

## **Presidents Report to Okotoks and District Fish and Game Association**

### **Annual General Meeting January 2025**

I believe that 2024 was a successful year for the Okotoks and District Fish and Game Association. We held many club events and our membership number grew.

Our January Annual General Meeting was well attended. After the business was completed, those in attendance enjoyed a presentation on Falconry, complete with birds, put on by one of our very own members.

Horn scoring in early February saw 16 heads measured, with 5 submitted to the AWF for inclusion in the provincial records. Close to 45 people attended the evening, which was held at Hub Town Brewing. Our local newspaper attended and printed an article in the paper.

Our Kids Can Catch day at Chain Lakes on the Family Day weekend was a huge success, thanks in large part to the coordinator Mark Anderson and his group of volunteers. We had 250 people and families registered. The weather was fantastic, a few fish were caught, and we ran out of hot dogs and hot chocolate, which is a good sign. We hope this event can continue to grow.

Also in February we sent 3 voting delegates to the Alberta Wildlife Federation Conference and Annual General Meeting in Medicine Hat. The club donated close to \$500 worth of merchandise to the Federation to use for their fundraising at conference.

The April club meeting included a presentation on rifle cartridge reloading. It was put on by 2 of our club members and sponsored by Hornady.

We held a sportsman's sale in April at the Elks Hall. Members were able to rent a table for the day and sell used fishing, hunting and outdoors supplies. A portion of sales was donated back to the club as a fundraiser. We also used the opportunity to sell club memberships and raffle tickets. The day was a reasonable success, and those who participated indicated it would be useful to do again.

We held our third annual Wild Game Banquet and Fundraiser in June. Once again, the event was sold out. Those people attending enjoyed a variety of tasty wild game dishes professionally prepared. There were a few hiccups, not the least of which was the cool evening and not enough heat in the tent. We learned a few things for future banquets. That said, we generated a good profit during the evening, which will go a long way to helping us with our programs. Thank you to Tim MacTavish the Banquet Chair and his committee members for doing a great job.

In July we sponsored a club youth member to the Narrow Lake Conservation Camp near Athabasca. He enjoyed the week while participating in various shooting activities, outdoor skills, team building and meeting other like-minded youth.

Our club family barbecue on July 7 saw 43 members and guests come out to the Crystal Shores Beach to enjoy the nice weather, play games, swim, visit and take part in the barbecue.

We also held our club 50/50 raffle draw on July 7. We had sold 487 of the 1000 tickets printed. The club netted over \$2300 from the raffle. Ticket sales could have been stronger. Looking ahead, it would be nice to have more members help to sell tickets. In the end it was still a good raffle.

We held a club meeting in September, with a good deal of club business discussed. The youth member who we sponsored to the summer camp also made a very nice presentation, highlighting his experience and answering questions.

Our October club meeting had a presentation by a retired Fish and Wildlife Officer who spent a bulk of his career as a Problem Wildlife Specialist and Predator Response Team Lead. He has instructed problem wildlife courses to recruit fish and wildlife officers across western Canada, as well as wildlife human attack response training to agencies in Canada and the US. He has investigated dozens of attacks on humans over his career. He spoke about predator attack avoidance and survival, and on the investigations undertaken by wildlife officials when a predator attack on humans or animals happens.

We also held a winter coat drive in October. Club members donated gently used coats, parkas, boots, gloves, toques, scarves and skidoo suits to a local charity. A representative of the United Church (who coordinates the local clothing drive) attended our October meeting to collect the pile of donations and express her thanks.

We couldn't have done all of this without the help of the Executive and our members. The club executive of myself, Peter Varga as Vice-President, James Oancia as Treasurer and Pedro Selegato as Secretary did the vast majority of the heavy lifting, with others jumping in to help out from time to time. I would really like to see other club members step up and help out. People with specific interests such as fishing, hunting, shooting, social media, program planning and so on can let us know and take on roles related to them. It would really be nice to have more people share the load.

I have been your president for a number of years. We finished 2024 with over 140 members. Our finances are in reasonably good shape. I am very proud of the growth in the club and the many new events we have undertaken. While I enjoy the role of president, I urge others to work toward stepping up and taking over. New people bring new ideas, and with that comes new future successes.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Zazula, President  
Okotoks and District Fish and Game Association