Small Game Hunting

Small game includes upland and migratory game birds, small game mammals, certain fur-bearers, and reptiles and amphibians.

Please read general hunting regulations first. See page 14.

**General Regulations**

- You may not use a rifle or handgun to hunt pheasant or migratory game birds. See page 44 for more information on turkeys.
- See pages 47–50 for additional information on migratory game birds.
- Air guns (see page 14) may be used to hunt squirrels, rabbits, hares, ruffed grouse, and fur-bearers that may be hunted (e.g., raccoons and coyotes) and unprotected species (see page 15). Air guns may not be used to hunt waterfowl, pheasant, wild turkey, or big game.
- Crossbows may not be used to take waterfowl or other migratory game birds. Crossbows may not be possessed afield in the Northern Zone when hunting small game (except coyotes) with the aid of a dog. Crossbows may be used to take any other small game or upland game birds during their respective open seasons except in Westchester and Suffolk counties.
- In Wildlife Management Unit 2A, hunting is permitted by falconry only.

**Reptiles and Amphibians**

**Frogs**—“Frogs” are defined as eastern spadefoot toad, eastern American toad, Fowler’s toad, northern cricket frog, northern gray treefrog, northern spring peeper, western chorus frog, bullfrog, green frog, mink frog, wood frog, northern leopard frog, southern leopard frog, and pickerel frog.

A fishing or hunting license is required to take frogs with a spear, club, hook, or by hand. A hunting license is required to take frogs with a gun, bow or crossbow.

**Snakes, Lizards, and Salamanders**—You may not harvest, take, or possess any native snakes, lizards, or salamanders at any time.

**Turtles**—The only turtle species for which there is an open hunting season is the snapping turtle. You may not harvest, take, or possess any other turtle species at any time.

The final diamondback terrapin season was April 1, 2017 through April 30, 2018, with licenses expiring June 4, 2018. You may no longer take or possess diamondback terrapins.

**Snapping turtles**—A hunting license is required to take snapping turtles. The only legal implement for taking snapping turtles is a gun, bow or crossbow.

**Falconry Seasons**

To hunt small game species with trained raptors, you must possess a Falconry License and a hunting license. Licensed falconers may take small game from October 1 through March 31 in any area of the state open to hunting these species EXCEPT:
- Waterfowl may be taken only during the regular firearm hunting season or during a specific period outside of the firearms seasons as specified by DEC.
- Common crow may only be taken during the open firearms season.
- A licensed falconer may take both male and female pheasants anywhere in the state when hunting under a Falconry License.

For more information on falconry, contact the DEC Special Licenses Unit, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4752 or call 518-402-8985.

If you choose to eat snapping turtles, you should carefully trim all fat and discard fat, liver and eggs prior to cooking to reduce exposure to contaminants. For information on these health advisories, call 1-800-458-1158 or visit the website http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/fish/health_advisories/

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Spruce Grouse vs. Ruffed Grouse

Male spruce grouse are very distinctive (mostly black with white markings and a red comb over each eye), but female spruce grouse are similar in color to ruffed grouse. By knowing the differences, hunters can avoid accidentally shooting spruce grouse. Loss of a female spruce grouse could be a significant setback for a small local population.

In New York State, the spruce grouse is an endangered species and not legal to hunt. Spruce grouse exist in lowland conifer forests in the Adirondacks. Although ruffed grouse occur in upland hardwoods statewide, during the fall and winter ruffed grouse may be found in spruce grouse habitat. Small game hunters in the Adirondack region must learn to distinguish between these species so that spruce grouse are not shot by mistake.
Small Game Hunting

Use of Hunting Dogs

Dogs may be used to hunt small game, except:
- You may not use dogs to hunt wild turkey in the spring.
- In the Northern Zone, if you are hunting with a dog, or accompanied by a dog, you may not possess a rifle larger than .22-caliber rimfire or possess a shotgun loaded with slug, ball or buckshot unless you are coyote hunting with a dog. In the Northern Zone, crossbows may not be possessed afield when hunting small game (except coyotes) with the aid of a dog or when accompanied by a dog.

