



THE PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION'S

# COOPERATIVE SAFETY ZONE PROGRAM



The Pennsylvania Game Commission's Cooperative Safety Zone Program is aimed toward providing a better landowner-sportsman relationship and improved hunting conditions at a time when suburban developments and new highways are rapidly diminishing the total amount of available hunting territory. Its primary intent is better protection to farm residents and farm property. A secondary objective is opening previously closed acreage to hunting.

At present, more than 7,200 landowners and tenants have taken advantage of the program. The farms, located in nearly every county of the state, comprise over 1,173,000 acres. Since its inception in 1954, the number of cooperators has increased steadily, indicating that farmers are finding an answer to their need for additional protection against the occasional inconsiderate or careless hunter.

To become a cooperator, the owner or person in legal control of a farm, containing a minimum of 50 acres, executes a simple agreement by which only the hunting rights are made available to the Game Commission. This agreement may be cancelled upon sixty (60) days written notice.

Hunting for or disturbing game, or discharging deadly weapons, within 150 yards of occupied dwellings or other farm buildings is unlawful except by specific permission of the occupant thereof. The cooperating farmer erects Safety Zone posters which are supplied free of charge by the commission, through the local Wildlife Conservation Officer. These signs must be erected not more than 150 yards from farm buildings. The penalty for violating the Safety Zone Law is determined by the magistrate and includes costs of prosecution.

The farm, with the exception of the Safety Zone, will remain open to lawful public hunting. The landowner or tenant may hunt within the Safety Zone and may grant permission to others to do so. Protection to life and property with enforcement of the Game and Wildlife Code by Pennsylvania Wildlife Conservation Officers is a significant part of the program. In addition, the Pennsylvania Landowner Liability Act encourages owners of land to make their property available to the public for recreational purposes such as hunting and trapping by limiting their liability toward persons entering thereon for such purposes.

Each cooperator is given a free yearly subscription to the Commission's monthly publication, the *PENNSYLVANIA GAME NEWS* when funding is available.

For many years the Game Commission tried to find the best method of creating friendly relations between hunters and farmers, realizing that the sport of both big and small game hunting depends upon safeguarding the rights of every landowner to a peaceful existence and to the protection of property, crops and livestock. Real sportsmen endorse the program and subscribe to the plea that all hunters conduct themselves as gentlemen.

It should have been apparent to all hunters, as many now realize, that thoughtless acts or outright vandalism by a few result in the posting of "NO TRESPASS" signs, thus greatly curtailing the area available for hunting.

The Commission believes that a reasonably satisfactory solution to this problem has been found in the Safety Zone Program. Further information relative to the program may be obtained from Game Commission field officers, field regional headquarters or the headquarters at Harrisburg.