

New York HUNTING & TRAPPING

2026–2027 Official Guide
to Laws & Regulations
Volume 20, Issue No. 1,
September 2026

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Earn-a-2nd-Buck Tag
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Most regulations are in effect September 1, 2026 through August 31, 2027

Message from the Governor



Enjoying the outdoors is essential to promoting the health and well-being of all New Yorkers and the millions of visitors who come to this great state each year. We are truly blessed with a wide array of opportunities to enjoy nature just outside our door or a short trip away. Time spent outside reinvigorates the mind, reduces stress, and provides physical activity contributing to a healthy lifestyle.

Those of us who treasure our time in forests, fields, or along our waterways have long known this, but increasingly, science is validating the connection between health and time spent outside. Our investments in clean air, water, abatement of pollution, open space, and wildlife conservation are a testament to a ‘One Health’ concept that human health, animal health, and environment are all linked.

Hunting and trapping have long been at the forefront of the outdoor movement, first out of a necessity to live and today as part of a long tradition that not only reconnects people with nature, but also yields a healthy, sustainable source of nutrition to all who enjoy and share their harvest. And here in New York, opportunities abound!

As we usher in the 2026–27 hunting and trapping seasons, I hope you will reflect on how special the bond with nature and its healing powers truly are. Perhaps you might even consider introducing or reintroducing someone to hunting and the outdoors to experience what you already know.

In the 2026–27 hunting and trapping guide you’ll find a summary of all the rules, season dates, and other helpful information to enjoy the upcoming seasons. As always, pay particular attention to safety while afield. While hunting remains incredibly safe, one tragedy is always one too many.

I truly hope you enjoy the season, have success, and generate new memories with those whom you share your time getting offline and getting outside.

Governor Kathy Hochul

Photo by Dr. Rebecca Collins



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New York State

Kathy C. Hochul, Governor

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Division of Fish and Wildlife's Mission:

The mission of DEC's Division of Fish and Wildlife is to serve the interests of current and future generations of New Yorkers by using our collective skills, in partnership with the public, to describe, understand, manage, and perpetuate a healthy and diverse assemblage of fish, wildlife, and ecosystems.

This guide is a summary that is intended for convenience only. For complete references, consult the New York State Environmental Conservation Law and Volume 6 of the Codes, Rules and Regulations of New York State. These are available at:

dec.ny.gov/regulatory/regulations
<http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/lawssrch.cgi?NVLWO>:
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ON THE COVER:

Joe D. and his son Connor D. alongside their lab Sonny hunting waterfowl in Chenango County. Joe on Hunting for the Bond: "My son and dog have a passion like no other for waterfowl season. It's the greatest feeling to be able to watch these two grow with every season." Photograph courtesy of Daniel C.

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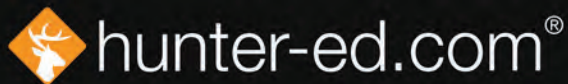


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Highlights for 2026–2027

Increasing Antlerless Harvest

In 2026, DEC adopted several changes to increase harvest of antlerless deer in specific areas where most needed, including:

- Adding 10 Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) to the nine-day season for antlerless deer in mid-September. See Deer Hunting Season Maps (see page 27).
- Designating some WMUs as having unlimited Deer Management Permits (DMPs), where hunters who harvest and report an antlerless deer using a DMP would be eligible to have the DMP automatically replaced (bonus DMP).
- Modifying the DMP application process, allowing hunters to apply for up to four DMPs, two in WMUs with limited DMPs and two in WMUs with unlimited/bonus DMPs (see page 30).
- Making DMP consignment between hunters unlimited.

DEC also created an incentive for hunters to harvest antlerless deer by establishing a state-wide Earn-a-2nd-Buck system.

- All hunters will receive a first Antlered Deer Tag valid during any season (with appropriate privileges), except the September antlerless season.
- Bow and muzzleloader privileges will include antlerless deer tags only.
- Hunters who harvest and report an antlerless deer using a DMP, Bow/Muzz Antlerless Deer Tag, or Deer Management Assistance Program Tag, will be eligible to receive a second Antlered Deer Tag.
- Hunters are required to retain evidence of the antlerless harvest.

See page 29 for additional details. See “Antlerless Deer Hunting Q & A” at <https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting> for more information.

New Crossbow Law

Passed in 2025, legislation now allows crossbows to be used during the entire bowhunting season by hunters with the bowhunting privilege in all areas where other bowhunting equipment can be used. All crossbow users are now required to have a certificate of bowhunter education. Additionally, the law has removed the minimum limb width and maximum draw weight restrictions for crossbows. The discharge setback for crossbows remains at a minimum of 250' from certain structures, except in Suffolk and Westchester counties, where it is 500'. Certain crossbow restrictions still apply to Junior Hunters (see page 45 for details).

Pending Legislation for DMPs in the Northern Zone

A pending bill would authorize DEC to issue DMPs in all portions of the Northern Zone. Should the bill be adopted, DEC will not immediately issue DMPs

in the new areas. Future decisions will be based on population management needs in each WMU.

Mentored Hunt Opportunities and More!

HuntFishNY is your one-stop resource for events offered by DEC and a network of partners and instructors. Events are hands-on and designed to teach you the basics about hunting, fishing, trapping, outdoor safety, wildlife, and other outdoor skills. You can find sponsored pheasant hunts, mentored hunts, target shoots, hunting seminars, social events, and more. Events are designed for all ability levels. See DEC's Learn to Hunt Opportunities in New York page (<https://on.ny.gov/learntohunt>) for information about HuntFishNY Events, the Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) program, sponsored pheasant hunts, and mentored hunts. These programs help new hunters develop the skills they will need to be safe and successful.

Fisher Trapping Season Regulation Changes

In 2026, DEC adopted new fisher trapping season dates. The new regulations expand fisher trapping opportunities by opening new areas to fisher trapping and extending the existing season in central and western New York. The regulations also shift fisher trapping seasons later in the year to better align with trapper values. To learn more about the fisher season setting decision making process, visit <https://dec.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2025-07/fishersdmsummary.pdf>

Potential Changes to Snow Goose Seasons

Following continued success of the spring light goose conservation order seasons, the regular season dates have been revised and shortened throughout most of upstate New York. Implemented more than a decade ago to address overabundant snow goose populations, the conservation order has successfully reduced greater snow goose populations to within the goal population. DEC will evaluate the need to maintain the spring conservation order this summer, with a final determination to be made before March 10. Updated information will be posted on the DEC website in March.

Lead-Free Ammunition Rebate Program – Continuing Statewide

New York Hunters for Conservation is offering a rebate of up to \$60 to hunters for purchase of certified lead-free ammunition. For more information about this program, please refer to page 34.



About This Guide

This high-quality reference guide is brought to you by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through a partnership with Kalkomey, a trusted leader in outdoor safety education since 1995. In addition to producing this guide, Kalkomey also offers a suite of educational courses to help people enjoy the outdoors safely.

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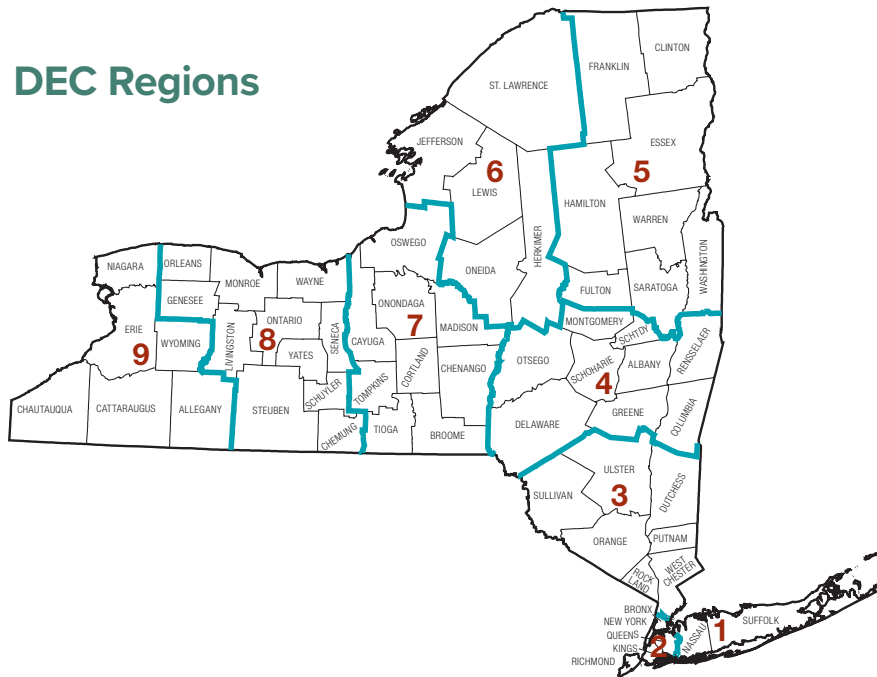
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Important Numbers

DEC Regions



Important Numbers

Region	Offices	Wildlife	Law Enforcement	Hunter Ed	Forest Rangers
1	Stony Brook University 50 Circle Rd. Stony Brook, NY 11790-3409	631-444-0310	631-444-0250	631-444-0255	631-444-0291
2	1 Hunters Pt. Plaza 47-40 21st St. Long Island City, NY 11101-5407	718-482-4922	718-482-4885	718-482-6429	631-444-0291
3	21 South Putt Corners Rd. New Paltz, NY 12561	845-256-3098	845-256-3013	845-256-3122	845-256-3024
4	1130 North Westcott Rd. Schenectady, NY 12306-2014	518-357-2355	518-357-2047	518-357-2158	518-357-2161
	65561 State Hwy 10, Suite 1 Stamford, NY 12167-9503	607-652-7367			
5	1115 Route 86, PO Box 296 Ray Brook, NY 12977-0296	518-897-1291	518-897-1326	518-623-1245	518-897-1303
	232 Golf Course Rd. Warrensburg, NY 12885	518-623-1240			518-623-1200
6	317 Washington St. Watertown, NY 13601-3787	315-785-2263	315-785-2231	518-785-2534	315-785-2558
	225 North Main St. Herkimer, NY 13350	315-866-6330			315-866-6330
	190 Outer Main St. Suite 103 Potsdam, NY 13676	315-265-3090			315-265-3090
	17893 Game Farm Rd. Dexter, NY 13634	315-639-6122			315-639-6122
	7327 NYS Rt. 812, Lowville, NY 13367	315-376-3521			315-376-3521
	5786 Widewaters Parkway, Syracuse, NY 13214-1867	607-218-3853			607-218-3820
7	1285 Fisher Ave. Cortland, NY 13045	607-218-3853	315-426-7431	607-218-3815	607-218-3820
8	6274 E. Avon-Lima Rd. Avon, NY 14414-9519	585-226-5380	585-226-6706	585-226-5463	585-226-5319
	7291 Coon Rd. Bath, NY 14810-9728	607-776-2165			607-622-8287
9	700 Delaware Ave. Buffalo, NY 14209	716-851-7010	716-851-7050	716-372-0645	716-372-0645
	182 East Union St., Suite 3 Allegany, NY 14706	716-372-0645			



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Other Important Numbers

DEC Automated Licensing System	1-866-933-2257 M-F 8AM-5PM, Sat 9AM-5PM
Lifetime License Information	518-402-8843
NYC Watershed Hunting Permits	1-800-575-5263
Hunter Ed	1-888-HUNT ED2 (1-888-486-8332)
Deer Management Permit (DMP) Hotline	1-866-472-4332
Game Harvest Reporting via DECALS	1-866-GAME-RPT (1-866-426-3778)
Reporting Banded Waterfowl	www.reportband.gov
Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program (HIP)	decals.east.licensing.app
Information on NY SAFE Act	1-855-LAW-GUNS (1-855-529-4867)
Forest Rangers	1-833-NYS-RANGERS (1-833-697-7264)
Law Enforcement (ECOs)	1-844-DEC-ECOS (1-844-332-3267)

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Message from the Commissioner



Hunting for Conservation

For more than 100 years, New York's hunting and trapping community has taken an active role in wildlife conservation. The voices of New York outdoor sports enthusiasts were instrumental in passing laws beginning in the late 1800s that are the foundation of sound conservation practices employed today. Early efforts focused on protection and restoration of sparse and isolated game species. New York hunters and trappers continue to play a pivotal role in wildlife conservation, particularly now as we address a changing landscape and an overabundance of certain species like White-tailed deer and non-migratory Canada Geese in some areas of the state.

The interests and values of hunters made the difference last year when the State authorized use of modern crossbows during the entire bowhunting season. Hunter and trapper input was also a critical component, merged with wildlife science, to identify the best approach for the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to address expanded fisher populations and the need to increase harvest of antlerless deer.

When you voice your interests and values to DEC, we listen and you influence actions. When you purchase a hunting and trapping license and associated equipment, you fund DEC's work to manage game species, protect threatened and endangered species, and conserve habitats important to New York wildlife. When you harvest game, you contribute to wildlife population management and wildlife conflict reduction. When you prioritize harvest of antlerless deer over antlered deer, you demonstrate a conservation ethic. When you mentor a new hunter, teach a hunter education class, participate in Snapshot NY, or invite a friend for a venison dinner, you share why conservation matters.

This fall, to celebrate the successes and impact of hunters and trappers, DEC is launching the Hunter Achievement Awards, available to individuals who legally harvest any of 24 eligible game species (see below for more information). It is one way DEC can help directly recognize our partners in conservation.

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

Amanda Lefton
Commissioner

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation



Report Your Harvests with the HuntFishNY App

Use DEC's HuntFishNY app as an e-license and to report your game harvest. HuntFishNY gives you a quick and easy way to:

- Access your sporting licenses, privileges, and permits
- Submit game harvest reports, even when out of cellular range
- View current and past harvest reports
- Look at season maps and a sunrise-sunset table
- Read DEC's current Hunting & Trapping Guide

HuntFishNY now includes the Tackle Box feature for anglers!

Get the HuntFishNY app free from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

Note: You will need a DECALS username and password to access your license documents through the app. If you don't have a username and password, visit <https://on.ny.gov/3KXkt5n> to get yours today. Questions? Call our sporting license hotline at 1-866-472-4332.



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Hunters who harvest any of the 24 eligible game species will receive an Achievement Award sticker and letter from DEC.

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HUNTER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD SNOWSHOE HARE

HUNTER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RACCOON

From Surveys to Stewardship: How the Public Shapes Wildlife Management

Wildlife management is often viewed as a science-driven field led by trained biologists, but the public plays a direct and powerful role in shaping the decisions that guide conservation.

From influencing policy through surveys to funding conservation programs and participating in stewardship, hunters and trappers help determine how wildlife is managed at local, state, and national levels.

One of the most direct ways the public shapes wildlife management is through surveys and public comment periods. When communities express strong support for conservation or concern about property damage, livestock loss, or safety – biologists incorporate these perspectives into management strategies to ensure policies are both scientifically sound and socially acceptable.

Funding is another critical way the public directs wildlife management. Legislation such as the Pittman-Robertson Act channels excise taxes on firearms and ammunition into wildlife restoration projects. Hunters, trappers, and outdoor enthusiasts also directly finance habitat protection, research, and enforcement through their purchases of licenses and stamps. Beyond government programs, nonprofit hunting and trapping organizations also rely on public donations to support conservation. These funding sources determine which projects receive attention and resources.

Stewardship further demonstrates the public's hands-on impact. Volunteers assist with habitat restoration, species monitoring, and citizen science programs, providing valuable data the biologists use to track population trends and ecosystem health. Community involvement fosters



Tuan M. and Brandon D.

a sense of shared responsibility, reinforcing that wildlife management is not solely the work of scientists but a collaborative effort between experts and the public.

Ultimately, effective wildlife management depends on both ecological research and public values. By voicing opinions, providing funding, and participating in stewardship, the public directly helps shape the priorities and practices that guide how wildlife is conserved for future generations. This year's *Hunting and Trapping Regulations Guide* dives into ways that hunters and trappers directly impact wildlife management decisions.

A smartphone displaying the eRegulations app interface, which includes a logo and the text "OFFICIAL REGULATIONS". The phone is resting on a piece of wood with a camouflage pattern. The background is dark and textured.

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General License Information

Purchasing a License

Hunting, trapping, and fishing licenses can be purchased at over 1,200 agent locations throughout NYS, over the phone via the DEC call center at 1-866-933-2257/M–F, 8AM–5PM, Sat. 9AM–5PM (extended hours Aug. 3–Nov. 30, M–F 7AM–7PM, Sat. 9AM–5PM), and online through DEC’s Automated Licensing System (DECALS) at dec.ny.gov/regulatory/permits-licenses/sporting-and-use/sporting/decals.

You can also locate a license-issuing vendor from the DECALS website. All major credit cards are accepted online and over the phone.

Mandatory Hunter Education

A hunter education course is required for persons who cannot provide proof that they have ever possessed a hunting license. You must be at least 11 years of age to take this class. The general course is an in-person or online course offered by DEC and is a minimum of seven hours in length. A hunter education certificate will be provided upon completion of the course. This certificate must be added to the individual’s DEC licensing profile before purchasing a license. This can be done anywhere licenses are sold or by calling 1-866-933-2257. DEC honors hunter education certificates and sporting licenses from all other states and countries that meet IHEA-USA requirements as proof of hunter education in order to purchase a New York State hunting license.

Mandatory Bowhunter Education

Hunters wishing to bow or crossbow hunt for big game must present either:

1. Proof that they successfully completed an approved bowhunter education course (in person or online). (Note: Approved courses are International Bowhunter Education Program courses or an equivalent course. If in doubt, call toll-free 1-888-HUNT-ED2); OR
2. Proof that they previously held a New York State bowhunting license or stamp issued in 1980 or later; if proof is from prior to 1980, they must take a bowhunter education certification course.

Note: Legislation passed in 2025 allows hunters to use a crossbow in the same seasons, places, and manner as a vertical bow for hunting deer and bear.

Residency

To qualify for an annual resident license, a person must live in New York State for more than 30 days immediately preceding the date of application. To qualify for a Lifetime License, a person must live in New York State for at least one year immediately preceding the date of

Licenses, Privileges, and Permits

Type	Age or Special Qualifier	Price
Hunting (Ages 16+) Privileges: Hunt small game species with gun, bow, or crossbow. Hunt deer or bear with gun, muzzleloader, bow, or crossbow (with proof of bow education or a bow privilege) during the regular season, or hunt with shotgun or muzzleloader during the Jan. firearms season (permit required — see page 20) in Suffolk County (Wildlife Management Unit [WMU] 1C). You may hunt frogs with a valid hunting or fishing license (see page 46 for more details). Qualifications: Hunter Education Certificate OR previous hunting license. Certificates to possess firearms do not qualify. Note: Those 16-17 years of age who are hunting big game for the first time as a holder of a hunting license must be accompanied for the entire season by a parent or legal guardian, or a person 18 years of age or older designated in writing (see permission form on page 45) with at least one year’s experience hunting bear or deer. Accompanist must have a current hunting license and meet all requirements as specified on page 45.	16–69 (NYS Resident)	\$22
	70+ (NYS Resident)	\$5
	Military Disabled ¹	\$5
	Patriot ²	FREE
	Indigenous Peoples ³	FREE
Junior Hunting (Ages 12–15)	16+ (Non-Resident)	\$100
Privileges: • Ages 12–13: Hunt small game species with gun or bow and deer with gun or crossbow during appropriate seasons when accompanied* by a parent, legal guardian, or person 21 years of age or older with written permission from parent or guardian (see permission form on page 45). Check DEC’s website (dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/deer-bear/junior-big-game) for a map of counties where 12- and 13-year-olds can hunt deer with a gun or crossbow and page 27 for details.) • Ages 14–15: Hunt small game with gun, bow, or crossbow (see page 23) when accompanied* by a parent, legal guardian, or person 18 years of age or older with written permission from parent/guardian. Hunt deer or bear with a gun, bow (with proof of bow education or a bow privilege), or crossbow (see page 23) during the regular season, or hunt with shotgun or muzzleloader during the Jan. firearms season (permit required — see page 20) in Suffolk County, when accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or youth mentor 21 years of age or older designated in writing (see permission form on page 45). * Accompanist must have a current hunting license and meet all requirements as specified on page 45. Qualifications: Hunter Education Certificate OR previous hunting license (certificates to possess firearms do not qualify). Must be accompanied by parent/legal guardian to purchase. First-time applicants must show proof of age (birth certificate or passport). Junior hunters do not need a Federal Duck Stamp, but are required to register in the NYS Harvest Information Program (dec.ny.gov/regulatory/permits-licenses/sporting-and-use/sporting/hunting-license/harvest-information-program) to hunt migratory game birds.	12–15 (NYS Resident)	\$5
	12–15 (Non-Resident)	\$5
Bowhunting Privilege (Ages 16+) Privileges: Hunt deer and bear with a bow or crossbow during bowhunting seasons. Qualifications: Current year NYS hunting license, PLUS acceptable Bowhunter Education Certificate, OR NYS Bowhunting Stamp issued in 1980 or later, OR NYS Junior Bowhunting License issued 1980 or later. Note: To hunt deer or bear with a bow or crossbow during the regular season, hunter must possess both a valid hunting license and either a current bowhunting privilege or a valid Bowhunter Education Certificate. This includes Westchester and Suffolk counties.	16–69 (NYS Resident)	\$15
	70+ (NYS Resident)	FREE
	Military Disabled ¹	FREE
	Patriot ²	\$15
	Indigenous Peoples ³	FREE
Junior Bowhunting (Ages 12–15)	16+ (Non-Resident)	\$30
Privileges: • Ages 12–13: Hunt deer and bear with a bow during the bowhunting season or the regular season, or bear during the early bear season when accompanied* by a parent, legal guardian, or youth mentor 21 years or older and designated in writing (see permission form on page 45). Youth hunter will receive a deer of either sex carcass tag for use in the regular season, instead of a regular season buck tag. • Ages 14–15: Hunt deer and bear with a bow during the bowhunting season and the regular season when accompanied* by a parent, legal guardian, or youth mentor 18 years of age or older designated in writing (see permission form on page 45). * Accompanist must have a current hunting license and meet all requirements as specified on page 45. Qualifications: Current year NYS hunting license, PLUS acceptable Bowhunter Education OR previous Junior Bowhunting License. Must be accompanied by parent/legal guardian to purchase.	12–15 (NYS Resident)	\$4
	12–15 (Non-Resident)	\$4
Muzzleloader Privilege (Ages 12+) Privileges: Hunt deer (ages 12+) and bear (ages 14+) with a muzzleloading firearm during muzzleloading season, and the Jan. special firearms season in Suffolk County (WMU 1C; ages 14+). Qualifications: Current year NYS hunting license.	12–69 (NYS Resident)	\$15
	70+ (NYS Resident)	FREE
	Military Disabled ¹	FREE
	Patriot ²	\$15
	Indigenous Peoples ³	FREE
	12+ (Non-Resident)	\$30

Licenses, Privileges, and Permits

Type	Age or Special Qualifier	Price
Deer Management Permit Application (Ages 12+) Privileges: Application for up to four antlerless deer tags issued through a random computer selection process. Tags are valid for hunting antlerless deer only (both antlers less than 3" long) in a specified Wildlife Management Unit (WMU). See DMP information on pages 30–31. Application deadline is Oct. 1 annually. Qualifications: Must hold a current year NYS hunting license to apply and pay a non-refundable \$10 application fee. Fee is waived for hunters 12–15 years of age and holders of Lifetime (Sportsman) Licenses purchased prior to Oct. 1, 2009.	12–15 (NYS Resident)	FREE
	16+ (NYS Resident)	\$10
	Military Disabled ¹	\$10
	Patriot ²	\$10
	Indigenous Peoples ³	\$10
	12–15 (Non-Resident)	FREE
	16+ (Non-Resident)	\$10
Turkey Permit (Ages 12+) Privileges: Hunt turkey during fall and spring turkey seasons (see page 51). To hunt turkey, all hunters must possess a turkey permit. There are no exceptions. Qualifications: Current year NYS hunting license. Turkey tags are included with a Lifetime License.	12+ (NYS Resident)	\$10
	Military Disabled ¹	\$10
	Patriot ²	\$10
	Indigenous Peoples ³	\$10
Trapping Privileges: Set traps for species during their appropriate seasons (see pages 61–65 for detailed information). Qualifications: Trapper Education Certificate or previous trapping license from any state or country. See page 45 for additional information on the mentoring program for trappers under 12 years of age.	12+ (Non-Resident)	\$20
	12–15 (NYS Resident)	\$5
	16–69 (NYS Resident)	\$20
	70+ (NYS Resident)	\$5
	Military Disabled ¹	\$5
	Patriot ²	FREE
	Indigenous Peoples ³	FREE
	12–15 (Non-Resident)	\$5
	16+ (Non-Resident)	\$275

Lifetime Sporting Licenses

The following Lifetime Licenses are available to New York State residents only and may be purchased at all license-issuing outlets throughout New York State. Applicants must prove NYS residency for one year prior to application (see **Residency information** on page 10). For additional information and clarification on Lifetime License sales, contact our License Sales Unit, NYSDEC, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4790; call 518-402-8843; or visit dec.ny.gov/regulatory/permits-licenses/sporting-and-use/sporting/lifetime.

Lifetime License holders should expect to receive their annual carcass tags in the mail no later than Sept. 1 annually. Lifetime License holders can also sign up to have their qualifying license and tags emailed to them, see Lifetime License Delivered Via Email below. License-issuing agents will replace licenses and tags free of charge between Sept. 1 and Nov. 1. After Nov. 1, there will be a replacement charge up to \$15. If you have a lifetime license card, you will only have to replace carcass tags at a fee of \$10.

Lifetime License (Sportsman) (combined hunting and fishing licenses, includes turkey permits):

For a person age 0–4	\$380
For a person age 5–11	\$535
For a person age 12–69	\$765
For a person age 70 or older	\$65

Other Lifetime Licenses/Privileges

Hunting License	\$535
Fishing License (age 0–69)	\$460
Fishing License (age 70 and older)	\$65
Trapping License	\$395
Bowhunting	\$235
Muzzleloading	\$235

¹**Military Disabled:** Must be a NYS resident and provide a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs showing a 40% or greater service-connected disability. Once the disability is confirmed and entered, it will stay in your customer profile. **Note:** The first purchase of either a hunting, fishing, or trapping license within a calendar year will cost \$5. Subsequent purchases of these license types within the same calendar year will be free for qualifying customers.

