

FSCA Kicks Off 2025 Youth Hunting Season

The Florida Sportsmen Conservation Association (FSCA) has officially launched its 2025 Youth Hunting Program, providing young outdoor enthusiasts with unforgettable experiences in Florida's wilderness. So far, FSCA has hosted three youth alligator hunts and one turkey hunt, introducing 18 young sportsmen to the excitement and challenges of hunting.

These hunts are made possible through a collaboration between the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) Youth Hunting Program of Florida, FSCA, and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), which provides access to the land. By working together, these organizations ensure that future generations can experience and appreciate Florida's hunting heritage.

In February, Huntmaster Kerry Garceau led an FSCA youth gator hunt team at the **DuPuis Wildlife and Environmental Area (WEA) Annual Youth Gator Hunt**. All three participating kids could harvest an alligator, and each was successful.

The first weekend of March saw another successful youth alligator hunt at **Stormwater Treatment Area #2 (STA #2)**, led by Huntmaster Lauresa Musgrove. Five young hunters participated, and once again, all five successfully harvested an alligator.

March also marked the beginning of turkey season. Huntmaster Steve Stroh and his team of guides organized a **youth turkey hunting weekend at Grassy Island**. Out of five participants, two hunters successfully harvested a turkey, while two others had opportunities but could not seal the deal. The fifth young hunter enjoyed the thrill of hearing gobblers in the wild, experiencing firsthand the excitement of turkey hunting.

To close out March, Huntmaster Billy Boatwright led another youth gator hunt, this time at **STA #5 (STA #5)**. Once again, all five young hunters had the chance to harvest an alligator, and each succeeded.

In addition to the hunts, a dedicated group of FSCA volunteers worked to retrieve tree stands from **Grassy Island**. A total of 10 stands were removed and stored for the summer, protecting them from potential damage caused by wildfires or hurricanes.

Each FSCA youth hunt begins with a Friday night dinner and orientation, where participants and their parents learn what to expect for the weekend. Every youth hunter is paired with an experienced guide, providing the hunter and their parent firsthand knowledge of hunting in Florida. These hunts also offer a primitive camping experience, allowing participants to set up camp, prepare meals, and fully immerse themselves in the great outdoors.

Through these efforts, FSCA, FWC Youth Hunting Program of Florida, and SFWMD work together to create meaningful opportunities for young hunters,

ensuring the next generation develops a deep appreciation for conservation and Florida’s outdoor heritage.

Article by Bishop Wright