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Highlights of Changes for 2015–2016

NEW LICENSE STRUCTURE

Effective February 1, 2014, changes were made to the types of licenses available and the fees associated with those licenses. These changes include reduced fees, reduced number of license types, changes to valid license dates and more. If you previously purchased combination licenses, such as Super Sportsman, you will now have to purchase each privilege separately, including fishing. For more information about the types of licenses now available and associated fees, see pages 14–17.

RIFLES IN SCHENECTADY, GENESEE AND SENECA COUNTIES

At press time, legislation was pending that would make rifles legal hunting implements for big game in Schenectady, Genesee and Seneca counties. Check DEC's website for updates.

FALL TURKEY SEASON CHANGES

After a three year study, DEC biologists have adjusted the fall turkey season to two weeks with a bag limit of one bird of either sex, statewide. For more information, see page 47.

CHANGES TO EARLY MUZZLELOADER

SEASON IN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT UNIT 6A

Hunters in Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) 6A may take only antlered deer during the early muzzleloader season (October 17–23, 2015). For details, see maps on page 27.

CHANGES TO EARLY BOWHUNTING AND LATE BOW/MUZZLELOADER SEASONS IN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT UNITS WITH TOO MANY DEER

Hunters in 12 Wildlife Management Units in the Lake Plains and southeastern New York may only take antlerless deer during the first 15 days of the early bowhunting season (October 1–15, 2015) and during any of the late bow and muzzleloader seasons in those WMUs (December 14–22, 2015). For details see maps on page 27.

REPORT POACHERS AND POLLUTERS HOTLINE

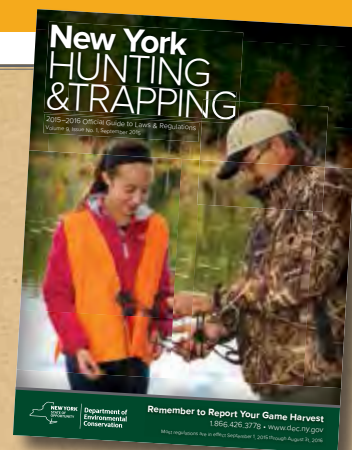
DEC has a new hotline to report suspected violations of fish and game laws and other environmental crimes. The hotline, 1-844-DEC-ECOS (1-844-332-3267), is answered 24/7 by DEC dispatchers who document and forward complaints to DEC's Environmental Conservation Officers (ECOs).

ATTENTION BOATERS!

New regulations are now in effect for all DEC boat launch facilities. Before you launch your boat or leave a site, you are required to:

- Clean all visible plant and animal material from your boat, trailer and associated equipment.
- Drain your boat's bilge, livewell, baitwell, and other water-holding compartments.

See page 53 for more information.



About this Guide

This high-quality regulation guide is offered to you by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through its unique partnership with J.F. Griffin Publishing, LLC.

J.F. Griffin is an award winning publishing house that specializes in producing state fish & wildlife regulation books. J.F. Griffin supports the DEC's staff in the design, layout and editing of the guides. They also manage the marketing and sales of advertising to appropriate businesses within the book.

The revenue generated through ad sales significantly lowers production costs and generates savings. These savings translate into additional funds for other important fisheries and habitat programs!

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www.dec.ny.gov/education/81939.html
Melissa Bailey at 315-793-2515 or
Email mrb323@cornell.edu



THE 10 COMMANDMENTS — OF — FIREARM SAFETY

- 1. WATCH THAT MUZZLE!** Keep it pointed in a safe direction at all times.
- 2. TREAT EVERY FIREARM WITH THE RESPECT DUE A LOADED GUN.** It might be loaded, even if you think it isn't.
- 3. BE SURE OF YOUR TARGET AND WHAT IS IN FRONT OF IT AND BEYOND IT.** Know the identifying features of the game you hunt. Make sure you have an adequate backstop—don't shoot at a flat, hard surface or water.
- 4. KEEP YOUR FINGER OUTSIDE THE TRIGGER GUARD UNTIL READY TO SHOOT.** This is the best way to prevent an accidental discharge.
- 5. CHECK YOUR BARREL AND AMMUNITION.** Make sure the barrel and action are clear of obstructions, and carry only the proper ammunition for your firearm.
- 6. UNLOAD FIREARMS WHEN NOT IN USE.** Leave actions open, and carry firearms in cases and unloaded to and from the shooting area.
- 7. POINT A FIREARM ONLY AT SOMETHING YOU INTEND TO SHOOT.** Avoid all horseplay with a gun.
- 8. DON'T RUN, JUMP, OR CLIMB WITH A LOADED FIREARM.** Unload a firearm before you climb a fence or tree, or jump a ditch. Pull a firearm toward you by the butt, not the muzzle.
- 9. STORE FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION SEPARATELY AND SAFELY.** Store each in a secured location beyond the reach of children and careless adults.
- 10. DO NOT CONSUME ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES BEFORE OR DURING SHOOTING.** Also avoid mind- or behavior-altering medicines or drugs.

Crossbow Hunting Qualifications and Safety Information

Crossbows may be used by any person age 14 or older to hunt deer, bear, unprotected wildlife and **most** small game species except waterfowl and other migratory game birds. Crossbows may not be used to take carp or any other fish.

Hunters who plan to hunt with a crossbow must have in their possession while afield either their completed Hunter Education Certificate of Qualification card dated on or after April 1, 2014 OR the completed Crossbow Certification of Qualification located below.