²**Patriot:** Free hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses are available to NYS residents who have the appropriate hunting or trapping education and are active members of the NYS National Guard, US Reserve Forces, or certain members of the U.S. Armed Forces. For more detailed information, visit our website or call 518-402-8843.

³**Indigenous Peoples:** Recognizing the sovereignty of Indigenous Nations and their governments, tribal members do not need a hunting, fishing, or trapping license from DEC when engaged in these activities on Nation territory. Members of the Shinnecock and Unkechaug Nations, and members of the Haudenosaunee Nations enrolled on reservations wholly or partially in New York State may hunt, fish, and trap off of tribal lands using their tribal identification card or by obtaining a free hunting, fishing, and trapping license from DEC. Licenses can be obtained from participating tribal and nation councils or by calling DEC headquarters in Albany at 518-402-8843.

purchase. Land ownership in New York State does not make you a resident. Residency is that place where a person maintains a fixed, permanent, and principal home (regardless of where temporarily located), such as where a person is registered to vote. If under age 18, the residence of parents or legal guardian shall be deemed such person's residence. For a complete list of valid residency proof documents, please see dec.ny.gov/regulatory/permits-licenses/sporting-and-use/sporting/general-info#Res.

Active members of the U.S. Armed Forces stationed in New York State and full-time college students in residence in the state during the school year (proof required) qualify for annual resident licenses.

Lifetime License Delivered Via Email

As a Lifetime License holder, you now have the option to have your license and tags emailed directly to you each year instead of being mailed. By choosing to have your license and tags emailed, you will receive them sooner and avoid the possibility of having them get lost in the mail. Once you receive the email, you can print your license and tags and be ready for the season. To sign up call 1-866-933-2257 or sign into your online DECALS account at <http://decals.east.licensing.app/>. Click on Lifetime Delivery Preference under My Account and change your Current Selection to Send Tags Via Email.

Lifetime Licenses and Tags for Young Hunters

Lifetime licenses can be purchased only as a gift for children under 16. Young hunters who hold a lifetime hunting privilege and wish to receive their tags must first take the appropriate hunter safety training course and have it entered in their DECALS profile. To have the course added, please call the DEC call center at 1-866-933-2257 (M–F, 8AM–5PM). Young hunters should take the appropriate training course well in advance of the season to allow adequate time for their tags to be mailed. Tags cannot be obtained from a license-issuing agent.

When purchasing a lifetime license for a child, the purchaser must bring proof of the child's age (e.g., birth certificate or passport) and a copy of the parent's proof of residency.

**Remember to
Report Your
Game Harvest**



It's the law!

For more information see page 15.

General License Information

Deer Hunting Privileges and Tags

Resident and Non-Resident Hunter Licenses

- **Hunting or Junior Hunting (ages 12–15):** Hunters ages 12 and older will receive an Antlered Deer Tag and hunters ages 14 and older will receive an Antlered Deer Tag and Regular Season Bear Tag.
- **Muzzleloading Privilege:** Hunters will receive a Bow/Muzz Antlerless Deer Tag.
- **Junior bowhunting or bowhunting privilege:** Hunters will receive a Bow/Muzz Antlerless Deer Tag. Junior bowhunters ages 12–13 will receive a Bow/Muzz Antlerless Deer Tag and a Bear Tag. Junior bowhunters ages 14–15 will receive a Bow/Muzz Antlerless Deer Tag. Junior bowhunters may use the Bow/Muzz Antlerless Deer Tag during the regular season, with bowhunting equipment.

Residents and non-residents must purchase a hunting license to be eligible for bowhunting and muzzleloading privileges. **If you purchase both bowhunting and muzzleloading privileges, you will receive two Bow/Muzz Antlerless Deer Tags.** Both tags may be used in either season, with the appropriate implement.

Minimum Hunting Age

Minors under the age of 12 may not obtain a hunting license or hunt wildlife.

License Year

Licenses and permits are valid from Sept. 1 through Aug. 31.



Jordyn D. with the 11 point buck she harvested. Photo taken by father Jason D.

Stamps / Donations

Type	Age or Special Qualifier	Price
Habitat & Access Stamp Donations are used to create or improve fish and wildlife habitat and improve access to those resources for recreational or educational activities.	Any	\$5
Venison Donation Help feed the hungry by supporting NYS's venison donation program.	Any	\$1 or more
Federal Duck Stamp Available at most post offices and some sporting goods stores.	16+	\$25

Privileges: Hunt migratory waterfowl. It is not needed for gallinules, coot, crows, rails, woodcock, or snipe. All migratory game bird hunters, including junior hunters, must register with the Harvest Information Program by calling toll free 1-866-933-2257 or dec.ny.gov/regulatory/permits-licenses/sporting-and-use/sporting/hunting-license/harvest-information-program.

Qualifications: Validated by holder's signature on the face of the stamp. Hunter must also possess a current-year NYS hunting license.

License Responsibilities

- A license or tag is not transferable and may be used only by the person to whom it was issued (except for Deer Management Permits [DMPs]—see pages 30–31).
- It is illegal to possess another person's license while hunting, except that a parent or guardian may carry the electronic license and tags of a junior hunter within their HuntFishNY app when e-tagging.
- A license to hunt, trap, or fish does not give the holder any right to go on private property without permission of the landowner.
- You can legally purchase and possess only one hunting license per year.
- Your license must be carried on your person when hunting or trapping.
- It is illegal to refuse to show your license on demand to a law enforcement officer or the land owner, lessee, or person in control of the lands (or their designees) while on their property.
- Make sure that your license has all the correct information. Carefully check it immediately after receipt. If you discover an error, have it corrected as soon as possible.
- Sign the front of your license/privilege page, if using paper tags.

Valid Proof of Licenses and Carcass Tags

You must carry valid proof of your license(s), privilege(s), permit(s), and all applicable tags. Valid proof of license(s), privilege(s), permit(s) includes: print out on 8.5 inches x 11 inches paper, digital copy, or electronic license in HuntFishNY app. Carcass Tags can be printed on 8.5 inches x 11 inches paper, or be electronic carcass tags in the HuntFishNY app. If you use paper tags, you must fill them out immediately upon harvest and report your harvest within 48 hours. If you use electronic tags in the HuntFishNY app, you must report your take immediately upon harvest. **NOTE:** The HuntFishNY app will work without internet service and will save your harvest reports as long as you have signed into the app before leaving service.

Backtags

Backtags are no longer required while hunting anywhere in New York State.

Hunting License Exceptions

All residents must have a valid hunting license in their possession except:

- Resident owners primarily engaged in farming, lessees, and members of their immediate families do not need a hunting license when hunting small game on farmlands they are occupying and cultivating.
- Individuals enrolled with a recognized Indian Nation wholly or partly in New York State do not need a hunting license while on or off reservation lands.

Indigenous Nations Licenses/Patriot Licenses

Free hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses are available to members of the Shinnecock and Unkechaug Nations and members of the Six Nations residing on reservations in the state. They must be obtained from a Nation's administrators or by calling DEC headquarters in Albany at 518-402-8843.

Free hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses are also available to NYS residents who have the appropriate hunter education and are active service members of the NYS Guard, U.S. Reserve Forces, or certain members of the U.S. Armed Forces. For more detailed information, visit our website or call 518-402-8843.

Lost Licenses

License holders can replace licenses and tags for free by accessing their sporting license account, online at decals.east.licensing.app, and print their licenses and tags. As an alternative, license holders can also use the HuntFishNY mobile app to show proof of their licenses (and tags). Additionally, a lost license may be replaced at

any license-issuing agent (LIA) at a cost of \$5 for a license sheet. Big game carcass tag sets or turkey carcass tag sets may be replaced at a cost of \$10. Licenses and tags replaced at a LIA or over the phone (1-866-933-2257) may be subject to the applicable printing/mailling fee.

Special Licenses for Hunters with Disabilities

Non-Ambulatory Hunter Permit

This permit allows qualified hunters to shoot a firearm from a motorized vehicle (including an off-road vehicle) that has the motor turned off and is completely off the highway right-of-way.

To qualify for a Non-Ambulatory Hunter Permit, a person must be physically unable to move about except with the use of a mechanized aid such as a wheelchair.

Modified Longbow Authorization

This authorization allows qualified people to hunt big or small game with a legal bow that is equipped with a device to hold it in a drawn and cocked position. It does not allow for the use of a crossbow.

To qualify for a Modified Longbow Authorization, a person must be permanently physically unable to draw and hold a legal bow.

Modified Crossbow Permit

This permit allows qualified people to hunt big or small game during bowhunting season with a crossbow that has been specifically modified with a device that only allows it to be discharged (fired) by means of a breath tube.

To qualify for a Modified Crossbow Permit, a person must be permanently physically unable to hold or draw a legal bow or to fire a legal bow that has been modified to hold and release the string.

If a person can pull the trigger on a gun, they will not qualify for a Modified Crossbow Permit.



David M. and Winston, his NYS licensed leashed tracking dog, with a deer they recovered for a hunter. Several volunteer organizations provide licensed dog handlers to assist with game recovery. See <https://deersearch.org>, <https://www.deersearchcny.com>, or <https://www.unitedbloodtrackers.org>



Trinity O. after her successful youth hunt in Steuben County.

Report Moose Sightings

DEC and its research partners are working to understand the status of the moose population. You can help us by reporting moose sightings at dec.ny.gov/nature/animals-fish-plants/moose.



Photo by John Clifford



The Wild Harvest Table is a celebration of the culinary bounty represented by wild game and fish in New York State.

Visit the website for game and fish recipes, nutrition information, and preparation techniques.

www.WildHarvestTable.com

E-Licenses, E-Tags, & Paper Tags



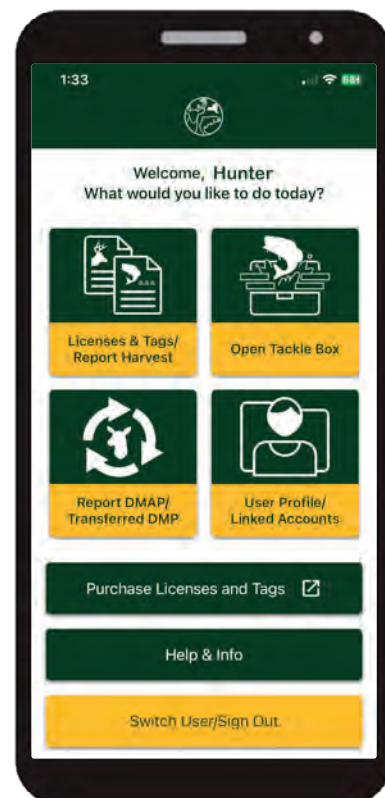
Rachelle L. with a turkey from Rensselaer County.

E-Licenses, E-Tags, & Paper Tags

An e-license is the electronic record of your hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses in DEC's HuntFishNY mobile app. E-tags are electronic records of your carcass tags for deer, bear, and turkey in the HuntFishNY app. Once you are signed into the app, tap on "Licenses & Tags/ Report Harvest" to view your licenses and tags and to report harvests.

Using E-Licenses & E-Tags:

- The HuntFishNY app works without cell service. Sign in to the app while you have service and your licenses and tags will display even if you lose service. You can also report an e-tag without service, and it will be uploaded as soon as you regain service.
- Hunters using e-tags who harvest a deer, bear, or turkey must immediately electronically "tag" the animal by reporting the harvest in the app.
- E-tag users do not need to attach anything to the carcass while they remain in possession of the carcass, including when in their vehicle and at their home. Before transferring possession or leaving the carcass at a camp or a processor, the hunter must make and attach a tag that includes their name, DEC ID number, and 8-digit reporting confirmation number (available in the app). See page 22 for sample "Change of Possession Carcass tags" which can be used. They can also print, fill out, and attach a carcass tag from their DECALS account.



Download the HuntFishNY app from the Apple App Store or Google Play store.

E-Tag → Take it → Report it → Tag it if you Leave it
Paper Tag → Take it → Tag it → Report it



Using Paper Tags:

- Get your paper tag when purchasing from a license-issuing agent, print from your email receipt or print from your online profile.
- Upon harvesting a deer, bear, or turkey, complete the tag with your harvest information and sign it.
- Place the tag in a waterproof holder and attach it to the animal so the tag is visible. Hunters are responsible for protecting their paper tag so it remains intact and legible. The tag does not need to be attached until you're home or at your camp or vehicle.
- Paper-tag users must report within 48 hours of taking a deer, bear, or turkey.

How to Properly Fill Out Your Carcass Tag and Report Your Harvest

Antlered Deer #1
Tag: 26-03-00539277
License Year 2026/2027

Kill info
 Date 11 / 27 / 26
 County Greene
 Town Cairo
 WMU 4H

Signature Cornelius Raberdasher

Antlered Deer #1
 DOB: 05/31/1982
 ID: 100409008941
 Issued: 08/06/26 11:50AM

Sex ☒ M ☐ F
 Antler Pts: L 3 R 3
☐ Bowhunting
☐ Muzzleloading
☒ Regular
☐ Youth

Affirmed under penalty of perjury pursuant to PL 210.45

It's as Easy as 1 - 2 - 3!

- 1 Fill in the date, location, biological, and season information on your tag.
- 2 Sign your tag.
- 3 Report your harvest! See details below.

Camp with us!



at one of the 51
 DEC Campgrounds in the
 Adirondack & Catskill
 Forest Preserve
 of New York State

newyorkstateparks.reserveamerica.com

It is against the law to improperly or incompletely fill out your carcass tag, e-tag, or harvest report.

If you SEE something, SAY something

Report Poachers and Polluters

Call an Environmental
 Conservation Officer at
 1-844-DEC-ECOS



Reporting Your Game Harvest

- Deer, Bear, and Turkey harvests must be reported.
- The time period for reporting has been reduced to 48 hours (no longer 7 days) for those using paper carcass tags. E-tag users must report their harvest immediately in the HuntFishNY app.
- You can report your harvest by phone (1 866-426-3778), online, or through our HuntFishNY mobile app (see page 22 for details).
- Reporting online (dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/report-your-harvest) and through the mobile app is simple, fast, and convenient!

Information You Will Need When Reporting

12 DIGIT TAG #

Antlered Deer #1
Tag: 26-03-00539277
License Year 2026/2027

Kill info
 Date 11 / 27 / 26
 County Greene
 Town Cairo
 WMU 4H

Signature Cornelius Raberdasher

Antlered Deer #1
 DOB: 05/31/1982
 ID: 100409008941
 Issued: 08/06/26 11:50AM

Sex ☒ M ☐ F
 Antler Pts: L 3 R 3
☐ Bowhunting
☐ Muzzleloading
☒ Regular
☐ Youth

Affirmed under penalty of perjury pursuant to PL 210.45

HARVEST REPORT LOG

Tag	Tag Number	Date of Kill	Reported?
Bear	26-02-02345060		☐
Antlered Deer	26-03-00539277	<u>11/27/2026</u>	☒
Antlerless Deer	26-51-07456062		☐
Fall Turkey	26-14-06234063		☐
Spring Turkey 1	26-15-43671064		☐
Spring Turkey 2	26-16-86745065		☐

CORRECT TAG TYPE

- For Spring Turkey:
 - » Spur length (none, less than 1/2", 1/2" or longer)
 - » Beard length (less than 3", 3" or greater but less than 7 1/2", or 7 1/2" or longer).
 - » Estimated weight
- For Fall Turkey:
 - » Remember to save a leg. We will request it to determine age and sex.

For Black Bear >> Remember to save the bear's skull. DEC will request a tooth to determine the bear's age.

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 and reach more active
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- ☒ Build customer awareness of your business and brand.
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- ☒ Increase sales and demand.

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General Hunting Regulations

The following are general hunting regulations. Specific regulations for various game species are in the Small Game, Big Game, and Trapping sections of this booklet.

Definitions

Air gun—a firearm that uses a spring or compressed air (not gunpowder) to propel a single projectile that is .17 caliber or larger and produces a muzzle velocity of at least 600 feet per second. You may use a smooth or rifled bore.

Bow—includes long (stick), compound, or recurve bow.

Crossbow—consists of a bow and string, either compound or recurve, mounted upon a stock with a trigger that holds the string and limbs under tension until released. The trigger unit of such crossbow must have a working safety. The minimum peak draw weight of such crossbow shall be one hundred pounds. Optical sights are allowed on crossbows.

Dwelling—a permanent place where people live and sleep. Excluded are temporary residential units including camping trailers, motor homes, or other portable shelters. Also excluded are abandoned dwellings, detached garages, tree houses, "playscapes," decks, pool areas, storage sheds, and out-buildings — even when/if they are temporarily occupied. A permanent camp or cabin may qualify as a dwelling house.

Firearm—all guns, including handguns, rifles, shotguns, muzzleloaders, BB, and pellet guns.

Handgun—is any pistol or revolver intended to be aimed and fired with one hand and having a barrel length not exceeding 16 inches. Possession of handguns in New York State requires a NYS Pistol Permit. New York State does not recognize permits issued by other states.

Muzzleloading firearm—is a firearm loaded through the muzzle, shooting a single projectile and having a minimum bore of .44 inches. Scopes or fiber-optic sights may be used at any time. You must possess a New York State Pistol Permit to hunt with a muzzleloading pistol.

Rifle—is a firearm with a barrel length of 16 inches or more with rifling in the barrel that uses metallic cartridges.

Shotgun—is a firearm with a barrel length of 18 inches or more that uses shells that are non-metallic except for the base.

Motor vehicle—means every vehicle or device operated by any power other than muscle power including but not limited to automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, tractors, trailers, motorboats, snowmobiles, and all-terrain vehicles, whether operated on or off public highways.

Public highway—means any road maintained by a state, county, or town. A private road is one maintained by a person or corporation.

To hunt—means to pursue, shoot, kill, or capture (other than trap) wildlife and includes all lesser acts that disturb or worry wildlife, whether or not they result in taking. Hunting also includes all acts to assist another person in taking wildlife.

To take—means to pursue, shoot, hunt, kill, capture, trap, snare, or net wildlife and game—and all lesser acts that disturb or worry wildlife—or to place or use any net or other device commonly used to take wildlife.

To trap—means to take, kill, or capture wildlife with traps, deadfalls, and other devices commonly used to take wildlife, including the shooting or killing of lawfully trapped animals. It also includes all related activities such as placing, setting, staking, or checking traps, or assisting another person with these activities.

Manner of Taking

It is illegal to take or hunt wildlife:

- While in or on a motor vehicle (except by special permit—see page 13)
- With the aid of a vehicle's lights
- On or from any public road
- With any firearm equipped with a silencer
- With any firearm which continues to fire as long as the trigger is held back (an automatic firearm)
- With any semiautomatic firearm with a capacity to hold more than 6 rounds, except:
 1. Firearms using .22 or .17 caliber rimfire ammunition, or
 2. Firearms altered to reduce their capacity to no more than 6 shells at one time in the magazine and chamber combined, or
 3. Autoloading pistols with a barrel length of less than 8 inches
- With a spear (except for frogs—see page 46)
- With a bow equipped with any mechanical device which is attached to the bow (other than the bowstring) for drawing, holding, or releasing the bowstring except for a person with a physical disability in possession of a Modified Longbow Authorization (compound bows are legal)
- With a spear gun or modified crossbow except for a person with a physical disability in possession of a Modified Crossbow Permit
- With an arrow with an explosive head or shaft
- With any device designed or intended to deliver drugs to an animal

Baiting—It is illegal to hunt with the aid of bait or over any baited area when hunting big game, upland game birds, turkey, or waterfowl.

Fish—Crossbows may not be used to take carp or any other fish.

Spotlighting

You may use lights to observe wildlife under the following conditions:

- You are not within 500 feet of a home or farm building, unless you have permission from the owner or lessee (when looking for deer or bear)
- While in or on a motor vehicle and operating a light and no person has a firearm, bow, or crossbow, or if:
 - » the implement is taken down, or
 - » the implement is securely fastened in a case, or
 - » the implement is locked in the trunk of the vehicle, or
 - » the implement is a handgun

For information on hunting furbearers at night, see page 60.

Possession of Firearms

During the open season for deer, it is illegal to:

- Possess shotgun shells loaded with slug or ball, unless holding a valid license (including carcass tags) or permit to take deer or bear, or
- Possess a rifle larger than a .22-caliber rimfire in areas where rifles are banned for taking deer. A rifle larger than .22-caliber rimfire

Donate \$5 to the Habitat & Access Stamp Program

This year's Habitat & Access Stamp features an Eastern Pondhawk (*Erythemis simplicicollis*). All funds from stamp donations are used for projects aimed at conserving fish and wildlife habitat and increasing access to publicly accessible lands for fish- and wildlife-related recreation.

To make your donation today, scan the QR code, visit your local license-issuing agent, or call 1-866-933-2257.



means a rifle chambered for a rimfire cartridge greater than .22-caliber or any centerfire rifle. Centerfire rifles less than .22-caliber and muzzleloading rifles are legal.

In Westchester County and on Long Island, it is illegal to use any rifle for hunting or to carry one afield.

In the Northern Zone, it is illegal to carry a rifle larger than .22 rimfire or a shotgun loaded with slug, ball, or buckshot afield if accompanied by a dog, except when coyote hunting.

Possession of handguns in New York requires a NYS Pistol Permit. New York does not recognize permits issued by other states.

New York State adopted legislation governing the purchase or transfer of ownership of semiautomatic rifles. Go to www.dec.ny.gov or <https://gunsafety.ny.gov/resources-hunters> for more information.

Transportation of Firearms

A person may not transport or possess a shotgun, rifle, or crossbow in or on a motor vehicle unless the firearm is unloaded in both chamber and magazine or the crossbow is taken down or unloaded (bolt removed and crossbow uncocked).

A muzzleloader is considered unloaded when the cap is off the nipple, the primer is removed, the primer powder is removed from the flintlock pan, or the battery is removed from an electric-fired muzzleloader.

A crossbow is considered unloaded when the arrow/bolt is removed and the crossbow is uncocked. While legally hunting migratory game birds, a loaded firearm may be possessed in a motorboat not under power or in a motorboat under power only while retrieving dead/crippled birds.

Whenever a gun is in a vehicle and an adult is not present, the gun must be locked in a plastic or metal hard-sided case or safe and be hidden from view. See <https://gunsafety.ny.gov/resources-gun-owners> for more details about gun transportation.

Discharge of Firearms, Crossbows, and Bows

It is illegal to discharge a firearm, crossbow, or bow:

- So that the load or arrow/bolt passes over any part of a public highway
- Within 500 feet for a firearm, 250 feet for a crossbow (500 feet for a crossbow in Suffolk and Westchester counties), or 150 feet for a bow of any school, playground, or an occupied factory or church
- Within 500 feet for a firearm, 250 feet for a crossbow (500 feet for a crossbow in Suffolk and Westchester counties), or 150 feet for a bow of a dwelling, farm building, or structure in occupation or use unless you own it, lease it, are an immediate member of the family, an employee, or have the owner's consent

Hunter Education

Hunter Education Program Requirements

All first-time hunters, bowhunters, and trappers must pass one or more courses before they can purchase a license. New York State offers both in-person courses and online options. For more information, visit: <https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/hunter-education/courses-certifications>

In-Person Hunter Education Program Courses

Free of charge – Hands on experience – Homework – Exam

In-person courses are taught by DEC trained and certified volunteer instructors and are offered throughout the year in all regions of the state. Homework must be completed in advance and brought to the class. Visit <https://decals.events.east.licensing.app/em/programs> for available in-person courses near you.

Online Hunter Education Program Courses

Has a fee – Take at your own pace – Question Modules – Exam

NY's online course options meet all the requirements to earn your hunter education, bowhunter education, or trapper education certificate. You must be a NYS resident to take the online courses.

Visit <https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/hunter-education/courses-certifications> to access online courses.

You may hunt waterfowl over water within 500 feet of a dwelling or public structure as long as neither are within 500 feet in the direction you are shooting.

Protected and Unprotected Wildlife

In New York State, nearly all species of wildlife are protected. Most species, including endangered species, songbirds, hawks, and owls, are fully protected and may not be taken. The few

unprotected species include porcupine, red squirrel, woodchuck, chipmunk, English sparrow, starling, rock pigeon, and monk parakeet. Unprotected species may be taken at any time without limit. However, a hunting license is required to hunt unprotected wildlife with a bow, crossbow, or firearm.

Game species may be taken only during their open seasons and as summarized in this guide. Persons taking wildlife on licensed shooting preserves must comply with regulations governing those shooting preserves.

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Regulations for Land Types

Places to Hunt in New York

DECinfo Locator is an interactive map that includes DEC lands with public hunting access and other outdoor recreation information. Go to dec.ny.gov/maps/interactive-maps/decinfo-locator.

For additional information about places to hunt in New York State, go to dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/places.

Private Lands

Always ASK the landowner for permission to hunt and trap on private land. Consider if it were your land and how you would like a visitor to act.

- Be courteous—ASK permission well in advance.
- ASK what is permitted. What species can be hunted? Are tree stands allowed?
- ASK if friends can join you.
- Exercise safety—always!
- Thank the landowner.

Many landowners use "ASK permission" stickers on their signs, which show the landowners' willingness to allow access to their lands. Stickers are available for free from your local Regional Wildlife Office (see page 6) or from DEC Central Office, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4754. For more information on hunting on private lands: dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/places#Hunting.

Remember: Damaging bark or cutting trees, branches, or plants is illegal without permission of the landowner.

ASK Permission

"ASK Permission" stickers, a brochure explaining the program, Landowner Permission forms, and information about fish and wildlife conservation are available for free from DEC Regional Wildlife Offices or by writing:

NYSDEC, 625 Broadway,
Albany, NY 12233-4754

OR online
at dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/places



Rights-of-way that cross private property, such as for power lines and railroads, are not public land. Trespassing on these areas without permission from the landowner is illegal.

FWMA Cooperative Areas

Through cooperative agreements under New York State's Fish and Wildlife Management Act (FWMA), Cooperative Hunting Areas provide access and management services to privately owned lands in order to increase public hunting opportunities. When using these areas, remember that you are a guest on private property. Littering and other abuses will only result in closure of many excellent hunting areas.

A Word About Liability

Whether or not the land is posted, New York State General Obligations Law protects landowners from liability for non-paying recreationists engaged in hunting, trapping, and fishing on their property. Because of this protection, recreational liability lawsuits against rural landowners are uncommon. This protection does not apply in cases of willful or malicious failure to guard or warn against dangers.

