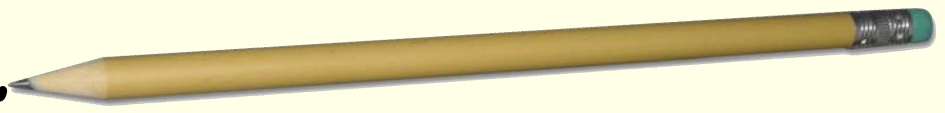


Field Notes...



Noteworthy News from the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources

ISSUE 67: DECEMBER 16, 2011

In This Issue:

- *Catch Up with the Latest in Our Monthly Highlights*
- *Vulnerability of At-Risk Species to Climate Change in New York*
- *2011 Deer and Bear Harvest Updates*
- *Latest Annual Fisheries Report Now Online*
- *Summer Flounder Commercial Trip Limits for December*
- *Perfect Last-Minute Gifts for Outdoor Hobbyists*
- *Get Involved: Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count is Here*
- *Recreational Sporting Season Reminders*
- *New Assistant Commissioner, Kathleen Moser*
- *Other News in the Press*
- *Al Breisch, Retired Amphibian and Reptile Biologist Receives Award*
- *Did You Know Fact Featuring White, White-Tailed Deer*

Significant Notes

Catch Up with the Latest in Our Monthly Highlights

The most recently released [Division Monthly Highlights](#) (PDF, 520kb) report is full of accomplishments and surveys conducted by our staff statewide. Some topics in this issue that you won't want to miss include:

- Details on estimating the wild turkey harvest potential in New York State's diverse landscapes
- Highlights from the "Day in the Life of the Hudson River" school event
- Accomplishments from the fall 2011 Cormorant Hazing Program
- Efforts to update management plans for species of greatest conservation need like the spruce grouse, cricket frog, Blanding's turtle, Karner blue butterfly and many others
- Results of the two-year study on common merganser effects on hatchery-released brown trout
- Updates in the annual Great Lakes hydroacoustic survey for estimating preyfish populations
- Research and more!

Vulnerability of At-Risk Species to Climate Change in New York

The NY Natural Heritage Program recently released their report titled, [Vulnerability of At-Risk Species to Climate Change in New York](#) (PDF, 1.8MB). This report will assist in adaptation planning for several species of greatest conservation need within New York State. Using the [NatureServe Climate Change Vulnerability Index](#) (CCVI), Natural Heritage staff assessed the relative vulnerability of around 120 at-risk species to predict whether each will likely suffer a decrease in range or population in the coming years due to climate change.

2011 Deer and Bear Harvest Updates

The preliminary harvest estimates based on reported deer and bear harvest for the 2011 hunting season are as follows:

- **For deer**, the 2011 hunting year started out low compared to last year, with 5% less harvest in mid-November and 20% less harvest in the opening week of the Southern Zone regular season. However, harvest picked up during Thanksgiving week, boosting results to align more closely with results of the 2010 harvest at this time of year.
- **For bear**, the 2011 season is quite different from last year, with preliminary harvests down in the Northern Zone but at record levels in the Southern Zone. This year, new regulations opened bear hunting in eastern New York, ranging from Westchester County to Washington County. Hunters in the new hunting areas have taken more than 40 bears so far. Still, even without these additional bears, the preliminary take in the southeastern New York region may become one of the top harvests ever recorded. In central and western New York, harvest is topping around 300 bears, which has already shattered the previous record of 189 bears taken in 2008.

Final reports on harvest of bear and deer will be released in early 2012. If you get out this weekend, enjoy yourself and hunt safely, and don't forget to [report your harvest](#).

Latest Annual Fisheries Report Now Online

In the newly released [2010 Bureau of Fisheries \(BOF\) Annual Report](#) (PDF, 2.9MB) learn about the yearly activities and research surveys conducted by our fisheries staff during the 2010-2011 fiscal year. This report includes summaries on our fish-stocking and hatchery efforts, I FISH NY outreach activities, recreational fisheries management angler surveys and population surveys, and much more.

Summer Flounder Commercial Trip Limits for December

Several trip limit changes for the summer flounder commercial fishery are in effect for the month of December. On December 16, the daily trip limit increased to 350 pounds. On December 25, the daily trip limit will decrease to 140 pounds. Finally, on January 1, the daily trip limit will decrease to 70 pounds, which will remain in effect until further notice. The weekly fluke program is scheduled to begin in January 2012.

Perfect Last-Minute Gifts for Outdoor Hobbyists!

DEC offers plenty of great gift ideas for that special person on your shopping list. A few of these items are described below:

- [Lifetime Sporting License](#) - Ensure the sportsman or sportswoman you know will enjoy fishing, hunting, trapping or a combination of these activities for life. You cannot beat giving a gift that will last a lifetime!
- [Becoming an Outdoorswoman \(BOW\) Workshop](#) - Sign up the ladies you know (mom, daughter, sister, wife, etc.) for a BOW workshop, where they can learn outdoor skills ranging from compass and map reading to hunting for deer!
- [Conservationist Magazine Subscription](#) - Give nature enthusiasts a year's subscription to DEC's magazine, with breathtaking images and intriguing stories on New York's fantastic natural world in every issue.

