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At press time there were no closures or restrictions to hunting and trapping seasons expected due to COVID-19, but be sure to check the DEC website for updates (www.dec.ny.gov)



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Highlights of Changes for 2020–2021

Changes to Regulations to Prevent the Spread of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

To prevent the introduction of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) to New York, hunters are prohibited from returning to the state with whole carcasses or intact heads of deer, elk, moose, or caribou that they harvest anywhere outside of New York. For more information read the CWD information on page 22 and visit <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8325.html>.

Deer and Moose Feeding Prohibited

DEC adopted regulations to strengthen and clarify the existing prohibition on feeding deer and moose. Intentional feeding, including placing mineral blocks, is prohibited at all times of year. Products packaged to be sold as a food or attractant for deer or moose are required to carry a label stating that such use is illegal in New York. For more information visit <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7197.html>.

New Early Bear Hunting Opportunity in Wildlife Management Unit 4W

Regulations were adopted to offer an early bear season in Wildlife Management Unit 4W (portions of Delaware and Sullivan counties) to address a growing bear population and associated human-bear conflicts in this area. WMU 4W joins 10 other WMUs in southeastern New York with September bear hunting opportunity. For details see the Bear Hunting Seasons map on page 43.

Additional Waterfowl Hunting Opportunity for Active-Duty Military and Veterans

As of 2020, states can offer two additional dates that allow active-duty military and veterans to hunt waterfowl. DEC worked with the Waterfowl Task Forces in each zone to select two days for this purpose. When this guide was printed regulations to provide additional hunting days for active duty military personnel and veterans were still pending. If approved, dates for each zone will be posted on the DEC website. Visit <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/28888.html>.

Changes to Trapping Season Dates for Mink, Muskrat, and Beaver

Based on input from trappers and management needs for species like beaver, DEC proposed regulations modifying season dates for mink, muskrat, and beaver. When this guide was printed the proposed regulations were still pending. If approved, revised season dates for these species will be posted on the DEC website. Visit <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/45551.html>.

New Hunting Season Summary

New in this year's Hunting and Trapping Regulations Guide is a four-page summary of hunting season maps and dates that you can pull out of the guide and take with you into the field.

DEC HAS A NEW HUNTING, TRAPPING & FISHING LICENSING SYSTEM!

You can purchase new licenses and privileges, apply for deer management permits, track online orders, register for HIP, view an events calendar, report your game harvest & view your harvest history and much more!

Here's how to access your account and get started today:

- STEP ONE:** Go to DEC's website www.dec.ny.gov and follow the links to purchase a sporting license online, then click 'Sign Up.'
- STEP TWO:** Locate your existing file by entering your current Customer ID # from your sporting license or your driver's license # and date of birth, OR create an account if you have never purchased a NYS sporting license.
- STEP THREE:** Create a user name (email address) and password.
- STEP FOUR:** Review your personal information and verify all the information is up to date.
- STEP FIVE:** Add qualifying education & eligibilities; view your order history, license holdings, game harvest reports and deer management permit history.
- STEP SIX:** Select the 'Buy a License' link at the top of the page to purchase a license!

For more information on the new system, including details on how to locate your profile, create a new one, add education and eligibilities and how to purchase licenses, privileges and products, visit our YouTube channel for tutorials or the DEC website.



Williamstown, MA | Birmingham, AL

About This Guide

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

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eRegulations.com

Message from the Commissioner



In 2020, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is commemorating 50 years since its inception. I am proud to work with the people at DEC, our partners, and the public to continue the stewardship of New York's natural resources. The unprecedented crisis we are facing this year during the State's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the response of all New Yorkers to persevere in the face of adversity is emblematic of what we can accomplish when we work together toward a common goal.

Prior to the creation of DEC in 1970, its precursor, the New York State Conservation Department, was one of the first state agencies of its kind when it began in 1895. For over 100 years, New York's hunting and trapping community has taken an active role in conservation efforts and we have a lot of success stories to show for it. Game species like deer and turkeys that were once either greatly reduced in number or were gone from the state entirely are now abundant. Furbearers like otter, fisher, and bobcat that were restricted in their distributions can now be found across upstate New York. In addition to the many success stories for game species, hunter and trapper supported conservation efforts have benefited a multitude of non-game species through protection, habitat improvement, and management. The amount of land with public access for hunting and trapping has steadily increased, now totaling millions of acres across the state including 260,000 acres of Wildlife Management Areas.

Whereas the goal of hunters and the Conservation Department was once the restoration and recovery of game populations, our focus now shifts to protecting habitats and providing access to those habitats for wildlife-related recreation and other sustainable uses. In some parts of the state, species like deer are now overabundant, negatively affecting residents in these communities. Hunters, who were advocates for setting hunting seasons and bag limits 100 years ago to foster population recovery are now helping to manage overabundant deer and the impacts they cause on people and habitats. As new challenges emerge which impact at-risk species, our hunters continue to be a strong voice for conservation efforts which protect all of our native wildlife. The role of the hunter-conservationist is as important as it has ever been — protecting and managing habitat, managing species like deer and bear, and preventing the spread of diseases like Chronic Wasting Disease, to name but a few important management issues.