CROSSBOW SAFETY INFORMATION

- Before shooting your crossbow, read and thoroughly understand your crossbow owner's manual.
- Make sure your fingers are well AWAY (below rail) from the path of the bow string and cables.
- Never dry-fire a crossbow (cock and fire without an arrow placed on the rail).
- Make sure the crossbow limbs are free of obstructions before shooting.
- Never carry a cocked crossbow with an arrow in it while walking.
- If hunting from a tree stand, always cock the crossbow on the ground before climbing into the stand.
- Once seated and secured in the tree stand, pull up your unloaded crossbow with a haul line.
- Do not place an arrow on the crossbow until you are safely secured in your stand.
- Never use a cocking device to uncock a crossbow.
- To uncock a crossbow, shoot an arrow tipped with a field point into the soft ground or a target.
- Always identify your target and the area beyond it before shooting.
- To prevent wounding game, practice often and do not take shots at game that are beyond your effective range, generally less than 30–40 yards, similar to a modern compound bow.
- To better understand how an arrow functions and the skill required for hunting with an arrow, DEC recommends all crossbow hunters take a bowhunter education course.

Practice safely, practice often, and learn the capabilities and limitations of the crossbow and the arrow it shoots.

SUGGESTED REFERENCES TO REVIEW

- NYSDEC Crossbow Hunting Qualifications: www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/98061.html

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Crossbow Certificate of Qualification

I certify that I have read and understand the safety recommendations, license requirements and legal specifications for crossbow use in New York.

Print Name

Signature

DEC ID# (this is your back-tag number) _____ Date _____

Fill in, cut out, and carry afield with your hunting license while hunting with a crossbow.



Building a Conservation Legacy

By Gordon Batcheller, Former Chief Wildlife Biologist

Theodore Roosevelt was a conservation giant.

As New York's governor, he strengthened the Forest, Fish, and Game Commission (DEC's predecessor) by insisting that professional biologists serve as the backbone for the state's then-fledgling conservation program. As president, he permanently protected 300 million acres as National Forest, National Wildlife Refuge, National Park, or National Monument. As a political leader, he insisted that science serve as the basis for conservation. As a sportsman, he promoted the principles of fair chase, and moved hunting out of the market-hunting model of the 1800s and into the modern, highly regulated version of hunting we know and enjoy today.

Roosevelt's zeal for the outdoor world is well known. As a small child, he was fascinated with nature, and spent much of his life outdoors. As an adult, he traveled the world hunting and exploring. He passed his passion for the outdoors to his children, and as New York's governor, he advocated that Americans live a "strenuous life." No other leader has been more effective in advancing the conservation agenda than Theodore Roosevelt, and it all started as a kid outside: a kid collecting insects; a kid studying birds; a kid practicing taxidermy; a kid learning to shoot; a kid on his first hunting trip.

This year's cover features a budding outdoor enthusiast learning the specialized skills needed to trap furbearing animals. DEC and the New York State Trappers Association co-sponsor three youth trapping camps every year to teach young boys and girls about our abundant furbearer species, the importance of wildlife conservation and management, and the principles of modern trapping as taught by highly skilled adult mentors. The Youth Trapping Camp Program was the inspiration of Patricia Arnold of Jefferson County. Sadly, we lost Pat last year, but her vision for getting boys and girls excited about nature lives on and she continues to change lives and grow the conservation ethic in a new generation.

Richard Louv in his award-winning book *Last Child in the Woods* lamented the disconnect between many of today's kids and the outdoors. He writes that nature is essential for a healthy life, and that "nature-deficit" disorder accounts for a number of alarming trends among today's young generation, including



Theodore Roosevelt was the world's greatest conservationist. His passion for nature started at a very early age.



A lifelong hunter, Roosevelt taught his children to enjoy the outdoors, including helping Theodore Jr. take his first deer.



The New York State Young Birders Club sponsors field trips to teach kids how to expertly identify birds.



Enjoying nature can be as simple as exploring local streams and ponds, searching for aquatic invertebrates, salamanders, and frogs.

obesity, attention disorders, and depression. If boys and girls don't get excited about nature, why should they care about protecting the natural world as adults?

Where will tomorrow's conservation leaders come from? Pat Arnold understood that a zeal for conservation starts with a zeal for nature. So did Theodore Roosevelt.

Fortunately, there are ample opportunities for parents to help their kids enjoy nature, in all of its forms.

- A great place to start is to consider DEC's summer camps that focus on environmental education, hunter and trapping education, and outdoor fun. With camps at Colby, DeBruce, Rushford, and Pack Forest, there is a convenient location for all New Yorkers. And it's not only very affordable, many kids also get camp scholarships from sponsoring conservation groups. Check out all you need to know about DEC's summer camps here: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/29.html>.
- Getting a kid started as a hunter has never been easier. (See pages 38–39.) DEC now offers youth hunting days for waterfowl, pheasants, wild turkey, and deer. Young trappers under 12 years can go afield with an adult trapper to begin learning about the highly specialized skills needed to effectively catch furbearers. All of these programs require the presence of an experienced adult mentor to ensure that our young hunters and trappers

have the best available coaches and teachers. As DEC's Hunting & Trapping Photo Gallery (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/54055.html>) shows, lifetime memories are being made.

- In recent years, the New York State Ornithological Association recognized that birding is a great way of connecting kids and nature, and they formed the New York State Young Birders Club. As stated on their website (<http://www.nysyoungbirders.org>), the club is a place "...for young people who have a passion for wild birds and their habitats."
- For parents looking for an uncomplicated way of teaching kids the joys of nature, simply walk down to a pond and listen and look for spring peepers—small but abundant harbingers of spring. Or on a warm and rainy spring night, look for salamanders making their annual migration to a nearby breeding pool. See DEC's website for more information, <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/51925.html>.