State Recreation Lands

For information on hunting and trapping opportunities and rules governing the use of State land, contact the regional DEC office for the county where you would like to hunt or trap (see page 6). DEC Wildlife staff can provide information on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and Cooperative Hunting Areas. DEC Forestry staff and Forest Rangers can provide details on State Forest lands and Forest Preserve lands. In some instances, written permission or permits are required to use State lands. These are available from DEC regional offices during normal business hours. For more information on State land regulations, visit: dec.ny.gov/regulatory/regulations.

Motorized Access to State Lands

DEC has designated routes on State Forests, WMAs, Forest Preserve lands and conservation easement lands for motor vehicle use by people with a qualifying mobility disability. For a list of these opportunities, along with information on how to obtain a motorized access permit, visit: dec.ny.gov/places-to-go/accessible-recreation/mappwd.

Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)

The Division of Fish and Wildlife manages over 211,000 acres of WMAs. These areas are located throughout the state and contain many different types of habitat and wildlife. They are managed primarily for wildlife and wildlife-related public use.

WMAs have specific use regulations in addition to the general use regulations for State land, and some WMAs also have area-specific regulations. Hunting, trapping, and fishing are allowed, except as specifically restricted by posted notice.

On WMAs, it is unlawful to:

- Target shoot unless posted as an allowed activity
- Camp without written permission
- Travel off-road by use of motorcycles, motor scooters, mopeds, trail bikes, snowmobiles, or any other motorized vehicle, except as specifically allowed by a permit or posted notice
- Remove, cut, or willfully damage or destroy living vegetation of any kind
- Construct or place a permanent structure, blind, stand, or platform (including placement of nails or other hardware into trees)
- Leave any personal property when exiting the area, including trail cameras. Tree stands labeled with name and address or DEC ID number may be left overnight, but must be removed at the end of the hunting season
- Enter property posted with "No Trespassing" signs, except with written permission from DEC

For more information on WMAs, go to:

dec.ny.gov/places-to-go/wildlife-management-areas.

Lands and Forests

The Division of Lands and Forests manages nearly 5 million acres of land, located in almost every county of the state. From the remote locations of the Adirondack and Catskill mountains to the rolling hills of the western part of the state and the forested areas on Long Island, a wide range of hunting and trapping opportunities await the outdoor recreationist.

Forest Preserve Lands

Hunting and trapping are permitted in the Adirondack and Catskill forest preserves. State-owned lands located within these preserves are designated Forever Wild. All State land rules and camping requirements apply to the preserves, as well as additional rules specific to certain areas.

Need help? Call a Ranger 833-NYS-RANGERS (833-697-7264)

Call a Forest Ranger for assistance with search and rescue, wildfires, reporting violations on DEC lands, obtaining backcountry camping permits, and more.

For a list of Forest Rangers by county, visit dec.ny.gov/about/contact-us/forest-ranger-rosters or scan the QR code.

If you need immediate assistance, dial 911.



Contact the regional DEC office (see page 6) of the county where you would like to hunt or trap for more information. For further information on Forest Preserve lands, visit: dec.ny.gov/nature/forests-trees/forest-preserve.

Conservation Easement Lands

Conservation easements are tracts of privately owned property on which New York State has acquired certain public recreation rights. These rights are outlined in the easement document as well as in a recreation management plan jointly developed by DEC and the landowner. Public hunting and trapping are allowed on many conservation easements, but due to the individual nature of each property, members of the public wishing to hunt or trap on a given easement are strongly encouraged to contact a local DEC office (see page 6) in the county where the property is located. The office can provide details on how to properly access the property and the hunting and trapping regulations unique to the easement. For further information on DEC-held conservation easements, visit <https://dec.ny.gov/nature/open-space/conservation-easements>.

State Forest Lands

Outside the Adirondacks and Catskills, State Forest lands are the most common type of State lands. Many recreational activities can be pursued on these lands, including hunting and trapping.

In some instances, permits are required to camp overnight on undeveloped State Forest lands. Unless specifically prohibited, groups of less than 10 people may camp on State Forest lands (other than developed campgrounds and WMAs) for three consecutive nights without a permit. To camp for four consecutive nights or more, a permit must be obtained. Groups of 10 or more people need a permit to camp on such lands for one night. Further information may be obtained from DEC regional offices for the county you want to camp in (see page 6). For further information on State Forest lands, visit: dec.ny.gov/nature/forests-trees/state-forests.

Remember, it is unlawful to:

- Cut or injure trees (including construction of permanent tree stands, construction of natural blinds, clearing of shooting lanes around portable stands, placement of nails or other hardware into trees, or use of live trees as targets while sighting-in firearms).
- Store personal property, which includes:
 - » Trail cameras.
 - » Tree stands or hunting blinds that do not injure a tree and are properly marked or tagged with the owner's name and address or valid hunting license number may be placed during the appropriate hunting season, but must be removed at the end of the season.

- Erect, use, or maintain a building or structure.
- Deposit or leave any litter or rubbish.
- Operate a motor vehicle off maintained roads, except where specifically allowed.
- Operate an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) other than designated by posting or by permit.
- Camp without a permit when a permit is required.
- Possess a rifle, shotgun, or firearm in or upon buildings or grounds used for educational purposes (see Penal Law Section 265.01-a).

State Parks

Many State Parks offer waterfowl, small game, and big game hunting. For more information, contact the appropriate DEC regional office (see page 6) or visit the State Parks hunting website (<https://parks.ny.gov/activities/hunting>). Call each State Park to find out specific hunting and access regulations. For a listing of State Parks that allow deer hunting, visit dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/places/state-parks-that-allow-hunting.

Other Areas to Hunt

- **Finger Lakes National Forest (federal):** Located east of Seneca Lake in Schuyler and Seneca counties, small and big game hunting opportunities are available. Special hunting permits are not required.
- **Fort Drum Military Base (federal):** Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) 6H, located in Jefferson and Lewis counties includes over half of the 107,000-acre U.S. Army military installation, which is open to the public for hunting and trapping. See the Fort Drum Fish and Wildlife Management Program website for more information at fortdrum.isportsman.net.
- **Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge (federal):** Located at the north end of Cayuga Lake in Seneca County, this site offers small game and waterfowl hunting opportunities. This area is also open for deer hunting on a controlled basis during both the bowhunting and regular seasons. Permits are required. When deer management permit use is allowed, WMU 8J permits are valid. For current information on seasons, permits, maps, and regulations visit Montezuma's website at fws.gov/refuge/montezuma/visit-us/activities/hunting.
- **Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge (federal):** Located in Genesee and Orleans counties in western New York, this site offers small game and waterfowl hunting opportunities.

This area is also open for deer hunting during regular, bowhunting, muzzleloading, and early antlerless seasons. For further information, visit fws.gov/refuge/iroquois/visit-us/activities/hunting.

- **Long Island:** For a brochure on areas to hunt and for access permits, please email the DEC regional office at wildlife.r1@dec.ny.gov.
- **New York City Watershed Lands:** The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) allows trapping, as well as deer, bear, turkey, and small game hunting on specially designated city water supply lands. Hunters and trappers must possess the appropriate, valid New York State sporting license and a valid access permit to hunt or trap on designated hunting and trapping areas on City water supply lands. For more information, including maps, visit nyc.gov/site/dep/recreation/hunting-trapping.page.

DEC Campgrounds

DEC operates 52 public campgrounds in the Adirondack and Catskill parks. Hunting is not permitted within these campgrounds, although some campgrounds allow camping during big game season. Unloaded firearms are allowed on public campgrounds only during the spring and fall hunting seasons. A valid hunting license is needed. Firearms cannot be discharged in the campground or day-use facilities at any time. For more information on DEC's campgrounds, visit dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/camping/campgrounds-day-use-areas.

Campgrounds outside the forest preserves are operated by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (see State Parks).

For all campgrounds, reservations can be made by calling 1-800-456-CAMP or online at newyorkstateparks.reserveamerica.com.

Licensed Guides

For information on licensed professional guides in New York State, contact NYS DEC, 625 Broadway, NY 12233-4752; call 518-402-8985; or visit dec.ny.gov/regulatory/permits-licenses/fish-wildlife-plant/licensed-guide-program.

Use of ATVs and off-road vehicles (ORVs) is restricted on most State lands.

Indigenous Nations Territories

New York State shares borders with nine sovereign Indigenous Nations. Nation territories or lands, most often being reservations, are reserved for the exclusive use of recognized Nation citizens. While most Indigenous Nations do not permit non-Nation citizens to hunt, trap, or fish on their land, some have made exceptions for limited public hunting, trapping, and fishing access. New York State sporting license privileges do not extend to Indigenous Nations lands. Check with the respective Nation's office to determine the requirements for hunting, trapping, and fishing within the Nation's boundaries, and whether a special permit may be required if these activities are allowed. As a responsible New York State hunter, it is important to know where you are; any trespass onto Indigenous Nations land while hunting or trapping or afield is enforceable by community or tribal police, DEC Environmental Conservation Police Officers, and NYS Police.

Big Game Hunting



Keraghen K. with her successful harvest in Chautauqua County.

Hunting Hours

Big game hunting hours are 1/2-hour before sunrise to 1/2-hour after sunset (see page 80). Sunday hunting is allowed in all areas of New York State. Before hunting on State lands, confirm regulations for the area.

Fluorescent Orange and Fluorescent Pink Clothing Requirements

Any person hunting deer or bear with a firearm or a person who is accompanying someone hunting deer or bear with a firearm shall wear:

1. a minimum total of 250 square inches of solid fluorescent orange or fluorescent pink material worn above the waist and visible from all directions; or
2. a minimum total of 250 square inches of patterned fluorescent orange or fluorescent pink consisting of no less than 50% fluorescent orange or fluorescent pink worn above the waist and visible from all directions; or
3. a hat or cap with no less than 50% of the exterior consisting of solid fluorescent orange or fluorescent pink material and visible from all directions.

Legally Antlered Deer

A legally antlered deer must have at least one antler that is 3" or longer. Antlerless deer are those without antlers (does and fawns) and deer with antlers less than 3" long. Special regulations apply in the Antler Restriction areas. See page 26 for details.

Earn-a-2nd-Buck Tag

See page 29 for details.

Defining "Early" and "Late" Seasons for Deer and Bear

The term "early" muzzleloader or bowhunting season means before the regular season for that particular zone. "Late" means after the regular season for that zone.

Feeding and Baiting Prohibited

Intentional feeding or baiting of deer or bear is prohibited at all times of year. This includes use of mineral blocks or powders. Exempt activities include agricultural plantings, wildlife food plots, and cutting of trees or brush.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Import Restrictions

Hunters are prohibited from returning to New York State with whole carcasses or intact heads of deer, elk, moose, or caribou that they harvest anywhere outside of New York State. Only the deboned meat, cleaned skull cap, antlers with no flesh adhering, raw or processed cape or hide, cleaned teeth or lower jaw, and finished taxidermy products of CWD-susceptible animals may be brought into New York State.

Manner of Taking

Big game may be taken with centerfire rifles, shotguns, handguns, muzzleloading firearms, bows, and crossbows during appropriate seasons and in designated areas (see maps, pages 26 and 27). You may use decoys, calls, and attractant scents to hunt big game.

It is unlawful to:

- Take big game while the deer or bear is in water.
- Possess a firearm of any description when bowhunting or accompanying a person bowhunting during an archery-only season.
- Possess a firearm other than a muzzleloading firearm when hunting deer or bear or when accompanying a person hunting deer or bear during a muzzleloading season.
- Make, set, or use salt licks or other attractants, whether block, liquid, or powder that contain any amount of salt, upon lands inhabited by deer or bear at any time of year.

In addition to the general hunting regulations for manner of take listed on page 16, it is unlawful to hunt big game with:

- Dogs (except as authorized by leashed tracking dog license) or aircraft of any kind, including drones.
- The aid of a pre-established bait pile.
- A firearm or bow aided by any artificial light or a laser that projects a beam toward the target (use of illuminated reticle scopes, laser rangefinders, red dot scopes, or illuminated sight pins is allowed, provided no light is projected toward the target).
- An autoloading firearm with a capacity of more than 6 shells (one which requires that the trigger be pulled separately for each shot), except an autoloading pistol with a barrel length of less than 8 inches.
- A firearm using rimfire ammunition.
- A shotgun of less than 20 gauge or any shotgun loaded with shells other than those carrying a single projectile (rifling in the barrel or choke is allowed).
- A bow with a draw weight less than 35 lbs.
- Arrows with barbed broadheads; arrowheads less than 7/8 inches at the widest point or with less than 2 sharp cutting edges.
- Double-barreled muzzleloaders or percussion cap revolvers during the special muzzleloading seasons.
- An air gun or air bow.

Deer Management Focus Area

See dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/deer-bear/deer-management-focus-areas for information on the Deer Management Focus Area in Tompkins County. Expanded antlerless bag limits and a Jan. antlerless season in this area provide

Continued on page 22

Meat Processors

Meat processors help ensure that harvested deer and bears are fully utilized by hunters and their families, or by those in need through venison donation programs. Many processors also allow DEC to collect biological data from deer and bears brought to their shops, which provides critical information to support DEC's deer and bear management. To find a meat processor near you, please scan this QR code.



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Big Game Hunting

Continued from page 20

additional opportunities for hunters and help to reduce deer-related conflicts.

Long Island Opportunities

All hunting on State-managed land requires a DEC permit. The archery deer season runs from Oct. through Jan. There is a Jan. firearms season during which shotguns and muzzleloading firearms can be used. Firearms users must obtain a landowner's endorsement to hunt during this season, and may also need a town permit. For more information on Long Island hunting opportunities, visit dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/places/long-island.

Prohibited Sale of Deer or Bear Meat

It is unlawful to sell deer or bear meat. Other than meat, the parts (e.g., hides, skulls, claws, antlers, and taxidermy mounts or rugs) from legally taken and reported deer and bear may be sold. Bear gallbladders and bile shall not be possessed or sold unless a valid bear tag (original or copy) is attached.

Meat Unfit for Consumption

If a deer, bear, or turkey is found to be unfit for human consumption, a special permit may be issued that allows the hunter to take another deer, bear, or turkey, provided the season is still open. The entire animal, including the antlers, must be forfeited to get a permit. A permit will not be issued if the meat is unfit due to hunter neglect. Call a regional DEC Wildlife office or Law Enforcement office listed on page 6.

Tagging, Reporting, and Transporting

When using paper licenses/tags: Deer and bear are in legal possession only when tagged with the completed carcass tag, valid for that season. See page 28 for clear tag descriptions.

When using e-licenses/e-tags: Hunters must fill out the e-tag valid for that season immediately upon harvest. The HuntFishNY app will save the harvest information, even out of service, if you sign in before leaving service. If the deer or bear stays within your possession, there is no need to attach a carcass tag. If the deer or bear leaves your possession, you must attach

a carcass tag (can be of your own making) with your name, DEC ID #, and harvest report confirmation number. You can also cut out and use one of the Change of Possession Carcass Tags provided below.

Tagging and Reporting

After harvesting a deer or bear:

Paper tags

1. Ensure that you select the proper tag for the harvested deer or bear.
2. **Immediately** fill in all information and sign the carcass tag with ink that won't erase.
3. Write the date of kill on the reporting portion of your hunting license. This will help you when reporting a harvest.
4. Place the tag in a weatherproof case or bag.
5. **Attach the tag** to the carcass upon arrival at your camp, home, or vehicle. You do not need to attach the tag while it is being dragged or physically carried from the place of kill to a camp or point where transportation is available.
6. **Report your harvest** online, by phone, or HuntFishNY mobile app within 48 hours as required by law. See page 15 for details.

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Change of Possession Carcass Tags

E-tagged Animal	Confirmation # _____ DEC ID # _____ Hunter Name: _____ Town of Harvest: _____
E-tagged Animal	Confirmation # _____ DEC ID # _____ Hunter Name: _____ Town of Harvest: _____
E-tagged Animal	Confirmation # _____ DEC ID # _____ Hunter Name: _____ Town of Harvest: _____
E-tagged Animal	Confirmation # _____ DEC ID # _____ Hunter Name: _____ Town of Harvest: _____

E-tags

1. Ensure that you select the proper e-tag from your HuntFishNY app for the harvested deer or bear.
2. Answer the report questions as prompted in the app. Acknowledge that by submitting the report, you are confirming the information is all correct; this will act as "signing" your tag.
3. Be sure to upload your harvest report when you reconnect to the internet. You should be prompted to do this the next time you open the app while in service, but if not, hit the "sync" button at the top right of the app.
4. If the deer or bear leaves your possession, attach a carcass tag (can be of your own making) with your name, DEC ID #, and harvest report confirmation number to the animal.

NOTE: The HuntFishNY app will work without internet service and save your harvest reports as long as you have signed into the app before leaving service. When you get back into service, check to make sure the app syncs and uploads your harvest information.

After you have used your last deer tag, you may help others hunt deer. You must have your hunting license with you, and you may not shoot or attempt to shoot a deer.

Transporting

Deer and bear may be transported either inside or outside the vehicle.

- Harvested and tagged deer and bear may be transported either inside or outside a vehicle by the hunter who harvested the animal, or in their attendance. A hunter transporting their own e-tagged deer or bear (see page 22) does not need to attach a tag to the carcass.
- If someone other than the hunter who harvested the deer or bear is transporting the carcass, the hunter must attach an additional tag of their own making to the carcass that includes the names, addresses, and signatures of the hunter and person(s) transporting the carcass.
- All portions of deer or bear meat being transported must be individually labeled with the name, address, carcass tag DOC #, date that the portions were cut, and the signature of the hunter who harvested the deer or bear. Packaged or boxed portions of venison need only one label with "venison" on the outside of the box. If someone other than the hunter is transporting the portions, the hunter must attach an additional label to each portion that includes the names, addresses, and signatures of the hunter and person(s) transporting the portions.
- A deer carcass with head removed can be transported as described above, but evidence of the sex of the deer must be intact. The deer carcass tag must be affixed to the carcass, and the hunter must attach a tag of their own making that includes the name and address of the taxidermist where the head was sent. A hunter transporting their own e-tagged deer (see page 22) without the head does not need

to attach a carcass tag, but must attach a tag of their own making showing the name and address of the taxidermist where the head was sent.

- Heads of male deer may be transported to a taxidermist only if a tag of the hunter's own making is attached that includes the hunter's address, signature, carcass tag DOC #, number of points on each antler, and the name and address of the taxidermist where the head is being sent. The head of a doe with antlers that are at least 3 inches in length can also be removed for mounting and transported following these same procedures.
- Hunters who harvest a deer or bear in remote areas may wish to quarter and pack out the meat. This is lawful, but you must retain the carcass tag with the quartered meat. A hunter transporting quartered meat from their own e-tagged deer or bear (see page 22) does not need to attach a tag to the quartered meat.

Muzzleloader Hunting

Muzzleloading firearms may be used during the muzzleloader and regular seasons, and during the Jan. firearms season on Long Island.

- Hunters must possess a current muzzleloader privilege to participate during the muzzleloader seasons.
- The muzzleloader privilege is not needed for hunters to use a muzzleloading firearm during regular firearms seasons or Jan. firearms season on Long Island.
- Muzzleloaders may not be used in WMUs 3S, 4J, 8C, and may only be used in 1C during the Jan. firearms season.
- Bow/Muzz Antlerless Deer Tags may not be used during the regular seasons, except in WMUs 1C and 3S.
- Hunters participating in the muzzleloader season shall not have in their possession, or be accompanied by a person who has in their possession, a bow or firearm other than a legal muzzleloading firearm.

Bow and Crossbow Hunting

Bows and crossbows can be used during the bowhunting and regular seasons:

- Hunters must possess a current bowhunting or junior bowhunting privilege to participate during the bowhunting seasons.
- The bowhunting privilege is not required to hunt with a bow or crossbow during regular seasons, but hunters must possess proof of eligibility (either a valid bowhunter education certificate or prior bowhunting license).
- Bow/Muzz Antlerless Deer Tags may not be used during the regular seasons except by junior bowhunters or in WMUs 1C and 3S.
- In WMUs 4J and 8C, only bows or crossbows may be used to take deer during the regular and bowhunting seasons.
- Suffolk (WMU 1C) and Westchester (WMU 3S) counties have separate regular seasons restricted to bows or crossbows for taking deer.

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Barbed Broadheads

Barbed broadheads are illegal for hunting big game. A barbed broadhead is one in which the angle formed between the trailing or rear edge of any blade and the shaft is less than 90 degrees. A notch at the base of the blade extending no more than 2 millimeters from the shaft shall not be considered a barb. Broadheads with mechanical blades are legal if the blades freely swing into a nonbarbed position without external force beyond gravity upon withdrawal of the arrow.

Broadheads for Big Game		
Type	Legal	Illegal
Fixed Blade		
Mechanical Blade (shown in position of being withdrawn from an animal)		
	Blades pivot forward (no longer barbed)	Blades do not pivot (remain barbed)

Important Reasons to Know Why You Should be Harvesting Does



In 2026, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) adopted new regulations to encourage and incentivize hunters to harvest more antlerless deer.

Although adult female deer, fawns of either-sex, and adult bucks that have shed or have sublegal antlers are all considered antlerless deer, the new regulations are primarily meant to increase harvest of female deer (i.e., does), the demographic component of the deer population that contributes most to population growth.

Throughout the early 2000s, New York deer hunters consistently harvested more antlerless deer than adult bucks. However, since 2015 there have only been two years (2018 and 2020) where that was the case, and for most hunters, it wasn't because of lack of opportunity. During the most recent hunting seasons, only around 17% of active deer hunters harvested an antlerless deer, even though 60% of those hunters had an opportunity to do so. As a result, deer populations have been growing across much of New York State, in many areas to levels that are detrimental to deer, their habitat, and the public. This shift in hunter behavior is concerning, and DEC is reminding all hunters of some of the important reasons why they should be harvesting does.

Maintaining the Social License for Deer Hunting

Every New York hunter is familiar with the process and requirements for obtaining their annual hunting license and deer tags. However, there is also a social license for hunting that every deer hunter should be interested in maintaining. It is well understood that the non-hunting public is largely supportive of hunting when it is done for food or to manage wildlife populations, but they are largely unsupportive of hunting when it is done

simply for sport or trophy hunting. Therefore by harvesting does, hunters demonstrate to the non-hunting public that they care about managing deer populations, are utilizing deer for food, and that there is much more to deer hunting than just antlers or trophies. A supportive non-hunting public is more likely to embrace pro-hunting policies, open their lands to hunting, and recognize hunters as stewards of the deer population and the environment. Given declining trends in private land access and hunter numbers, maintaining the social license for deer hunting is more important than ever.

Improving Deer Health and Condition

Numerous studies have demonstrated that deer populations that are kept in balance with available habitat produce healthy deer that are in good physical condition. These deer tend to have larger antlers, heavier body weights, produce more fawns, and are more resilient to diseases such as Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) and Chronic Wasting Disease. Each year, DEC staff physically examine 12-14,000 hunter-harvested deer to determine each deer's age and physical condition. Unfortunately, DEC has documented declines in the antler sizes of bucks in several management areas, indicating that the deer populations in these areas have begun to exceed what the habitat can support. Additionally, New York has begun to experience repeat outbreaks of EHD, with the outbreaks being especially severe in areas with high deer populations. By harvesting does, hunters reduce competition between deer for available vegetation and resources, thereby increasing the nutrition and physical condition of each remaining deer. Additionally, by lowering deer densities, hunters help reduce the likelihood that diseases will spread rapidly and have severe impacts on the deer population.

Reducing Negative Deer Impacts

As deer populations increase, so too do negative deer-related impacts such as deer-vehicle collisions (DVCs), the spread of tick-borne diseases, crop damage, and reduced forest regeneration. A 2023 study found that DVCs are responsible for the deaths of about 440 Americans each year, and the number of DVCs in New York is increasing. According to Albany's Institute for Traffic Safety Management and Research, in 2024 there were 32,287 reported DVCs involving deer, compared to around 10,000 in 2005. There are also more New Yorkers being diagnosed with tick-borne diseases such as Lyme disease, and although increasing deer populations aren't the only cause they are certainly a contributor. Further, in 2025, DEC issued the highest number of deer damage permits since it first began tracking in 2018. Although the economic costs of deer damage to New York's farms, orchards, and communities are difficult to quantify, they are likely in the hundreds of millions of dollars annually. Lastly, forests in many parts of New York do not have sufficient regeneration to recover following a disturbance event and deer are a primary cause of that lack of regeneration. Reduced forest regeneration also negatively affects many other species of wildlife such as ground-nesting birds and small mammals. Therefore, by harvesting does and lowering deer densities, hunters help reduce negative deer impacts that affect everyone.

Following the near extirpation of white-tailed deer from New York in the early 1900s, hunters led the conservation and recovery efforts that allowed deer to recolonize and populations to rebound throughout the state. Now, hunters face a different conservation and deer management challenge, one that requires them to harvest more does. Under DEC's new regulations there has never been greater opportunity or incentive for hunters to do so, and the reasons to do so are clear. The question is, will hunters rise to the challenge and demonstrate that they are still stewards of New York's deer population?

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Department of
Environmental
Conservation



Cornell University

Additional details on page 43



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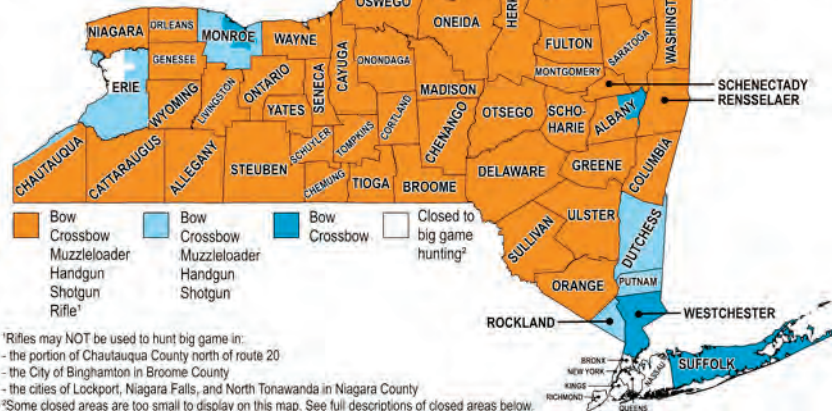
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Big Game Boundary Descriptions/Legal Implements

Legal Implements for the Early and Regular Deer and Bear Seasons

Discharge Setback Distances	
Firearms	500 feet
Crossbow	(Suffolk & Westchester County) 500 feet (All other Counties) 250 feet
Bow	150 feet



Complete descriptions of all WMUs are available on DEC's website at dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/regulations/wildlife-management-units.

