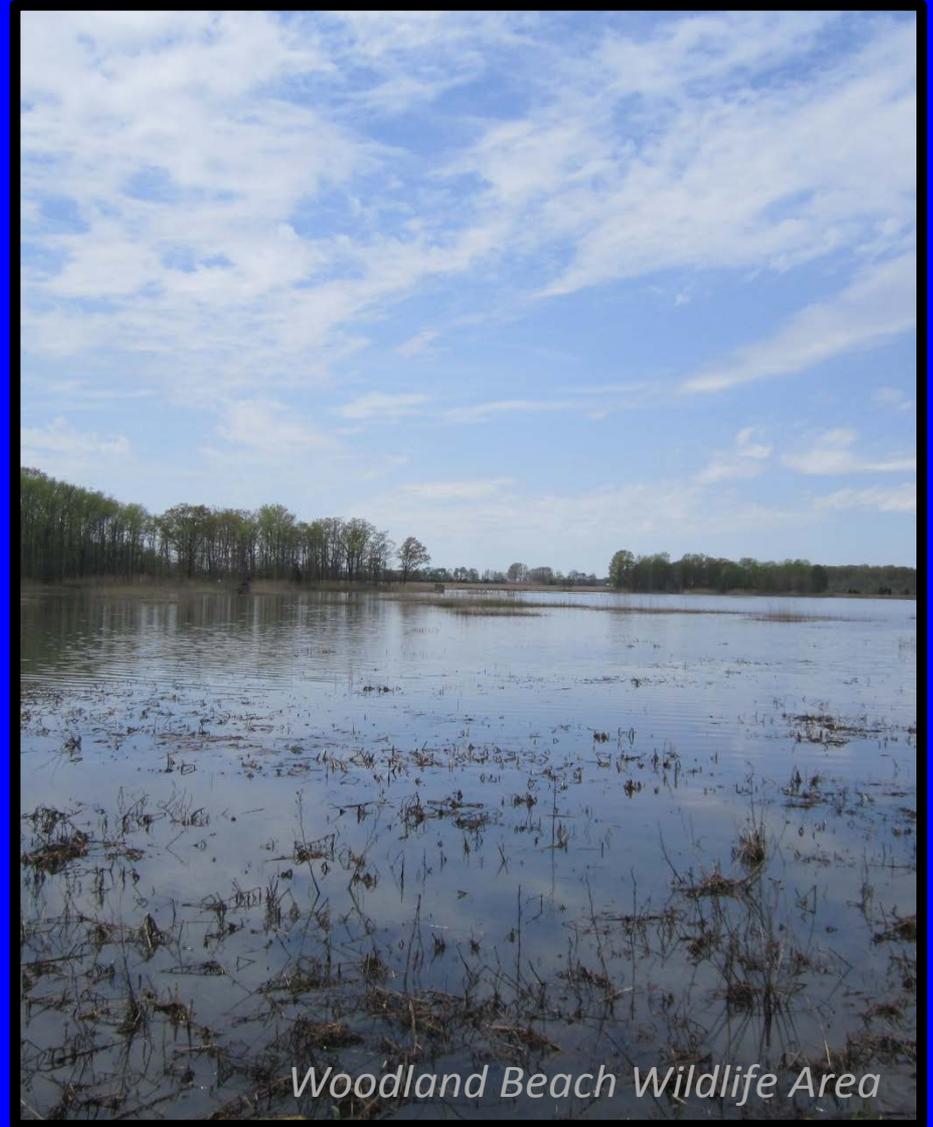
January 2016



*We Bring You Delaware's Great Outdoors  
through Science and Service*

# Agenda

- Services, Revenue and Fee Presentation
- Breakout Discussions
- Group Comments and Questions



# Economic Importance of Hunting

Hunters and trappers in Delaware generate approximately \$4.2 million/year for wildlife management, research and public hunting lands through...

- License Purchases
- Federal Excise Taxes (Equipment)

Hunters spend \$61.7 million each year in Delaware, adding to the state's economy and supporting 549 private sector jobs.