It's all very simple. If we want a healthy world where nature thrives, we need to build up a new generation of outdoor enthusiasts. As Theodore Roosevelt understood, it starts in the marshes, fields, and forests. If we want to continue his conservation legacy, our kids need to get outside. To that, Roosevelt would exclaim "Bully!"*

**TR's favorite way of expressing enthusiastic support.*



Making Decisions for White-tailed Deer Buck Hunting in New York

Deer hunters in New York State have diverse views about buck hunting. Although many hunters have voiced a desire to reduce harvest of yearling (1.5 year old) bucks to have a greater chance of taking an older buck with larger antlers, many hunters also prefer to have the freedom to choose which buck they harvest and to practice restraint voluntarily.

Changing the way that hunters pursue and take bucks is not necessary for the health of New York's deer herd, but it may better satisfy hunter desires in some portions of the state. To help managers make informed recommendations, DEC has developed a systematic process to evaluate potential buck hunting strategies in a way that accounts for regional variation in hunter values and the impacts of the strategies.

Elements of structured decision making

1. **Define the Problem.** We needed an objective process to evaluate strategies for reducing harvest of yearling bucks.
2. **Determine Objectives.** For this decision process, our key objectives were to: (1) maximize hunter satisfaction, (2) minimize impact on our ability to manage and monitor deer populations, and (3) minimize management costs.

3. **Identify Alternative Strategies.** Based largely on previous suggestions from hunters, we considered six possible buck harvest strategies that could impact both yearling buck harvest and hunter choice and opportunity to varying degrees. These included: (1) no change, (2) active promotion of voluntary antler restrictions, (3) establishing a 1 buck per hunter per year limit, (4) shortening the regular firearms season by 1 week in the Southern Zone and 2 weeks in the Northern Zone, (5) imposing mandatory antler point restrictions from the start of bow season through the 1st week of the regular firearms season, and (6) imposing mandatory antler point restrictions during all seasons.

4. **Evaluate Consequences.** We evaluated how well each of the alternatives would achieve each of the specified objectives. To do this, we created a population model to predict the outcomes of each alternative on age and sex distribution of the population and legal harvest. We also surveyed a random sample of hunters throughout New York to determine the relative importance of various aspects of buck hunting and opportunity that affect hunter satisfaction in each Buck Management Zone. Additionally, DEC biologists and law enforcement officers

described how each alternative would influence costs and ability to manage deer populations.

5. **Evaluate Tradeoffs.** Tradeoff analysis involves determining which objectives are most important to the overall decision. Because buck harvest management is essentially a social issue in New York, we assigned relative weights such that the hunter satisfaction objective comprised 75% of the final decision, population management 15%, and management costs 10%. We used results from the hunter survey to assign relative weights to different aspects of hunter satisfaction. For each alternative harvest strategy, we then calculated a "score" to reflect the degree to which each objective was satisfied.

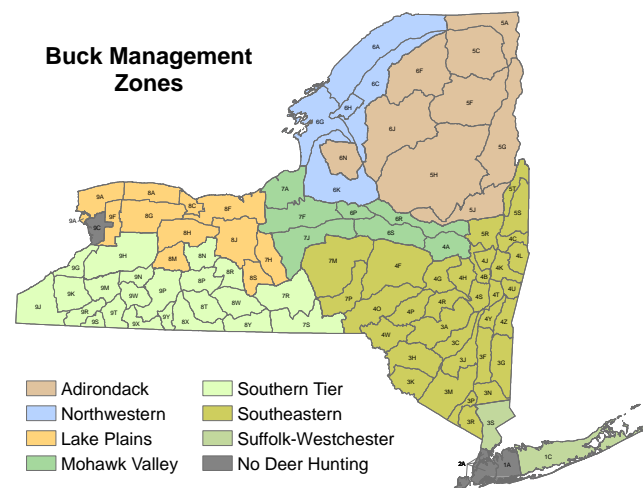
What's next?

In the coming year, DEC will finalize the SDM analysis and make recommendations for possible changes to buck hunting regulations based on the results. We will share those results with deer hunters throughout New York to determine the best course of action to implement, perhaps as early as fall 2016. **Stay tuned!**

For other articles about Buck Harvest Management, DEC's SDM process, and future updates, see www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/27663.html.

Buck Management Zones

Because hunter interests, opportunity, and deer populations vary across the state, we analyzed ecological, deer harvest, and management data to logically group Wildlife Management Units into several Buck Management Zones. Within each zone, we measured hunter preferences and considered alternative strategies to reduce harvest of yearling bucks.



Structured Decision Making (SDM)

SDM is an organized way to identify and evaluate creative options and make choices in complex decision situations. SDM is designed to give insight to decision makers about how well their objectives may be satisfied by alternative courses of action and clarifies the trade-offs that may exist between potential actions. It is especially helpful when stakeholders have conflicting ideas of how a resource should be managed. SDM uses scientific evaluation of population biology and stakeholder values to identify an outcome that may best balance competing interests. We used SDM to evaluate alternative buck harvest strategies and incorporate the biological and social aspects of buck harvest management in New York State.

Strengths & Weaknesses of our SDM Approach

Strengths: SDM brings science into the decision process, it considers hunter interests in context with management concerns, and it integrates hunter values with likely outcomes. We tested the SDM process with small changes in the population modeling and hunter survey data, and the process holds up well.

Weaknesses: Freedom of choice is a core value for some hunters, but we were only able to account for opportunity and success rate in our population model. Thus, while opportunity and success may, over time, be only slightly reduced with strategies like mandatory antler restrictions, hunter freedom of choice would remain limited. Also, because hunters have divided opinions about buck management and disagree about the importance of reducing harvest of young bucks, even with the SDM process there may be no “slam dunk” option for decision makers.