Northern-Southern Zone Line

A line commencing at a point at the north shore of the Salmon River and its junction with Lake Ontario and extending easterly along the north shore of that river to the Village of Pulaski, thence southerly along Route 11 to its intersection with Route 49 in the Village of Central Square, thence easterly along Route 49 to its junction with Route 365 in the City of Rome, thence easterly along Route 365 to its junction with Route 28 in the Village of Trenton, thence easterly along Route 28 to its junction with Route 29 in the Village of Middleville, thence easterly along Route 29 to its junction with Route 4, thence northerly along Route 4 to its junction with Route 22, thence northerly and westerly along Route 22 to the eastern shore of South Bay on Lake Champlain in the Village of Whitehall, thence northerly along the eastern shore of South Bay to the New York-Vermont boundary.

Closed Areas

The following closed areas are specific portions of the state where the taking of deer and bear is prohibited by the Environmental Conservation Law. This section does not include areas covered by town laws, local ordinances, or posting by landowners.

Broome County

City of Binghamton

Erie County

Area around Buffalo: bounded by Tonawanda Creek from East Branch Niagara River to Rt. 78 to Greiner Rd. to Rt. 268 to Rt. 5 to Ransom Rd. to Rt. 33 to Rt. 78 to Rt. 20 to Rt. 20A to Lake Erie.

Herkimer County

Area along Big Moose Lake: bounded by Judson Rd. from Herkimer-Hamilton County line to Higby Rd. to Big Moose Rd. to Martin Rd. and along it to its eastern end and then to the lake shore and back (starting westerly) along the shore to Herkimer-Hamilton County line and along it to Judson Rd.

Herkimer and Hamilton Counties

Area bounded by Rt. 28 from Old Forge to Inlet and by South Shore Rd. from Inlet to Old Forge.

Nassau County

All of Nassau County.

New York City

All of the City.

Antler Point Restriction Program

A mandatory antler point restriction exists in WMUs 3A, 3C, 3H, 3J, 3K, 4G, 4O, 4P, 4R, 4S, and 4W in southeastern New York (see deer hunting season maps). This program will continue as DEC encourages hunters elsewhere to practice voluntary restraint. Over time, as more and more hunters in the broader region opt to pass on young bucks voluntarily, it may be appropriate to lift the restrictions.

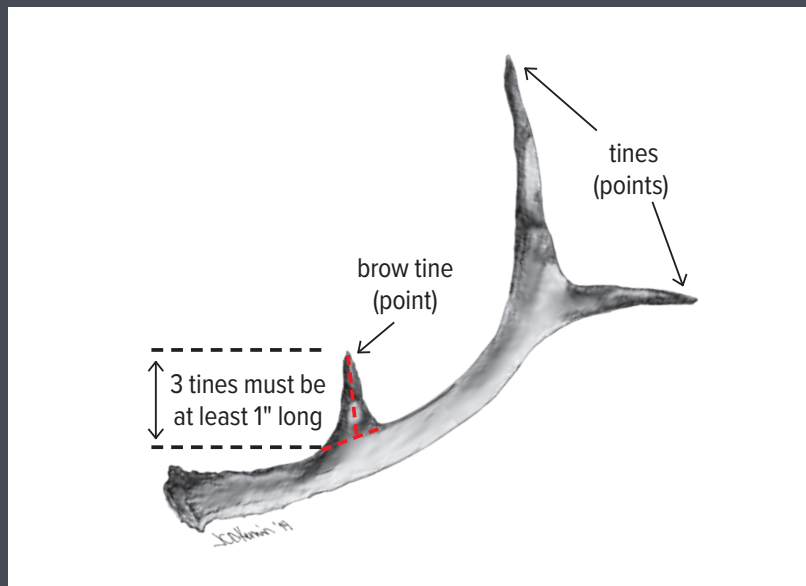
Antler Identification

Antler Point Restriction

- At least 1 antler with 3 or more points that are at least 1 inch long
- Applies to all public and private land and all seasons in WMUs that have antler point restrictions.
- Hunters aged 12–16 are exempt and may take any buck with antlers 3 inches or longer

Antlerless Deer

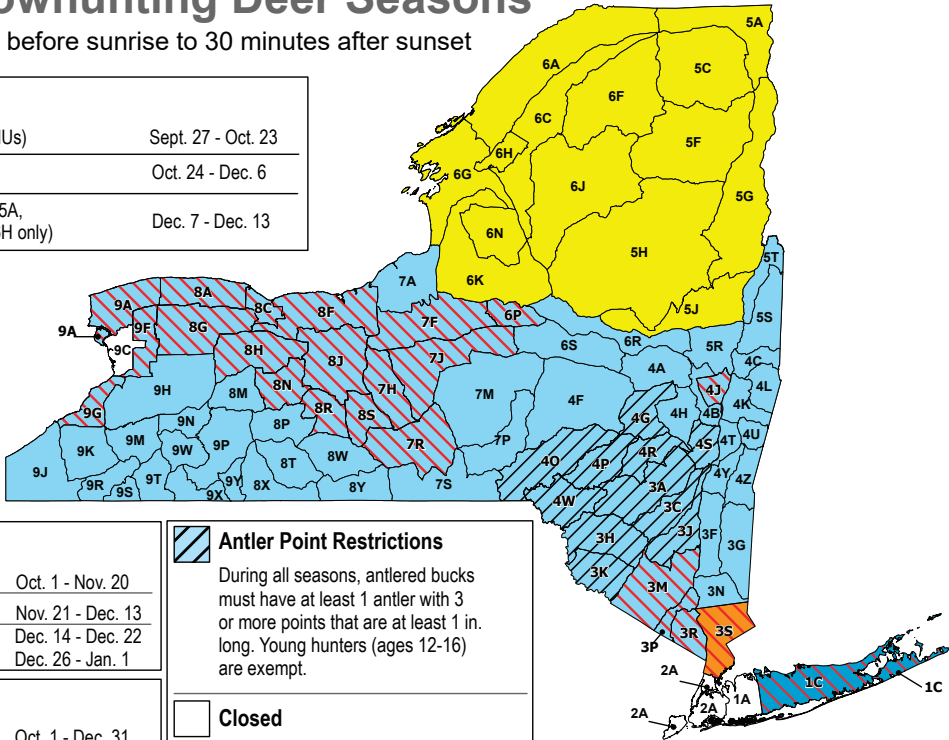
- Adult does, doe fawns, buck fawns (button bucks), adult bucks without antlers, or with antlers less than 3 inches long



Regular and Bowhunting Deer Seasons

Hunting Hours: 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset

 Northern Zone	
Early Bowhunting (all WMUs)	Sept. 27 - Oct. 23
Regular	Oct. 24 - Dec. 6
Late Bowhunting (WMUs 5A, 5G, 5J, 6A, 6C, 6G, and 6H only)	Dec. 7 - Dec. 13



 Southern Zone	
Early Bowhunting	Oct. 1 - Nov. 20
Regular	Nov. 21 - Dec. 13
Late Bowhunting	Dec. 14 - Dec. 22 Dec. 26 - Jan. 1

 Antler Point Restrictions	
During all seasons, antlered bucks must have at least 1 antler with 3 or more points that are at least 1 in. long. Young hunters (ages 12-16) are exempt.	
 Closed	

 Westchester County (3S)	
Regular - bowhunting only	Oct. 1 - Dec. 31

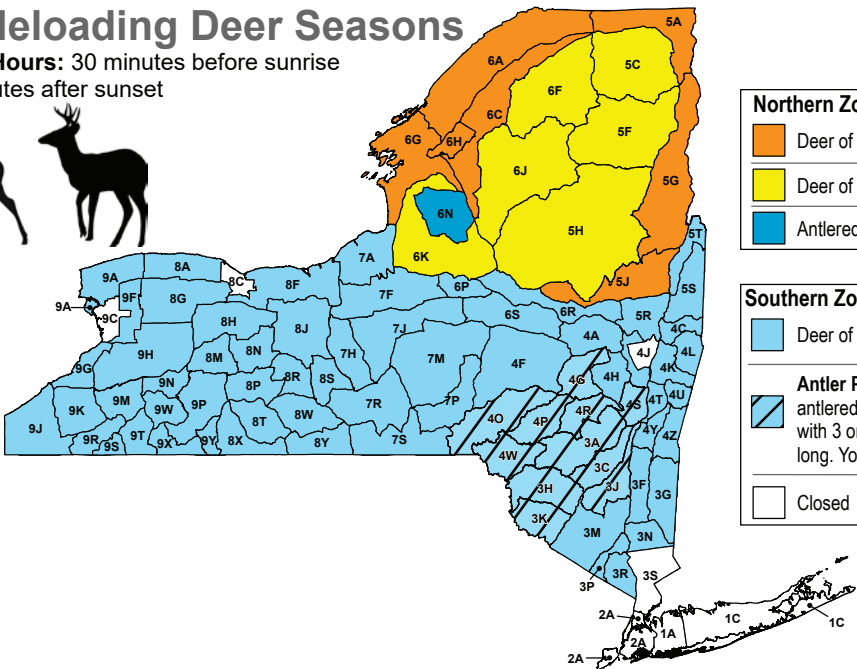
 Suffolk County (1C)	
Regular - bowhunting only	Oct. 1 - Jan. 31
Special Firearms (Permit Req.)	Jan. 3 - Jan. 31

 Early Antlerless Season	Sept. 12 - Sept. 20
Eligible Tags: DMP and DMAP Open Areas (bow-only): 1C, 3S, 4J, 8C Open Areas (firearms & bows): 3M, 3P, 3R, 6P, 7F, 7H, 7J, 7R, 8A, 8F, 8G, 8H, 8J, 8N, 8R, 8S, 9A, 9F, 9G	

Youth Firearms
Season Dates
Oct. 10 - 12
See Page 45 for Details

Muzzleloading Deer Seasons

Hunting Hours: 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset



Northern Zone	
 Deer of Either Sex	Oct. 17 - Oct. 23 Dec. 7 - Dec. 13
 Deer of Either Sex	Oct. 17 - Oct. 23
 Antlered Deer Only	Oct. 17 - Oct. 23

Southern Zone	
 Deer of Either Sex	Dec. 14 - Dec. 22 Dec. 26 - Jan. 1
 Antler Point Restrictions: during all seasons, antlered bucks must have at least 1 antler with 3 or more points that are at least 1 inch long. Young hunters (ages 12-16) are exempt.	
 Closed	

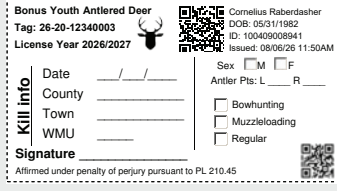
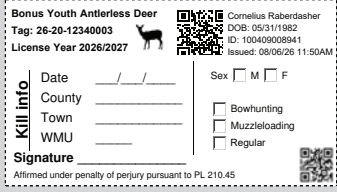
Deer Tag Descriptions

For all season dates, see page 27. See page 12 for privilege information.

Tag Name	Tag Can Be Used In	Tag Is Valid For
Antlered Deer Tag Only you may hunt with this tag. This tag cannot be transferred to another hunter.	Regular Season - Northern Zone - Southern Zone Westchester County - Regular (bowhunting only) Suffolk County - Regular (bowhunting only) - Special Firearms (special permit, see page 20) Bowhunting Season (privilege required) - Northern Zone - Southern Zone Muzzleloading Season (privilege required) - Northern Zone (check open areas and dates on map on page 27) - Southern Zone Youth Deer Season	Antlered Deer Only Except: May be used for antlered or antlerless deer as follows: - In Westchester County (WMU 3S) - In Suffolk County (WMU 1C) - In areas restricted to bowhunting only (WMUs 4J and 8C) - In late seasons (with bowhunting or muzzleloading privilege) - By Junior Hunters during the Youth Deer Hunt IF you have a non-ambulatory permit. 
Bow/Muzz Antlerless Deer Tag Only you may hunt with this tag. This tag cannot be transferred to another hunter.	Bowhunting Season (privilege required) - Northern Zone - Southern Zone Muzzleloading Season (privilege required) - Northern Zone (check open areas and dates on map, page 27) - Southern Zone Westchester County - Regular (bowhunting only) Suffolk County - Regular (bowhunting only) - Special Firearms (special permit; see page 20) Not valid during the Northern or Southern Zone Regular Seasons or Youth Hunt except as specified in right-hand column.	Antlerless Deer Only Bowhunting or Muzzleloading seasons only (including the regular season in Westchester County and the regular and special firearms seasons in Suffolk County), corresponding to the privileges purchased. Except: - May not be used during muzzleloading seasons in certain Northern Zone WMUs that are Antlered Deer-Only areas (see map page 27). - May be used by junior Bowhunters during the Bowhunting and Regular Seasons. 
Deer Management Permit Antlerless Deer Tag This is the only tag that can be transferred to another hunter (see page 31 for how to transfer a DMP carcass tag).	Any Open Deer Season	Antlerless Deer Only Valid for the WMU specified and printed on the Deer Management Permit (DMP) Antlerless Deer Tag. See page 30. 

Bonus Youth Deer Tags

Youth hunters (12–15 years old) who harvest and report a deer of either sex using their Antlered Deer Tag during the Youth Firearms Big Game Hunt and who do not possess a Deer Management Permit, will receive a Bonus Youth Deer Tag. If the Antlered Deer Tag is used for an antlered deer, the youth hunter will receive a Bonus Youth Antlerless Deer Tag. If the Antlered Deer Tag is used for an antlerless deer, the youth hunter will receive a Bonus Youth Antlered Deer Tag, and if the antlerless harvest was their first of the season, the youth hunter will also be eligible to receive their second Antlered Deer Tag (see page 29).

Tag Name	Tag Can Be Used In	Tag Is Valid For
Bonus Youth Antlered Deer Tag Only hunters who were eligible to participate in the Youth Firearms Big Game Hunt may hunt with this tag. This tag cannot be transferred to another hunter.	All seasons and areas that an Antlered Deer Tag can be used in.	Antlered Deer Only Except: May be used for antlered or antlerless deer as follows: - In Westchester County (WMU 3S) - In Suffolk County (WMU 1C) - In areas restricted to bowhunting only (WMUs 4J and 8C) - In late seasons (with bowhunting or muzzleloading privilege) 
Bonus Youth Antlerless Deer Tag Only hunters who were eligible to participate in the Youth Firearms Big Game Hunt may hunt with this tag. This tag cannot be transferred to another hunter.	All seasons and areas that an Antlered Deer Tag can be used in.	Antlerless Deer Only 

Earn-a-2nd-Buck Requirements

Hunters who harvest and report an antlerless deer on any valid antlerless deer tag will be eligible to receive a second Antlered Deer Tag. Both Antlered Deer Tags may be used during any season (with appropriate privileges) except the September antlerless season, and both may be used during the same season.

The second Antlered Deer Tag will be automatically added to the hunter's DECALS account and emailed to them if there is a valid email associated with their profile. E-tag users will see the second Antlered Deer Tag in the Hunt-FishNY mobile app under "Licenses & Tags/Report Harvest". Paper tag users will be able to print the tag from their email receipt, print from their online DECALS profile, or obtain their second Antlered Deer Tag at a regional DEC office (see page 6 — call the wildlife office number to schedule an appointment). Paper tag users must have the second Antlered Deer Tag in their possession before hunting for and harvesting a second antlered deer.



Photo courtesy of Jeb McConnell

Validation of Antlerless Harvest:

Hunters who receive a second Antlered Deer Tag may be contacted by DEC to provide proof of their harvested antlerless deer. Valid forms of proof include one of the following:

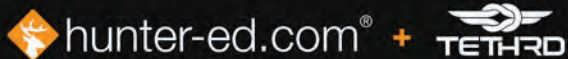
1. A digital photograph of the harvested deer, or
2. The head or skull from the harvested deer.

Either form of proof must clearly show that the deer was antlerless, be retained for seven days after the date of harvest, and be provided to

DEC upon request. If the harvested antlerless deer was brought to a processor and a photo was not taken, the hunter must provide the processor's information to DEC upon request.

If the hunter harvests additional antlerless deer after receiving their second Antlered Deer Tag, they do not need to retain proofs of their second and subsequent antlerless deer harvests.

See "Antlerless Deer Hunting Q & A" at <https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting> for more information.



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Deer Management Permits (DMPs)

Hunters possessing a DMP may take one antlerless deer per permit in addition to any deer that may be taken with a regular hunting license or bowhunting and muzzleloading privileges.

- DMPs may not be used for legally antlered deer (at least one antler 3 inches or longer).
- DMPs may be used in any open season only in the WMU they are issued for.
- Hunters may transfer or receive DMPs from other hunters (see page 31).

Applying for a DMP

- **DMP Application Deadline: WMUs with limited DMPs – Close of business on October 1, 2026. WMUs with unlimited/bonus DMPs – Anytime**
- You may apply for DMPs at all license-issuing outlets, by phone, or online beginning on Aug. 3, 2026.
- DMPs are available to all hunters age 12 years or older who purchase or possess a regular hunting license (12 years old for Junior Bowhunting license holders).
- There is a \$10 nonrefundable application fee for all applicants. The fee is waived for holders of Lifetime Licenses purchased prior to Oct. 1, 2009, and Junior Hunters and Junior Bowhunters.
- **Know your WMUs before you apply.** If you are unsure of the WMUs you hunt in, see the WMU maps on pages 70–77 of this guide or visit dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/regulations/wildlife-management-units for written boundary descriptions. You may also call the DMP Hotline for additional information at 1-866-472-4332.
- You may apply for up to four DMPs, two in WMUs with limited DMPs and two in WMUs with unlimited/bonus DMPs. Applications can be for DMPs in the same WMU or different WMUs.

- **Disabled veterans** with a service-connected disability rated at 40% or greater (who are residents of New York State) will receive preference on DMPs. You must provide a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs showing a 40% or greater service-connected disability. Once the disability is confirmed and entered, it will stay in your customer profile.
- **Landowners: It is illegal for more than one person per 50-plus-acre tax map ID to apply as a landowner.** If you own 50 or more contiguous acres of land within the WMU you will be hunting in, you will receive preference on DMP selection. Annually, you must bring your tax map identification number and SWIS code (found on your tax bill) with you when you apply. Be sure to tell the license-issuing agent prior to applying that you are a landowner. Lessees do not qualify as landowners.
 - » **Corporate ownership: It is illegal for more than one person to apply as a corporate landowner no matter how many 50-acre parcels are owned.** The corporation must submit an original letter or certified copy of a resolution, dated in the current year, designating one individual and must include the tax map ID and SWIS code information.
 - » **Group ownership: It is illegal for more than one person per 50-plus-acre tax map ID to apply as a landowner,** regardless of how many co-owners. Additional 50-plus-acre parcels in the same WMU require separate tax IDs.
- **Preference points:**
 - » Preference points increase your chances of selection for a DMP in WMUs with limited DMPs, but do not guarantee DMP selection. Preference points are not used or received when applying for DMPs in WMUs with unlimited/bonus DMPs.
 - » Preference points are won and lost on first permit selection only.

Chances of DMP Selection

Your chances of selection for DMPs by WMU are available online at <https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/deer-bear/antlerless-deer-hunting>, posted at all license-issuing outlets or by calling our Deer Management Permit (DMP) hotline at 1-866-472-4332. Chances of DMP selection remain the same throughout the entire DMP application period.

- » If you receive a DMP in your first choice WMU, all available preference points will be used.
- » If you do not receive a DMP in your first choice WMU, you will receive a preference point for the following year.
- » Any preference points contained in your file are automatically applied to your first-choice WMU selection, even if preference points are not required for that unit.
- » If you do not receive your first choice, the points are applied to your second choice, but will remain in your file for the following year, regardless of your second-choice selection results.
- » Qualifying landowners and disabled veterans will receive their first choice DMP in all open WMUs.
- » Preference points are not WMU specific. If you earned a preference point by being denied a DMP in a WMU with limited DMPs, you can use that preference point in a subsequent year when applying for a DMP in a different WMU with limited DMPs.

DMP Selection Order

During the instant issuance process for WMUs with limited DMPs, an applicant's chances of



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selection are determined by an applicant's category. The categories, in priority order, are as follows:

1. Landowners (50 or more acres of land within a WMU) and Disabled Veterans (40% or more service-related disability). All applicants in this category will receive their first-choice DMP.
2. NYS Residents and Non-residents with 3 preference points
3. NYS Residents with 1–2 preference points
4. NYS Residents without preference points
5. Non-residents with 1–2 preference points
6. Non-residents without preference points

Additional DMP Opportunities

Unlimited/Bonus DMPs: If you fill and report a DMP in a WMU with unlimited/bonus DMPs, you will receive another DMP for that WMU. Bonus DMPs will be automatically added to your license holdings. If you have an email address in your DECALS profile, you will be sent a confirmation email with the Bonus DMP attached. Additionally, Bonus DMPs can be printed at home from your online account, or you can obtain the Bonus DMP from regional DEC staff at pre-determined locations. For complete information, visit our website <https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/deer-bear/antlerless-deer-hunting> or call a DEC Regional Wildlife office to schedule an appointment as follows:

Region 1	1-631-444-0310
Region 3	1-845-256-3098
Region 4	1-518-357-2355
Region 6	1-315-866-6330
Region 7	1-607-218-3853
Region 8	1-585-226-5380
Region 9	1-716-851-7010

Leftover DMPs: If there are still DMPs remaining for WMUs with limited DMPs after the initial instant-issuance process period closes on October 1 and the back-end correction selections have occurred, the remaining DMPs may be available on a first come, first served basis, beginning on or around Nov. 1. These DMPs are only available in person at license-issuing agents. Leftover DMPs will not be available by phone or online. WMUs with DMPs available will be announced on DEC's website (<https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/deer-bear/antlerless-deer-hunting#additional>). If you already applied for DMPs during the initial application period, there is no additional application fee. If you are applying for the first time this hunting season, you will have to pay a \$10 application fee. The fee is waived for Resident and Non-Resident Junior Hunters and Junior Bowhunters, and for Lifetime License holders who purchased prior to Oct. 1, 2009. You can receive up to two DMPs during the first come, first served application period in addition to any you may have received during the initial application period.

Deer Management Assistance Program

The Deer Management Assistance Program allows landowners and resource managers to implement site-specific deer management on

their lands. DEC issues a permit and determined number of antlerless deer tags for use on the property during open deer hunting seasons. Hunters are expected to report their harvest. For more information on the program, refer to <https://dec.ny.gov/nature/animals-fish-plants/white-tailed-deer/deer-management-conflict-avoidance/management-assistance-program>.

How to Transfer a DMP Antlerless Deer Tag

Hunter Cornelius Raberdasher wants to transfer his DMP tag to hunter Pete Moss.

Step 1. Cornelius Raberdasher signs the bottom of his DMP tag.

Step 2. Cornelius Raberdasher gives the DMP tag to Pete Moss.

Step 3. Pete Moss records the Tag# of the DMP tag on the back of his license page.

Step 4. If Pete Moss takes an antlerless deer with the transferred DMP, he is required to report the deer by calling the automated reporting system (1-866-426-3778) or by reporting online at dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/report-your-harvest using the transferred DMP Tag# and his own date of birth.

- There is no limit to the number of DMPs that can be transferred to you from other hunters.
- DMPs can be transferred from the receiving hunter back to the original hunter or to another. The other hunter must record the DOC# on the back of their license page, as in Step 3 above, to complete the transfer.

Transferred DMPs are currently not available as e-tags. Hunters who receive a transferred DMP must be in physical possession of it when taking antlerless deer with the transferred DMP.

Remember: Hunting licenses are not transferable. Only DMP antlerless deer tags can be used by another hunter. A hunter must be in physical possession of a DMP when taking antlerless deer with a DMP. It cannot be shared by a group afield.

DMP Antlerless Deer			Cornelius Raberdasher DOB: 05/31/1982 D: 100493008941 Issued: 08/06/26 11:50AM	
Tag: 26-04-12340005			Sex ☐ M ☐ F	
License Year 2026/2027		☐ Bowhunting ☐ Early Antlerless ☐ Muzzleloading ☐ Regular ☐ Youth		
Kill info	Date ____/____/____			
	County _____			
	Town _____			
	WMU 4H			
Signature	Signature _____ Attested under penalty of perjury pursuant to PL 210.45			

DMP carcass tag of hunter Cornelius Raberdasher

Pete Moss writes his Tag# and date of kill on the back side of his license page:

Tag: 26-04-12340005 Date of kill: 11/27/2025

DMP Transfer portion for hunter Pete Moss

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For more information:

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Your state wildlife agency



DMAP on State Lands

DEC has enrolled two state lands in DMAP. Tag availability is limited and hunters must apply to participate. See <https://dec.ny.gov/nature/animals-fish-plants/white-tailed-deer/deer-management-conflict-avoidance/management-assistance-program> for information.

Properties include:

- Bully Hill State Forest, WMU 9P
- Doodletown Wildlife Management Area, WMU 4Z

Eurasian Boar

Eurasian boars are a destructive invasive species that damage habitat and crops, and threaten native wildlife and domestic livestock. DEC and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have worked hard to eradicate these animals from the state's landscape. We are now working to prevent their reintroduction into New York State.

- It is illegal to possess, sell, distribute, trade, or transport Eurasian boars or their hybrids.
- It is illegal to import, breed, or release Eurasian boars or their hybrids.
- It is illegal to hunt, trap, or take free-ranging Eurasian boar or their hybrids.

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 by emailing wildlife@dec.ny.gov or calling 518-402-8883.

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Ann Wilcox-Swanson, Instructor



Qualifications

- At least 18 years of age
- Good communication skills
- Hunting experience preferred
- Good moral character

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for more info!



This hunting season, receive up to \$60 back when you **voluntarily** purchase and use lead-free ammunition.

Hunters are the original conservationists and wildlife stewards. By choosing lead-free ammunition, you can help reduce lead exposure for scavenging animals that feed on the remains of harvested game.

Hunters for Conservation is a privately funded, hunter-led initiative dedicated to protecting freedom of choice and the future of hunting.

For program details, visit:
HuntersForConservation.org

Try Lead-Free Ammunition for FREE!

If you have considered trying lead-free ammunition, this is your opportunity to do so for free.

New York Hunters for Conservation (NYHC; a program of Conservation Science Global) are offering up to \$60 in rebates to all big game hunters that voluntarily purchase and use certified lead-free ammunition and participate in a post-hunt survey for the 2026/2027 regular big game season. For information about the rebate program please visit the website at HuntersForConservation.org.