# Economic Importance of Wildlife Watching

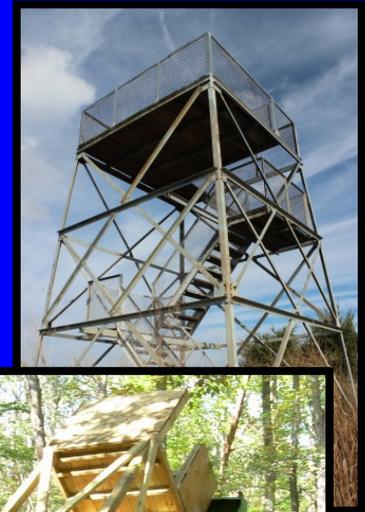
Wildlife watchers spend millions of dollars each year in Delaware, adding to the state's economy and supporting private sector jobs.



# The Business of Fish & Wildlife

The Division provides wildlife program services to include:

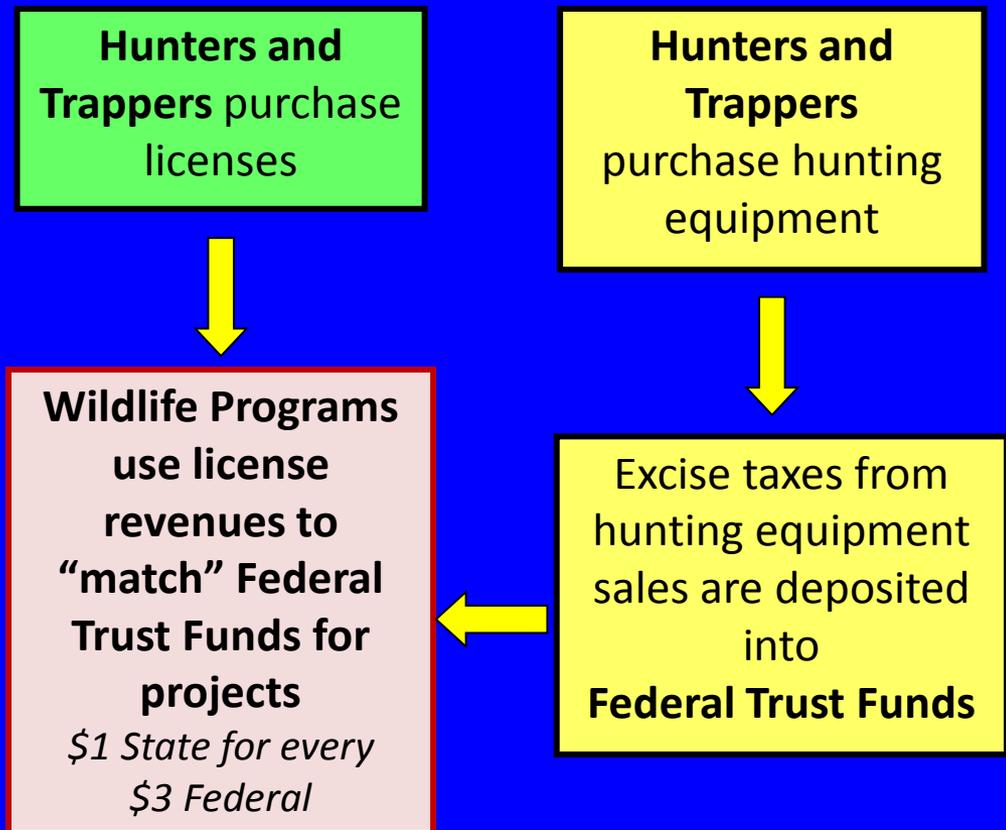
- Wildlife population and habitat management
- Wildlife surveys and habitat studies
- Public Wildlife Areas for wildlife and for hunting, trapping, wildlife watching and other wildlife-associated activities
- Hunter education
- Shooting sports facilities