Highlights of the Hunter Survey

Surveys were mailed to a random sample of 7,000 hunters statewide to obtain specific information needed for the SDM process. Forty percent of surveys were returned, which was more than enough to provide statistically reliable results for each Buck Management Zone.

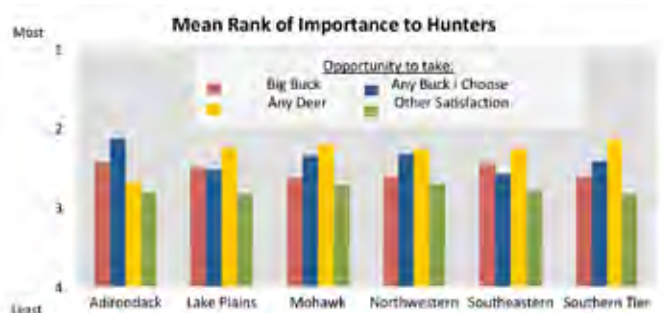
Many hunters are satisfied with their opportunities in New York:

- 58% were moderately or very satisfied with current buck hunting rules.
- 41% were satisfied with their opportunity to take a large-antlered buck, but 25% were dissatisfied; the rest were undecided.

HOWEVER, hunters have conflicting values about buck hunting:

- Statewide, 57% greatly value their freedom to choose what type of buck to harvest, but 55% greatly value a better chance to take a big buck.
- Among Buck Management Zones, 43–53% of hunters said that reducing harvest of young bucks was important, while 30–37% said it was not.
- 40–54% were willing to accept limitations on their freedom of choice to achieve a reduction in harvest of young bucks; 30–45% were not willing.
- About 33% of hunters were primarily interested in seeing and taking older bucks and were supportive of restrictions on taking young bucks. Another 35% of hunters were primarily interested in the opportunity to take any buck of their choice and were not accepting of limitations of their opportunity. About 17% of hunters seemed to be on both sides of the fence, supportive of accepting restrictions but also highly valuing their freedom of choice. The final 15% were either unsure or not strongly opinionated on the issue.
- In most Buck Management Zones, hunters ranked “Opportunity to Take Any Buck I Choose” slightly higher than “Opportunity to Take a Big Buck” (see chart). However, the SDM process considers how much either opportunity would be increased or decreased under each of the alternatives after a period of 5 years.

The survey did not ask directly about hunter preferences for various buck management strategies, as if a vote. We tried that in a 2010 survey and results were inconclusive. Rather, this survey focused on hunters’ values about buck hunting and acceptable tradeoffs.



Fight Chronic Wasting Disease Through Disease Prevention

The health of New York's deer herd depends on all of us.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a fatal neurologic disease in deer, elk, and moose. It poses a serious threat to the white-tailed deer population and the tradition of deer hunting in New York. If introduced, CWD could spread rapidly and will be practically impossible to eliminate from the wild deer herd once established. Preventing CWD from entering New York is the most effective disease management strategy. DEC's CWD regulations were created to protect New York's deer herd now and for future generations.

Important regulations

Transporting or shipping whole trophy heads or intact carcasses from a restricted state or province into New York is prohibited. You will be ticketed and your entire animal, including antlers, will be confiscated and destroyed. It is permitted to import the meat, hide and cape, antlers, cleaned skull cap with antlers attached, finished taxidermy mounts, tanned hides, and clean upper canine teeth.

Any person who possesses a carcass or part of an animal that was tested for CWD in another state, and is notified that such animal has tested positive for CWD, must report the test results to the DEC within 24 hours.

For the latest information on DEC's efforts, and current regulations and restrictions, and import restrictions, visit www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7191.html.

CWD facts

CWD is spread by direct contact with an infected animal or its body fluids (saliva, urine, or feces), contaminated soil, or an infected animal carcass. Prions, the agent that causes CWD, can persist in the environment for many years before infecting other deer. Infected deer may not appear sick but can still spread the disease. CWD is always fatal to deer. CWD continues to spread in the US, and is increasing in states with infected herds.

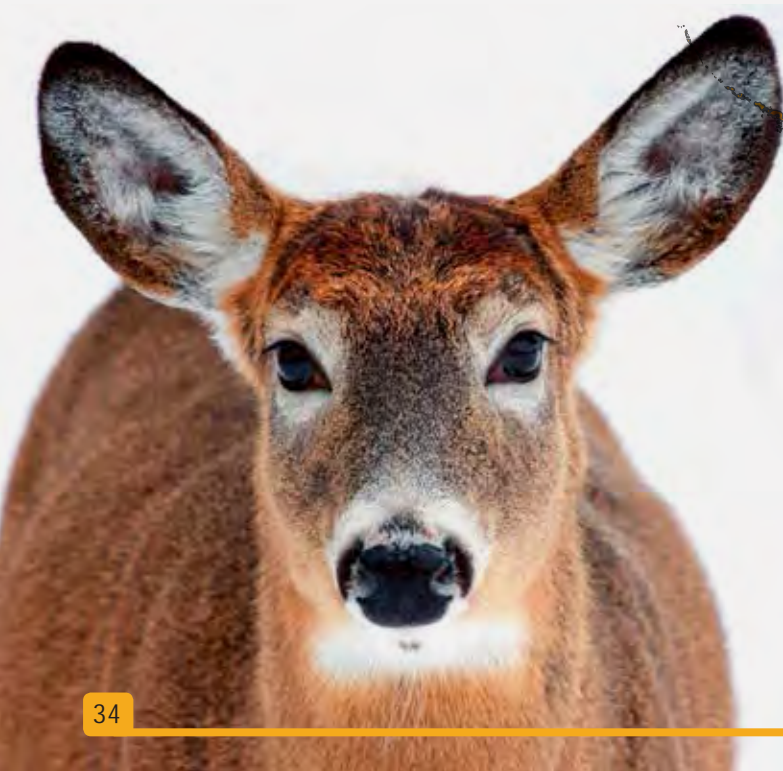
Import restrictions

Whole carcasses may not be imported from the following places:

- All states west of the Mississippi River, including Alaska and Hawaii.
- CWD-positive states east of the Mississippi River (Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin).
- CWD-positive Canadian provinces (Alberta, Saskatchewan), as well as Manitoba, British Columbia, Yukon, and Northwest Territories.