Hunters were the earliest leaders in conservation, and NYHC created this program to strengthen that legacy. Hunter education teaches hunters to know their target and what lies beyond it, yet many hunters do not realize this principle extends to ammunition choice. Traditional lead ammunition breaks apart into many small fragments that can be unintentionally left behind in the gut piles of field-dressed deer. As a result, animals that scavenge gut piles are at risk of lead poisoning. Lead-free ammunition eliminates this risk by remaining up to 95% intact after impact and being far less toxic than lead.

NYHC and NYDEC have consulted with the New York State Conservation Council and the New York Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, and NY hunters have been clear: they want to retain the ability to voluntarily choose their ammunition while remaining conservation leaders. This program supports that goal.

Your participation in this program will allow you to:

1. Reduce risk to wildlife health
2. Experience ammunition that is highly effective with proven ballistic performance
3. Show how hunters proactively make voluntary choices to protect wildlife and the future of hunting.



Photo credit Mike McTee

Brian Bird, NY Chapter Coordinator of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers recently commented on the program saying, "Nearly 100 years ago, hunters led conservation efforts when wildlife populations were in trouble. It's time to lead again. The science and ballistics support lead-free ammunition — making the voluntary switch is simply the right thing to do for wildlife and our hunting heritage."



Keith G. Tidball, PhD — President of the New York State Conservation Council said, "The NYSCC membership is adamant and clear in its opposition to one size-fits all ammunition bans. We are equally emphatic and clear in our support of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation (NAM) which establishes that the best available science—rather than politics or market demands—is the foundation for informed, sustainable wildlife management. We appreciate this approach to make a path for hunters to choose or not choose to try out alternatives to lead, a scientific way for sportsmen and women to explore the implications of the switch themselves."



New York Hunter Education Firearm Safety Tips

- Keep unloaded firearms locked in a safe or use cable locks
- Store ammunition separate from firearms
- Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction
- Never place a loaded firearm in a vehicle



Citori 825 Field Shotgun
NEW! Features & styling elevate this over & under shotgun to new levels of performance & elegance. Built for both hunting & the range, includes new Fire Lite 2 Mechanical Trigger, Inflex II recoil pad & Invector-DS chokes.



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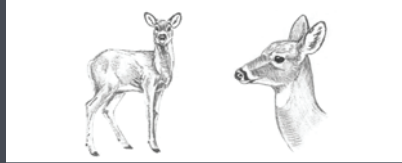
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Doe or Fawn?

During the fall, it can often be difficult to distinguish adult does and fawn deer, particularly if seen alone. In recent years, about 20% of the total antlerless deer harvest has been fawns (5–7 months old), with nearly even proportions of doe fawns and buck fawns. Though fawns provide excellent table fare, some hunters prefer to target adult deer. Taking female deer contributes to management objectives, and passing buck fawns may allow some of them to be available later as antlered bucks. By learning the differences between antlerless deer, hunters can make more informed harvest choices.

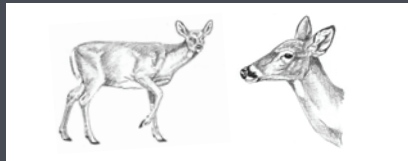
Hunting Tips

- Button bucks often travel alone, but adult does rarely do. Wait until several antlerless deer are present before making a harvest decision.
- It is easier to identify sex and age when animals are standing still or moving slowly.
- Harvest antlerless deer early in the season when differences between fawns and adult does are most noticeable.



Fawn

- Body about as long as tall (square)
- Short neck and compact nose/head
- Eyes look large for head
- Doe fawns have a more rounded head shape between their ears
- Buck fawns' heads appear flattened and may have visible antler nubs or "buttons"



Adult Doe

- Body longer than tall (rectangle)
- Long neck and elongated nose

STRAP UP BEFORE YOU GO UP



HuntSafeNY

Always inspect and adjust your gear before use.

Buckle your full body harness securely.

Connect to the tree before your feet leave the ground and stay connected.



Department of
Environmental
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Hunter Education Program

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BAR MK 4 Hunter

NEW! Autoloading rifle for big game hunting available in magnum calibers. Walnut shim-adjustable stock with oil finish. Fluted non-reflective matte blued barrel & lightweight alloy receiver.



Photo by Gary K.

Tree Selection Matters!

Know the health and species of the tree you choose for your stand. The following NYS tree species are currently impacted by non-native pests and pathogens, and should be avoided for tree stand use: Ash species (*Fraxinus spp.*), Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*), American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), Eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), and American elm (*Ulmus americana*).

Never use a dead, dying, crooked, or leaning tree.

HUNTERS: Want Older Bucks in New York?

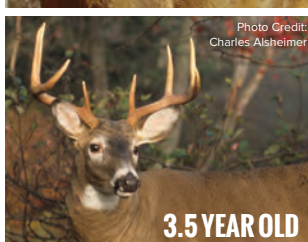
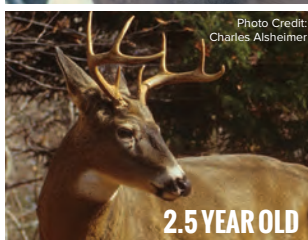
It's Your Choice

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

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South Africa and Namibia



10 Days - 6 Animals 1x1 - \$7,000

10 Days - 12 Animals 1x1 - \$9,500

Cape Kudu or Nyala * Gemsbok or Zebra Blue -or- Black Wildebeest -or- Red Hartebeest Impala * Blesbok * Warthog -or- Springbok

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Kyrgyzstan Ibex - 10 Days - 1x1 - \$9,000



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THE STORY
BEGINS.

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A MODERN DIGITAL
RECORD BOOK
FOR TODAY'S
MUZZLELOADER HUNTER.



LONGHUNTERSOCIETY.ORG

Big Game Season Dates

Future Big Game Season Dates			
Northern Zone			
Bear	Adirondacks (WMUs 5A, 5C, 5F, 5G, 5H, 5J, 6C, 6F, 6H, and 6J)	Regular	First Saturday after the second Monday in Sept. through the Sunday immediately following the first Saturday in Dec.
	Western Periphery (WMUs 6A, 6G, 6K, 6N)	Early Bowhunting	First Saturday after the second Monday in Sept. through the Friday immediately preceding the regular season.
		Early Muzzleloading	7 consecutive days beginning on the first Saturday after Columbus/Indigenous Peoples' Day.
		Regular	Second Saturday after Columbus/Indigenous Peoples' Day through the Sunday immediately following the first Saturday in Dec.
Deer		Early Bowhunting	Sept. 27 through the Friday immediately preceding the regular season.
		Early Muzzleloading	7 consecutive days beginning on the first Saturday after Columbus/Indigenous Peoples' Day.
		Regular	44 consecutive days beginning on the second Saturday after Columbus/Indigenous Peoples' Day.
		Late Bow and Muzzleloading (some WMUs)	7 consecutive days immediately following the regular season.
Southern Zone			
Bear		Early Firearms (some WMUs)	16 consecutive days beginning the first Saturday after Labor Day.
		Early Bowhunting	Oct. 1 through the Friday immediately preceding the regular season.
		Regular	23 consecutive days beginning the third Saturday in Nov.
		Late Bow and Muzzleloading	9 consecutive days immediately following the regular season.
Deer		Early Antlerless (some WMUs)	9 consecutive days beginning the second Saturday of Sept.
		Early Bowhunting	Oct. 1 through the Friday immediately preceding the regular season.
		Regular	23 consecutive days beginning the third Saturday in Nov.
		Late Bow and Muzzleloading	9 consecutive days immediately following the regular season and Dec. 26 through Jan. 1.
Northern & Southern Zone			
Deer & Bear	Youth (ages 12–15)	3 consecutive days beginning on the Saturday of Columbus/Indigenous Peoples' Day Weekend.	
Westchester County			
Deer & Bear	Regular (bowhunting only)	Oct. 1 through Dec. 31.	
Suffolk County			
Deer	Regular (bowhunting only)	Oct. 1 through Dec. 31.	
	Special Firearms Season	First Sunday in Jan. through Jan. 31.	

- WESTERN NEW YORK
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620,000 ACRES
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Bear Hunting



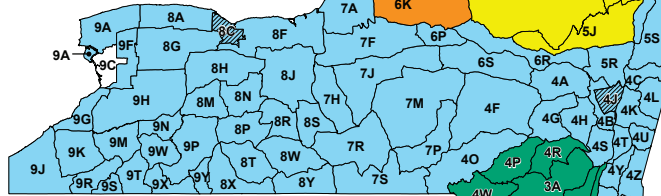
Josh O. with his successful harvest in Oneida County.

Black Bear Hunting

Hunting Hours: 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset

Northern Zone

Regular	Sept. 19 - Dec. 6
Bowhunting	Sept. 19 - Oct. 23
Muzzleloading	Oct. 17 - Oct. 23
Regular	Oct. 24 - Dec. 6



Bear hunting in Allegany State Park requires a park permit.

Southern Zone

Early Firearms	Sept. 12 - Sept. 27
Early Bowhunting	Oct. 1 - Nov. 20
Regular	Nov. 21 - Dec. 13
Late Bowhunting	Dec. 14 - Dec. 22
Late Muzzleloading	Dec. 14 - Dec. 22
Westchester County (3S) Regular - bowhunting Only	Oct. 1 - Dec. 31

Bowhunting Only WMUs
Closed

Youth Firearms Season Dates
Oct. 10 - 12
See Page 45 for Details

Bear Hunting

- Resident and non-resident hunters will receive a bear tag with their hunting license and may take one bear per year.
- In the Southern Zone, hunters may not shoot a cub or a bear that should be known to be a cub, shoot any bear from a group of bears, or shoot or take a bear from its den.
- Hunters may use and carry up to 1.5 fluid ounces of a liquid scent or lure, though such scent or lure may not be placed in a manner that it may be consumed as bait.
- Hunting bear with the aid of bait or dogs is prohibited.

Attention Hunters and Taxidermists

Bear gallbladders and bile shall not be possessed or sold unless a valid bear tag (original or copy of bear carcass tag) is attached. New York State law requires taxidermists to keep records of all bear gallbladders and bile received or sold.

To find a bear taxidermist in NYS please scan this QR code:



New York State Bear Management Cooperator Program

The Bureau of Wildlife is requesting the assistance of successful black bear hunters in New York State.

Hunters who harvest a bear in New York State are required to report their harvest (see page 22). Successful bear hunters are also asked to submit a premolar tooth from the bear for DEC to determine the bear's age and to record the dressed weight of the bear (see dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/report-your-harvest/black-bear-tooth-collection for more information). Successful bear hunters will be sent a tooth collection packet with premolar removal and submission instructions.

Report your bear and return a bear tooth to receive a commemorative 2026 NYS Black Bear Cooperator Patch. Samples will be aged in the summer of 2027. Cooperating hunters will receive patches and letters indicating the age of their bear in early fall 2027.



Be BearWise

In 2022, DEC became a cooperating partner of BearWise®, a multistate campaign focused on educating people on how to live responsibly with black bears. The campaign provides sound information and smart solutions that help homeowners, businesses, and communities coexist with black bears. Visit <https://bearwise.org/> to learn the BearWise basics, bear safety tips, and to download educational resources. Be BearWise to help keep New York State's black bears healthy and safe.





Department of Environmental Conservation

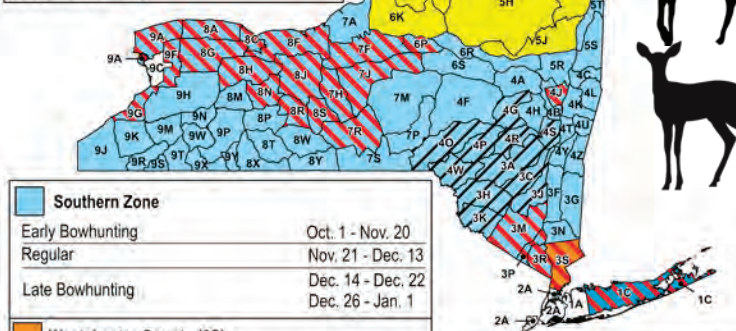
2026-27 Hunting & Trapping Seasons Summary

For complete rules and regulations see Official New York Hunting and Trapping Regulations Guide

Regular & Bowhunting Deer Hunting

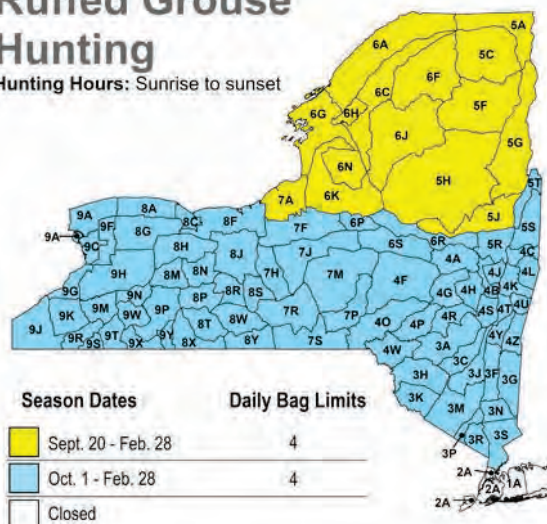
Hunting Hours: 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset

Northern Zone	
Early Bowhunting (all WMUs)	Sept. 27 - Oct. 23
Regular	Oct. 24 - Dec. 6
Late Bowhunting (WMUs 5A, 5G, 5J, 6A, 6C, 6G, and 6H only)	Dec. 7 - Dec. 13



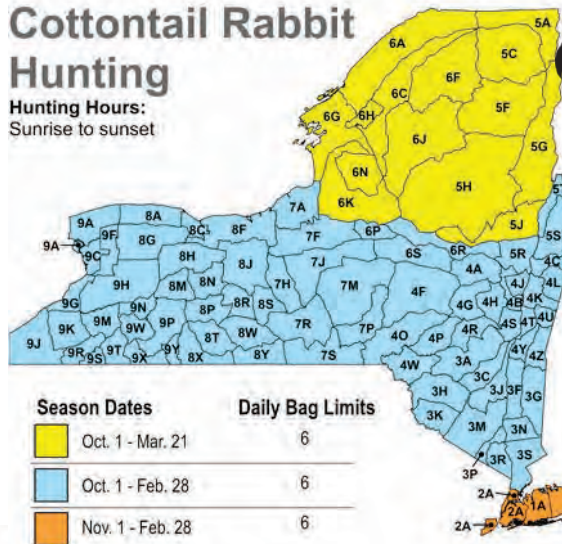
Ruffed Grouse Hunting

Hunting Hours: Sunrise to sunset



Cottontail Rabbit Hunting

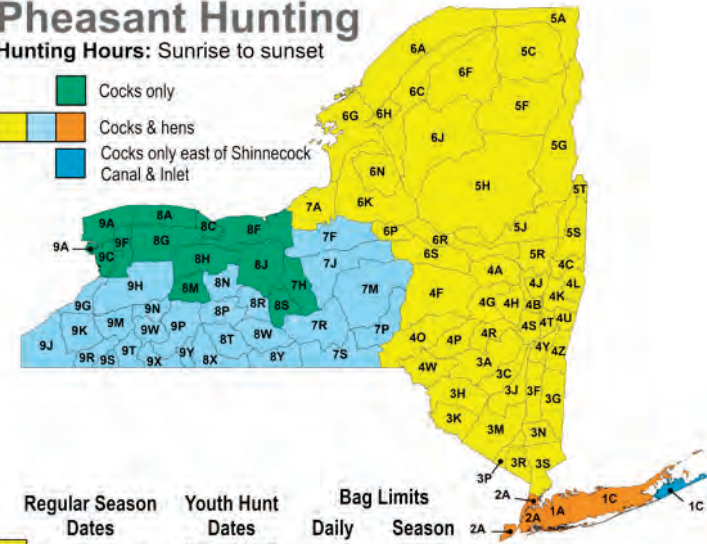
Hunting Hours: Sunrise to sunset



Pheasant Hunting

Hunting Hours: Sunrise to sunset

- Cocks only
- Cocks & hens
- Cocks only east of Shinnecock Canal & Inlet



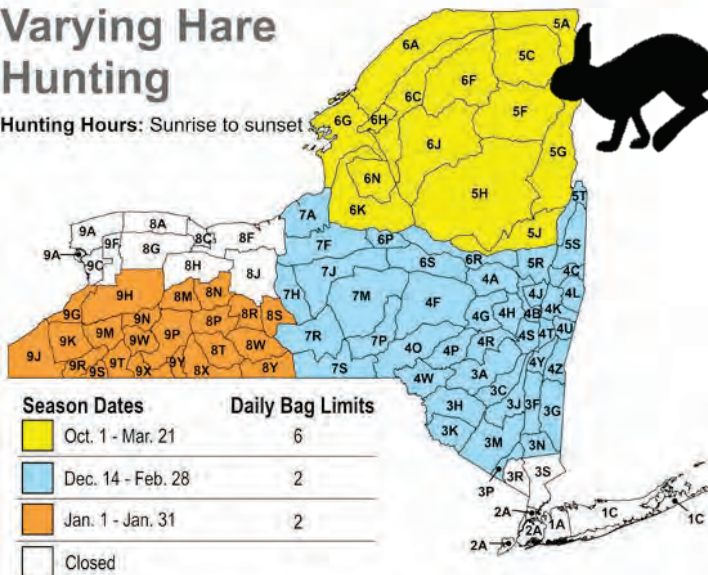
Regular Season Dates	Youth Hunt Dates	Bag Limits
Oct. 1 - Feb. 28	Sept. 26 & 27	2
Oct. 17 - Feb. 28	Oct. 10 & 11	2
Oct. 17 - Dec. 31	Oct. 10 & 11	2
Nov. 1 - Dec. 31 ¹	Oct. 24 & 25 ¹	2 1/4**
Nov. 1 - Dec. 31	Oct. 24 & 25	2 1/4**

¹In WMU 2A no youth hunt; hunting is by falconry only
²Youth hunt
³Regular season



Varying Hare Hunting

Hunting Hours: Sunrise to sunset



Bobwhite Quail Hunting

Hunting Hours: Sunrise to sunset

Season Dates	Bag Limits
Oct. 1 - Feb. 28	4
Nov. 1 - Dec. 31	6



Raccoon, Fox, Skunk, Opossum & Weasel Hunting

Long Island & NYC: Nov. 1 – Feb. 25
All other areas of New York: Oct. 25 – Feb. 15

There are no bag limits for these species. They may be hunted during the day or night, except weasel, which may only be hunted from sunrise to sunset.



Coyote Hunting

Statewide except Long Island & NYC: Oct. 1 – Mar. 28

There are no bag limits for coyotes. They may be hunted during the day or night.



Gray, Black & Fox Squirrel Hunting

Hunting Hours: Sunrise to sunset

Long Island & NYC*: Nov. 1 – Feb. 28

All other areas of New York: Sept. 1 – Feb. 28

Daily bag limit of 6 total, regardless of species

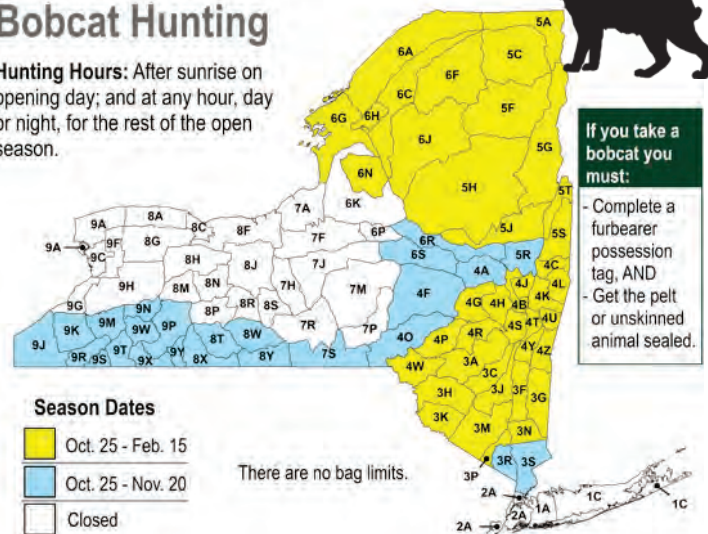
*In WMU 2A hunting is by falconry only



Red squirrels are unprotected, and may be hunted at any time without limit.

Bobcat Hunting

Hunting Hours: After sunrise on opening day; and at any hour, day or night, for the rest of the open season.



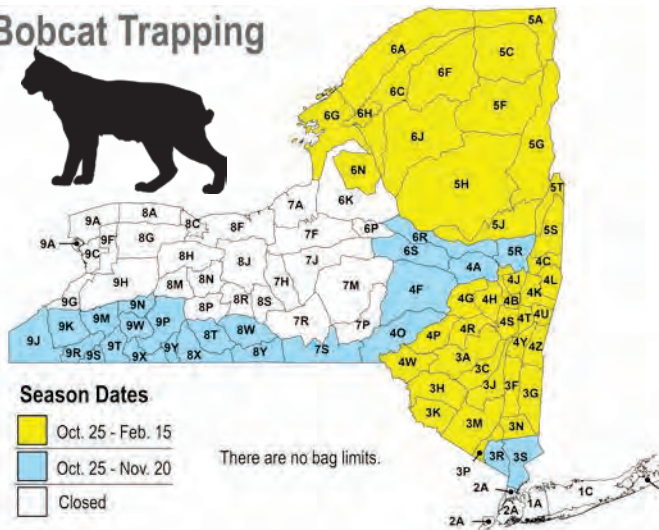
If you take a bobcat you must:

- Complete a furbearer possession tag, AND
- Get the pelt or unskinned animal sealed.

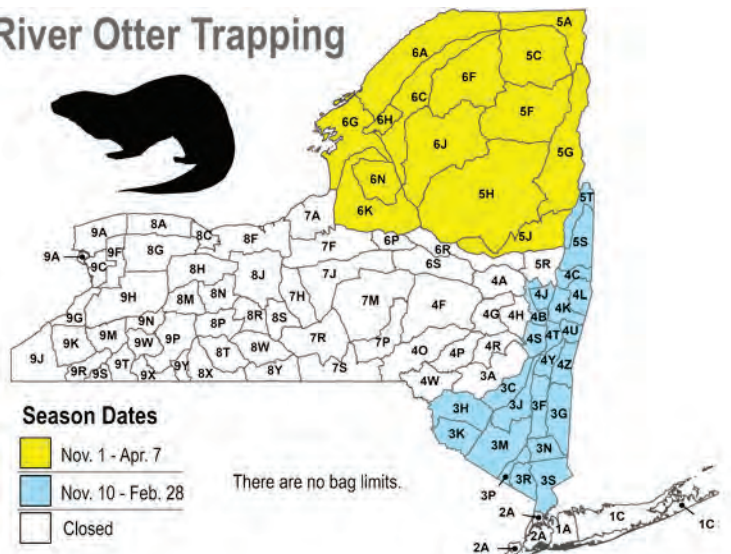
Season Dates
Oct. 25 - Feb. 15
Oct. 25 - Nov. 20
Closed

There are no bag limits.

Bobcat Trapping



River Otter Trapping

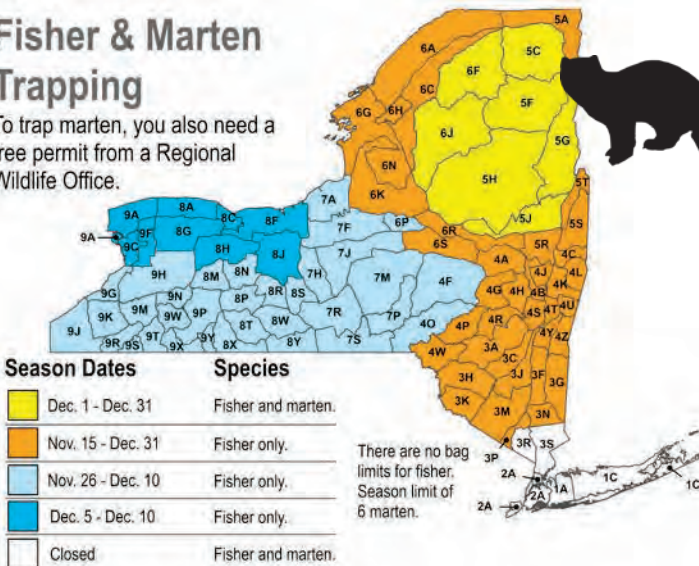


If you take a bobcat, otter, fisher, or marten, you must:

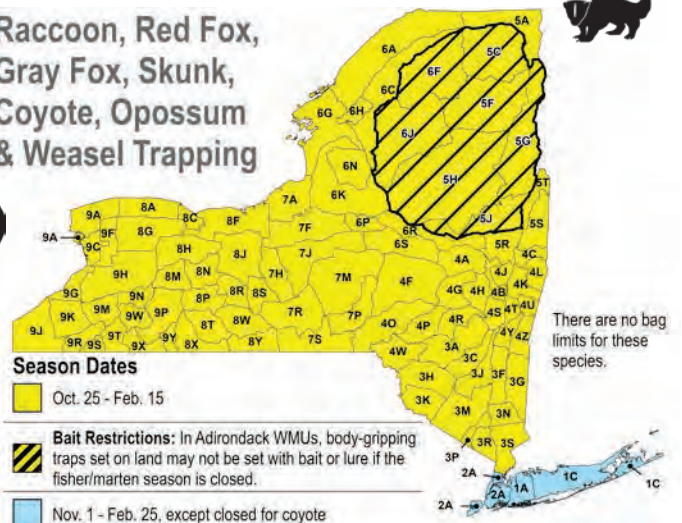
- Complete a furbearer possession tag, AND
- Get the pelt or unskinned animal sealed.

Fisher & Marten Trapping

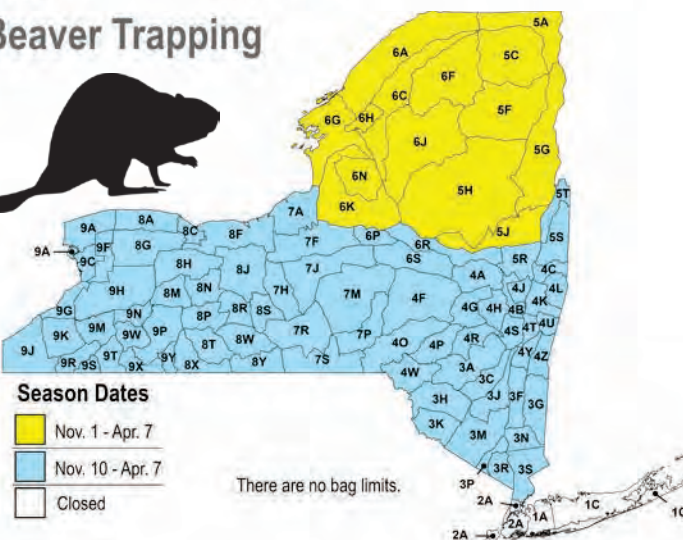
To trap marten, you also need a free permit from a Regional Wildlife Office.