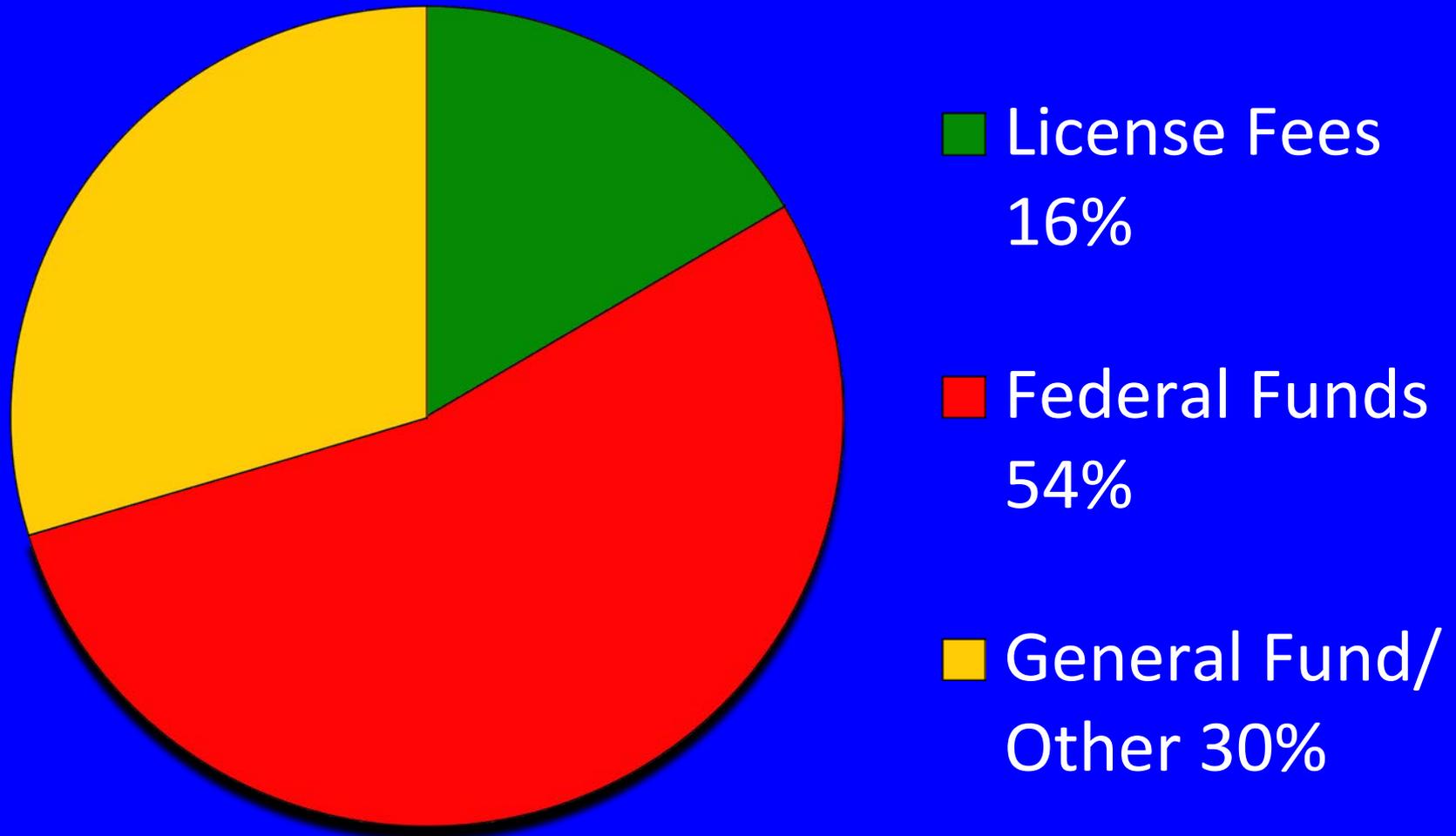
# Fish & Wildlife as a Business

**Revenues** → **Services**

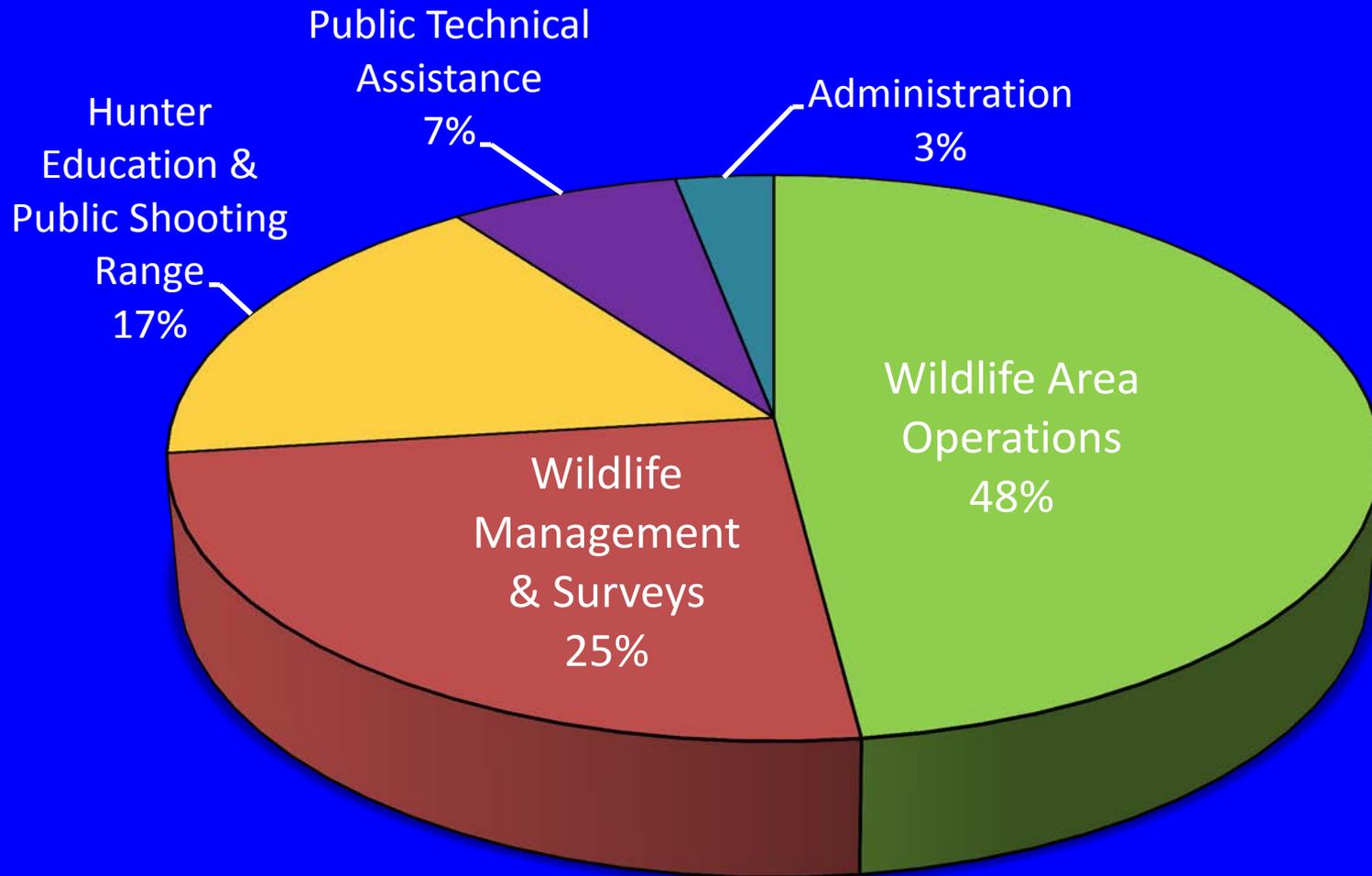
50-75% of Wildlife Program operation revenues depend on hunting and trapping license funds combined with matching Federal Pittman-Robertson (PR) funds (\$1 State yields \$3 Federal).



