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Highlights of Changes

Highlights of Changes for 2016–2017

Revisions to Fisher Trapping Season

Regulations were recently adopted that will:

- Reduce the fisher trapping season from 46 days to 30 days in selected Adirondack Wildlife Management Units (WMUs);
- Establish a limited 6-day open trapping season (no bag limit) in selected WMUs in Central/Western New York to provide new opportunities for sustainable use of this natural resource;
- Require licensed trappers who pursue fisher to obtain a free permit from their regional wildlife office;

For more details, see information on page 52.

Rifles in Albany and Livingston Counties

Legislation has passed that will allow the use of rifles to hunt big game in Albany County for two more years, and to allow rifles to hunt big game in Livingston County permanently.

PENDING Updates to Deer and Bear Hunting Seasons

At the time of press, regulations are pending that would:

- Allow junior hunters to take bear as well as deer during the youth firearms hunt;
- Rescind an antlerless-only requirement established in 2015 during portions of the bow and muzzleloader season in some Wildlife Management Units (WMUs);
- Reduce the take of antlerless deer in WMUs 6F and 6J by allowing hunters to only take antlered deer during the early muzzleloader season;
- Clarify that bow/mz either-sex and antlerless-only deer tags may both be used during either bow or muzzleloader seasons by properly licensed hunters.

Check DEC's website for the latest regulation changes before heading afield this fall.



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.

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... an archery program into your school

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- Annual statewide tournament

*** Attention Teachers ***

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

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.

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.

Message from the Commissioner



Enjoy Your Time Afield and Report Your Harvest

Dear Fellow Conservationist:

As you venture afield this hunting season, take a few minutes to stop, look around, take a deep breath, and soak it all in. New York's natural resources abound, and we all know that hunting is not just about the hunt - it's about ritual, history, and the experience in the natural world.

Time spent outside in New York's fields, wetlands, and forests is time exceptionally

well-spent. Fostering these traditions is at the heart of our conservation efforts in the state. Shared hunting experiences are some of the best ways to introduce a new generation of hunting enthusiasts to the sport, and I encourage you to take a friend, family member, neighbor, or acquaintance with you the next time you go hunting in the season ahead.

Whether you enjoy wildlife from the ground, a blind, tree stand, canoe, or kayak, DEC is working to make those experiences more enjoyable and accessible through sound wildlife management, habitat enhancement, and improved public access to our state lands and waters.

NY Works funding coupled with Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration funds are being used to enhance your access opportunities. We've recently completed several new projects including: new parking and trailhead on Saratoga State Forest; new parking area and road improvements at Saddles State Forest; accessible parking, trail and hunting blind at Upper and Lower Lakes Wildlife Management Area (WMA); and a new bridge over Bone Dry Creek at Allegheny Reservoir WMA. These are just a few examples of the many projects we completed in the last two years, and we have

many more coming up in the year ahead!

Please visit DEC's website for information on where to go to enjoy New York's great outdoors: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/82098.html>.

As a hunter, one of the best ways you can assist in our management efforts is to ensure that you and any members of your hunting party report your harvest. All hunters who successfully take a deer, bear or turkey are required to report their harvest within seven days of taking the animal. DEC's dedicated and skilled staff use your harvest information to manage New York's wildlife populations. Hunters can also participate in DEC's grouse and woodcock hunting log, bow hunter sighting log, and summer turkey brood count programs. The more people we have contributing data, the easier it is for us to make accurate management decisions, so please remember to report your harvest.

Best of luck to you in the upcoming season, and I hope to see you out and about enjoying the wilds of New York.

Basil Seggos

Commissioner

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Sportsman Education Program... Aiming for the Future

Quite a bit has been going on behind the scenes with the DEC Sportsman Education Program this past year. In April of 2015, a peer review of our program was conducted by an outside team consisting of staff from the US Fish & Wildlife Service and other state wildlife agencies. We requested this review process to identify current strengths and weaknesses and ways to guide our program into the future to better meet the demands of today's sportsman