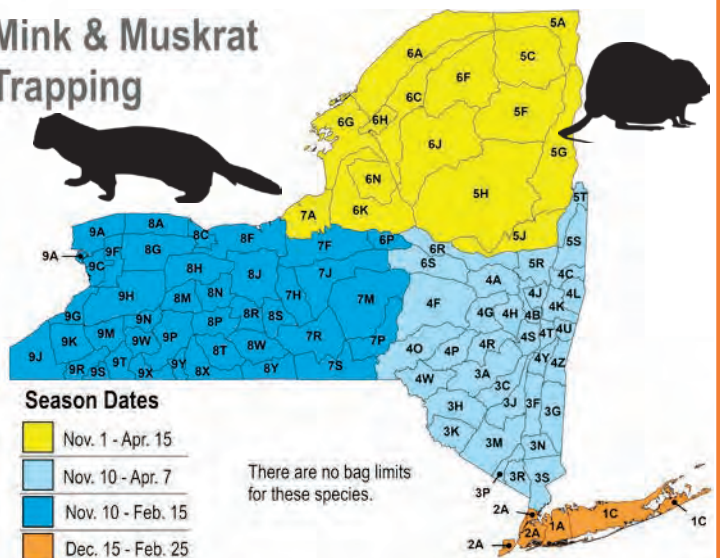
Raccoon, Red Fox, Gray Fox, Skunk, Coyote, Opossum & Weasel Trapping



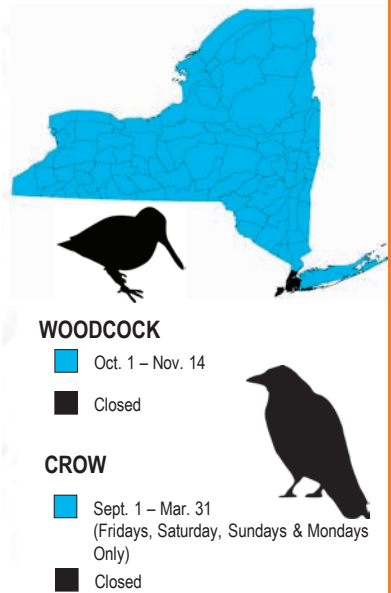
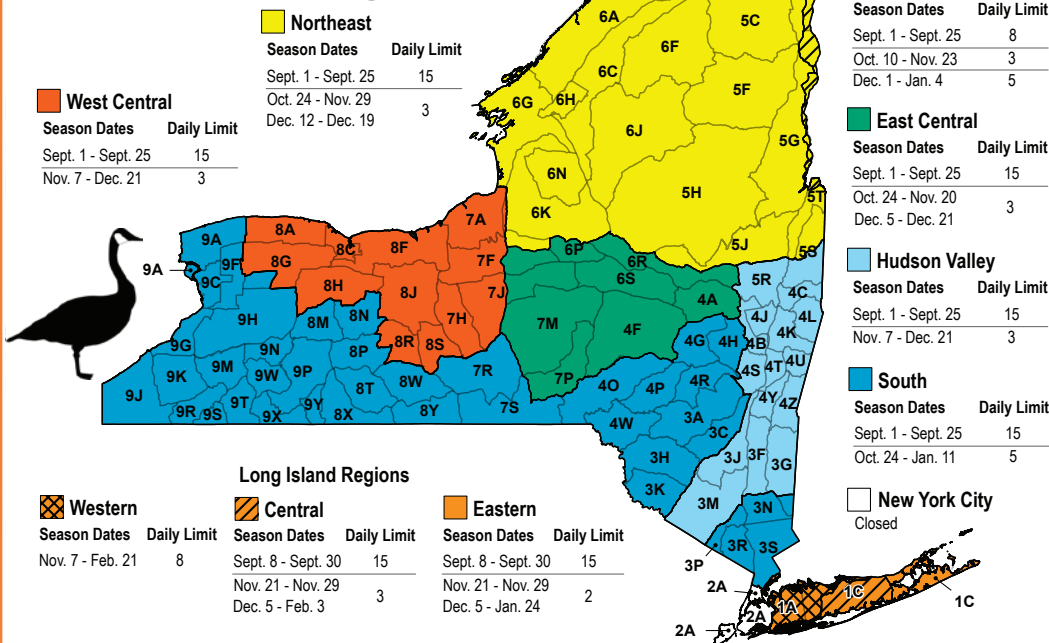
Beaver Trapping



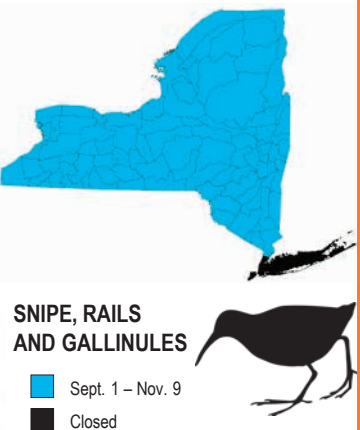
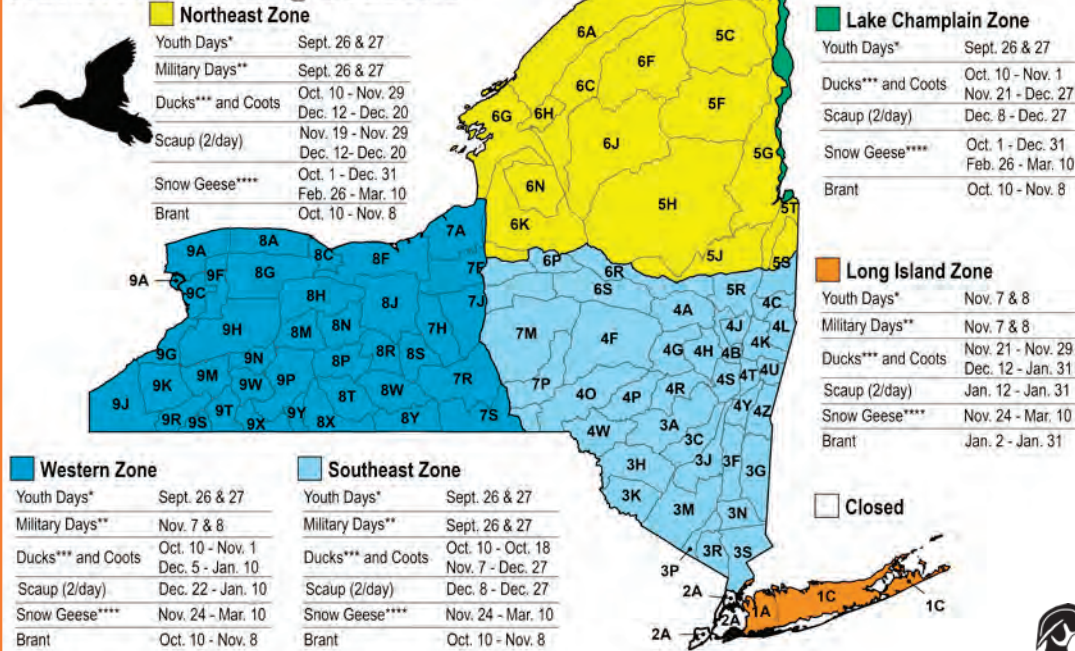
Mink & Muskrat Trapping



Canada Goose Hunting



Waterfowl Hunting Seasons



A migratory duck stamp is not required to hunt these three groups of birds.

[HIP registration](#) is required for each of these species except crow.



* Youth days are additional days for junior hunters only. Young hunters, 12 to 15 years of age, possessing a junior hunting license may hunt ducks, coots, mergansers, Canada geese, and brant on 2 special days in each zone. Daily bag limits for all species are the same as those allowed during the regular season for all species (excludes September Canada goose bag limits). Youth hunters must be accompanied by a licensed (including current HIP registration and duck stamp) adult hunter, and the mentor may not carry a firearm. This prohibition does not apply to other hunters in the party that are not mentoring the youth.

** Any person who meets the definition of active military or veteran (as defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code) can participate. Daily bag limits for all species during the military hunting days are the same as those allowed during the regular season for all species.

*** Crippled sea ducks may be taken under power in the [special sea duck area](#), only.

**** Pending regulatory changes to the Spring Conservation Order. For more information on the status of snow geese and the conservation order, please visit: [Waterfowl Season Setting](#).

The daily bag limit is the maximum number of birds of each species that any person may take or possess in the field during any one day. The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit for all migratory game birds except snow geese.

- a. The daily limit of 6 ducks includes all mergansers and sea ducks (scooters, eiders and long-tailed ducks) and may include no harlequin ducks and no more than 4 mallards (2 of which may be hens), 3 wood ducks, 2 black ducks, 3 pintails, 1 scaup (2 scaup are allowed during the 20 days specified above for each zone), 2 redheads, 2 canvasbacks, or 4 sea ducks (including no more than 3 scooters, 3 long-tailed ducks, or 3 eiders and no more than 1 female eider). For all other duck species, the daily limit is no more than 6.
- b. Cackling geese and white-fronted geese may be taken as part of the Canada goose daily and possession limits. Snow geese and Ross' geese may be taken as part of the snow goose limits.

Bag Limits

Species	Daily Limit	Possession Limit
Ducks ^a	6	18
Coot	15	45
Canada Geese ^b	See Map	3 times the daily limit
Snow Geese ^b	25	No Limit
Brant	1	3

SNAPSHOT NY

Be Part of the Picture

Snapshot NY is a statewide wildlife trail camera network powered by people like you.

It's early morning, and a hunter slips into a favorite stand location in Western New York. The season hasn't opened yet, but a trail camera has been out for weeks, capturing everything that's passed by – raccoons, coyotes, maybe even that big buck spotted crossing the road last month. Nearly 300 miles away, in the heart of the Adirondacks, a trapper checks a camera along a well-used game trail, curious what's been moving through. And on the edge of a suburban neighborhood in Long Island, another camera quietly records wildlife most people never realize is there.

Trail cameras have become a regular part of hunting, trapping, and wildlife watching. They're out there 24/7, capturing an incredible amount of information about wildlife. Snapshot NY is a new effort by DEC and Cornell Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit to put that information to work on a bigger scale, helping to conserve and monitor New York's diverse wildlife.

Why it matters

Hunters and trappers already provide DEC with valuable information about our wildlife through reporting their harvests, responding to surveys, and participating in hunting and trapping logs. These data help track populations of deer, bear, and other species, and they give us insight into effort and success in the field. But those tools have limits. Most hunting and trapping happens in rural areas and only during open seasons, leaving gaps in places like suburbs, cities, and hard to access remote wilderness. And because many surveys are voluntary, not everyone participates.

Snapshot NY helps fill in those gaps. The idea is simple: volunteers across the state set up trail cameras and upload their photos to the Snapshot NY website. Biologists with DEC and researchers at Cornell University use those images to identify species, estimate populations, and document wildlife interactions and behavior. SnapshotNY doesn't replace the information hunters and trappers already provide, it builds on it. Together, these data sources give us a more complete picture of New York's wildlife, setting a stronger foundation for management.

What we're learning

Trail cameras capture every animal that walks by. This allows us to monitor a wide range of species, including deer, bear, turkey, bobcats, fishers, coyotes, foxes, raccoons, and more. Over time this information can help us:

- Detect population changes earlier
- Improve harvest management decisions
- Identify important habitats and sensitive areas
- Better understand how wildlife use different parts of the state

Get involved

Hunters and trappers make ideal partners for trail camera community science programs like Snapshot NY, because they typically have equipment and access to private lands, possess high-level scouting skills, and have a vested interest in sustainable wildlife management. And joining Snapshot NY is easy! Volunteers choose one of over 4,500 survey blocks across New York to host a trail camera on. Remember, every location matters. Whether it's a remote woodlot or a backyard near town, your camera can provide valuable information. To participate, you'll need:

1. Access to land in New York (private land or permission to use public lands)
2. A smartphone and basic computer skills
3. A computer that can read SD cards (readers available if needed)
4. The ability to set up and check a camera
5. Willingness to upload photos to the Snapshot NY website regularly

Don't have a camera? You can request to borrow one when you sign up.

Contact Us!

Learn more at www.snapshotny.org. If you have questions or need assistance, reach out to us at:

(607) 255-6459

Snapshotny@cornell.edu



**Monitoring New York's wildlife,
one snapshot at a time.**

Special Seasons Designated for Young Hunters



Anthony G. after a successful harvest in Cattaraugus County.

Youth Hunts (Ages 12–15)	
Youth Pheasant Hunt	
Northern and Eastern New York	Sept. 26–27, 2026
Western New York	Oct. 10–11, 2026
Long Island	Oct. 24–25, 2026
Youth Waterfowl Hunt	
Waterfowl Hunting Zone	Dates
Northeastern	Sept. 26–27, 2026
Southeastern	Sept. 26–27, 2026
Lake Champlain	Sept. 26–27, 2026
Western	Sept. 26–27, 2026
Long Island	Nov. 7–8, 2026
Youth Wild Turkey Hunt	
Upstate NY (north of Bronx-Westchester Co. boundary) and Suffolk County	Apr. 24–25, 2027
Youth Firearms Deer and Bear Hunt	
Upstate NY (north of Bronx-Westchester Co. boundary; excluding bowhunting-only WMUs)	Columbus/ Indigenous Peoples' Day Weekend; Oct. 10–12, 2026



All smiles from Wiley V., Adelyn V., and father Joshua V. during the 2025 Youth Hunt in Seneca County.



Vivan M. following a successful spring turkey hunt in Washington County, 2025.

Share Your Hunting and Trapping Photos With Us!

Help us celebrate the successes of young and first-time hunters and trappers by submitting photographs to DEC's Hunting and Trapping Photo Gallery:



dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/hunting-trapping-photo-gallery

Take them outside the classroom. Way outside.

EXPLORE BOWHUNTING



The NYSDEC has partnered with the Archery Trade Association to bring you a next step archery program with curriculum that includes over 20 introductory lessons to bowhunting for youth ages 11-17.

Contact the NY Explore Bowhunting coordinator for local instructor training opportunities.
P: 518-402-8967 E: hunter@dec.ny.gov

New York is on Target!

The National Archery in the Schools Program:

- Is an archery program for grades 4-12
- Is taught during the in-school curriculum
- Includes instructor training
- Uses standardized equipment
- Has over 45,000 students participate annually



For more information, please contact NY NASP at 518-402-8855 or katelyn.ritzko@dec.ny.gov



All Junior Hunters (ages 12–15) must:

1. Complete a Hunter Education Course to hunt. Complete a Bowhunting Safety Course to hunt big game with a bow or crossbow.
2. Purchase a Junior Hunting license to hunt. Also, Junior hunters may purchase the following additional privileges:
 - a. Junior Bowhunting privilege to hunt deer and bear during the bowhunting seasons;
 - b. Muzzleloading privilege to hunt deer and bear during the muzzleloader seasons;
 - c. Turkey permit to hunt during the youth or regular turkey seasons.
3. Register with the Harvest Information Program (HIP) to hunt waterfowl.
4. Be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or adult mentor meeting the following age and experience requirements.

Minimum Age & Experience of Mentor		
	Youth Hunter Age	
	12–13	14–15
Small Game	21 years old	18 years old
Deer or Bear with bow	21 years old with 3 years' experience	18 years old with 1 year experience
Deer or Bear with firearm or crossbow	21 years old with 3 years' experience	

5. Carry written permission if mentored by someone other than a parent or legal guardian (permission form below for convenience).
6. When hunting big game with a firearm or crossbow, junior hunters and their mentors must:
 - a. Wear fluorescent orange or fluorescent pink visible from all directions: shirt, jacket, or vest with at least 250 square inches of solid or patterned orange or pink (the pattern must be at least 50% orange or pink) OR hat with at least 50% orange or pink.
 - b. Remain at ground level. Tree stands or elevated blinds cannot be used unless junior hunter is bowhunting.

Additionally:

1. 12- and 13-year-old junior hunters may not hunt bear with a firearm.
2. 12- and 13-year-old junior hunters may hunt deer with a firearm or crossbow only in counties that have passed a local law authorizing such activities. See DEC website (<https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/deer-bear/junior-big-game>) for a map of counties that have opted-in.
3. During designated youth hunts (e.g. youth pheasant, turkey, waterfowl, or big game hunt), mentors may not possess a firearm, bow, or crossbow or attempt to take game when accompanying a junior hunter.
4. Mentors must maintain physical control over the junior hunter at all times.
5. When waterfowl hunting, the adult mentor must possess a federal duck stamp and current HIP registration.

First Time Big Game Hunters aged 16–17

1. Must be accompanied by a licensed hunter 18 years or older who has at least 1 year of experience hunting deer or bear with the same implement.
2. Carry written permission if mentored by someone other than a parent or legal guardian.

Junior Trapping

Trappers under 12 years of age:

May accompany and assist a licensed trapper in all aspects of trapping without possessing a trapping license themselves. The licensed trapper must have at least 3 years of trapping experience and may be a parent, legal guardian, or someone 18 years or older designated in writing (use the form below).

Junior Trappers 12 years or older:

Must complete NYS's Trapper Education Program whether they will be trapping alone or with an adult licensed trapper.

Youth Firearms Big Game Hunt

The bag limit for the youth big game hunt is one deer of either-sex and one bear. Junior hunters aged 12-13 years old may not hunt bear with a firearm. During the youth hunt, junior hunters may use an Antlered Deer Tag for deer of either sex, or they may use DMPs or DMAP tags for antlerless deer. Bow/muzz antlerless tags are not valid during the youth hunt.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Mentored Youth Hunter and Trapper Permission Form

Use this form to designate a licensed adult hunter or trapper to accompany young hunters or trappers.

I, _____ am the parent/legal guardian
(Print name of parent or legal guardian above.) (Please circle one.)

of _____, and I hereby give permission for him or her
(Print name of young hunter/trapper above.)

to be accompanied by _____ whom I acknowledge meets
(Print name of adult hunter/trapper above.)

the legal age, experience, and licensing requirements to function as a mentor during hunting and trapping seasons.

Signature: _____
(Parent or legal guardian sign above.)

Date _____
(Print today's date above.)

Telephone Number _____
(Print phone number above.)

Attention Young Hunter or Trapper: carry this form with you while afield.

Small Game Hunting

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

Please read the general hunting regulations first on page 16.

General Regulations

- You may not use a rifle or handgun to hunt pheasant or migratory game birds. See page 50 for more information on turkeys.
- See pages 53–55 for additional information on migratory game birds.
- Air guns (see page 16) 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 17). Air guns may not be used to hunt waterfowl, pheasant, wild turkey, or big game.
- 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 game birds during their respective open seasons.
- In WMU 2A, hunting is permitted by falconry only.

Reptiles and Amphibians

Frogs—"Frogs" are defined as eastern spadefoot toad, eastern American toad, Fowler's toad, northern cricket frog, northern gray treefrog,

northern spring peeper, western chorus frog, bullfrog, green frog, mink frog, wood frog, northern leopard frog, southern leopard frog, and pickerel frog.

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

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

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

You may not take or possess diamondback terrapins at any time.

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 health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/fish/health_advisories/.

Reptile and Amphibian Hunting Seasons

Frogs	
Open Season	Jun. 15–Sept. 30
Open Area	All WMUs except that (1) leopard frogs shall not be taken in WMUs 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	Jul. 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

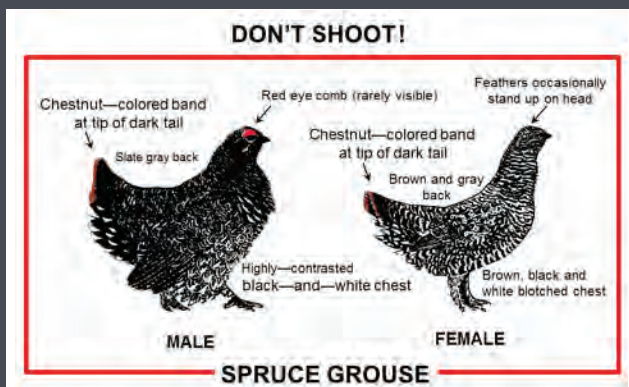
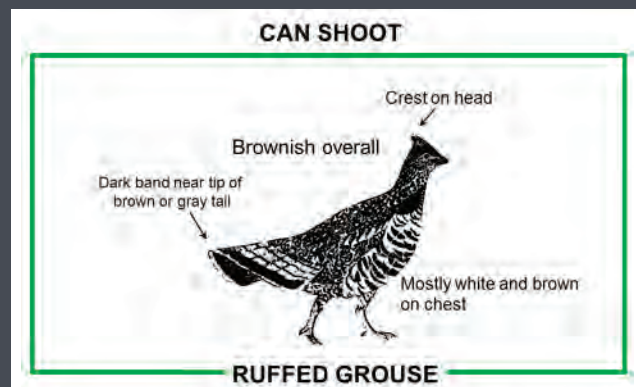
Possession and Release of Game Birds

It is illegal to possess or release migratory game birds and upland game birds without the proper license(s) from DEC. Before you take possession of any captive-reared or wild

Ruffed Grouse vs. Spruce Grouse

In New York State, the spruce grouse is endangered and is not legal to hunt. Spruce grouse occur in evergreen forests in the Adirondacks in WMUs 5C, 5F, 6F, and 6J. During the fall, spruce grouse frequently make their way to roads to eat gravel and often travel into upland hardwood forests where ruffed grouse occur. Small game hunters in the Adirondack region must be able to distinguish between these species so that spruce grouse are not shot by mistake.

Spruce grouse are similar in size and color to ruffed grouse, making distinguishing between them difficult. One notable difference is that spruce grouse have an orangish-brown band at the tip of their tails, which contrasts with ruffed grouse's black tail band. By noting the differences in the images here, small game hunters can avoid accidentally shooting a spruce grouse. The loss of a single female spruce grouse could be a significant setback for a small local population.



game birds, contact the DEC Special Licenses Unit, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4752; call 518-402-8985; or email speciallicenses@dec.ny.gov.

Falconry Seasons

To hunt small game species with trained raptors, you must possess a Falconry License and a hunting license. Licensed falconers may take small game from Oct. 1 through Mar. 31 in any area of the state open to hunting these species except:

- Common crow may only be taken during the open firearms season.
- A licensed falconer may take both male and female pheasants anywhere in the state when hunting under a Falconry License.

Waterfowl may be taken via falconry during the following seasons:

- **Northeast, Southeast, and Western Waterfowl Zones:** Oct. 1–Jan. 13
- **Long Island Waterfowl Zone:** Nov. 1–Feb. 13
- **Lake Champlain Waterfowl Zone:** Only during the regular hunting season for each species (see map on page 56).

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

Protect Rabbits and Hares from RHDV2

Rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus 2 (RHDV2) is highly lethal to rabbits and hares. It is easily transmitted through direct contact between rabbits or contact with contaminated objects. RHDV2 is extremely hardy, remaining contagious on surfaces for 3 months. If it enters NYS's wild rabbit and hare populations, it will be impossible to control and could result in significant population declines. To protect these species:

- Avoid contact with domestic rabbits.
- Wear disposable gloves when handling rabbit and hare carcasses.
- Properly dispose of rabbit carcasses in trash that's taken to a landfill or by burying deep enough to prevent scavenging.
- Disinfect all hunting gear after out-of-state travel with a 10% bleach solution (1 part household bleach, 9 parts water).
- Avoid travel to states that have confirmed RHDV2 outbreaks, and do not bring rabbit carcasses killed in other states to New York.
- Avoid transporting rabbits or hares to train hunting dogs.
- Although dogs cannot get sick from RHDV2, they can transmit the virus, so minimize contact between dogs and rabbit carcasses.
- Immediately report sick rabbits or unusual rabbit mortalities to DEC's Wildlife Health Program (518-478-2203; wildlifehealth@dec.ny.gov).



Photo by John Mack

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Small Game Hunting

Use of Hunting Dogs

Dogs may be used to hunt small game, except:

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

Training

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

Control

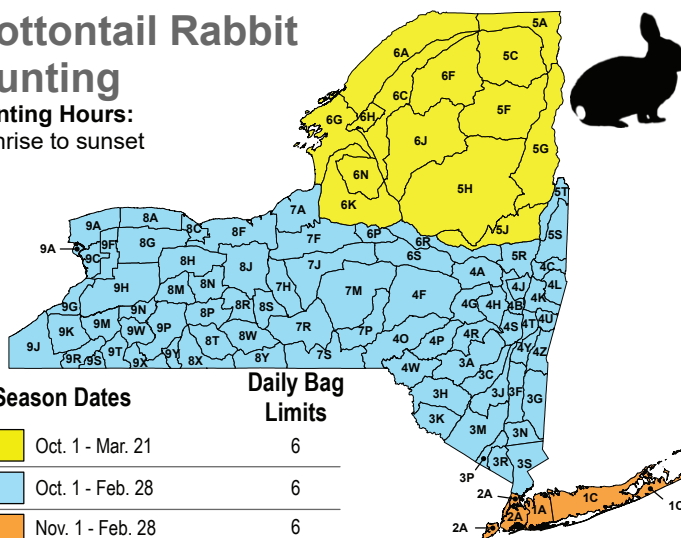
Hunting dogs should remain under control of the hunter or trainer, especially on lands inhabited by deer. Do not allow your dogs to pursue game on any posted land without the landowner's permission. You cannot legally harvest game that is pursued through private property that you do not have permission to be on, even if the animal returns to property where you do have permission. Do not shoot dogs; report stray dogs to a local Environmental Conservation Officer (ECO) or your local animal control officer.

Hunters: You Can Help Combat the Illegal Wildlife Trade

One of the biggest threats to New York State's turtles is illegal collection. What to look for: people with bags poking around wetlands and streams; unmarked traps in wetlands (a trap set for legitimate purposes will be clearly labeled); sheets of metal/plywood laid out on the ground to attract reptiles; cars with collection equipment like nets, containers, pillowcases visible inside; unattended backpacks/bags left in the woods along a trail or road. If you see or hear about suspicious behavior that may be connected to poaching, call DEC Law Enforcement at 1-844-DEC-ECOS. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) also has an anonymous tip line - 1-844-FWS-TIPS. For more visit: <https://www.fws.gov/wildlife-crime-tips>.