Training

You may train dogs on raccoon, fox, coyote, and bobcat from July 1 through April 15. You may train dogs on other small game only from August 15 through April 15. You may train dogs at any time on lands you own, lease, or have written permission to use, if you are not training on wild game. You may only use blank ammunition when training dogs, except during an open season.

Control

Hunting dogs should remain under control of the hunter or trainer, especially on lands inhabited by deer. Do not allow your dogs to pursue game on any posted land without the landowner’s permission. Do not shoot dogs; report stray dogs to a local Environmental Conservation Officer or your local animal control officer.

Possession and Release of Game Birds

It is illegal to possess or release migratory game birds and upland game birds without the proper license(s) from DEC. Before you take possession of any captive-reared or wild game birds, contact the DEC Special Licenses Unit, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4752 or call 518-402-8985 or e-mail speciallicenses@dec.ny.gov.

Reptile and Amphibian Hunting Seasons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frogs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open Season</td>
<td>June 15–Sept. 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Area</td>
<td>All wildlife management units except that (1) leopard frogs shall not be taken in Wildlife Management Units 1A, 1C, or 2A, and (2) northern cricket frogs and eastern spadefoot toads shall not be taken in any area of the state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size Limit</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Bag</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Season Bag</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting Hours</td>
<td>Any time of the day or night, except that no person shall use a gun to take frogs when hunting at night (sunset to sunrise).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Snapping Turtles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open Season</td>
<td>July 15–Sept. 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Area</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size Limit</td>
<td>The upper shell (carapace) must be 12 inches or longer, measured in a straight line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Bag</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Season Bag</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting Hours</td>
<td>Any time of the day or night</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Small Game Hunting

Attention

The New England cottontail was a candidate for the federal Endangered Species Act, but as a result of ongoing conservation activities, it was determined that this was not necessary. It’s important that we continue to collect information on this species and conduct conservation activities and you can help! If you hunt or own property in WMUs 3F, 3G, 3N, 3S, 4C, 4K, 4L, 4Z, 4U, 4T, or 4Y and would like to assist with survey efforts or habitat management, please call 518-402-8929 or email wildlife@dec.ny.gov!

Got Hare?

DEC wants to learn more about the distribution of hare. You can report your observations online at www.dec.ny.gov/animals/30770.html or e-mail us at wildlife@dec.ny.gov! Thanks for your help!

Cottontail Rabbit Hunting

Hunting Hours: Sunrise to Sunset

Season Dates 2018/2019 Daily Bag Limits
Oct. 1–Mar. 17 6
Oct. 1–Feb. 28 6
Nov. 1–Feb. 28 6

Varying Hare Rabbit Hunting

Hunting Hours: Sunrise to Sunset

Season Dates 2018/2019 Daily Bag Limits
Oct. 1–Mar. 17 6
Jan. 1–Jan. 31 2
Dec. 10–Feb. 28 2
Closed

Gray, Black & Fox Squirrel Hunting

Hunting Hours: Sunrise to Sunset

Season Dates 2018/2019 Daily Bag Limits
Sept. 1–Feb. 28 6
Nov. 1–Feb. 28 6

Attention

If you would like to raise and release pheasants to increase pheasant hunting opportunities, please e-mail us at wildlife@dec.ny.gov and type "pheasants" in the subject line or call (607) 273-2768. For a list of hunting areas where pheasants are released, contact a DEC Regional Wildlife Office (on page 6) or visit our website at www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/9349.html.

Youth Pheasant Hunt

Junior hunters (ages 12–15) must be accompanied by a licensed adult hunter. Only the junior hunter may carry a firearm.

Attention

You may not shoot woodcock unless you have registered in the Harvest Information Program. To register, go to www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6405.html or call 1-888-427-5447. (See woodcock season dates, page 50.)

Attention

DEC is seeking grouse hunters to participate in a survey to help monitor ruffed grouse populations. For more information, please e-mail us at wildlife@dec.ny.gov and type “grouse log” in the subject line, call (518) 402-8883, or visit www.dec.ny.gov/animals/9351.html.