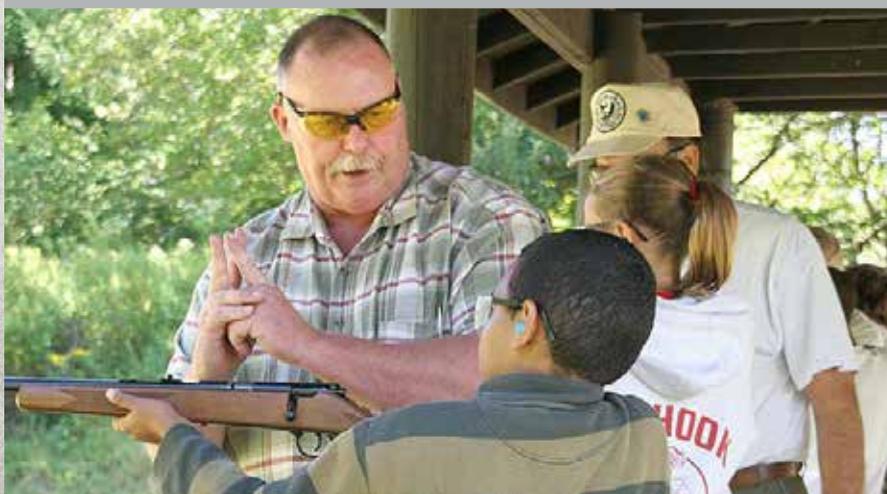
education student.

One of the suggestions from the review was to simplify our menu of course types and delivery options. Our team of regional sportsman education coordinators explored this over the last few months and firmly believe that a combination of homework prior to the course followed by a field day with more hands-on training will better meet today's educational demand and at the same time maintain New York's outstanding safety record.

Beginning in 2016, the menu of course options for the instructor and the student was simplified. There are now four: Hunter Education, Bowhunter Education, Trapper Education, and Waterfowl Hunter Education. All courses will now have mandatory homework, accessible either online or from provided manual/worksheet materials. Students are now required to review the same course materials and complete the same associated homework sheet prior to attending the classroom and field session, all to enhance their understanding of the subject material. Instructors will be accepting either options (voucher from a completed on-line homework or a completed homework worksheet) as an "entrance ticket" to the field day.

Access to the homework materials and acceptable on-line homework options can be found on the DEC website at: www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7860.html or follow the guidelines listed in the various course announcements when you register for a particular class. Actual course manuals and worksheets will be made available by DEC and sportsman education instructors.

Working within the philosophy of "Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I'll understand," several courses have been conducted around the state using the new requirements. Both the instructor and the student find it a more positive experience when taking a course. The student comes better prepared, asking more detailed questions, and the instructors are beginning to utilize more hands-on course work for the student.



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 Certificate 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 (but do not load) 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.



Want Older Bucks in New York?

It's Your Choice!

Every year, tens of thousands of New York hunters enjoy the opportunity to bring home a handsome 2.5-year or older buck, while approximately half of the antlered bucks taken in the state annually are 1.5-years old (yearlings). Yearling bucks generally weigh about 20% less and have 50% smaller antlers than they would as 2.5-year-olds. The primary reason New York doesn't have more older, larger-antlered bucks in the harvest is because many bucks are taken as yearlings. New York hunters can increase the likelihood of harvesting a 2.5-year-old or older buck simply by choosing to pass up shots at young bucks.



Photos of the same buck as a yearling (1.5-years old), as a 2.5-year-old and a 3.5-year-old. Note that spike bucks will grow into larger antlered bucks when given the chance. Photos by Charles Alsheimer.

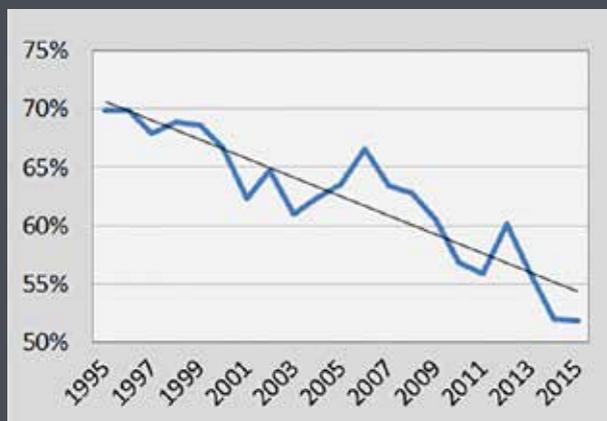
You Can Change Your Deer Hunting Experience

- For NY bucks to grow bigger bodies and larger antlers, they simply need to age.
- Older bucks are more challenging to hunt and yield more meat. These bucks create more rubs and scrapes and vocalize more—all things that enhance the deer-hunting experience.
- As more hunters choose to pass up young bucks, all hunters will enjoy the opportunity to see and take more older bucks.
- Many NY hunters are already choosing to pass up young bucks; you can too!