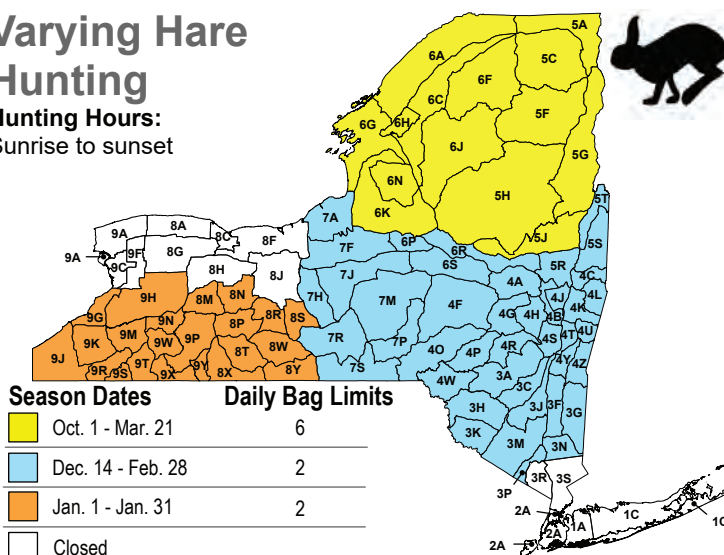
Cottontail Rabbit Hunting

Hunting Hours:
Sunrise to sunset



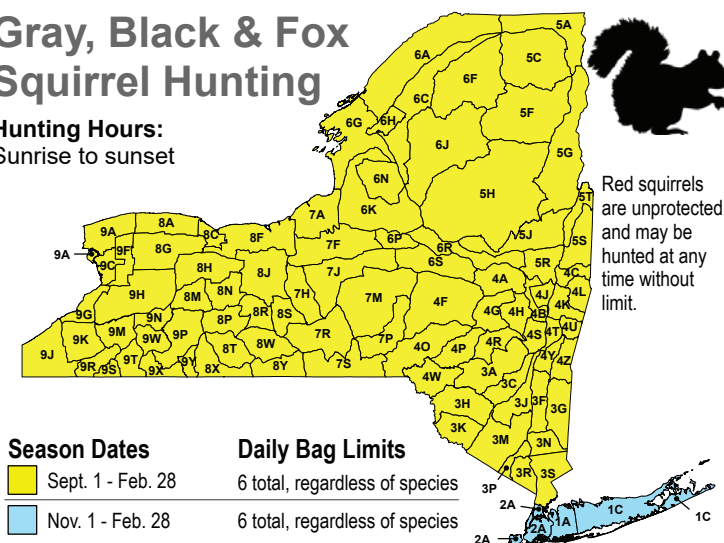
Varying Hare Hunting

Hunting Hours:
Sunrise to sunset



Gray, Black & Fox Squirrel Hunting

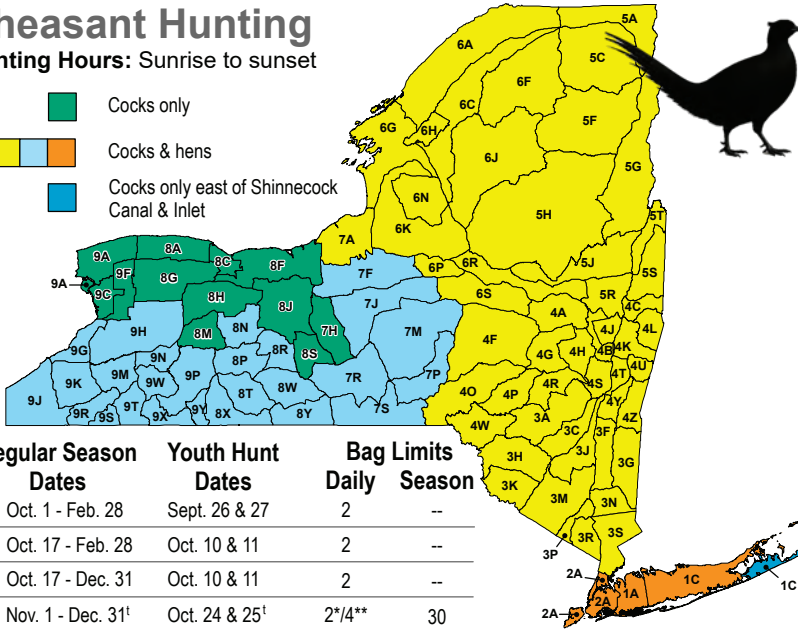
Hunting Hours:
Sunrise to sunset



Pheasant Hunting

Hunting Hours: Sunrise to sunset

- Cocks only
- Cocks & hens
- Cocks only east of Shinnecock Canal & Inlet

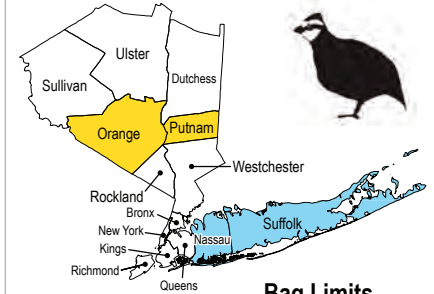


Regular Season Dates	Youth Hunt Dates	Bag Limits Daily	Season
 Oct. 1 - Feb. 28	Sept. 26 & 27	2	--
 Oct. 17 - Feb. 28	Oct. 10 & 11	2	--
 Oct. 17 - Dec. 31	Oct. 10 & 11	2	--
 Nov. 1 - Dec. 31 [†]	Oct. 24 & 25 [†]	2*/4**	30
 Nov. 1 - Dec. 31	Oct. 24 & 25	2*/4**	30

[†]In WMU 2A no youth hunt; hunting is by falconry only ^{*}Youth hunt ^{**}Regular season

Bobwhite Quail Hunting

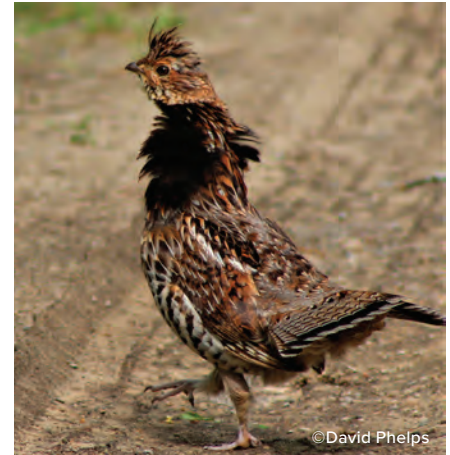
Hunting Hours: Sunrise to sunset



Season Dates	Bag Limits Daily	Season
 Oct. 1 - Feb. 28	4	10
 Nov. 1 - Dec. 31	6	40
 Closed		

Where does DEC stock pheasants?

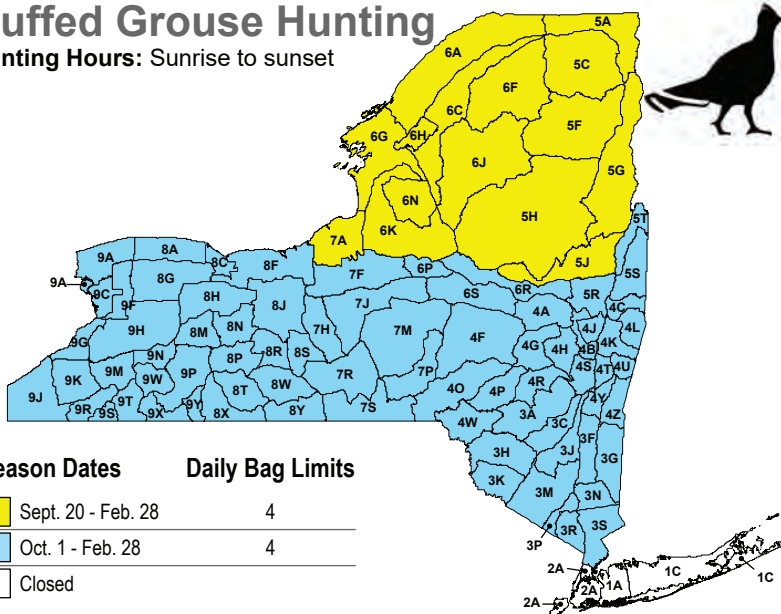
DEC introduced an interactive mapping tool to display the locations where pheasants are released throughout the state. Approximately 50,000 pheasants are released annually, thanks to the cooperation and interest of private and public landowners. Whether on public or private property, it's essential to adhere to any special rules and respect the land. Scan the QR code to find locations using the interactive mapping tool:



©David Phelps

Ruffed Grouse Hunting

Hunting Hours: Sunrise to sunset



Season Dates	Daily Bag Limits
 Sept. 20 - Feb. 28	4
 Oct. 1 - Feb. 28	4
 Closed	

Calling All Grouse Hunters!

Submit a Grouse and Woodcock Hunting Log and Ruffed Grouse Parts to be entered in a raffle to win a YETI® cooler or a subscription to the *Conservationist*.

These data help DEC monitor the ruffed grouse population across New York State.

For more information on how to participate, visit the webpage below, email wildlife@dec.ny.gov, or call 518-402-8883.

on.ny.gov/3HX9ueE



Turkey Hunting

General Regulations

- You may buy only one turkey permit per year, which includes three carcass tags, two for spring and one for fall.
- If you have filled your bag limit, you may call turkeys for another hunter, but you may not carry a bow, crossbow, or firearm. You may call turkeys to aid another hunter only if you are licensed to hunt wild turkey in New York State and have a valid turkey permit.
- If you have taken a turkey that is unfit for consumption, authorized DEC staff may issue a special permit to take another. You will have to surrender the carcass. Call your wildlife or law enforcement office (see page 6).

- You may not take a turkey with a rifle or air gun, or with a handgun firing a bullet.
- You may use a muzzleloading shotgun.
- You may not hunt with a dog during the spring season. You may hunt with a dog during the fall season.
- You may not use bait to hunt turkey.
- You may not use an electronic calling or amplifying device to locate or hunt turkeys during the open season.
- You may use decoys. You may not use a live decoy when turkey hunting.
- A scope of any type is allowed.

- » Users of paper tags must report within 48 hours of the harvest via phone (1-866-GAMERPT), online (dec.ny.gov), or through our HuntFishNY mobile app.
- You may give your turkey to another person.
 - » You must attach a tag with the following information to the turkey carcass:
 - Your name
 - Your address
 - Your hunting license number
 - Turkey permit carcass tag number
 - The recipient's name
 - The recipient's address

Manner of Taking

- You must carry your hunting license and turkey permit while you hunt.
- You may hunt with a bow or crossbow; however, crossbows may only be used by hunters 14 or older and may not be used to take wild turkeys in Westchester or Suffolk counties.
- You may hunt with a shotgun or handgun only when using shot no larger than #2 and no smaller than #9.

Tagging, Possession, and Reporting

- Hunters using e-tags who harvest a turkey must **immediately** electronically "tag" the carcass by reporting the harvest via the HuntFishNY mobile app.
- Hunters using paper tags must immediately tag the harvested turkey with the appropriate, completed, and legible carcass tag until it is prepared for eating.

Reward

Protect wild turkeys against illegal hunting. Their future depends on you!

The National Wild Turkey Federation is offering a \$200 reward to anyone giving information and testimony leading to the arrest and conviction of anyone illegally hunting or killing a wild turkey in New York State. 1-844-DEC-ECOS



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Fall Turkey Season

- You may take a bird of either sex.
- There is one carcass tag for the fall season, and it may be used in any fall turkey hunting zone.
 - » General e-tag and paper tag regulations apply.
- Save a leg:** if you harvest a turkey, save one of its legs. You will receive instructions about what to do with the leg when you report your harvest. The legs are used to help monitor the age and sex structure of the turkey population.

Help Monitor the Turkey Population Structure

DEC is requesting turkey hunters submit wing, leg, chest (beard), and tail fan photographs of harvested turkeys. Successful hunters will be prompted to upload photographs after reporting their harvest. Hunters can also visit the Fall Turkey Season Section on the Turkey Hunting Regulations webpage to find the photograph submission link.



Scan the QR code to visit the Turkey Hunting webpage and submit photos

Example photographs needed to determine age and sex of harvested turkeys:

- A:** Chest feathers & beard (if present)
B: Legs, spurs (if present), and wing tips

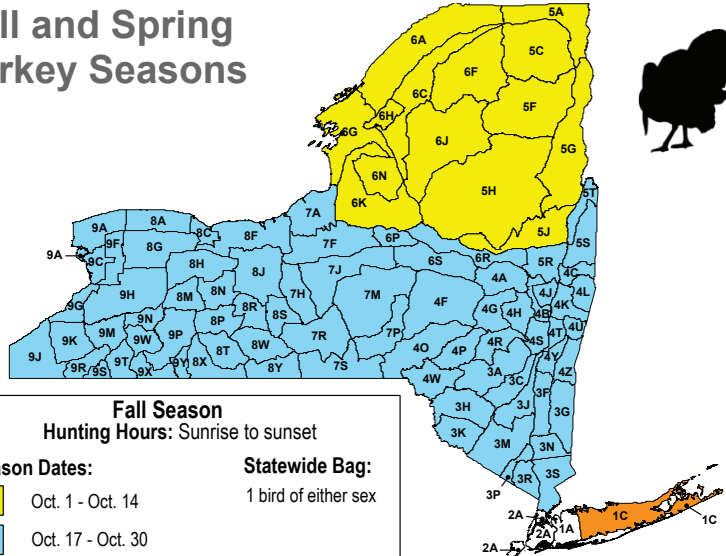


This information, in combination with fall turkey leg collection data, will be used to help determine the statewide age and sex structure of the turkey population. Visit the Fall Turkey Harvest Data Dashboard to view results from past season.



Scan the QR code to view the Fall Turkey Harvest Data Dashboard

Fall and Spring Turkey Seasons



Fall Season Hunting Hours: Sunrise to sunset

Season Dates:	Statewide Bag:
Oct. 1 - Oct. 14	1 bird of either sex
Oct. 17 - Oct. 30	
Nov. 21 - Dec. 4	
Closed	

Spring Season Hunting Hours: 1/2 hour before sunrise to noon

Season Dates:	Statewide Bag:
May 1 - May 31 in all open areas	- 2 bearded birds, no more than 1 per day.
Closed	- No more than 1 in WMU 1C.

Spring Youth Turkey Season

Hunting Hours:
1/2 hour before sunrise to noon

Season Dates:
April 24-25, 2027

Statewide Bag Limit:
1 bearded bird

Open Areas:
Same as regular spring season

NYS 4-H Shooting Sports



Cornell Cooperative Extension
 50 West High Street
 Ballston Spa, NY 12020
 518-885-8995

4-H Shooting Sports is a statewide youth development program focusing on the safe and responsible use of firearms and archery equipment. Six disciplines are offered:

Archery, Muzzleloading, Rifle, Pistol, Shotgun & Hunting

All disciplines are taught by certified instructors. Youth gain knowledge and understanding while developing valuable vocational and life-long recreational skills. Contact Saratoga County Cornell Cooperative Extension or visit NYS 4-H Shooting Sports on the web for more information.

<http://www.NYS4HShootingSports.org>

Turkey Hunting Tips

DON'T

- Wear red, white, blue, or black.
- Stalk turkeys.
- Shoot at the sound of turkeys.

DO

- Wear blaze orange on the way to and out of your hunting spot.
- Sit and call turkeys to you.
- Make sure of your target and what is beyond it.

If you see another hunter:

- Speak up clearly and say "STOP."
- Don't move, wave, or nod.
- Don't make turkey or animal sounds.

Most turkey hunting injuries happen when one hunter mistakenly stalks another hunter.

Avoid using a turkey reaper fan.



Turkey Hunting

Spring Turkey Season

- In the spring, you may take two bearded birds. You may only take one bird per day.
- Fill out the carcass tag and attach it to the bird.
- You do not need to save and send in turkey legs in the spring. You do need to take careful spur, beard, and weight measurements for harvest reporting.
 1. Spur measurements: Spurs should be measured from the tip of the spur to the base of the spur, where it emerges from the scaly part of the leg. Measure to the nearest $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. Do not measure to the forward edge of the leg, only to the base of the spur.
 2. Beard measurements: Beards should be measured from the tip of the beard to the base, where it emerges from the skin. Put the end of your ruler against the base of the beard and extend the beard along the body of the ruler. Measure to the nearest $\frac{1}{4}$ inch.
 3. Record the weight of the turkey to the nearest pound.

Spring Youth Hunt

Eligible youth hunters are 12–15 years of age and hold a Junior Hunting License and a Turkey Permit.

All youth hunters must be accompanied by an adult mentor, as required by law for a Junior Hunting License (see pages 44 and 45).

The accompanying adult mentor must have a current hunting license and Turkey Permit. Mentors may assist the youth hunter (including calling), but may not possess a firearm, bow, or crossbow or attempt to take game when accompanying a junior hunter during a designated youth hunt.

The bag limit for the youth hunt is one bearded bird. This bird becomes part of the youth's regular season bag limit of two bearded birds. A second bird may be taken beginning May 1.

Youth hunters may hunt with a shotgun or with a bow. Fourteen- and 15-year-old hunters may also use a crossbow. All other wild turkey hunting regulations remain in effect.

Turkey Hunters Needed for Grouse Survey

DEC is seeking spring turkey hunters to participate in a survey to help monitor grouse populations.

For more information:

- Email us at wildlife@dec.ny.gov and type "Grouse Drumming Survey" in the subject line, or
- Call 518-402-8883, or
- Visit www.dec.ny.gov and search for "drumming survey."

BE TICK SAFE!

Ticks can spread disease, but not all bites will make you sick. Deer ticks may carry Lyme disease, the most common tick-borne disease in New York.

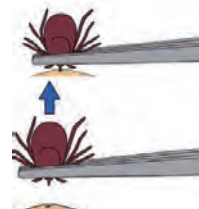


QUESTIONS?

- Contact the NYS Department of Health or your healthcare provider if you have symptoms of fever, rash, body aches, or fatigue after a tick bite.
- See www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/lyme/

TICK REMOVAL

- Using tweezers, grab the tick as close to your skin as possible.
- Pull upward with steady, even pressure.
- Clean the bite area with soap and water, rubbing alcohol, or hydrogen peroxide.



Check yourself, your children, and pets for ticks daily.



ECO Beiber with youth Frank R. and his first turkey shot on the Youth Weekend. This bird was shot on NYS DEC lands in Suffolk County.

Migratory Game Birds

Migratory Game Bird Seasons and Bag Limits

Migratory game bird hunting regulations are set by the federal government in consultation with state agencies.

Consumption of Wild Waterfowl

The New York State Department of Health recommends that you remove the skin and fat of wild waterfowl before cooking, and eat no more than two meals containing waterfowl per month (with the exception of mergansers). Mergansers are fish-eating birds that tend to be the most heavily contaminated waterfowl and should not be eaten.

Recent data indicate that waterfowl residing in the Hudson River between Hudson Falls and Troy have higher PCB levels than waterfowl from other portions of the Hudson River and are likely to have higher PCB levels than waterfowl from other areas of the state. Because PCBs may have a greater effect on young children or an unborn child, it is particularly important for women under 50 and children under 15 to minimize their PCB exposure. For more information visit health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/fish/health_advisories/advice_on_eating_game.htm.

Waterfowl Hunting in Populated Areas

Some excellent waterfowl hunting opportunities occur in shoreline areas of New York State that are becoming more populated and developed. Waterfowl hunters have special privileges in New York State, but please consider the possible concerns that nearby homeowners may have about noise, safety, or invasion of privacy before you go afield. Avoiding such conflicts will help ensure that waterfowl hunting remains an accepted tradition in fast-developing shoreline areas. For more information, go to dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/regulations/avoiding-conflicts-between-hunters-property-owners.

DEC, in cooperation with the South Shore Waterfowlers Association (SSWA), has produced *A Pocket Reference for Police Officers and Waterfowl Hunters* that summarizes the

state laws that pertain to waterfowl hunting in general and includes a code of ethics for waterfowl hunters to help ensure that waterfowl hunting remains a viable recreational opportunity in New York State. For a copy, call 518-402-8883 or email wildlife@dec.ny.gov.

General Regulations

Following is a summary of State and federal rules that apply to the taking, possessing, shipping, transporting, and storing of all migratory game birds in New York State. For more complete information, consult the specific federal (50 CFR Part 20) and State (6 NYCRR Part 2.30) regulations. You can find links to both of these at dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/migratory-game-bird.

Definitions

Migratory game birds are wild ducks, geese, brant, coot, rails, gallinules, woodcock, and snipe. Migratory waterfowl are wild ducks, geese, brant, and coot.

License requirements

All migratory game bird hunters must carry a valid New York State hunting license, except for persons not required to have a hunting license. All migratory game bird hunters must register annually with New York State's Harvest Information Program (HIP) and carry proof of compliance whenever going afield. If you are 16 years or older and you hunt waterfowl, then you also need a federal migratory game bird hunting stamp (duck stamp).



E-STAMP

- E-Stamp is valid for legal hunting requirements and supports vital wildlife habitat conservation.
- After July 1, your E-Stamp purchase will include either a bar code or printable receipt license as your immediate and only permit for the entire 2026–27 hunting season.
- Paper receipt or digital copy must be carried at all times when hunting.
- Physical stamp mailed after March 10.
- To purchase a stamp: <https://duckstamp.com/e-stamp/>

Image © Adam Grimm, used by USFWS with permission

What is a Migratory Game Bird?

Under state and federal laws and regulations, all of the following are considered migratory game birds in New York State:

- All wild ducks, mergansers, geese, and brant (waterfowl)
- All coot, rails, and gallinules (moorhens)
- Woodcock and snipe

Crows are not considered migratory game birds under federal regulations, but most of New York State's migratory game bird hunting regulations apply to crows. You should assume they are the same except where differences are noted.

Mourning doves are considered migratory game birds under federal regulations, but they are not defined as such under New York State law so no hunting season has been established for this species.

Migratory Game Birds

Harvest Information Program (HIP) Registration

All migratory game bird hunters must register annually for HIP through DECALS, DEC's licensing system. Information from this survey helps the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and state wildlife agencies monitor the harvest of migratory game birds and is needed to establish hunting regulations. HIP registration is valid from Aug. 3–Jul. 30 annually. There are two options for registering:

- **Option 1 – Online HIP Registration:**
 - » Go to the DEC Hunting License website: dec.ny.gov/regulatory/permits-licenses/sporting-and-use/sporting/decals
 - » Click on the header at the top of the main page that says “Report Game Harvest/ Register for HIP”
 - » A DECALS login is not required, but you will be prompted to provide your DEC ID and Date of Birth
 - » Click “Search”
 - » The system will then list all previous HIP registrations you have associated with your

DEC ID, indicating whether they have been submitted or are still pending.

- If no results return after pressing the “Search” button, it means you currently do not have a current/valid hunting license and are ineligible for HIP registration.
- » Once you find the current HIP year registration survey, select the dropdown arrow on the right-hand side, and select “Register for HIP”
 - You will be prompted to answer a series of questions pertaining to your hunting activities last year.
- » After answering all required questions, press “Submit.” The system will then save your data and provide your HIP number. This number completes the registration process and proves your participation in HIP. You are required to carry this number with you in some form while migratory bird hunting.
- **Option 2 – HIP Registration via the automated phone system:**
 - » Call 1-866-933-2257
 - » Select the option for “HIP registration”

- » Follow automated instructions.
- » At the end of the call, you will be given your HIP registration number. Migratory game bird hunters are required to carry this number in some form while hunting.

Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp

Each waterfowl hunter 16 years of age or older must carry on his/her person a valid Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (duck stamp) signed in ink across the face. Stamps do not have to be attached to your license. E-stamps, validated as defined in the federal Permanent Electronic Duck Stamp Act of 2013, are also permitted. Duck stamps are not required to hunt coot, rails, gallinules, woodcock, or snipe. Duck stamps are not required of minors 12–15 years of age hunting migratory waterfowl in New York State.

Federal duck stamps are sold at most post offices and many sporting goods stores and cost \$25 each. They may also be ordered by calling 1-800-852-4897. There is a shipping and handling fee for phone or internet orders.

Hunting Hours

Woodcock may be taken from sunrise to sunset. All other migratory game birds may be taken from one-half hour before sunrise until sunset in all hunting zones. Canada geese may be taken until one-half hour after sunset during the Sept. seasons, when all other waterfowl hunting seasons are closed. Otherwise, shooting hours end at sunset. Snow geese may be taken until one-half hour after sunset during Jan. 15–Apr. 15 whenever all other waterfowl hunting seasons are closed (note: extended shooting hours may be repealed prior to the Snow Goose Conservation Order Season; please check our website before going afield).

Non-Toxic Shot Requirement

Non-toxic shot is required for hunting any migratory game bird, except woodcock, everywhere in New York State. Possession or use of shells loaded with shot other than steel, bismuth-tin, iron-tungsten, iron-tungsten-nickel, tungsten-bronze, tungsten-iron-copper-nickel, tungsten-matrix, tungsten-polymer, tungsten-tin-iron, tungsten-tin-bismuth, tungsten-tin-iron-nickel, or other shot approved by the USFWS is strictly prohibited when hunting waterfowl, snipe, rails, or gallinules.

Duck Hunting Blinds

NYS Navigation Law Section 33-b requires that duck blinds placed in the waters of lakes within New York State be prominently marked with the



MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTERS: PROTECT THE GAME, DON'T SKIP HIP

The Harvest Information Program (HIP) is a legally required registration for migratory bird hunters of all ages that helps biologists manage migratory birds.

Migratory game birds include ducks, geese, brant, rails, coots, gallinules, woodcock, and snipe.

<https://dec.ny.gov/regulatory/permits-licenses/sporting-and-use/sporting/hunting-license/harvest-information-program>

Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons and Bag Limits

owner's full name and address. All duck blinds placed in lakes must be removed no later than Mar. 15 annually.

