



Mike Clancy

What a Fish!

While ice fishing on Mystic Lake in Cattaraugus County in January 2009, Thomas Reed of Kill Buck experienced the thrill of any angler's life; he landed a new state record fish. While Reed knew the walleye he pulled through the ice was huge, he was thrilled to learn that his 16-pound, 9-ounce fish surpassed the 1994 state record (also caught in Cattaraugus County) by 2 ounces. Walleye are the largest member of the

perch family, and some of New York's most highly sought after and valued sportfish. The walleye Reed caught is estimated to be more than 20 years old.

New York's Peregrines— model of success

Hoping to learn the secret to New York's peregrine falcon nesting success, various national and international officials visited New York during 2009 to observe the banding of young falcons.

Once eliminated as a breeding bird in the state, there are now roughly 60 breeding pairs of the state-listed endangered peregrine. In fact, the state now holds the largest number of nesting peregrine falcons east of the Mississippi River, and New York City may be home to the largest urban population in the world.

DEC monitors falcon pairs across the state. The data collected allows us to better understand, protect and manage the species. Interested individuals can watch several of these falcon nests and hatchlings via DEC webcams that run from March to July. For more information, and to link to live falcon webcams, please visit www.dec.ny.gov/animals/56121.html.

Good News for Deer

DEC reports that continued testing has found no new cases of the deadly Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in New York's white-tailed deer population. This bodes well for the state's deer, and is a good sign that regulations instituted by DEC to combat the possible spread of CWD—restricting the importation of live elk and deer, restricting the transportation of certain animal parts, and restricting the feeding of deer—is working. A very rare, but fatal neurological disease that affects members of the deer family, CWD was confirmed in two white-tailed deer in Oneida County in 2005. Since CWD is transmitted through animal-to-animal contact, primarily fecal, urine and saliva contact, there is the potential for the disease to spread throughout the state's deer population, especially in areas of high deer concentrations, such as winter deer yards. The most recent testing indicates that the disease hasn't spread from the original area in Oneida County. To learn more, visit www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7191.html.



Barbara Saunders

White-nose Syndrome Update

Al Hicks



Scientists recently identified the fungus associated with the disease White-nose Syndrome (WNS) which has been afflicting hibernating bats in New York and across the northeast. The cold-loving fungus, *Geomyces destructans*, grows best between 0-10 degrees Celsius, the same temperature found in bat hibernacula. WNS was first detected in bats in a New York cave in the winter of 2005-2006. Since then, roughly 1 million bats have died within the affected region and the disease has spread to caves and mines as far away as central Virginia. All six hibernating bat species in NY in nearly all hibernacula are now infected. The most severely affected species are the little brown bat, the northern long-eared bat, and the



James Clayton

Bats with WNS leave roosts in winter, causing their premature death.

eastern pipistrelle. The least affected species is the big brown bat. While the cause of the disease is not yet confirmed, evidence continues to point to the fungus itself as the causative agent. DEC is working with a long list of universities, conservation organizations, and state and federal agencies to find a solution to this problem. For more information, visit www.dec.ny.gov/animals/45088.html.

Summer Camp Scholarship

DEC joined with the National Heritage Trust (NHT) to develop a summer camp scholarship in memory of Emily Timbrook, a former Camp Rushford attendee and volunteer. Emily's parents set up the scholarship in her memory after she tragically died in a car accident. The Timbrooks hope that this scholarship will encourage other young people to get outdoors and appreciate nature the same way Emily did. Scholarships will use funds collected via NHT to send returning campers to DEC's summer camps for free. If you would like to donate to the NHT fund for camper scholarships, send a check made out to NHT—Camps Scholarship, c/o Director of Management and Budget Services, NYSDEC, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-5010 and be sure to visit www.nysparks.state.ny.us for a description of NHT. For more information about DEC summer camps, visit www.dec.ny.gov/education/29.html.



Emily Timbrook

Ruffed Grouse Survival Study

For the past two years, DEC staff and a student at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry have conducted a fall/winter survival study of ruffed grouse at two locations in New York. Biologists banded more than 200 ruffed grouse for the study, and put radio-transmitters on 169 birds. Ruffed grouse experienced a mortality rate of at least 50 percent in both 2007 and 2008. Less than 11% of the total birds captured were harvested by hunters over the course of the two-year study. The mortality study is part of an effort DEC recently initiated to learn more about grouse populations. In addition to the telemetry study, DEC is employing the Cooperative Ruffed Grouse Hunting Log and Ruffed Grouse Drumming Survey to learn more about trends in grouse populations and distribution. For more information, and links to surveys in which you can participate, visit: www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/48393.html.



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