As New York's landscape and the wildlife that inhabit it change, so too does our relationship with the natural world. Engaging with that world during these challenging times is more important now than ever, and hunting and trapping are great ways to do so. In addition, when you head afield this fall you are continuing not only New York's hunting legacy, but its long legacy of conservation.

I hope to see you out there. Remember to recreate responsibly and safely to protect yourself and others. Good Luck and be safe!

Basil Seggos

Commissioner

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Game Harvest Reporting

Hunters are required to report the harvest of deer, bear and turkey within 7 days of take. You may report your harvest using one of these methods:

- **Online:** www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8316.html
- **By phone:** 1-866-GAME-RPT (1-866-426-3778).
- **Game Harvest Mobile App** (see below for details).

DID YOU KNOW?

You may be fined up to \$250 for failing to report your deer, bear or turkey take.

Take it • Tag it • Report it

Harvest reporting is the **LAW** and necessary for wildlife management!

Report your Game Harvests via Mobile App!

DEC's mobile app, *HuntFishNY* provides hunters with an e-license and game harvest reporting tool. Hunters now have a quick, user-friendly way to:

- gain instant, mobile access to an electronic version of sporting licenses and privileges;
- report the harvest of deer, bear and turkey on a smartphone immediately while afield, even when out of cellular range;
- view current and past harvest reports.

The *HuntFishNY* App can be downloaded from the **Apple App store** or **Google Play store**.

NOTE: You will need a DEC Automated Licensing System (DECALS) user name and password in order to access your license documents through the app. If you have not yet created an online user name and password, visit the **DECALS** website today. Questions? – Call our sporting license hotline at 866-472-4332.



1-866-426-3778
HuntFishNY Mobile App
www.dec.ny.gov

REPORT YOUR HARVEST

**TAKE IT
TAG IT
REPORT IT**

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IN NEW YORK STATE**

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HUNTERS: Want Older Bucks in New York?

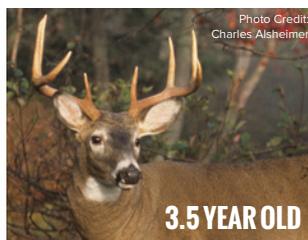
It's Your Choice

You can increase the availability of older bucks by choosing to pass up shots at young bucks.

- Older bucks create more rubs and scrapes, vocalize more, and yield more meat – all things that create unforgettable hunting experiences.

You can boost deer condition and body and antler size by balancing the deer population with the habitat:

- Take a doe if permits are available in your area
- Create young forest to enhance natural forage and cover for deer



Let go

YOUNG BUCKS and watch them

GROW

YOUR CHOICE MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

NEW YORK STATE

Department of Environmental Conservation

Chronic Wasting Disease:

We Need Your Help to Protect New York’s Deer and Moose



DEC Environmental Conservation Officer with antlers from elk that were illegally imported into New York. Antlers from cervid carcasses that are seized because they are illegally imported into New York are destroyed.

What is CWD?

A contagious, fatal disease of cervids (deer, elk, moose, and caribou) that is caused by an abnormal protein called a prion, which causes holes to form in the brain. Animals become diseased from direct contact with live infected animals, animal parts, or contaminated soil and plants. Infected animals shed prions in saliva, feces, and urine before they die. An infected deer can look healthy for months to years before dying.

Why is CWD a Problem?

There is no cure, vaccine, or genetic resistance to CWD. Prions can last in the environment for decades. Once CWD is established in an area, eliminating the disease is virtually impossible. Deer populations and deer hunting will be impacted! Although there are no known human cases, the Centers for Disease Control recommends no one consume a CWD-positive animal. New York randomly tests thousands of deer each year. Hunters can make arrangements to have their deer tested: <https://cwhl.vet.cornell.edu/hunter-cwd-testing>.

Don't Be a CWD Risk!

The actions of a few careless hunters can put all deer and moose at risk. The most likely modes of CWD introduction into New York are through: (1) illegal movement of infected carcasses or carcass parts of deer or elk taken by hunters in other states; (2) illegal import of live deer or elk for fee-based shooting of confined animals; or (3) use of infected urine-based lures by hunters.

How Can You Help?

Don't let CWD into the state again! Know your regulations: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8325.html>.

Here Are Some Things You Can Do:

Debone your harvest if you hunt outside of New York – Meat, hide and cape, antlers, cleaned skull cap with antlers attached, finished taxidermy mounts, tanned hides, and cleaned upper canine teeth can be brought into NY. Hunters who improperly import whole carcasses or prohibited parts will be ticketed, and the entire animal (including antlers) will be confiscated and destroyed. If you have a CWD-positive harvest from another state, DEC will assist with safe disposal of the animal and recommend disinfection methods.