How can hunters help protect New York's deer herd?

- » **Do not use deer urine-based cover scents or lures.** CWD is shed in saliva, urine, and feces. There is no test to see if urine products are contaminated. CWD binds to the soil and can remain infectious to deer for many years, if not decades.
- » **Debone or quarter your deer before bringing your out-of-state harvest back to New York.** This eliminates the parts with highest risk for spreading CWD (i.e., brain, spinal cord).
- » **Dispose of carcass waste in a landfill.** Do not dispose of deer parts or carcasses on the landscape where wild deer can contact them. Ask your meat processor or taxidermist if they are disposing of carcass waste properly.
- » **Do not feed wild deer.** Besides being illegal, deer can spread disease to other deer at a bait feeding site.
- » **Report any deer that appears sick or acts abnormally to the nearest DEC Regional Wildlife Office.**
- » **Hunt wild deer and support fair chase hunting principles.**



Message from the Division Director



Welcome to another year of hunting and trapping in New York State! As you venture afield, either to scout or hunt, take a look around. For you “seasoned” license holders, you may notice that many of the places you go afield look different from when you picked up a bow or shotgun for your first hunt. New York is more forested today — 63% — than it was 100 years ago. That affects the habitat available to support your favorite game species. Please read about DEC’s new Young Forest Initiative (YFI) on page 74. I am very excited that we are building on the success of past work on our Wildlife Management Areas by providing the resources to cut more trees and restore wildlife habitat. We hired 18 new staff members to work on this effort, using Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration grant funds (Pittman Robertson), which come from the excise taxes you pay when purchasing your sporting arms and

ammunition and archery equipment. Governor Cuomo also included language in the budget this year to provide innovative state funds to “match” the federal dollars and give us the capacity to restore habitat for our wildlife and for you. Part of those state funds come from the voluntary \$5 Habitat and Access Stamp (see page 70). In honor of our YFI, this year’s featured species is an American woodcock, one of the many species that needs the habitat we will be restoring with our YFI. Keep an eye on our website for progress on where we’re cutting, and I encourage you to buy your Habitat and Access Stamp: your dollars go into conservation action on the ground.

Patricia Riexinger
Director of Division of Fish,
Wildlife and Marine Resources



Shooting Range Small Grants Program

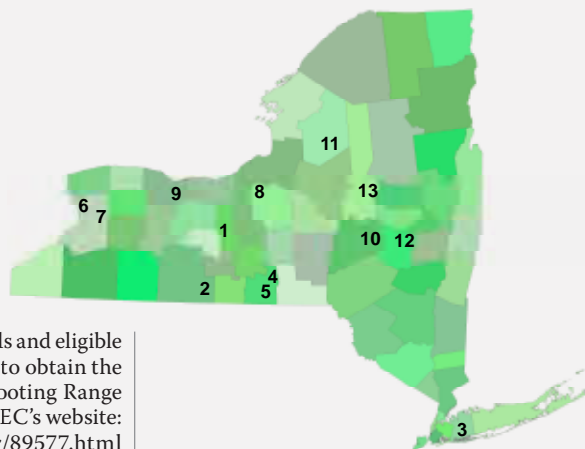
New applications and projects underway

Shooting ranges provide important benefits to the hunting, recreational shooting, and competitive shooting communities. DEC's Shooting Range Small Grants Program continues to improve public access to non-profit shooting ranges across New York. With many of the program's projects near completion, sportsmen and sportswomen will find public access days available for sighting-in their firearms this fall.

This federally funded program assists non-profit organizations and municipalities with improvement projects for shooting ranges and related facilities. This is a matching grant program where each successful applicant will be responsible for providing a match of at least 25% of the total project cost. In addition, they need to provide public access for a certain number of weekends per month. Nine more applicants are on board for 2014. As always, check with the facility for public use availability.

To learn more... about the goals and eligible projects within the program and to obtain the program guidelines, visit the Shooting Range Small Grants Program page on DEC's website: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/89577.html> or contact Melissa Bailey at (315) 793-2515 or mrb323@cornell.edu. The application period runs from March through mid-May.

Name of Organization	
1	Seneca Waterways Council (Boy Scouts), Ovid, NY
2	Painted Post Field and Stream, Painted Post, NY
3	Freeport Revolver and Rifle Association, Freeport, NY
4	Newark Valley Historical Society, Newark Valley, NY
5	Tioga County Sportsman's Association, Owego, NY
6	Tonawanda Sportsmen's Club, North Tonawanda, NY
7	Hawkeye Bowmen, Marilla, NY
8	Baldwinsville Rod and Gun Club, Baldwinsville, NY
9	Lima Gun Club, Honeoye, NY
10	Milford Fish and Game Club, Middlefield, NY
11	Constableville Fish and Game Club, Constableville, NY
12	Middleburgh Rod and Gun Club, Middleburgh, NY
13	Sprite Club, Dolgeville, NY



NEW YORK
STATE OF
OPPORTUNITY
**Department of
Environmental
Conservation**

HOW WILDLIFE IS THRIVING BECAUSE OF GUNS & HUNTING

HOW IT WORKS

- Hunters and target shooters purchase guns and ammunition.
- Manufacturers pay federal excise taxes on guns and ammunition.
- Revenue from these excise taxes is distributed to state wildlife agencies.
- In turn, millions of acres of important habitat have been set aside to help ensure future wildlife abundance.
- State wildlife agencies use these funds to purchase land for wildlife habitat and to manage wildlife populations.