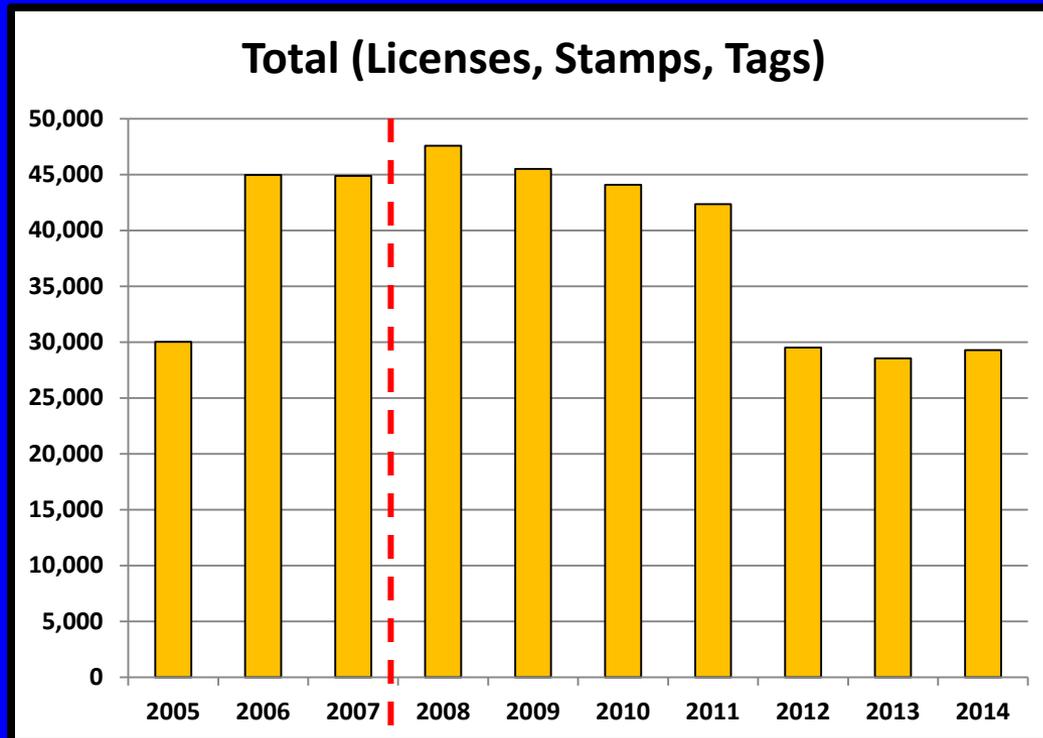
# Sources of Wildlife Program Revenues



# Wildlife Program Spending



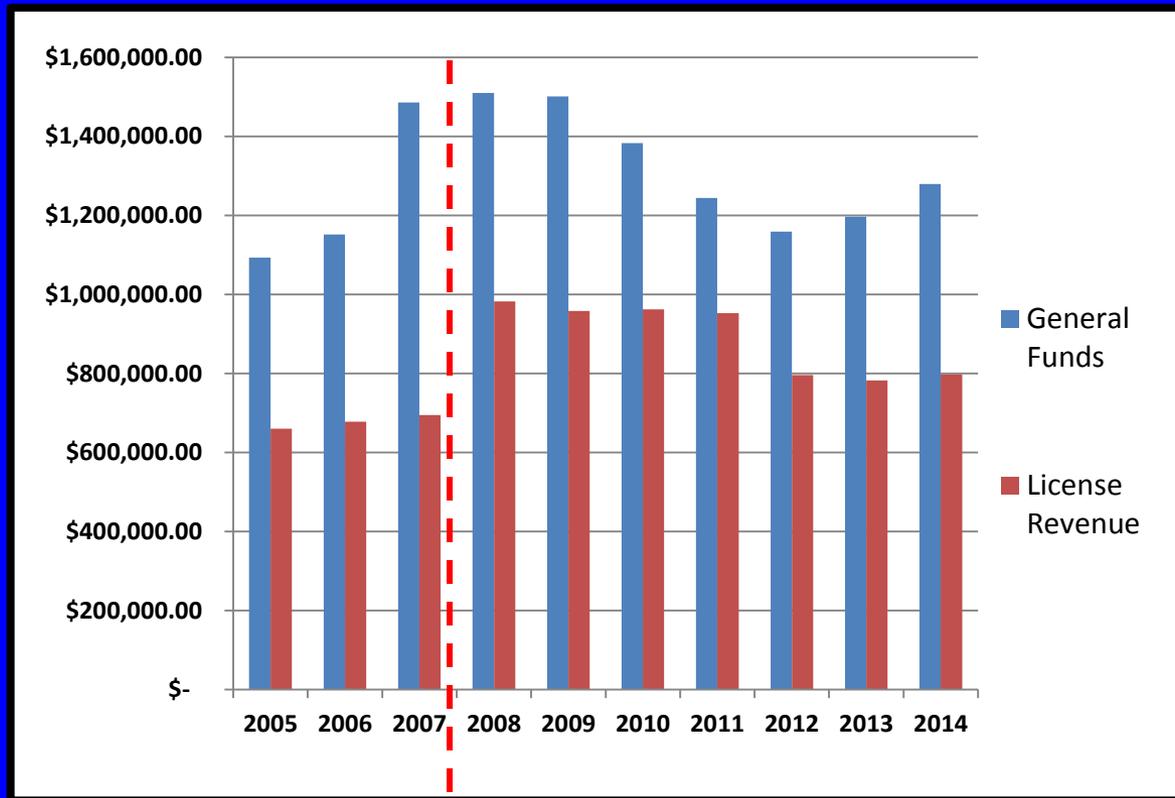
# Trends in Hunting License Sales (including stamps and tags)



Last license fee increase was in 2007.