Avoid natural deer urine products – Commercially produced urine products may claim to be CWD-free, but manufacturers cannot guarantee their safety. There is currently no direct regulatory oversight of these products and purported testing has not been validated. Choose synthetic alternatives. You don't want to contaminate your favorite hunting spot!

Take precautions when handling deer – Wear rubber or latex gloves when field dressing or processing. Remove internal organs with knives or utensils dedicated for hunting. If you use lead ammunition, bury or landfill the organs to ensure scavengers, like bald eagles, do not accidentally ingest lead fragments. Trim generously around the wound channel and bag remaining carcass waste for the landfill.

Do not feed wild deer – Feeding deer is illegal year-round. Concentrating deer around food sources can facilitate the spread of diseases like CWD. Report sick and abnormal deer to DEC. DEC would like to examine any deer that are very thin, drooling, standing with legs splayed and head lowered, listless, circling, or are easily approached. Contact the DEC Regional Wildlife Office near you (see page 6) or visit <http://www.dec.ny.gov/about/558.html>

Import Restriction	Allowed Parts	Species Affected
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deboned meat • Cleaned skull cap • Antlers with no flesh • Raw or processed cape or hide • Cleaned teeth or lower jaw • Finished taxidermy products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White-tailed deer (<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>) • Black-tailed & Mule deer (<i>O. hemionus</i>) • Red deer (<i>Cervus elaphus</i>) & Elk (<i>C. e. canadensis</i>) • Moose (<i>Alces alces</i>) • Sika deer (<i>Cervus nippon</i>) • Caribou and Reindeer (<i>Rangifer tarandus</i>)

Crossbow Hunting Qualifications and Safety Information

A crossbow must have compound or recurve limbs with minimum width of 17 inches (outer tip of limbs excluding wheels and cams, uncocked); a minimum overall length from butt of stock to the front of the limbs of 24 inches; and be able to launch a minimum 14 inch arrow/bolt, not including the legal arrowhead. It must have a draw weight of 100 to 200 pounds.

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.

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.

Accessibility for All

By Josh Carney

I've always been fascinated by the outdoors. As a child, I hunted small game with my family in Louisiana; eventually that led to pursuing white-tailed deer and wild turkeys.

At age 13, I became fascinated with turkey hunting. I watched television shows and read articles describing how incredible it was. I wanted to find out for myself. When turkey season was a few months away, I bought every turkey call I could find. I drove my family crazy as I practiced, trying to perfect the sound. As the season approached, I begged my dad to take me; he promised he would. I grew more anxious with each passing week: each day I'd wake up knowing that opening day was one day closer.

On April 17, 2005, it was finally my day to shine. As my dad and I walked down a gravel road, I found a feather; I knew it was a sign: this was our spot. We crossed the ditch and headed to the timber. My dad picked a place to sit and I picked another 20 yards away. This was our first turkey hunt; neither of us were very knowledgeable. We began to call but got no response. I patiently waited before calling again. As a novice, I figured turkey hunting would be like the TV shows: rub two sticks together to make a turkey call and the bird would run right in. But that was not the case. After a while, I saw movement out of the corner of my eye: a turkey had come in behind me. I caught a glimpse of my father aiming his shotgun in my

direction. Before I knew it, his gun went off, my body went numb, there was ringing in my ears, and my vision started to blur. I had been shot. My dad rushed me out of the woods and called 911.

I spent the next three months in the hospital. I endured lots of surgeries before going home. After just two weeks, the only thing I could think about was going hunting again. So I did. In fact, I haven't stopped, even as a paraplegic in a wheelchair.

Hunting from a wheelchair takes extra planning; many questions cross a hunter's mind. Is the area I want to hunt easily accessible? What is the terrain like? Will my chair get stuck? How about the parking? My truck is modified to lift my wheelchair, but it requires extra space.

Many technological advances and site modifications help those with disabilities enjoy hunting. Specially designed hunting trailers can be placed at remote locations. Some states allow track chairs on state lands, which is great because these chairs are game-changers. Some locations have raised, ramp-accessed hunting platforms overlooking food plots—I'd like to see more of those. Packed gravel paths and bridges allow me to get deep into the deer and turkey woods. Some states have programs that allow people with disabilities to hunt in warmer weather under special permits.

Several organizations have programs to help hunters with disabilities get outdoors, fostering the sense of reward and empowerment that



comes with hunting. I'm thankful for these programs, and for land managers' efforts to make the outdoors accessible to all.

Hunter and motivational speaker Josh Carney is featured on the cover of this guide.

For more information about accessible hunting opportunities on DEC lands, see page 38.

Remember the cardinal rules of firearm safety:

- Treat every firearm as if it is loaded.
- Keep your muzzle pointed in a safe direction.
- Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
- Be sure of your target and what is in front of and beyond it.
- Stalking stinks! Set up with your back against a tree or other object wider than your shoulders and call birds to you.