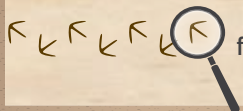
This System Has Provided
MORE THAN **\$9.5 Billion**
For Conservation So Far

Where the Money Goes

Buy, develop, maintain and operate wildlife management areas



Research projects focused on wildlife conservation



Hunter safety and education programs



Construction and maintenance of public target shooting ranges

Quick History

- Early 1900s**
As many wildlife species are dwindling in numbers or disappearing, firearms industry steps forward and asks Congress to redirect excise tax on sale of guns and ammo to help fund wildlife conservation.
- 1937**
Congress passes and President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act into law.
- 1938 to today:**
Revenue from this act has purchased millions of acres of prime habitat that is maintained by state wildlife agencies. These lands, where game and non-game species flourish, are purchased with sportsmen's dollars but used by all Americans.

Since the late 1930s, hunters, target shooters and the firearms industry have been the nation's **LARGEST** contributors to **conservation**, paying for programs that benefit America's wildlife and all who love the outdoors.

THEN & NOW

White Tailed Deer Population		
1900	500,000	32,000,000 TODAY
Ducks / Waterfowl Population		
1901	FEW	44,000,000 TODAY
Rocky Mountain Elk		
1907	41,000	1,000,000 TODAY
Wild Turkeys		
1900	100,000	7,000,000 TODAY
Pronghorn Antelope		
50 YEARS AGO	12,000	1,100,000 TODAY

OTHER WAYS SPORTSMEN CONTRIBUTE

Excise taxes combined with revenue from hunting and fishing license sales fund the majority of state wildlife agency budgets.



\$81 Million
CONTRIBUTED ANNUALLY

Duck stamp proceeds are used by the government to buy or lease wetland habitat for ducks, geese and hundreds of non-game birds and animals.



SOME HEROES OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL CONSERVATION MODEL IN THE WORLD ARE:



Theodore Roosevelt



Aldo Leopold



Key Pittman



Willis Robertson

New Fall Turkey Season Structure

The season alternative that best balanced a desire for higher turkey populations with hunter satisfaction was the same for all geographic regions — a two-week season with a bag limit of one bird of either sex.

As DEC biologists, hunters, and other wildlife enthusiasts have noted over the past 15 years, wild turkey populations have declined dramatically since their peak around 2001. Reasons for this decline include changes in habitat, a more abundant and diverse predator community, and poor reproductive success in extremely wet springs. Certain parts of the state with a better mix of habitat types (e.g., forest, agriculture, and “early successional” habitats such as old fields, young forests and shrublands) can buffer some of the negative effects of habitat loss, predation and weather, but most regions of New York have fewer turkeys today than in the past.

Since 2012, DEC biologists and partners at SUNY ESF and Cornell University have been working to better understand the biological and social factors associated with turkey management. Efforts have included:

- A study to understand how weather and landscape-scale habitat interact in different parts of the state and how this influences the number of birds found there
- Surveys of turkey hunters to identify what they value in terms of turkey populations, a high-quality hunting experience, and the tradeoffs they make between hunting opportunity and turkey abundance
- Field research, where hens were banded and radio-tagged so biologists can track survival and estimate fall harvest rates

The goal of these projects was to develop a thorough understanding of wild turkeys and the people who enjoy them so fall hunting seasons could be set based on current environmental and social conditions. The data collected enabled evaluation of a range of fall harvest alternatives, from a conservative season (2 weeks, 1 bird bag limit) to a liberal season (7 weeks, 2 bird bag limit), to identify the optimal season framework for different regions in New York that best balances turkey populations and hunter satisfaction. On average, fall turkey hunters spend four to six days afield, regardless of season length. In addition, surveyed hunters indicated that the most important factors in their satisfaction were hearing and seeing birds and having the chance to go afield. They valued having a season that includes two or more weekends and that does not overlap with the regular

deer season. The optimal season alternative that best balanced the turkey population with hunter satisfaction was the same among all geographic regions — a two-week season with a bag limit of one bird of either sex.

The new fall hunting season structure (see page 48) is part of a four-year research program. DEC staff banded over 1,000 hens in 2013 and 2014, affixing satellite radios to a portion of these to assess survival rates and

harvest rates under the current fall season structure. Staff will continue to band and track hens in 2015 and 2016 to evaluate the impact of a modification to the fall season on harvest and survival. This information, in addition to the abundance, productivity, and hunter survey data collected annually, can be used to offer sustainable fall harvest opportunities that reflect environmental conditions and current trends in turkey populations.



Eurasian Boar Eradication

Hunting or Trapping Eurasian Boars is Illegal in New York State

Eurasian boars are a destructive invasive species that damage habitat and crops, and threaten native wildlife and domestic livestock. DEC is working with the USDA to eradicate these animals from the state's landscape. To ensure maximum effectiveness of Eurasian boar eradication efforts, the Eurasian Boar Law and Regulation have resulted in the following changes in New York:

- It is illegal to hunt, trap or take free-ranging Eurasian boars.
- It is illegal to import, breed or release Eurasian boars.
- It is illegal to disturb, destroy, open, obstruct or interfere with any DEC/USDA Eurasian boar trap.
- It is illegal to release or remove any Eurasian boar caught in a DEC/USDA trap.
- As of September 1, 2015, it is illegal to possess, sell, distribute, trade or transport Eurasian boars.