- 17,369 licensed hunters (not including stamps and tags)
- Recently a 3-8% decrease in license sales in most years (exemptions, recruitment)

# Wildlife Program State Revenue Trends

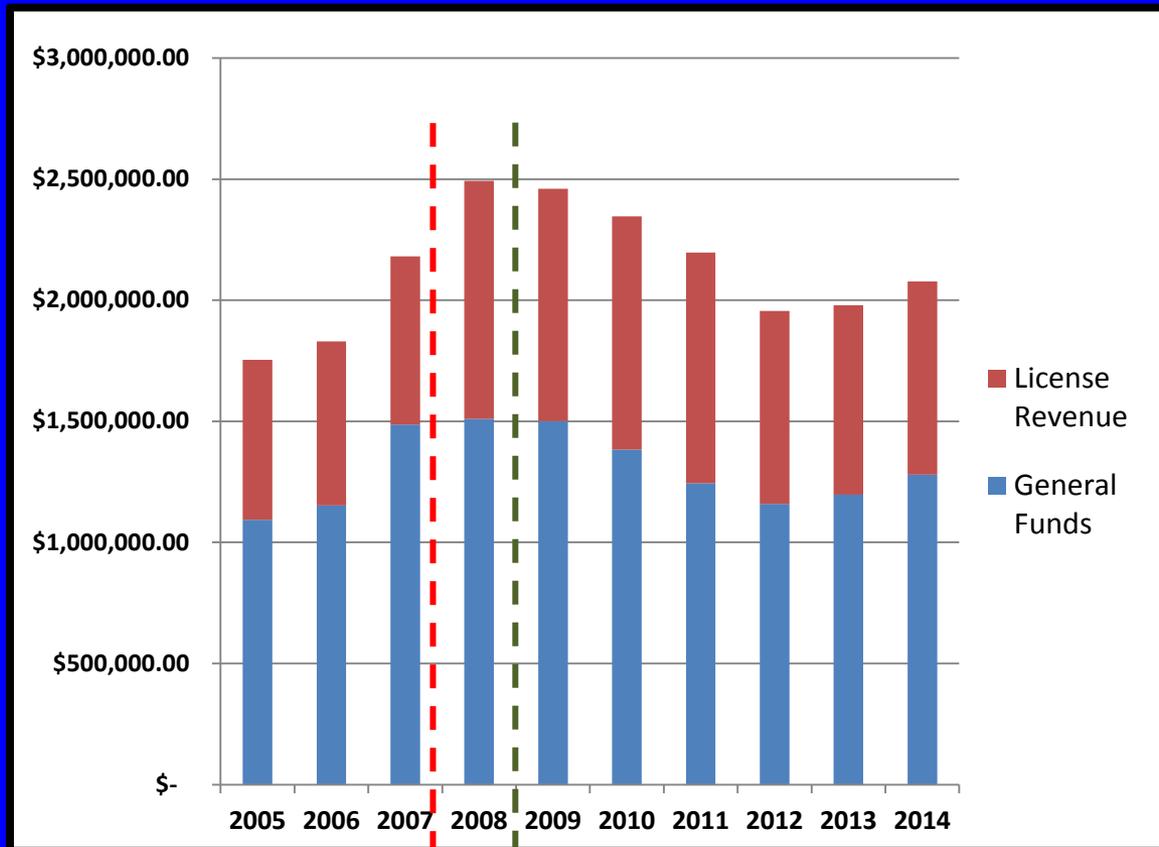


- Decrease in license revenues compared to 2008
- Decrease in General Funds\* compared to 2008
- 20% inflation over last 10 years (less purchasing ability)

Last license fee increase was in 2007.

*\*General Funds come from State income and other State taxes. Small General Fund increase in 2013 & 2014 dedicated to Michael Castle C&D Canal Trail.*

# Wildlife Program State Revenue Trends



- License revenues increased from the 2007 license increase.
- The license increase was offset by General Fund decreases after 2008.
- Net result of **LESS** state funds available to match Federal funds than in 2008.

Last license fee increase

GF decline

# Working Within Our Budget

## The Wildlife Program has:

- Identified additional \$200,000/year of eligible funding to match Federal Pittman-Robertson (PR) funds.
- Implemented service reductions and cut costs
  - Did not fill five full-time vacant positions (3 Conservation Techs, Impoundment Manager, Rangemaster); reduced Fleet vehicles
  - Hired 70% fewer seasonal employees for Wildlife Area management
  - Eliminated wildlife food plots and reduced sunflower plantings
  - Closed Wildlife Area access roads between hunting seasons
  - Reduced number of permit hunting days on Wildlife Areas
  - Reduced other maintenance/operational activities at Wildlife Areas
  - Reduced days/hours at the Ommelanden shooting range

# Wildlife Program Revenue Needs

Current hunting and trapping fee revenues are not sufficient to restore, maintain or enhance Wildlife Program service levels and wildlife/habitat conservation.