Permission Granted!

Ask, or you'll never know...

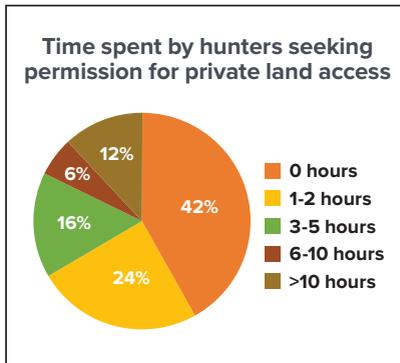


For decades, hunter access to private lands has been on the decline. As properties subdivide, develop, and transfer, more land has been labeled as **POSTED**. Trespassing is illegal whether the land is posted or not, but there is a certain stigma associated with posted property that deters many hunters from even asking. Some landowners may be resistant to providing hunting access due to fears of liability, safety concerns, unruly guests, or personal objection to hunting, but many others readily allow hunting to occur on their land.

Declines in access can reduce efficient deer population control and negatively impact hunter enthusiasm. When hunters ask for permission and landowners grant hunting access, it's a win-win! But hunters must start this relationship by **ASKING**.

An on-line survey conducted by DEC revealed something interesting about hunters' attitudes towards access. More than 55% of respondents believed that lack of access was directly linked to their lack of hunting success. Yet, more than 40% of these same respondents admitted they did not spend time seeking permission. Opportunities for hunters to gain access to private property exist, but many hunters are simply not asking.

Hunters wanting to increase their success must take initiative. Though past research indicates that landowners are most comfortable only allowing family and friends to hunt their property, 15-35% of landowners did grant hunting access to strangers who asked permission. This should be encouraging for hunters hoping to find a new piece of ground.



“When I first moved to the Albany area, I hunted public land and spent a lot of time knocking on doors asking permission. Posted signs actually helped because it told me who the landowner was. I got turned away from probably 90% of the people I asked, mostly because they already had other hunters.

But all it took was permission from 2 or 3 landowners, and I was set.”

Jeremy Hurst, DEC Big Game Unit Leader

ASK PERMISSION stickers and record cards are available upon request. These items are a great way for landowners to encourage hunters to ask permission, improving the communication process.

www.dec.ny.gov/docs/wildlife_pdf/askperm.pdf



Misconceptions: Private Land Access

- **POSTED—THE LAND IS CLOSED TO HUNTING:** Most landowners want to control access, not eliminate it. In fact, *less than 25% of landowners post because they disapprove of hunting*. Show respect and **ask** in person.
- **POSTED PROPERTIES ALREADY HAVE HUNTERS:** Posted signs can lead hunters to believe the property is already being hunted. This could be true, but some owners might not have contact with any hunters. You won't know unless you **ask!**
- **SMALL/SUBDIVIDED PARCELS—NOT WORTH IT:** Small parcels can deter hunters looking to maximize hunting ground acreage. However, more landowners means better chances of finding one who will grant access. But you must **ask!**
- **HUNTERS—A RISK TO MY FAMILY AND PROPERTY:** Careless and irresponsible behavior by one hunter can ruin public perception for others. It's up to hunters to change this stereotype. **Ask** permission, hunt safe, and treat the land and wildlife with respect.
- **GRANTING ACCESS INCREASES LIABILITY:** The New York State General Obligations Law protects landowners from liability for nonpaying recreationists engaged in hunting and many other outdoor activities.

MAKING IT LAST

Continuing the Tradition.

Jeff Liddle, late Hunter Education Coordinator for New York's Department of Environmental Conservation, taught a new hunter critical firearm handling skills. Jeff inspired countless new hunters during his long career with DEC. Conservation is dependent on funding provided by hunters and trappers. Our Hunter Education Program – with the help of volunteer hunter and trapper education instructors – are working hard to continue the tradition and conserve beautiful New York for years – and generations – to come. For more information, or to volunteer as an instructor, visit: www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7860.html



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

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.

Hunt Smart

Choose Non-lead Bullets & Slugs

You wait all year for this. Big game season is just around the corner and you've been scouting, preparing your gear, and practicing at the range. Now you're about to pick up a fresh box of that ammunition that has served you well in the past or perhaps something different based on cost or a friend's recommendation. Pause a moment. Let's think about the bullet or slug you'll use this year. Traditional lead-based bullets and slugs fragment to varying degrees, leaving small lead particles distributed along the wound channel and some distance into the meat of your deer or bear. They may be small enough not to be visible to the naked eye. As a result, you and those you share your bounty with can be exposed to lead, a well-known toxin. In addition, scavenging animals feeding on the gut pile left behind

can ingest lethal and sub-lethal doses of lead. Why chance it?

Today's alternative ammunitions choices, typically copper bullets or slugs, are engineered to expand reliably for a quick kill and perform excellent in most rifles, shotguns, and muzzle-loading firearms. They are a bit more expensive, typically costing about \$5-10 more per box than a high-quality lead-based option. When you consider all that you put into your big game season, the investment is small compared to the benefit to you, your family, and non-target wildlife.