What Can You Do to See More Older Bucks?

- Choose not to harvest young bucks.
- Improve the habitat by creating young forest and enhancing natural forage and cover for deer. See www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/104218.html#YFprivate
- In many areas, take an antlerless deer instead of a young buck, which can help meet overall management goals and bring the deer population into better balance with the habitat, which, in turn, improves deer condition.
- Work with your neighbors and hunting partners to cooperatively reduce harvest of young bucks, meet your antlerless harvest goals, and improve habitat conditions.

Yearling Portion of NYS Buck Take (by Voluntary Restraint)



Reducing harvest of young bucks is an unmistakable trend in New York and nationally. In 2015, about 48% of adult bucks harvested in NY (excluding areas with mandatory antler restrictions) were 2.5 years old or older.



These bucks from Washington County, NY demonstrate typical body size and antler differences among yearlings and 2.5 and 3.5-year-old bucks. Photos courtesy of QDMA.

Learn the Differences between Young and Older Bucks

Nearly all bucks in New York with 4 total points or less are 1.5-years old. In central and western New York and other high-quality habitat areas, about 30% of yearlings can have 5–6 total antler points and 15% can have 7–8 total points. However, throughout New York, the overall size of yearling antlers is small, with antler spreads generally less than 12 inches — well inside the ear tips when the ears are in a relaxed or semi-alert position.

Yearling Buck

- Body size similar to an adult doe
- Legs look long and skinny
- Often lacks clear muscle definition
- Slender neck and body
- Narrow, small-framed antlers, narrower than ear tips

Older Buck

- Body larger than an adult doe
- Thicker chest makes legs appear stockier
- Well-defined shoulder and thigh muscles
- Belly appears flat and sags a bit
- Antlers on a 2.5-year-old are generally almost as wide as the ear tips, while a 3.5-year-old buck's antlers may be wider than the ear tips

Note: There is considerable variation in antler growth within age classes of bucks, depending on local habitat quality.

After your shot, check the teeth of your deer to see whether it is a yearling or older buck. Visit www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/27663.html for a guide to aging deer by tooth replacement and wear.

This information is provided to depict differences in age classes of bucks and guide hunters about harvest choices that best reflect their hunting interests.

Evaluating Buck Management Options

In recent years, there has been strong interest among some hunters in increasing the number of older, larger-antlered bucks in our deer population.

This could be accomplished through a variety of regulatory and non-regulatory approaches. However, New York hunters have divided opinions about deer hunting and many greatly value having the freedom to choose what type of buck to harvest. So, DEC worked with experts at Cornell University to evaluate various buck hunting strategies (e.g., mandatory antler point restrictions, one-buck bag limit, shorter regular season) in a way that accounted for regional variation in hunter values and the impacts on harvest, population management, and hunter satisfaction. The study indicated that regulatory changes are not appropriate or most compatible with hunter values at this time (please see: www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/27663.html for more information). Thus, DEC concluded that the best approach is simply to encourage hunters to voluntarily pass up shots at young bucks.

Prevent Chronic Wasting Disease: How Hunters Can Help



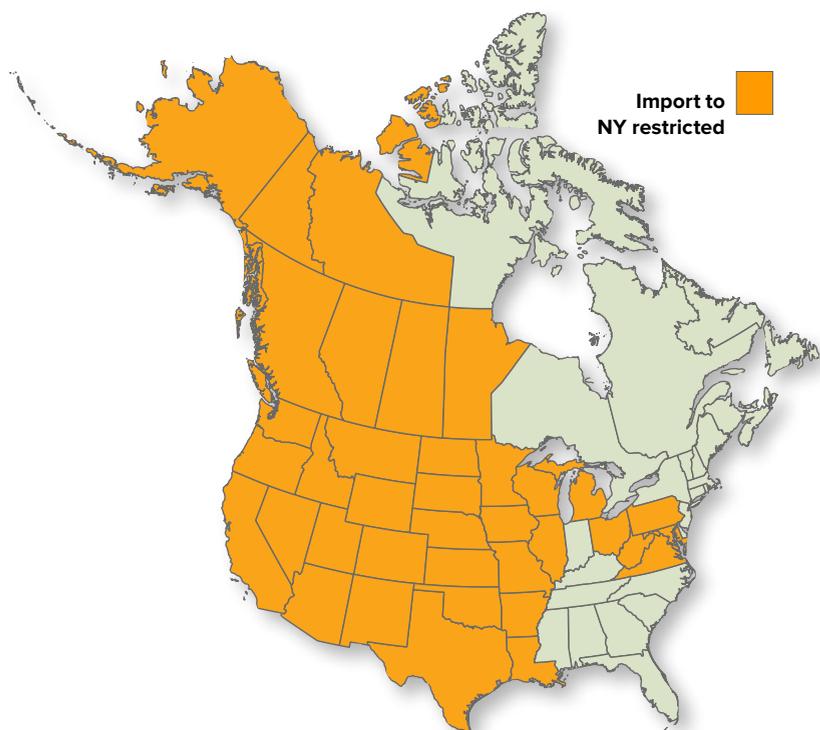
CWD has not been detected in NY since 2005. DEC tests over 2,000 deer annually and over 35,000 wild deer have tested negative since 2005. Let's keep New York CWD-Free!