Q. If I see a Eurasian boar while I am deer hunting, can I shoot it?

A. No, it is illegal to hunt or trap free-ranging Eurasian boars in New York. Report any animal that you think might be a Eurasian boar to the nearest DEC regional wildlife office (see page 6) or e-mail us (wildlife@dec.ny.gov). Try to get a picture of the animal and include it with your report. Include a description of the animal, how many you saw and the exact location (county, town, distance and direction from an intersection, nearest landmark, etc.).

Q. Can I hunt Eurasian boars at a fenced hunting preserve in New York?

A. No, as of September 1, 2015, it is illegal for anyone to possess live Eurasian boar in NY. Fenced hunting preserves, also called canned hunts or enclosed shooting facilities, cannot have Eurasian boar and cannot offer Eurasian boar hunts.



Q. I own a farm and some wild pigs are destroying my crops. I think they might be Eurasian boars. Can I shoot them?

A. Maybe. If they are domestic pigs that likely escaped from a nearby farm, do not shoot them and try to find the owner. If they are Eurasian boars, there are provisions in the regulation that would allow you to shoot these animals if they are damaging property you own or occupy. Contact a DEC Regional Office to determine if a permit is needed to shoot nuisance or destructive Eurasian boars on your property.

Bobcat Harvest Expansion Area Permit



Southern/Western New York harvest expansion area

To **hunt or trap for bobcat** in the "Harvest Expansion Area" (area highlighted in blue on the map), which includes WMUs 3R, 3S, 4A, 4F, 4O, 5R, 6R, 6S, 7S, 8T, 8W, 8X, 8Y, 9J, 9K, 9M, 9N, 9P, 9R, 9S, 9T, 9W, 9X and 9Y, you **must** do the following:

1. Obtain a free bobcat Harvest Expansion Area Permit from any DEC regional bureau of wildlife office listed below.
2. Comply with all conditions stated on the permit.
3. Maintain and submit a hunting/trapping activity log; DEC will provide this when you receive your permit.
4. Submit the skull or lower jaw of all harvested bobcats at the time of pelt sealing.

The season in the Harvest Expansion Area will open on October 25 and close November 20, 2015.

All bobcats taken in the Harvest Expansion Area must be pelt sealed by November 30.

Completed trapping/hunting activity logs, **even if you did not trap or hunt**, must be submitted to DEC by November 30.

All other regulations associated with furbearer trapping and hunting apply.

To obtain a bobcat trapping or hunting permit for the Harvest Expansion Area, contact any of the offices below by phone, mail or e-mail. Permits will be issued and mailed in the beginning of October before the start of the season. Only one permit is needed to hunt or trap in all of the WMUs in the Harvest Expansion Area. You must provide the following information:

- Name
- Mailing address
- DEC ID # (from your trapping/hunting license or backtag)
- Phone number and/or e-mail address
- If you plan to *trap* bobcat, *hunt* bobcat or *both*
- If you request a permit by email, be sure to include the county in which you plan to trap and/or hunt.

DEC REGION	WILDLIFE MGMT. UNITS	ADDRESS	PHONE
3	3R, 3S	21 South Putt Corners Rd. New Paltz, NY 12561	845-256-3098
4/5/6	4A, 4F, 4O, 5R, 6R, 6S	1130 N. Westcott Road, Schenectady, NY 12306-2014	518-357-2152
7	7S	1285 Fisher Ave. Cortland, NY 13045	607-753-3095, ext. 247
8	8T, 8W, 8X, 8Y	7291 Coon Rd. Bath, NY 14810-9728	607-776-2165, ext. 16
9	9J, 9K, 9M, 9N, 9P, 9R, 9S, 9T, 9W, 9X, 9Y	182 East Union St., Suite 3 Allegany, NY 14706	716-372-0645

Or Apply by Email at wildlife@dec.ny.gov with Bobcat Harvest Expansion Area in the subject.

Please contact your local Environmental Conservation Officers (ECOs) for answers to your specific questions (see pages 64–65).

Q: How do I report poaching or other suspected violations of fish & wildlife laws?

A: As soon as possible, call the DEC Police “Report Poachers and Polluters” Hotline at 1-844-DEC-ECOS (1-844-332-3267). You may file a complaint anonymously or ask to have your name kept confidential.

Q: Has the minimum distance that I can discharge a bow near a house changed?

A: Yes. You must be a minimum of 150 feet to discharge a bow, 250 feet for a crossbow and 500 feet for a firearm.

Q: Can I hunt small game with a rifle in counties where deer hunting with a rifle is prohibited?

A: Yes, but if the deer season is open, you cannot use a rifle larger than .22 caliber. You may never possess a rifle afield for hunting on Long Island or in Westchester County.

Q: Can I use a tag from a friend or family on a deer, bear or turkey I shot?

A: Only the deer management permit, (DMP), may be transferred to another person. Instructions on transfers are found on Pages 32–33 of this guide. Otherwise, it is not legal to possess or use tags of another.

Q: If the trapping season is open, does that mean I can hunt for that species?

A: No. While hunting, the hunting rules apply; while trapping, the trapping rules apply. Seasons and other rules vary between hunting and trapping. Unless you own the trap or have permission, it is illegal to release, dispatch or steal a trapped furbearer or tamper with legally set traps.

Q: After reporting my deer harvest and cutting it up, what do I do with the tag?

A: The tag must remain with the meat, not the carcass. Your actions reflect on all sportsmen, so properly dispose of the carcass and hide.