Non-lead ammunition; it works, it reduces exposure to lead, and it is good for conservation. It's a smart choice. Try it this year!

For more information: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/48420.html>



Non-Lead Ammunition for...

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

Accessible Hunting Opportunities on DEC Lands

Hunters and trappers with disabilities can find accessible features at several Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and State Forests such as accessible parking areas, hunting blinds, platforms, boardwalks, trails, and motorized access routes (MAPPWD). See the maps on pages 67-73 for facilities and specific features, which can also be found on the **Accessible Recreation Destinations** webpage (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/34038.html>).

There are many great DEC lands to explore across the state. Below is a summary of features that can be found at select sites. Visit <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7768.html> for more about these sites, WMAs, and other state lands.

Western NY

Tonawanda WMA (Orleans, Erie, Genesee, and Niagara Counties) has an accessible parking area and kiosk off of Route 77, as well as an accessible parking area, path, and waterfowl hunting blind off of Owen Road (hunting by permit only; call 585-948-5182 for more information).

Spicer Creek WMA (Erie County) has a universally accessible parking area, trail, and two hunting blind/observation decks. A free permit is required from Beaver Island State Park to hunt at these blinds. For more information, call 716-773-3271.

The Motorized Access Program for People with Disabilities (MAPPWD) provides access to vehicular routes for hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation for qualified people with disabilities. Qualified individuals must obtain a permit from the appropriate DEC region to use these routes. To apply for a MAPPWD permit visit www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/2574.html.

Northern NY

Upper and Lower Lakes WMA (St. Lawrence County) features two accessible trails. The trails lead to pads suitable for use with portable hunting blinds and are located off of County Route 14 on Middle Access Road. Off of County Route 15 is an accessible trail and waterfowl blind. The covered blind is large enough for two people and a dog. It has a dog door and ramp for retrieval of game.

Upper Hudson Valley

Vosburgh Swamp WMA (Greene County) has an accessible waterfowl hunting blind at the north end of Vosburgh Swamp, along the eastern shore. A trail and short boardwalk to this blind begin at the middle parking lot off of Four Mile Point Road.

Partridge Run State Forest and WMA (Albany County) together have nearly five miles of MAPPWD routes.

Mid-Hudson Valley

Bashakill WMA (Orange and Sullivan Counties) has an accessible waterfowl hunting/wildlife observation blind and a 600-foot trail from the western parking area on Haven Road. Waterfowl hunting at Bashakill WMA requires an area-specific permit. Contact the Region 3 office at 845-256-3098 or wildlife.r3@dec.ny.gov.

Stewart State Forest (Orange County) has an accessible boardwalk and parking lot on Great Swamp Road. There are also over 15 miles of MAPPWD routes. Special arrangements must be made to obtain combinations for entry at selected gates.



Accessible path and waterfowl hunting blind at Tonawanda WMA.

Permits for Hunters with Disabilities

Eligible hunters with a physical disability can get a permit to use a modified crossbow or longbow and to hunt from a motorized vehicle. All permits require verification of a qualifying disability from a licensed physician. More information, including applications, is available at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/30419.html> or through the Special Licenses Unit (518-402-8985 or speciallicenses@dec.ny.gov).

Non-Ambulatory Hunter Permit authorizes hunting with a firearm from a motorized vehicle with the motor turned off and completely off the highway right-of-way, with its motor turned off.

Modified Longbow Authorization allows hunting with a legal bow equipped with a mechanical device to aid in the drawing, holding, and releasing of the bowstring.

Modified Crossbow Permit authorizes hunting using a modified crossbow and use of a crossbow equipped with a breath-tube apparatus to release the bowstring.

Preference for Deer Management Permits and reduced fees for hunting, trapping, and fishing licenses are available to resident military veterans with a service-related disability of 40% or more. Hunters need to provide a letter from the Veteran's Administration. Visit <https://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6097.html>.

Small Game Hunting

Small game includes upland and migratory game birds, small game mammals, certain furbearers, and reptiles and amphibians.

Please read general hunting regulations first on page 14.

General Regulations

- You may not use a rifle or handgun to hunt pheasant or migratory game birds. See page 48 for more information on turkeys.
- See pages 51–52 for additional information on migratory game birds.
- Air guns (see page 14) may be used to hunt squirrels, rabbits, hares, ruffed grouse, furbearers 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 or when accompanied by 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.

Reptile and Amphibian Hunting Seasons	
Frogs	
Open Season	June 15–Sept. 30
Open Area	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.
Size Limit	None
Daily Bag	None
Season Bag	None
Hunting Hours	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).
Snapping Turtles	
Open Season	July 15–Sept. 30
Open Area	Statewide
Size Limit	The upper shell (carapace) must be 12 inches or longer, measured in a straight line.
Daily Bag	5
Season Bag	30
Hunting Hours	Any time of the day or night

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.