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a neurologic disease that is always fatal to deer, elk, and moose. It is a serious threat to New York's white-tailed deer population and the tradition of deer hunting in New York. Regulations have been put in place to protect New York's deer herd, and hunters can take extra steps to safeguard deer now and for future generations. Prevent CWD by:

- **Do not use deer urine-based cover scents and lures.** CWD is caused by a *prion* that is shed in saliva, urine, and feces. There is no test to see if urine products are contaminated. CWD binds to soil and can remain infectious to deer for many years.
- **Debone or quarter your deer before bringing your out-of-state harvest back to New York.** This practice removes "high-risk" parts (brain, spinal cord and others) that could potentially spread CWD. If you bring a whole intact carcass from a prohibited state or province, you will be ticketed and your entire animal (including trophy heads) will be confiscated and destroyed. *Meat, hide and cape, antlers, cleaned skull cap with antlers attached, finished taxidermy mounts, tanned hides, and clean upper canine teeth are permitted.*
- **If you harvested an animal from another state that tested positive for CWD, you must report test results to DEC within 24 hours.** Many other states have carcass import and urine use restrictions. Check hunting guidelines before planning your hunt.
- **Dispose of all carcass waste in a landfill.** Deer parts can transmit CWD to healthy deer and scavengers can spread prions in feces. Remember to ask your meat processor or taxidermist if they are disposing of carcass waste properly.
- **Do not feed wild deer.** Feeding is illegal and can spread disease to other deer at a feeding site by deer-to-deer contact or from body fluids left behind by an infected deer.
- **Report any deer that appears sick or acts abnormally to the nearest DEC Regional Wildlife Office.** Infected deer may not appear sick and can still spread disease.
- **Hunt wild deer and support fair chase hunting principles.** CWD continues to spread in the U.S. and disease rates are increasing in infected herds. Transmission rates are higher in areas overpopulated with deer.

There are no documented cases of CWD in humans, but the Centers for Disease Control recommends people do not consume CWD-infected venison.

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



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.

Although DEC's eradication efforts have been very successful to date, we must remain vigilant. Anyone who sees a Eurasian boar should report it to DEC as soon as possible.

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.

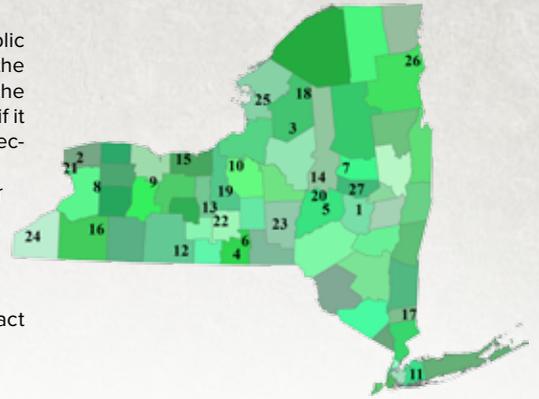
Shooting Range Small Grants Program

Over the past several years, DEC's Shooting Range Small Grants Program has continued to assist non-profit organizations with improvement projects for shooting ranges while at the same time improving public access to numerous ranges across New York.