DEC POLICE DISPATCH

Q: What is the definition of an “unloaded crossbow” for transportation or possession in a motor vehicle?

A: A crossbow must be uncocked to be legally possessed in or on a motor vehicle. Simply removing the bolt does not meet the requirement. When using lights on lands inhabited by deer, a crossbow must be taken down, securely fastened in a case or locked in the trunk.

Q: Am I required to wear “Hunter Orange” while hunting?

A: While hunting deer or bear, junior hunters and their mentors are required to wear at least 250 inches of hunter orange. There are no requirements for other hunting activities, but wearing hunter orange helps prevent others from shooting in your direction.

Q: I wounded a deer and heard there are trained dogs that can help me find it. How do I contact a handler?

A: DEC-licensed leashed tracking dog handlers may help you find the deer. They are volunteers and do not charge for their service. Visit www.deersearch.org for more information or call the ECO Dispatch Center.

Q: May I hunt small game with an air gun?

A: You may use an air gun to hunt any species that may legally be taken with a .22 caliber rimfire rifle provided the air gun is no smaller than .17 caliber and produces a muzzle velocity of at least 600 feet per second.

Q: May I take a child younger than 12 with me while hunting? What about a spouse?

A: Yes, a person of any age may accompany a hunter afield to observe as long as they do not assist in the taking of wildlife. Assist excludes calling animals or actively participating in a deer drive. If unsure, consult an ECO.



CH (ANSWERED 24/7): 1-877-457-5680



- ▲ ECOs Tim Worden and Greg Maneeley investigated a bull moose killed in Lewis County during the first week of the Northern Zone deer season. There is no open season for moose in New York. The violator pled guilty, paid significant fines and faces hunting license revocation.



- ▲ ECO Eric Templeton and supervisor Lt. Ric Warner captured a sick bald eagle showing signs of poisoning after it ate a dead porcupine. They were able to release it after it had a lengthy stay at an Oswego County DEC-licensed wildlife rehabilitator.



- ▲ ECO Matt Nichols answers questions at a Staten Island outreach event. The public learned about the role of the ECO in protecting our valued resources for future generations to enjoy.



- ▲ Supervisor Lt. Matt Lochner and ECO Aaron Gordon with three Wayne County bucks taken illegally during bow season by the same man. Poachers deprive you, your family and friends from a chance to harvest bucks like this — report them to the Poachers and Polluters Hotline.

**REPORT POACHERS AND POLLUTERS HOTLINE —
1-844-DEC-ECOS (1-844-332-3267)**

The Young Forest Initiative

Helping wildlife by managing forests on our Wildlife Management Areas

DEC's Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources (DFWMR) recently launched the Young Forest Initiative to considerably increase habitat management on Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) for wildlife that need young forests. Important game species like American woodcock, ruffed grouse, and snowshoe hare all rely on this disturbance-dependent habitat, as do many at-risk species such as New England cottontail, golden-winged warbler, and many charismatic and well-known songbirds such as brown thrasher and eastern ("rufous-sided") towhee. Population declines of these species are attributed to a lack of habitat that they require for foraging, cover, nesting and raising young. To address this issue, the goal of the YF Initiative is to create, restore and maintain habitat on WMAs so that 10% of the forested area can be considered young forest.

Young forests are the transitional or ephemeral habitat that exists for about 10 to 20 years after a disturbance removes the tree canopy of a mature forest. The absence of a closed canopy allows growth of shade-intolerant tree seedlings and saplings, shrubs, woody vines, and herbaceous vegetation. Site conditions such as soil productivity, slope, aspect, and climate determine how long any given area will retain this dense, shrub-scrub vegetation.

By using even-aged silvicultural techniques to create gaps in the forest canopy, like this clearcut at Partridge Run Wildlife Management Area in Region 4, sunlight can reach the forest floor and spur the regeneration of shrubs, woody vines, and herbaceous vegetation needed by a variety of game and nongame wildlife species.

Historically, natural disturbances such as fire, flooding, insect outbreaks, or environmental engineering by beavers, as well as human-caused events like logging and farmland abandonment, created young forests. Decades of suppression of these natural processes and changes in human land use have resulted in a landscape that is largely mature forest. Today, active land management is required to maintain young forests throughout New York's landscape. DFWMR is working with the Division of Lands and Forests to ensure that there is ample habitat for young forest-dependent species. Forest regeneration cuts — such as clearcuts, shelterwood cuts, and seed tree cuts, as well as salvage operations following natural disturbance — are one of the tools that land managers use to create a diversity of habitats and forest age classes.

The young forest that grows back after this type of habitat management will help to improve the productivity, survival, dispersal, and population trends of wildlife that require young forests. By providing additional high-quality young forest habitat, DFWMR will also expand recreational opportunities for the enjoyment of both game and non-game species. The YF Initiative is committed to raising awareness and encouraging the understanding, appreciation, and use of new young forest habitat and wildlife resources on state-owned lands. In the near future, look for the Young Forest Initiative on DEC's website for more information about which WMAs to visit to see young forest habitat.



- ▲ The American woodcock is one of the young forest-dependent species that will greatly benefit from forest management that creates more young forest habitat. This striking bird was photographed in Columbia County, NY in March 2014.



- ▲ Shrubs and herbaceous plants grow back less than a year after a small clearcut, creating a low, dense layer of vegetation at Cranberry Mountain Wildlife Management Area in Region 3. This project created habitat for New England cottontails.



- ◀ A skidder removes the last few logs from one of three five-acre clearcuts at Wickham Marsh WMA in Region 5. This regeneration cut improved wildlife habitat diversity by providing young forest within a large stand of even-aged mature pine/oak forest.

Photo © Karl Parker