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/

Falconry Seasons

To hunt small game species with trained raptors, you must possess a Falconry License and a hunting license. Licensed falconers may take

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.



Waterfowl Hunting Zone Descriptions

Waterfowl Hunting Zones

Western Zone – That area west of a continuous line extending from Lake Ontario east along the north shore of the Salmon River to Interstate Route 81 and then south along Interstate Route 81 to the New York-Pennsylvania boundary.

Northeastern Zone – That area north of a continuous line extending from Lake Ontario east along the north shore of the Salmon River to Interstate Route 81, south along Interstate Route 81 to Route 31, east along Route 31 to Route 13, north along Route 13 to Route 49, east along Route 49 to Route 365, east along Route 365 to Route 28, east along Route 28 to Route 29, east along Route 29 to Route 22, north along Route 22 to Route 153, east along Route 153 to the New York-Vermont boundary, exclusive of the Lake Champlain Zone.

Lake Champlain Zone – That area east and north of a continuous line extending along Route 11 from the New York-Canada boundary south to Route 9B, south along Route 9B to Route 9, south along Route 9 to Route 22 south of Keeseville, south along Route 22 to the west shore of South Bay along and around the shoreline of South Bay to Route 22 on the east shore of South Bay, southeast along Route 22 to Route 4, northeast along Route 4 to the New York-Vermont boundary.

Southeastern Zone – That area east of Interstate Route 81 that is south of a continuous line extending from Interstate Route 81 east along Route 31 to Route 13, north along Route 13 to Route 49, east along Route 49 to Route 365, east along Route 365 to Route 28, east along

Route 28 to Route 29, east along Route 29 to Route 22, north along Route 22 to Route 153, east along Route 153 to the New York-Vermont boundary, and northwest of Interstate Route 95 in Westchester County.

Long Island Zone – That area consisting of Nassau and Suffolk counties and their tidal waters, and that area of Westchester County and its tidal waters southeast of Interstate Route 95. (See map page 53).

Special Sea Duck Area – All coastal waters and all waters of rivers and streams in New York State seaward from the first upstream bridge.

Accessing Great Waterfowl Hunting in New York State

New York boasts a variety of waterfowl hunting opportunities on private lands, public lands, and public waterways. As a “pinch point” in the Atlantic Flyway, almost all species found in the flyway can be found or hunted in New York (33 species to be exact!). Hunters can experience duck and goose hunting in diverse habitats from tidal marshes on the south shore of Long Island, to small beaver ponds in the Adirondacks and Catskills, to large open waters of the Finger Lakes and Great Lakes. DEC divides the state into five hunting zones with independent season dates to maximize hunting opportunity that overlaps with waterfowl migration, weekends, and holidays. The result is that hunters can find an open waterfowl season somewhere in the state from September through April!

Although the many waterways across the state provide great hunting opportunities, goose hunters will typically need access to private lands where fields can be very productive hunting locations. Approaching landowners can be an intimidating experience, but keep in mind that Canada geese can damage agricultural plantings and hunting can be a useful management tool to reduce damage. As a result, many farmers and property owners are open to allowing hunting. Taking the time to scout and politely ask permission can greatly improve your odds of having a successful hunt.

Aside from field hunting opportunities, waterfowl hunters have the distinct advantage that many of the best hunting areas and waterways around the state are publicly owned. Hunters without access to private lands can concentrate on larger bodies of water such as Lake Ontario, Lake Champlain, Great South Bay, or the Finger Lakes in Central New York. If hunting from shore, hunters should be aware

that most shorelines above the mean low tide mark are private property and hunters may not hunt from or anchor on private property without permission from the landowner. On these larger bodies of water, housing or other developments often are near high quality waterfowl habitats and the State Legislature determined that special considerations were warranted. As a result, hunters pursuing waterfowl on public property or private property with the permission from the landowner may discharge their firearm over open water within 500 feet of a dwelling, provided there is not any dwelling, public structure, livestock, or person within 500 feet of the shooter in the direction they are shooting. When hunting ducks or geese that congregate on near-shore waters, it is safer for a hunter to shoot away from shore than to shoot toward shore from open water. DEC encourages hunters to be considerate of residents living along shorelines who may not be knowledgeable about duck hunting seasons and methods. Abusing this exemption from the 500' setback distance could result in areas being permanently closed to hunting.

If hunters do not have access to the necessary equipment to hunt larger bodies of water, there is an abundance of opportunity on DEC managed wetlands that can be accessed on foot and by canoe or kayak and with minimal equipment. On many Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), DEC manipulates water levels to maximize food availability for waterfowl and to provide migratory and breeding habitat for a variety of game and non-game species throughout the year. Places like Northern Montezuma, Tonawanda, Oak Orchard, Perch River, and Wilson Hill WMAs provide excellent viewing and hunting opportunities.

