

REPORTING A VIOLATION

Immediately after witnessing a suspected violation, note as many details as possible. The more information you provide, the faster a violator can be caught and prosecuted. Transmit this information to the Commission region office serving your area as quickly as possible. For a list of all counties in each Game Commission region, and addresses and telephone numbers, see the "Contacting the PGC" page at the beginning of this Digest.

• Gather as much information as possible about the subject: an accurate physical description and any other pertinent information. If possible, get a hunting license back tag number. Try to secure names and addresses of other witnesses, and any information they may have about the violation or suspect. Things such as:

• What type of violation was it, and when, where and what time did it occur?

• What wildlife was involved (species, how many and where are they now)?

• Describe the suspect's vehicle: license number, make, year, color and any other distinguishing features such as dented fenders or other noticeable damage.

• Note other physical evidence, such as hides, entrails, firearms, cartridge cases, etc. Note type and make of firearms involved. Do you know if the illegal game will be moved soon—when and where?

ATV USE POLICY

Changes in the Pennsylvania Hunting & Trapping Digest have included the magazine size, the use of full color on many pages and paid advertising. The magazine-size format allows a better presentation and easier to read style for many of the new illustrations and tables. The move to accept paid advertising was made for sound economic reasons. The Game Commission's share of advertising revenues have enabled the agency to save thousands of sportsmen's dollars in publication and distribution costs.

Among the paid advertisements have been several ads for ATVs. Some of our license buyers and indeed, some of our agency employees, have voiced concerns that the appearance of ATV ads in the Digest sends the message that the Game Commission was endorsing the use of ATVs and condoning the illegal and unethical use of these machines. This is far from the case. The operation of ATVs on State Game Lands and other properties open to public hunting remains a violation of the law and continues to be aggressively enforced by our wildlife conservation officers and their deputy WCOs. We view this as no different than the illegal use of automobiles, trucks and SUVs on these properties.

It is unlawful to ride ATVs on State Game Lands, except on **designated roads open for persons issued a Disabled Persons Permit**, and who have a valid registration from the Department of Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR). It is unlawful to ride ATVs on private land open to public hunting without the permission of the landowner. It is unlawful to have a loaded firearm on an ATV. Individuals issued a Disabled Persons Permit may hunt from a **parked** ATV. For ATV use regulations on state forests and parks, contact the DCNR. For information on using an ATV on the Allegheny National Forest, contact the ANF.

Violation Report Form

Use this form to record as much information as possible.

Nature of Violation _____

Date _____ Time _____

Location _____

Suspect's Name _____

Weight _____ Height _____ Hair _____ Eyes _____

Customer ID Number (CID) _____

Vehicle License Number _____

Year _____ Make _____ Color _____

Distinguishing Features _____

Wildlife Involved _____

Evidence _____

Type of Firearm _____

Other Information _____

Your Phone Number _____

TURN IN A POACHER 1-888-PGC-8001

The Game Commission has established a "Turn-In-A-Poacher" hotline as a way for people to report the illegal taking of wildlife. The number is 1-888-PGC-8001, or sportsmen can also report suspected wildlife crimes by filling out a "Tip" Reporting Form on the agency's website at www.pgc.state.pa.us and click on "Turn in a Poacher." Calls to report violations in progress or that require an immediate response should be directed to the region office servicing the area. The phone numbers are listed at the beginning of this digest.

The hotline was authorized by the legislature as part of an act calling for an additional fine of \$500 for those convicted of the multiple killing of big game, or threatened or endangered species. This additional penalty may be added to fines levied upon those found guilty of Game and Wildlife Code violations. The \$500 enhanced penalty goes into a special fund from which half the amount (\$250) can be paid to the individual who provided the information that led to the conviction. The remainder will be used to offset the costs of operating the TIP program.

The TIP Hotline 1-888-PGC-8001 will be answered by a secure recording device. Calls to the TIP Hotline submitted using the new online reporting system will be delivered electronically to a special e-mail account in the agency's Bureau of Wildlife Protection.

Both methods of reporting are available to the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week. People who provide "tips" can choose to remain anonymous, but if you'd like to claim a reward you're entitled to, you'll have to provide a way for the agency to let you know that your information led to the successful prosecution of the accused individual.