

# State Income Taxes Can Be "For the Birds"

## ■ "Checkoff" to Help Alabama's Nongame Wildlife Soar

Paying taxes is not usually a pleasant experience, but receiving a refund certainly can help soften the blow. How would you like to know that all or a portion of your state income tax refund can help one or more of the 900-plus wildlife species in Alabama classified as "nongame" or illegal to hunt? You can play a major part in ensuring that wildlife in our state continues to flourish for the enjoyment and education of generations to come by simply opting to Checkoff for Wildlife on your Alabama state income tax return. Conservation-minded citizens who choose to give their tax dollars back to nature can help increase the chances of survival of many wildlife species, including once threatened or endangered wildlife such as the majestic bald eagle, eastern bluebird, and gopher tortoise. In fact, donations and money from the checkoff system helped fund the successful Bald Eagle Restoration Project and the Bluebird Restoration Project in the early days of the Nongame Wildlife Program.

This important program is administered by the Alabama Department of Conservation's Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division. The program does not receive money from the General Fund budget. It is partially funded by the citizens of Alabama through tax-deductible donations and federal funds through the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (P-R Act). The P-R Act is an excise tax on sporting firearms, ammunition, archery and other outdoor equipment earmarked for wildlife restoration and management. The sales of hunting licenses also provide funding for the conservation of all of the state's wildlife species, meaning Alabama hunters provide the primary sources of funding for Alabama's Nongame Wildlife Program. But those dollars are simply not enough.

Since 1984, the Alabama Nongame Wildlife Fund checkoff box has been included on the state income tax form, providing concerned citizens a way to donate all or a portion of their state tax refunds for the benefit of wildlife. These donations are matched on a three-to-one federal cost share. This means that for every \$1 you donate, the state receives \$3 in federal matching funds. Your \$5 donation means \$20 for nongame wildlife conservation. Your \$100 donation means \$400.

More than 1 million Alabamians receive a state tax refund each year; if only one out of four people donate just \$4, it would mean over \$1 million dollars for nongame wildlife conservation in Alabama.

Won't you make a commitment to help? If you use a tax accountant or preparer, please direct them to check the box for the Alabama Nongame Wildlife Fund. If you do not receive a state income tax refund, you can still make a direct donation. Send your check to the Nongame Wildlife Program, Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, 64 North Union Street, Montgomery, AL 36130. Remember, your tax-deductible donation will be tripled through available federal funds.

This year, give something back to wildlife for all the enjoyment it has given you. It is our responsibility to help preserve this treasured resource for future generations. For more information contact the Nongame Wildlife Program, Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, 64 North Union Street, Montgomery, AL 36130; 334-242-3469.

*The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources promotes wise stewardship, management and enjoyment of Alabama's natural resources through five divisions: Marine Police, Marine Resources, State Parks, State Lands, and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries.*



### 'Crankbait' strikes again on last day

Well-known Gilbertown fisherman Jerry Roberts once again proved he's not just deadly on the water by killing his second big buck of the season. This 170-pound 10-point is a nice second buck for Roberts, who also harvested another 10-point earlier in the year.




Choctaw Sun photo by Dee Ann Campbell

### Skelton gets 9-point


LUSK – Shawn Skelton killed this nice 9-point while hunting in the Lusk area on Tuesday. The kill was his first buck of the season.

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