This federally funded program assisted non-profit organizations with improvement projects for shooting ranges during the 2013–2015 grant period. During these three years, the program awarded over \$396,000 to 27 organizations for various projects including improvements to archery, shotgun, and rifle ranges. One of the

requirements of the grant is to provide public access on the project site for five years after the project is completed. It is now time to take the next steps in evaluating the program to see if it is meeting the programs initial goals and objectives for public demand and use.

With many of the program's projects near completion, sportsmen and women will find public access days available for sighting-in their firearms this fall. Check with the facility for public access availability. For any questions related to the program, contact Melissa Bailey at (315) 793-2515.



	Club	Town	County
1	Middleburgh Rod and Gun Club	Middleburgh	Schoharie
2	Tonawanda Sportsmen's Club	NorthTonawanda	Niagara
3	Constableville Fish and Game Club	Constableville	Lewis
4	Tioga County Sportsmen's Association	Owego	Tioga
5	Milford Fish and Game Club	Middlefield	Otsego
6	Newark Valley Historical Society	Newark Valley	Tioga
7	Sprite Club	Dolgeville	Fulton
8	Hawkeye Bowmen	Marilla	Erie
9	Lima Gun Club	Honeoye Falls	Livingston
10	Baldwinsville Rod and Gun Club	Baldwinsville	Onondaga
11	Freeport Revolver and Rifle Association	Freeport	Nassau
12	Painted Post Field and Stream	Painted Post	Steuben
13	Seneca Waterways Council (Boy Scouts)	Ovid	Seneca
14	Ilion Fish and Game Club	Ilion	Herkimer

	Club	Town	County
15	Williamson Rod and Gun Club	Williamson	Wayne
16	Franklinville Conservation Club	Franklinville	Cattaraugus
17	Hilltop Sport Conservation Club	Brewster	Putnam
18	NY FFA Leadership Training Foundation	Croghan	Lewis
19	Cayuga County Sportsmen's Association	Auburn	Cayuga
20	Richfield Sportsmen's Club	Richfield Springs	Otsego
21	Sheridan Transit Rod and Gun Club	Grand Island	Erie
22	Trumansburg Fish and Game Club	Trumansburg	Tompkins
23	Oxford Rod and Gun Club	Oxford	Chenango
24	Westfield Fish and Game Club	Westfield	Chautauqua
25	Sackets Harbor Sportsmen's Club	Watertown	Jefferson
26	Chesterfield Fish and Game Club	Clintonville	Essex
27	Sprout Brook Rod and Gun Club	Canajoharie	Montgomery

High-Tech Bullets and Slugs

Non-Lead Ammunition: A Better Choice

Soft, easily molded and heavy, lead has long been the most common type of ammunition. With early firearms such as muzzleloaders, lead bullets retained their shape, but modern, higher-velocity centerfire rifles often cause lead bullets (even those sheathed in copper) to fragment upon impact.

Fortunately, today's harder copper and other copper alloy bullets and slugs typically remain intact on impact, transferring more energy to the target by folding downward into "petals" that greatly expand the surface area. The result is a very effective, quick, humane kill and more edible, uncontaminated meat.

Lead's Risk for People and Wildlife

When lead and lead-core bullets fragment on impact, hundreds of tiny lead particles scatter throughout the tissue—up to 18 inches from the wound. Some of these fragments are too small to be seen, felt, tasted, or removed. These lead particles can ruin the quality and yield of game meat and pose a risk to people and scavenging animals.

Lead damages the organs, particularly the central nervous system, including the brain. People and wildlife who eat lead-tainted game meat are at risk. Scavenging wildlife may feed on lead-contaminated gut piles or unrecovered

carcasses. Clear evidence of lead poisoning has been found in bald eagles in New York State. Non-lead ammunition helps eliminate these risks.

Pros and Cons

Performance:

Copper ammunition is accurate. Technology is improving the ballistic qualities of solid copper and other monolithic bullets, and they often surpass those of lead bullets. To get the best results from non-lead ammunition, try different brands, as every firearm handles ammunition differently. It is important to note that copper bullets of the same grain weight as lead bullets are longer. This longer bullet will react differently in the gun barrel and to its rifling, yielding different ballistics. Reducing the grain weight of the copper bullet will give you similar ballistics to the higher grain weight of the lead bullet. The benefit to the shooter will be lighter recoil and thus more accurate shots. However, re-sighting one's firearm for copper bullets and slugs is necessary as this ammunition will shoot slightly differently than lead.

Cost:

Non-lead ammunition is similar in cost and quality to premium-grade lead ammunition. Although high-quality ammunition may seem expensive, it is one of the most important pieces



Non-Lead Ammunition for...