- Wildlife Program has had revenue shortfalls since 2009 due to decreased license revenues and reduced General Funds
- **\$600,000** projected additional license revenue need for FY17 (July 2016 - June 2017)
- Prevents matching \$1.2 million in Federal Pittman-Robertson (PR) funds
- Total lost funding opportunity = \$1.8 million/yr.



# Why is \$600,000 Needed?

- To provide the necessary match to ensure that Delaware receives its full portion of Federal Pittman-Robertson (PR) funds
- To avoid the possibility that some Federal PR excise taxes paid by Delaware hunters could be redistributed to other states



The Pittman-Robertson (PR) trust fund is funded by excise taxes on firearms, ammunition and hunting equipment.

# Why is \$600,000 Needed?

## **To restore/enhance services by combining with Federal grant funds to:**

- Improve services by filling license-funded vacant positions (the majority of wildlife full-time positions depend upon license revenues)
- Cover operating costs to support the filled positions, including vehicle and equipment
- Cover mandated employee cost increases, including health insurance and pension costs (affecting all state agencies)
- Provide for expanded access to and management of Wildlife Areas
- Replace supplemental funding no longer available to balance the budget
- Establish an annual budget buffer

# Possible Service Reductions Without Increased Revenues

**Major reductions in Wildlife Program services will be unavoidable without additional revenues.**

**These service reductions could include:**

- Closing Ommelanden shooting range
- Eliminating dove hunting sunflower plantings on public Wildlife Areas
- Reducing the number of days public Wildlife Areas are open to lottery/permit hunting
- Eliminating non-lottery duck blinds and deer stands on public Wildlife Areas
- Reducing/closing road and trail access on public Wildlife Areas
- Reducing/eliminating wildlife population surveys (e.g., aerial waterfowl surveys)
- Eliminating nuisance and injured wildlife response/referrals

# Authority and Process to Increase Fees

## Fee Authority Granted by the 148<sup>th</sup> General Assembly Senate Bill 160 Epilogue (excerpt with emphasis added):

Section 95. Revenues. The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, *following adequate opportunity for public comment and the approval of the appropriate public advisory council(s)* and Secretary, may establish...such appropriate fees as shall approximate and reasonably reflect costs necessary to defray the expenses of each such activity or service...but no fee shall be charged for a purpose not specified in...the Delaware Code...*any fee or fee increase associated with hunting, trapping or fishing and under the management authority of the Division of Fish and Wildlife must also receive the appropriate approval of the General Assembly before becoming effective.*”



Woodland Beach Wildlife Area

# Authority and Process to Increase Fees

## Fee Process:

- Opportunity for public comment
- Consider public comment
- Develop possible fees for Wildlife Council consideration
- Wildlife Council votes on possible fees  
*January 26, 2016 at 7:00 pm in the DNREC auditorium (in Dover)*
- Any proposed fees or new fee categories would be presented to the 148<sup>th</sup> General Assembly for approval
- Any fee increases or new fee categories would be effective July 1, 2016

# Overview of Possible Fees

- **SIMILAR % increase for most license categories**
- **SIMILAR % increase for most resident and non-resident license categories**
- **NO CHANGE for**
  - Junior hunting license
- **POSSIBLE NEW FEE CATEGORY**
  - Conservation Access Pass (to use wildlife areas)



# Conservation Access Pass Possible Approach



- To ensure all users contribute to the management of State Wildlife Areas, a Conservation Access Pass would be required for any individual using these areas for wildlife-associated recreation such as hunting, trapping, birdwatching, horseback riding, etc.
- Annual and 3-day passes
- Resident and non-resident pass fee difference
- Not required for C&D Canal Michael Castle Trail or designated fishing and boating access areas
- Would replace the Public Blind/Deer Stand Permit

# Conservation Access Pass Possible Approach



## Possible fees

- Resident Annual: \$20.00
- Non-resident Annual: \$30.00
- Resident 3-Day: \$7.50
- Non-resident 3-Day: \$12.50
- Would generate an estimated \$85,000 in new revenue/year