Get Involved!



Tufted titmouse photo by Judy Howle, courtesy of National Audubon Society

Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count is Here!

Get yourself outside to enjoy the crisp winter air, and listen for bird songs and owl hoots while participating in the Audubon Society's 112th annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC). The count continues through January 1, and you can join other enthusiastic birders at one of more than 70 "count circles" around New York. Your observations will be included in the extensive CBC database used by researchers, conservationists and biologists to monitor the health and status of early winter bird populations across North America.

Visit the Audubon website at birds.audubon.org/faq/cbc for details on how to get involved and to learn more about the CBC!

Recreational Sporting Season Reminders

Upcoming Seasons

The reminders listed below include open and final recreational season dates occurring over the next two weeks only (*December 16 through December 30*). For all season dates and to view more information about hunting and fishing in New York, visit DEC's [Outdoor Activities](#) webpage.

Saltwater Fishing

- *December 20* marks the final day for **tautog (blackfish)** fishing.
- *December 25* marks the final day for **scup** fishing for all anglers.

Deer & Bear Hunting

(View the [big game hunting map](#) to identify hunting zones)

In the Southern Zone:

- *December 20* marks the final day for the deer and bear muzzleloader hunting and bowhunting seasons. Although, deer and bear bowhunting seasons in Westchester County and deer bowhunting season in Suffolk County remain open through December 31.

Waterfowl Hunting

(View the following maps to identify [waterfowl hunting zones](#) and [Canada goose hunting areas](#) that are described below)

For Canada Goose:

- *December 17 to January 2* marks the second open regular season for hunting in the Hudson Valley Goose Hunting Area.
- *December 26 to January 8* marks the second open regular season for hunting in the South Goose Hunting Area.
- *December 26 to January 9* marks the second open regular season for hunting in the West Central Goose Hunting Area.

For Duck, Coot, Merganser:

- *December 22* marks the final day for hunting in the Lake Champlain Waterfowl Hunting Zone for the 2011 season.
- *December 25* marks the final day for hunting in the Southeast Waterfowl Hunting Zone for the 2011 season.
- *December 26 to January 9* marks the second open season for hunting in the Western Waterfowl Hunting Zone.

For Snow Goose:

- *December 26 to January 9* marks the second open season for hunting in the Western Waterfowl Hunting Zone
- *December 29* marks the final day for hunting in the Lake Champlain Waterfowl Hunting Zone for the 2011 season.

Please review our [Hunter Safety Tips](#) before going afield!

New Assistant Commissioner, Kathleen Moser

We would like to extend a warm welcome to Kathleen Moser who will be working with us, the Division of Lands and Forests and the Office of Invasive Species in executing conservation programs for the protection of New York's natural resources. Kathleen has an extensive background in environmental and wildlife conservation. In her earlier endeavors, she worked for the U.S. Peace Corps, which led to multiple leadership roles for both the Nature Conservancy and the World Wildlife Fund. We are delighted to work with Kathleen in our continuous efforts to manage and conserve New York's wildlife heritage. Welcome Kathleen!



Other News in the Press

Below are additional links to noteworthy DEC press releases:

- [Ban on Disposing Rechargeable Batteries in NYS Effective December 5.](#)
- [State Land Acquisition Expands Cranberry Mountain Wildlife Management Area by a Third](#) - Acquisition to protect land in the New York Highlands made with federal grant funding and a private donation.
- [DEC Recognizes Five Innovative Programs Working to Sustain NY's Resources and Strengthen the Economy](#) - Winners announced at the 8th Annual Environmental Excellence Awards.
- [State to Purchase 1,200 Acres of Land in the Catskill Park](#) - Big Indian acquisition protects important state forest land.
- [Robert S. Stegemann Joins DEC as Region 5 \(Adirondack Region\) Director.](#)

Awards and Recognition

Al Breisch, Retired Amphibian and Reptile Biologist Receives Award

Al Breisch, DEC's retired amphibian and reptile biologist has been named the first winner of the [Alison Haskell Excellence in Herpetofaunal Conservation Award](#), presented by Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC). This new annual award recognizes an individual in North America who exemplifies extraordinary commitment to herpetofaunal conservation. Al worked for the division for 26 years until his retirement in 2009, and has fostered herpetofaunal conservation through his career with the state of New York and his participation in multiple groups such as PARC, The Nature Conservancy and the Wildlife Conservation Society. Al was a founding member of the Northeast PARC and currently is PARC's National Co-chair. He continues to mentor students of all ages and leads efforts to conserve multiple species of herpetofauna across the country.



Did You Know...?

New York State has the largest herd of entirely *white*, white-tailed deer in the world. Around 300 of these completely white deer roam on 10,000 acres of the Seneca Army Depot in Seneca County, NY, where they were first observed in the early 1940s. Termed "leucistic," this genetic variation results in a white appearance due to lack of pigmentation in the hair of animals and even in the skin of humans; yet, the eyes remain a normal color.

More about the white, white-tailed deer and its natural history in New York is available on the [Seneca Army Depot website](#).

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