

bears, that have become accustomed to certain behaviors, breaking into homes and garages looking for the food that they have been eating for years. Although we had fewer recaptures as well as fewer overall captures, the number of bears euthanized for behavior deemed hazardous increased,” reports Lackey.

Under NDOW policy, bears that cause damage or are a threat to human safety must be humanely euthanized.

“It’s a shame when we are forced to put down a food-conditioned bear, but if the new ordinances work, we can reduce the number overall long term, making both people and bears safer.

When a bear is released back into the wild, NDOW uses specially trained Karelian Bear Dogs in combination with aversive conditioning tools and structured learning situations to teach

Nevada Department of Wildlife Biologist Carl Lackey draws blood from a captured bear.



bears to recognize and avoid human territory.

“It has good short term effectiveness in keeping bears away, but remember, it is designed to modify their behavior (avoiding humans) and is not intended to make them leave an area. This can mean simply reverting to nocturnal behavior when humans aren’t around as much.”

Fowl Play!

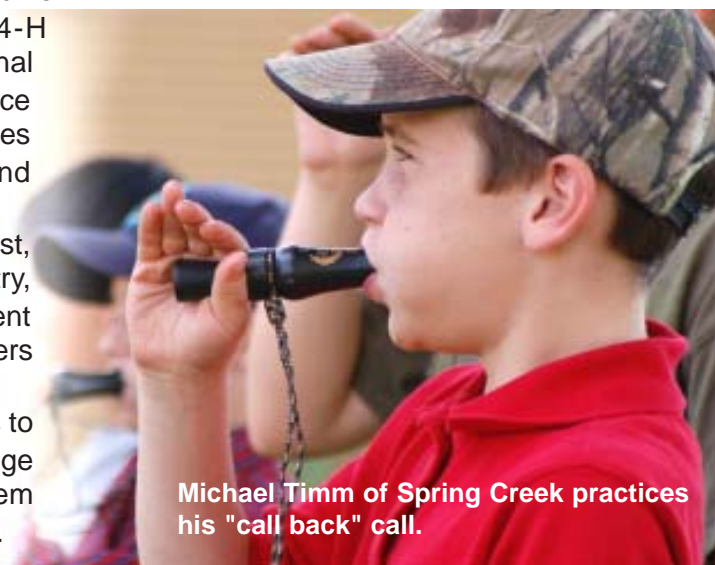
By Joe Doucette

It was a beautiful fall day for the 25 youngsters and parents from around Elko County who showed up for the 6th annual Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Youth Waterfowl Expo. The event, hosted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) and Ducks Unlimited (DU), 4-H Shooting Sports and Safari Club International is held every year in September to introduce youth to the waterfowl and hunting opportunities that can be found at Ruby Lake NWR and surrounding areas.

According to Jeff Mackay, USFWS biologist, “While Nevada is the driest state in the country, areas like Ruby Lake NWR provide excellent waterfowl hunting opportunities that few hunters take advantage of.”

Mackay adds that the goal of the Expo is to not only introduce young people to the Refuge and its opportunities, but to start giving them the skills needed to take advantage of them.

“Activities the kids participated in on Saturday included duck banding, learning how to put out decoys, and duck calling,” stated Mackay. Other activities included hunter ethics, a trap range, an air rifle range and LaserShot, an interactive



Michael Timm of Spring Creek practices his "call back" call.

computer game that helps beginning hunters on shooting skills and making judgment calls.

The activity that seemed to garner the most interest was the duck banding and identification, conducted by Mackay. He selected ducks and coots he trapped the night before and allowed youngsters to hold the ducks as he banded their legs with an identification tag for future data collection. The kids then took them to the waters edge and released the ducks back into the wild.

Participants were treated to a free hotdog and chili lunch as well as a free drawing for prizes including duck decoys, duck calls, hats, and a single shot shotgun provided by the Elko chapter of Ducks Unlimited won by Michael Timm of Spring Creek.

Timm had been out earlier in the morning with his father, Mike, and grandfather, Charles, taking advantage of the Youth Waterfowl Hunt Day that allows young hunters the opportunity to hunt before the regular season.

“He’s really interested in wildlife biology,” Mike said of his son. “It’s due in part to stuff like this. He’s way into waterfowl.”

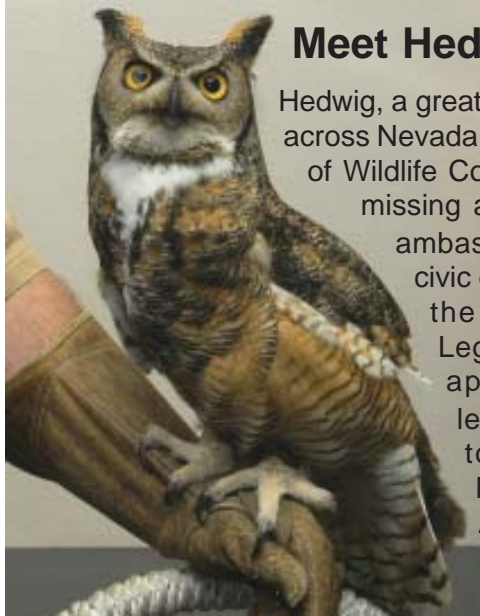
At the end of the day, prizes were given for the duck calling contest, Laser-Shot and trap shooting high scores. Then every child received prizes and goodie bags with gifts and informational handouts provided by Ruby Lake NWR, NDOW and Ducks Unlimited.

“We have this wonderful resource here in Elko County, yet many residents are unaware of the



Lewis Mendive of Elko holds a duck while USFWS biologist Jeff Mackay puts a band on its leg.

waterfowl opportunities in Nevada,” explains Mackay. “This gives the youth in our area, and their parents, an introduction to the waterfowl found here.”



Meet Hedwig, the teaching owl

Hedwig, a great horned owl, has educated almost 10,000 students and adults across Nevada about raptors and wildlife with the help of Nevada Department of Wildlife Conservation Educator Joe Doucette of Elko. Hedwig, who is missing a wing, acts as an ambassador to schools, civic groups and even to the Nevada State Legislature where he appeared at a legislative breakfast to help promote Nevada’s Wildlife Action Plan.