For a list of public properties with waterfowl hunting opportunities in each waterfowl hunting zone, visit: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/103606.html>

Waterfowl Blinds for Hunters with Disabilities

Duck hunting is available for people who require easier access to hunting locations. DEC and cooperating state and federal partners have developed blinds on WMAs accessible for people of all abilities:

- » Region 1: Otis Pike Preserve
- » Region 4: Vosburgh Swamp WMA
- » Region 6: Upper and Lower Lakes WMA
- » Region 7: Hamlin Marsh WMA
- » Region 8: Northern Montezuma, Tonawanda, John White WMAs
- » Region 9: Spicer Creek WMA, Chautauqua Lake FWMA

For more information on hunting at these locations contact the regional wildlife office. To see the full list of accessible duck hunting blinds and other recreation opportunities visit: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/34038.html>

Keeping the Trapping Tradition Alive

Adopt “Best Practices” when Trapping on Private Lands

While many of New York’s trappers stick to setting traps on public land, trapping on private lands can be a win-win for all involved. With roughly 80% of New York’s land privately owned, getting permission to trap on private property helps open up additional opportunity for trappers while helping landowners manage local wildlife populations and reduce potential nuisance issues on their land. Trappers are likely familiar with “Best Management Practices” or “BMPs” which evaluate the efficacy and humaneness of many different trap systems. Below are a different kind of BMPs - recommendations for trapping private lands that reduce the chance that conflicts between trappers and landowners will occur, protecting the legacy of trapping for future generations.

- Communication is key when talking to landowners! A report done in 2019 found that a majority of Americans support regulated trapping. Take the time to explain the reasons why you trap, and keep the following in mind.
 - » Approval is highest for trapping if it is for subsistence, population control, or to reduce damage to property, crops, or gardens.
 - » Approval is lowest if trapping is for recreation, fur clothing, or money.
- Be sure to talk to landowners well before the season begins and identify any concerns that they may have or special rules they would like you to follow.
- Ask the landowner who else might be using their property during trapping season. Be sure to communicate with them regarding when others may be on the property and what they may be doing.

- Work with the landowner to clearly define where on their property you are allowed to set traps and when you will be there.
- Follow the regulations associated with setting body-gripping traps on land including specifications for cubby sets (see page 63).
- Know and use selective trap sets. For example, use foot-encapsulating traps for raccoons whenever possible.
- Avoid areas that have a high risk of trapping domestic animals. Keep traps covered and do not bait traps with pet food or meat-based baits.
- Check traps regularly and as early in the day as possible.
- Fully use trapped animals to the greatest extent possible, and dispose of carcasses properly.
- Offer to help out landowners with nuisance wildlife problems.
- Be respectful. Don’t damage vegetation when making sets, do not drive in areas where you don’t have permission, and make sure to close gates behind you.
- Give the landowner your contact information so they may call you with questions or concerns while you are trapping on their property.

Most importantly, remember that you are the future of trapping. One negative incident can have a substantial impact on New Yorkers’ support for this activity. Be an advocate for the respectful, sustainable use of wildlife, wildlife management, and the benefits of trapping.

For more information read “Bodygrip Traps on Dryland: A Guide to Responsible Use” (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/81564.html>). For guidance on how to effectively talk about trapping with the public, check out the “Communication Strategy for Trapping and Furbearer Management” (<https://www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-inspires/furbearer-management>).



Devon Morris in Washington County (top).

Khalei Holbert and Mike Williams in Madison County (bottom left).

Maria Smith in Steuben County (bottom right).



Report Your Furbearer Sightings!

DEC wants to learn more about the occurrence of various furbearers throughout New York such as bobcat, otter, fisher, weasel, and snowshoe hare. Your observations help biologists understand the distribution and abundance of these elusive or inconspicuous mammals.

You can report your observations online, and you can even include photos!

Go to www.dec.ny.gov/animals/30770.html or e-mail us at wildlife@dec.ny.gov!

Thanks for your help!

Photo courtesy of Natalie Werner, sighting in Allegany County

TRAPPING IS OUR HISTORY.
WILL TRAPPING BE IN OUR FUTURE?



BECOME A TRAPPER
EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR!

APPLY TODAY!

- 1-888-HUNT-ED2 (1-888-486-8332)
- www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/9189.html

New York State Environmental Conservation Police

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

A: No - it is unlawful to possess or use tags of another person, except properly consigned Deer Management Permits (DMPs) or land-owner DMAPs. DMP instructions can be found in this guide.

Q: I'm using an "app" that shows land owned by NY State - can I hunt on that land?

A: State lands are owned by DEC, DOT, SUNY, NYS Parks, Thruway, and others. It's your responsibility to check the rules for each property, as even some DEC lands are off limits to hunting.

Q: What documentation must I carry when hunting?

