

# 'What it's all about'



PHOTOS BY LAUREN PIERCE | THE JOURNAL

Cabela's employee Justin Smith, left, helps Brayden Mason line up his shot next to his dad, Matt, at a National Hunting and Fishing Day event Saturday at South Cove County Park.



Ashley and Elliot Houck spent the morning catching catfish at South Cove County Park's fishing pier Saturday for National Hunting and Fishing Day.

## National Hunting and Fishing Day event draws local kids outdoors

BY LAUREN PIERCE  
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — South Cove County Park's National Hunting and Fishing Day festivities were one of only five events across the nation, according to county parks, recreation and tourism director Phil Shirley.

"Normally there's about 50 of these around the country," he said. "And with the situation we are in right now, there's only five of them this year, so we were one of the lucky states to be able to still have theirs."

The free family event drew a crowd Saturday morning at the park to join in a hands-on celebration of the outdoors.

The 13th annual Upstate event included fishing on Lake

Keowee, viewing live wildlife and artifacts, archery, air rifle shooting, fly tying and casting, camo hide and seek and kayaking.

"It's a great opportunity to get kids outdoors, get them off their phones, off their tablets and kind of familiarize them or introduce them to things like archery and fishing," Shirley said. "(The S.C. Department of Natural Resources) stocked the dock this week with like 3,000 catfish. They brought in fish just for the day, so that the kids had something to catch."

Traditionally held the fourth Saturday in September, National Hunting and Fishing Day promotes the contributions of

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hunters and anglers to conservation.

"National Hunting and Fishing Day remains the most effective grassroots effort ever undertaken to promote outdoor sports and conservation," event chairwoman Angela Viney said. "We look forward to this event every year. It is a great opportunity for the community to come and enjoy the great outdoors in a safe, educational environment with family and friends.

"It's what it's all about — getting kids outdoors," she added. "And younger adults — to sometimes people my age — have never caught a fish or put a line in the water or have never experienced an air rifle or archery before."

Shirley said though the event wasn't hosted last year, "it's growing."

"There's a lot of things going on — the Heritage Fair is in town, of course, it's football Saturday and then we've got National Hunting and Fishing Day," he said. "It's a lot of options for people to choose (Saturday) and they still chose to come here. ... It's great to see people out there and be able to get hands on and do stuff"

National Hunting and Fishing Day is hosted through partnerships with the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, Oconee County Parks, Recreation and Tourism, Trout Unlimited, Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service, S.C. 4-H Shooting Sports and the Harry Hampton Memorial Wildlife Fund.

"It's a great collaboration of organizations that work in conservation," Viney said.

## HISTORY OF THE EFFORT

A news release from



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## Luke Seal holds an alligator at the National Hunting and Fishing Day event Saturday at South Cove County Park.

DNR Upstate outreach and education coordinator Greg Lucas said more than 100 years ago, hunters and anglers were the "earliest and most vocal supporters" of conservation and scientific wildlife management.

They were the first to recognize that swift development and unregulated uses of wildlife were "threatening the future of many species," he said.

"Led by fellow sportsman President Theodore Roosevelt, these early conservationists called for the first laws restricting the commercial slaughter of wildlife," Lucas said in the release. "They urged sustainable use of fish and game, created hunting and fishing licenses, and lobbied for taxes on sporting equipment to provide funds for state conservation agencies.

"These actions were the foundation of the North American wildlife conservation model, a science-based, user-pay system that would foster the most dramatic conservation successes of all time. Populations of white-tailed deer, elk, antelope, wild turkey, wood ducks and many other

species began to recover from decades of unregulated exploitation."

He added President Richard Nixon signed the first proclamation of National Hunting and Fishing Day on May 2, 1972, writing, "I urge all citizens to join with outdoor sportsmen in the wise use of our natural resources and in insuring their proper management for the benefit of future generations."

"By late summer, all 50

governors and more than 600 mayors had joined in by proclaiming state and

local versions of National Hunting and Fishing Day," Lucas said. "The response was dramatic."

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