# Possible Fees

Fee Type	Existing Fee	Possible Fee
<b>Resident Hunt (Age 16-64)</b> (Includes Deer, Turkey, Small Game plus 4 Antlerless Deer Tags)	\$25.00	\$39.50
<b>Resident Junior Hunt (Age 13-15)</b> (Includes Deer, Turkey, Small Game plus 4 Antlerless Deer Tags)	\$5.00	\$5.00
<b>Resident Guide Hunting License (Age 18 and Over)</b> (Includes Individual License for Deer, Turkey, Small Game plus 4 Antlerless Deer Tags)	\$100.00	\$159.50
<b>Non-Resident Hunt (Age 16 and Over)</b> (Minimum of \$130.00 or other state reciprocal value) (Includes Deer, Turkey, Small Game plus 4 Antlerless Deer Tags)	\$130.00	\$199.50
<b>Non-Resident Junior Hunt (Age 13-15)</b> (Includes Deer, Turkey, Small Game plus 4 Antlerless Deer Tags)	\$50.00	\$50.00
<b>Non-Resident 3-Day Hunt (Age 16 and Over)</b> (3 Consecutive Days for Small Game only. Not valid for Deer or Turkey)	\$50.00	\$75.00
<b>Non-Resident Guide Hunting License (Age 18 and Over)</b> (Includes Individual License for Deer, Turkey, Small Game plus 4 Antlerless Deer Tags)	\$300.00	\$475.00
<b>Resident Hunters Choice/Quality Buck Tag</b>	\$10.00	\$20.00
<b>Antlerless Tag</b>	\$10.00	\$20.00
<b>Non-Resident Quality Buck Tag</b>	\$25.00	\$50.00
<b>Non-Resident Antlered Tag</b>	\$25.00	\$50.00
<b>Public Blind/Deer Stand Permit</b>	\$20.00	n/a
<b>Resident Waterfowl Stamp (Age 16-64)</b>	\$9.00	\$15.00
<b>Non-Resident Waterfowl Stamp (Age 16 and Over)</b>	\$9.00	\$15.00
<b>Resident Fur Dealers</b>	\$28.75	\$50.00
<b>Non-Resident Fur Dealers</b>	\$287.50	\$475.00
<b>Breeders Permit</b>	\$11.50	\$17.50
<b>Propagating Permit</b>	\$25.00	\$39.50
<b>Resident Trapping</b>	\$3.50	\$10.00
<b>Non-Resident Trapping</b>	\$25.00	\$75.00
<b>Resident Annual Conservation Access Pass (for wildlife areas)*</b>	n/a	\$20.00
<b>Non-Resident Annual Conservation Access Pass (for wildlife areas)*</b>	n/a	\$30.00
<b>Resident 3-Day Conservation Access Pass (for wildlife areas)*</b>	n/a	\$7.50
<b>Non-Resident 3-Day Conservation Access Pass (for wildlife areas)*</b>	n/a	\$12.50

*\*New fee category;  
requires General  
Assembly establishment*

# How Increased Revenues Would Be Used

**The estimated \$607,225/year in new revenue would:**

- Balance budget
- Restore/enhance services
- Avoid further service reductions
- Continue to provide wildlife conservation, management and surveys
- Continue to manage public Wildlife Areas to provide access to hunters, trappers and wildlife watchers
- Continue to evaluate fee revenues, program operations and wildlife user base



# More Bang for your Buck

**Additional revenues through a fee increase provides an opportunity to deliver value-added services which could...**

- **Restore Wildlife Program Services**
- **Expand Statewide Hunting Seasons**
- **Improve Habitat on State Wildlife Areas**
- **Expand Hunting/Trapping Opportunities on State Wildlife Areas**
- **Expand Wildlife Viewing Opportunities on State Wildlife Areas**

# Breakout Sessions

- **Visit information stations around the room**
- **Opportunities to discuss with Wildlife staff**
- **Group question/comment session**

# Comments and Questions

- **Comments and questions are welcome.** Please use the microphone provided. Please limit comments to 3 minutes per person.
- **Questionnaire** – Please complete and return questionnaire tonight.



***Thank you for your input and support of  
wildlife conservation and wildlife-associated  
activities in Delaware!***



*We Bring You Delaware's Great Outdoors  
through Science and Service*

*Ted Harvey Wildlife Area*