A: You must carry your hunting license, plus carcass tags (deer, bear, turkey), any special permits (e.g., turkey permit), and a "duck" stamp with HIP# (if hunting migratory game birds), plus a back tag (where required). "Hunting license" means the printed license listing privileges or a lifetime license card or NY driver's license with an "Adventure" hunting icon. You may also use your HuntFishNY app for proof of a hunting license, provided you still have your back tag (where required) and carcass tag(s), or the quarry you're hunting doesn't require a carcass tag. Special hunts or hunt areas may require additional paperwork.

Q: Why can NY stores sell deer bait and salt blocks when it is illegal to use them for hunting in NY?

A: The law and regulation do not prohibit sale, but they prohibit the use of bait to aid in hunting and feeding deer (and bear) at all times. If the material is placed where the animal may ingest it, it is likely to be considered baiting or feeding.

Q: Are deer urine scents legal in NY?

A: Yes, but DEC strongly urges hunters not to use natural urine or animal-based scents. To protect NY deer from Chronic Wasting Disease hunters who want to use deer attractant scents should only use synthetic products.

Q: Why aren't food plots considered feeding or baiting?

A: DEC regulations exempt wildlife food plots from feeding and baiting prohibitions as "areas established by standard agricultural production practices." Wildlife food plots do not concentrate deer in the same way as supplemental feed sites and do not entail the same risk of disease spread, behavioral changes, or localized ecological damage.

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

A: Yes, but if any deer season is open, you cannot use a rifle larger than .22 caliber. You may not possess rifles afield on Long Island or in Westchester Co.

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

A: It depends on the season and species. Some furbearers may only be trapped, while some can also be hunted, but with different seasons. Coyote is a good example of a species that can be hunted and trapped, but season dates for hunting and trapping this species are different, so be sure to check the guide before going afield.

Q: I found a live wild animal in a trap. What can I do?

A: Unless you own the trap or have permission (and are licensed to trap), it is illegal to release, dispatch or steal a trapped furbearer or tamper with legally set traps.

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

A: The tag stays with the carcass and is not needed after the deer is prepared for consumption. DEC strongly encourages all hunters to dispose of your carcass waste in a landfill as a "best practice" for minimizing disease risks.

Q: How can I transport a crossbow in a vehicle?

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

Q: What basic steps should I follow when an ECO approaches me while I am afield hunting?

A: Most importantly, keep firearms pointed in a safe direction with the safety "ON." Do not try to unload them, which can lead to accidents.

Q: Without permission, how far must I be from a house to discharge an implement?

A: You must be a minimum of 150 feet to discharge a bow, 250 feet for crossbow and 500 feet for firearms including muzzleloaders. Local laws or ordinances on firearm discharges may also apply.

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 has a muzzle velocity of at least 600 f.p.s.

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, such as 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 eligible for resident license fees. 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 possessing the DMP may take an antlerless deer. DMPs may be consigned from one hunter to another, but this needs to happen before the deer is harvested. See the DMP consignment rules for more info.

Q: Can I target shoot on DEC lands?

A: Yes, on some DEC lands. Many DEC state lands, including State Forests and Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) have specific rules prohibiting target shooting in some or all areas - call ahead. Where target shooting is allowed, 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, you may not possess a firearm of any type while bowhunting during those seasons. Possession of a handgun in NY requires a NY Pistol Permit. NY does not recognize any permits from other states.

Q: Can I shoot a deer at first light?

A: No. For deer and bear hunting, legal shooting is between the minute of local sunrise to the minute of local sunset, NOT just when it's light enough. Sunrise/sunset charts are available in this guide.

Q: May I transport an entire deer carcass into NY from another state?

A: No. Chronic Wasting Disease regulations ban importation of whole carcasses from anywhere outside of New York State. See the CWD pages of this guidebook.

Please contact your local Environmental Conservation Officers (ECOs) for answers to your specific questions (see pages 68-69).



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



ECO Chris DeRose and K-9 Cramer next to an illegally taken deer hidden under a pile of leaves by a violator. DEC K-9s have typical police dog skills and can detect scents including gunpowder/shell casings and venison, trout or turkey.



ECO Jared Lomozik assisted the Wounded Warrior in Action Foundation, NY Conservation Officers Association and other non-profits who fully sponsored regular season deer hunts for these three Purple Heart recipients in Yates County.



ECO Kevin Holzle with baby raccoons seized from a Niagara County suspect. ECOs routinely investigate complaints of illegally possessed wild animals. "If you care, leave it there" and call DEC to contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.



ECO Brian Canzeri's dedicated tipsters put him on investigations in Rensselaer County that led to three subjects being charged with numerous tickets including baiting, taking over the limit of antlered deer and failure to report harvests.



ECO Mark Colesante observed a pile of snow geese on the porch of a Cayuga County resident. Several youths were charged after his investigation revealed that they were all illegally taken from the highway and from a motor vehicle.



A happy youth hunter and ECO Lt. Liza Bobseine after a Seneca County youth deer season hunt. ECOs regularly attend Hunter Education classes and mentor hunters during the youth seasons for deer, turkey and waterfowl.