- Good Hunting
- Improved Conservation
- High-Quality Meat
- Safer Consumption

of equipment purchased for a hunt and often represents only a small portion of the total cost of hunting.

Meat Quality:

Little or no fragmentation of non-lead bullets means that more high-quality meat can be taken home from a harvest, and this source of exposure to lead in people, wildlife and the environment is reduced.

Product Availability:

Non-lead ammunition for specific calibers may not be as easy to find as lead-based ammunition. With demand for such ammunition increasing, however, more caliber options are becoming available. A wide range of non-lead bullets and cartridges is available from major manufacturers. Ask your local gun store to check on availability.

Fragmentation vs. Mushrooming



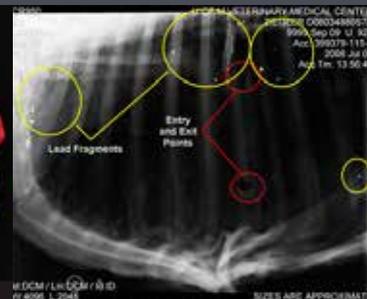
Comparison of two .270-caliber bullets shot into a modified rain barrel for collection to simulate performance on game. The copper jacket lead-core bullet (left) is heavily fragmented compared to the solid copper bullet (right) that retained its original shape upon impact.



Shotgun slugs made of copper fold into "petals," expanding the slug's surface area better than slugs made of lead.



CT-scan showing lead fragments (appearing white) in 20 one-pound packages of ground venison.



Radiograph of a deer's chest illustrating fragmentation of a lead ballistic tip rifle bullet.

New York State Environmental Conservation Police

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 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 30–31 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 carcass 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.

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: Junior hunters and their mentors are required to wear at least 250 inches of hunter orange while hunting deer or bear. There are no requirements for other hunting activities. Hunter orange makes it easier for others to see you in thick brush or at longer ranges.

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 rim-fire 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.

Q: I own a camp and property in New York, can I purchase a resident hunting license?

A: Residency is a fixed, permanent and principal home to which a person always intends to return. Simply owning land or paying taxes does not make one a resident. More information on residency is found in the front of this guide.

Q: Can our hunting party “share” Deer Management Permits (DMPs) on a “deer drive”?

A: Only the person with the DMP tag in their possession may take an antlerless deer, regardless of how many have the tag consigned to them. See the rules for DMP consignment for more info.

Q: Can I target shoot on DEC lands?

A: Many DEC state lands, including State Forests and Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) have specific rules – call ahead. You may not damage live trees and must remove all litter.

Q: Can I carry a handgun while bowhunting deer/bear during the special bowhunting seasons?

A: No, this is prohibited by law. Possession of a handgun in New York requires a NYS Pistol Permit. NY does not recognize permits from other states.

Q: Can I shoot a deer at first light on opening day of deer season?

A: No. Certain species have specific legal shooting hours. For deer and bear, it is from legal sunrise to sunset, NOT just when it’s light enough. The sunrise/sunset chart is at the back of this guide.

Please contact your local Environmental Conservation Officers (ECOs) for answers to your specific questions (see pages 62–63).



Polluters Hotline — 1-844-DEC-ECOS (1-844-332-3267)



Acting on a tip from a local PD, ECO Robert Peinkofer investigated and charged two men who illegally shot these bucks from an area closed to hunting while using bows and spotlights at night.



ECO Jason Curinga teaches youth about the tools used by ECOs and the importance of a clean environment at an Albany park preserve day. ECOs regularly participate statewide in similar school and community events.



ECO Jeff Hull investigated this piebald deer found dead in the woods. The meat was donated to charity. When faced with the evidence, including matching arrows, the suspect confessed to hunting over bait and failing to tag the deer.



ECO Steven Bartoszewski responded to a complaint in progress and discovered two illegally tagged antlerless deer. During his interview, the suspect admitted to taking three others which he had hidden in a field.



ECOs Anthony Glorioso (left) and Vern Bauer (right) mentored this new hunter during a youth turkey hunt in Greene County, where he harvested his first long beard, weighing 20 lbs, with a 9" beard and 3/4" spurs.



ECO Travis McNamara responded to a complaint of two bucks caught in a tennis net. He and a local police officer were able to lasso this larger buck until it could be cut free of the net. Both bucks were released uninjured.