Prohibitions on Methods of Take

No person shall take migratory game birds:

- With a trap, snare, net, rifle, pistol, swivel gun, shotgun larger than 10-gauge, punt gun, battery gun, machine gun, fishhook, poison, drug, explosive, or stupefying substance.
- With a shotgun capable of holding more than three shells, unless it is plugged with a one-piece filler that is incapable of removal without disassembling the gun. This does not apply to the taking of snow geese in any area or zone, or taking of Canada geese during Sept., when all other waterfowl seasons are closed. However, semiautomatic shotguns may not exceed six shells in the magazine and chamber combined, at any time when waterfowl hunting.
- From a sink box (a low-floating device, having a depression affording the hunter a means of concealment beneath the surface of the water).
- From or with the aid or use of a car or other motor-driven land conveyance, or any aircraft, except that paraplegics and single or double amputees of the legs may, with a permit issued by DEC, take from any stationary motor vehicle or stationary motor-driven land conveyance. "Paraplegic" means an individual afflicted with paralysis of the lower half of the body with involvement of both legs, usually due to disease or injury to the spinal cord.
- From or by means of any motorboat or sailboat unless the motor has been completely shut off and/or sail furlled, and its progress has ceased. Motorboats and sailboats under power may be used to retrieve dead or crippled birds; however, crippled birds may not be shot from such craft under power except in the Special Sea Duck Area described in the Hunting Seasons Table.
- By the use or aid of live decoys. All live, tame, or captive ducks and geese shall be removed for a period of 10 consecutive days prior to hunting and confined within an enclosure which substantially reduces the audibility of their calls and totally conceals such tame birds from the sight of migratory waterfowl.
- Using recorded migratory bird calls or sounds or electrically amplified imitations of bird calls.

This does not apply to the taking of snow geese in any area or zone, or taking of Canada geese in Sept., when all other waterfowl seasons are closed.

- By driving, rallying, or chasing birds with any motorized conveyance or any sailboat to put them in the range of hunters.
- By the aid of baiting (placing feed such as corn, wheat, salt, or other feed to constitute a lure or enticement) or on or over any baited area. Hunters should be aware that a baited area is considered to be baited for 10 days after the removal of the bait, and it is not necessary for the hunter to know an area is baited to be in violation. Migratory game birds may be taken on or over standing crops, flooded harvested crop lands, or grain crops properly shocked on the field where grown or grains are found scattered solely as a result of the normal agricultural planting or harvesting.

Military and Veteran Hunting Days

Military veterans or active duty hunters possessing the necessary licenses, HIP registration, and duck stamp, may hunt migratory game birds during two (2) special days in each zone. The daily bag limit is the same as those allowed during the regular hunting season.

In addition to the previously mentioned license requirements for adults hunting migratory game birds, participants must carry one of the following forms of identification afield:

- Active military identification card
- Actively participating Guard or Reservist identification card
- Retired military identification card
- New York State driver's license with Veteran Status
- Form DD214, Certificate of Discharge
- Form DD215, Corrected Certificate of Discharge

Wanton Waste and Possession of Live Birds

No person shall kill or cripple any migratory game bird without making a reasonable effort to retrieve the bird and retain it in their actual custody. Wounded birds reduced to possession shall be killed immediately and included in the daily bag limit.

Field Possession Limit

No more than one daily bag or aggregate daily bag limit of migratory game birds may be possessed or transported, tagged or untagged, at or between the place of taking and:

- Their automobile or principal means of land transportation
- Their personal abode or temporary place of lodging
- Migratory bird preservation facility
- Post office or common-carrier facility

No person shall completely field dress any migratory game bird and then transport the bird from the field. The head or one fully feathered wing must remain attached to all such birds while being transported.

Possession, Tagging, Shipment, and Importation

The possession limit is the maximum number of migratory game birds that any person may possess in total in their automobile or principal means of land transportation, personal abode, or in their name at any migratory bird preservation facility, post office, or common-carrier facility. The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit for all waterfowl species except snow geese.

No person shall give, put, or leave any migratory game birds at any place (other than personal abode) or in the custody of another person for picking, cleaning, processing, shipping, transportation, storage (including temporary storage), or taxidermy services, unless the birds are tagged by the hunter with the following information:

- Hunter's name, address, and signature
- Total number of birds involved, by species
- Dates such birds were killed

For more information on regulations pertaining to possession, tagging, shipment, and importation of legally killed migratory game birds, consult the specific federal and State regulations cited previously.

Caution/Dual Violation

More restrictive regulations may apply to national wildlife refuges and State WMAs open to public hunting. Violation of New York State migratory bird hunting regulations is also a violation of federal regulations.

Woodcock, Crow, Snipe, Rail, and Gallinule Hunting Season Dates, Bag Limits, and Regulations for 2026–2027

Regulations	Woodcock	Crow	Snipe	Virginia & Sora Rails	Gallinules	Clapper & King Rails
Upstate New York ^{1,3}	Oct. 1 – Nov. 14	Sept. 1 – Mar. 31	Sept. 1 – Nov. 9	Sept. 1 – Nov. 9	Sept. 1 – Nov. 9	Closed
Long Island ^{2,3}	Oct. 1 – Nov. 14	Sept. 1 – Mar. 31	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Bag Limit	3/day 9 in possession	None	8/day 24 in possession	8/day 24 in possession	8/day 24 in possession	n/a
Shooting Hours	Sunrise to Sunset	Sunrise to Sunset	1/2-Hr Before Sunrise to Sunset	1/2-Hr Before Sunrise to Sunset	1/2-Hr Before Sunrise to Sunset	n/a
Non-Toxic Shot	NOT Required	NOT Required	Required	Required	Required	n/a
HIP Registration	Required	NOT Required	Required	Required	Required	n/a
Other	Fed Migratory Bird Stamp NOT Required	Hunting on Fri., Sat., Sun. & Mon. ONLY; Fed Migratory Bird Stamp NOT Required; Rifles and electronically amplified bird calls or sounds permitted	Fed Migratory Bird Stamp NOT Required	Fed Migratory Bird Stamp NOT Required	Fed Migratory Bird Stamp NOT Required	n/a

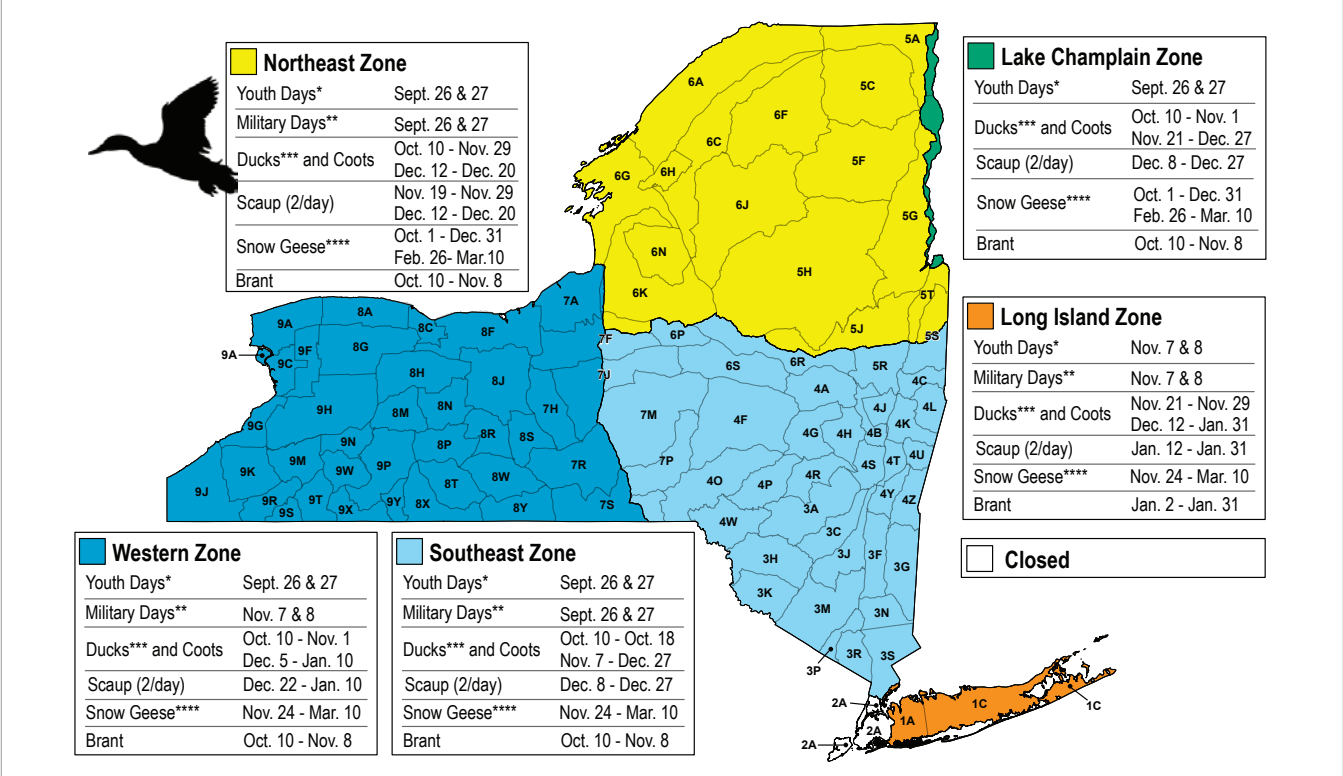
1 Upstate New York includes all of New York State north of the Bronx-Westchester County boundary.

2 Long Island includes all of WMUs 1A and 1C (Nassau and Suffolk counties).

3 Hunting season closed in New York City for all species listed in table; New York City includes all of WMU 2A (Bronx, Kings, Queens, New York, and Richmond counties).

Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons and Bag Limits

2026–2027 Waterfowl Hunting Seasons



Bag Limits		
The daily bag limit is the maximum number of birds of each species that any person may take or possess in the field during any one day. The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit for all migratory game birds except snow geese.		
Species	Daily Limit	Possession Limit
Ducks ^a	6	18
Coot	15	45
Canada Geese ^b	See map	Three times the daily limit—see map page 58
Snow Geese ^b	25	No limit
Brant	1	3

- a The daily limit of 6 ducks includes all mergansers and sea ducks (scoters, eiders, and long-tailed ducks) and may include no harlequin ducks and no more than 4 mallards (2 of which may be hens), 3 wood ducks, 2 black ducks, 3 pintail, 1 scaup (2 scaup are allowed during the 20 days specified above for each zone), 2 redheads, 2 canvasbacks, or 4 sea ducks (including no more than 3 scoters, 3 long-tailed ducks, or 3 eiders and no more than 1 female eider). For all other duck species found in New York, the daily limit is no more than 6.
- b Cackling geese and white-fronted geese may be taken as part of the Canada goose daily and possession limits. Snow geese and Ross' geese may be taken as part of the snow goose limits.
- * Youth Days are additional days for Junior Hunters only. Young hunters, 12–15 years of age, possessing a junior hunting license may hunt ducks, coots, mergansers, Canada geese, and brant on 2 special days in each zone. Daily bag limits for all species are the same as those allowed during the regular season for all species (excludes Sept. Canada goose bag limits). Youth hunters must be accompanied by a licensed (including current HIP registration and duck stamp) adult hunter. The licensed adult hunter serving as a mentor to a junior hunter participating in the special youth migratory game bird hunt days may not carry a firearm, longbow, or crossbow afield. The prohibition does not apply to other hunters in the party who are not mentoring the youth.

- ** Any person who meets the definition of active military or veteran (as defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code) can participate. A list of identification requirements can be found in the migratory game bird regulations and license requirements (dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/migratory-game-bird/regulations). Federal regulations require Lake Champlain zones to have the same dates in both Vermont and New York; Vermont does not offer special military days, thus no dates can be selected. Daily bag limits for all species during the military hunting days are the same as those allowed during the regular season for all species (excludes Sept. Canada goose bag limits).
- *** Crippled sea ducks may be taken under power in the special sea duck area only. This area includes all coastal waters and all waters of rivers and streams in New York State seaward from the first upstream bridge.
- **** Pending regulatory changes to the Spring Conservation Order. For more information on the status of snow geese and the conservation order, please visit DEC's Waterfowl Season Setting page at <https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/migratory-game-bird/waterfowl-season-setting-places-to-hunt>.

PROTECT YOUR WATERS

Clean, Drain, and Dry Your Boat and Gear

Attention boaters: you are required by New York State law to clean, drain, and dry your boat and equipment before using them in a new water body—to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

When you pull your boat out of the water:

- **CLEAN** all visible plant and animal material from your boat, trailer, and other equipment;
- **DRAIN** your boat's bilge, livewell, baitwell, and other water-holding compartments; and
- **DRY** everything completely for five to seven days. If drying isn't possible, visit a decontamination station to disinfect boats and other equipment with hot water that is at least 140 degrees Fahrenheit.

Boaters operating motorized watercraft in the Adirondack Park or within 10 miles of the Blue Line must also possess certification that their vessel has undergone Clean, Drain, and Dry procedures before launching.

To learn more about Clean, Drain, Dry and obtaining certification, visit on.ny.gov/cleandraindry or scan the QR code.

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 56).

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



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Waterfowl Hunting Zone Descriptions

2026–2027 Canada Goose Seasons

For written descriptions of Goose Hunting Areas and Waterfowl Hunting Zones, see pages 57–58.

West Central

Season Dates	Daily Limit
Sept. 1 - Sept. 25	15
Nov. 7 - Dec. 21	3

Northeast

Season Dates	Daily Limit
Sept. 1 - Sept. 25	15
Oct. 24 - Nov. 29	3
Dec. 12 - Dec. 19	3

Lake Champlain

Season Dates	Daily Limit
Sept. 1 - Sept. 25	8
Oct. 10 - Nov. 23	3
Dec. 1 - Jan. 4	5

East Central

Season Dates	Daily Limit
Sept. 1 - Sept. 25	15
Oct. 24 - Nov. 20	3
Dec. 5 - Dec. 21	3

Hudson Valley

Season Dates	Daily Limit
Sept. 1 - Sept. 25	15
Nov. 7 - Dec. 21	3

South

Season Dates	Daily Limit
Sept. 1 - Sept. 25	15
Oct. 24 - Jan. 11	5

New York City

Closed

Western

Season Dates	Daily Limit
Nov. 7 - Feb. 21	8

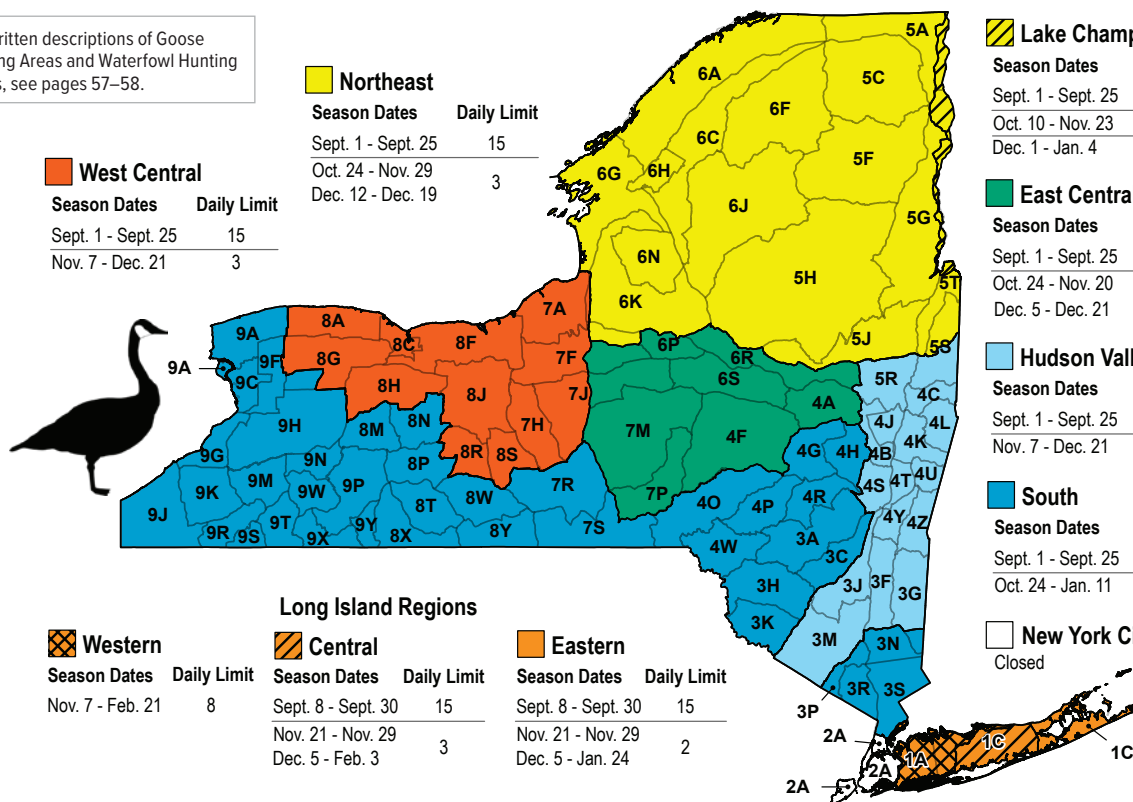
Long Island Regions

Central

Season Dates	Daily Limit
Sept. 8 - Sept. 30	15
Nov. 21 - Nov. 29	3
Dec. 5 - Feb. 3	3

Eastern

Season Dates	Daily Limit
Sept. 8 - Sept. 30	15
Nov. 21 - Nov. 29	2
Dec. 5 - Jan. 24	2



New York State Goose Hunting Areas

See road boundaries at dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/migratory-game-bird/zone-boundary-descriptions.

- The Lake Champlain Goose Hunting Area is the same as the Lake Champlain Waterfowl Hunting Zone (see page 57).
- The Northeast Goose Hunting Area is the same as the Northeastern Waterfowl Hunting Zone (see page 57).
- The West Central Goose Hunting Area consists of the following WMUs: 7A, 7H, 8A, 8C, 8F, 8H, 8J, 8R, and 8S. The West Central Goose Hunting Area also includes: that part of WMU 6K lying west of a continuous line extending along the north shore of the Salmon River from U.S. Route 11 to Interstate Route 81, then south along Route 81 to Route 49; those parts of WMUs 7F and 7J lying west of Route 81; and that part of WMU 8G lying north and east of a continuous line extending along the New York State Thruway from Crittenden-Murrays Corners Road (near the Erie-Genesee county line) to Exit 48 in Batavia, then south along Route 98 to Route 20.
- The East Central Goose Hunting Area consists of the following WMUs: 4A, 4F, 6P, 6R, 6S, 7M, and 7P. The East Central Goose Hunting Area also includes those parts of WMUs 7F and 7J lying south of Route 31 and east of Route 81.
- The Hudson Valley Goose Hunting Area consists of the following WMUs: 3F, 3J, 3M, 4B, 4C, 4J, 4K, 4L, 4S, 4T, 4U, 4Y, 4Z, 5R; that part of WMU 5S lying south of a continuous line extending east along Route 29 to Route 22, north along Route 22 to Washington County Route 153, then east along Route 153 to the New York-Vermont boundary; and that part of WMU 3G lying in Dutchess County.
- The South Goose Hunting Area consists of the following WMUs: 3A, 3C, 3H, 3K, 3N, 3P, 3R, 4G, 4H, 4O, 4P, 4R, 4W, 7R, 7S, 8M, 8N, 8P, 8T, 8W, 8X, 8Y, 9A, 9C, 9F, 9G, 9H, 9J, 9K, 9M, 9N, 9P, 9R, 9S, 9T, 9W, 9X, and 9Y. The South Goose Hunting Area also includes: that part of WMU 8G lying south and west of a continuous line extending along the New York State Thruway from Crittenden-Murrays Corners Road (near the Erie-Genesee county line) to Exit 48 in Batavia, then south along State Route 98 to State Route 20; that part of WMU 3G lying in Putnam County; and that part of WMU 3S lying north of Route 1-95.
- The Western Long Island Goose Hunting Area is that area of Westchester County and its tidal waters southeast of Interstate Route 95 and that area of Nassau and Suffolk counties lying west of a continuous line extending due south from the New York-Connecticut boundary to the northernmost end of Sound Road (just east of Wading River Marsh); then south on Sound Road to North Country Road; then west on North Country Road to Randall Road; then south on Randall Road to Route 25A, then west on Route 25A to Sunken Meadow Parkway; then south on Sunken Meadow Parkway to the Sagtikos State Parkway; then south on the Sagtikos Parkway to the Robert Moses State Parkway; then south on the Robert Moses Parkway to its southernmost end; then due south to international waters.
- The Central Long Island Goose Hunting Area is that area of Suffolk County lying between the Western and Eastern Long Island Goose Hunting areas, as defined above and below.
- The Eastern Long Island Goose Hunting Area is that area of Suffolk County lying east of a continuous line extending due south from the New York-Connecticut boundary to the northernmost end of Roanoke Avenue in the Town of Riverhead, south on Roanoke Avenue (which becomes County Route 73) to State Route 25, west on Route 25 to Peconic Avenue, south on Peconic Avenue to County Route (CR) 104 (Riverleigh Avenue), south on CR 104 to CR 31 (Old Riverhead Road), south on CR 31 to Oak Street, south on Oak Street to Potunk Lane, then west on Stevens Lane, then south on Jessup Avenue (in Westhampton Beach) to Dune Road (CR 89), then due south to international waters.

Furbearer Hunting

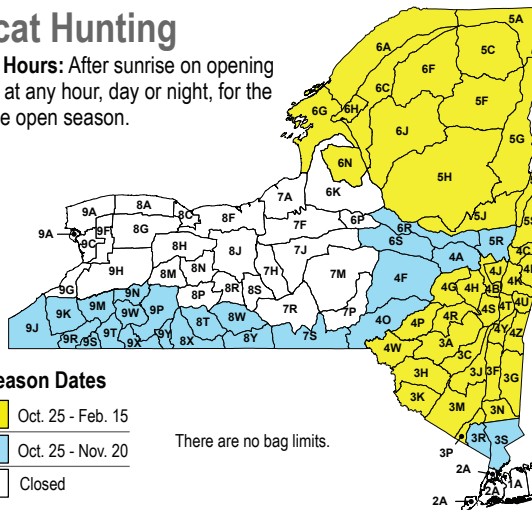
General Regulations

To hunt furbearers, you must possess a resident or non-resident hunting license. A trapping license does not allow you to hunt furbearers. Furbearers may be hunted with a bow, crossbow, or firearm as described below.

- You may hunt red and gray fox, coyote, bobcat, raccoon, skunk, weasel, and opossum anywhere in the state with an open season.
- If you take a bobcat, it must be tagged and sealed.
- You may use a call, including an electronic call.
- Mink may only be hunted in the Southern Zone with a firearm not larger than .22 caliber during their open trapping season. Mink may not be hunted with a firearm in the Northern Zone.
- Muskrat may only be hunted on Lake Champlain during the open trapping season with a firearm not larger than .22 caliber.
- You may not hunt from any motor vehicle, including an ATV or snowmobile.
- Except as noted above, you may hunt furbearers using any handgun, shotgun, muzzleloading rifle, bow, crossbow, or air gun.

Bobcat Hunting

Hunting Hours: After sunrise on opening day; and at any hour, day or night, for the rest of the open season.



If you take a bobcat you must:

- Complete a furbearer possession tag, **AND**
- Get the pelt or unskinned animal sealed.

Weasel, Opossum, Skunk, Raccoon, and Fox Hunting

Long Island and NYC: Nov. 1–Feb. 25

All other areas of New York:
Oct. 25–Feb. 15

There are no bag limits for these species. Hunting Hours: After sunrise on opening day; and at any hour, day or night, for the rest of the hunting season. Weasel may only be hunted from sunrise to sunset.



Coyote Hunting

Statewide except Long Island and New York City: Oct. 1–Mar. 28

There are no bag limits for coyotes. They may be hunted during the day or night.



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Possession and Use of Rifles for Hunting Furbearers

- Is **any deer season open** in the location you wish to hunt (including archery, muzzleloading, regular, late, and Focus Area)? (page 27)
 - If **NO**, you may use any caliber rimfire or centerfire rifle for hunting furbearers.
 - If **YES**, can deer be hunted with rifles in that location during the regular season? (page 26)
 - If **YES**, you may use any caliber rimfire or centerfire rifle for hunting furbearers during any open deer season.
 - If **NO**, you may only possess afield rimfire rifles .22-caliber or smaller, or centerfire rifles **LESS THAN** .22 caliber (.204, .17, etc.) during any open deer season. Once all deer seasons are closed, the restriction ends, except:
- You may **NEVER** possess a rifle afield in Westchester, Nassau, and Suffolk counties.
- In the Northern Zone, it is illegal to carry a rifle larger than .22 caliber rimfire (or .22-caliber or larger centerfire rifles) at any time if accompanied by a dog, except when coyote hunting.

Hunting Furbearers at Night

- Spotlights, night vision, and thermal and laser devices are permitted for furbearer hunting. They may be attached to the firearm. All laws pertaining to the use of a spotlight apply.
- Hunters should consult with local government officials for any laws that may prohibit the discharge of firearms at night.

Report Your Furbearer Sightings!

DEC wants to learn more about the occurrence of various furbearers throughout New York State. Reporting any observations of bobcats, otters, fishers, weasels, gray foxes, and snowshoe hare help DEC biologists better understand the distribution and behavior of these elusive mammals. Go to <https://dec.ny.gov/nature/animals-fish-plants/biodiversity-species-conservation/citizen-science/furbearer-sighting-surveys> or click on the 'Furbearer Public Sighting Survey' link in the Info section of the HuntFishNY app to report your sightings. You can even upload pictures and videos. Thank you for your help!

Distinguishing Wolves from Coyotes

Wolves

Wolves are very rare in New York State, with only three confirmed in the past 25 years, including one harvested by a coyote hunter in 2021. Wolves are protected in NYS as an endangered species. They can be distinguished from coyotes by their larger size, typically weighing between 70–100 pounds and measuring over 2 feet tall at the shoulder. Wolves have proportionally small, rounded ears and a shorter, blockier snout than coyotes. Their feet are larger, with tracks measuring about 5 inches long by 4 inches wide.

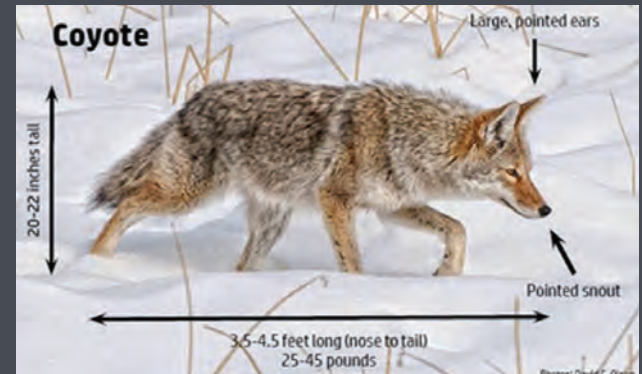
Gray Wolf



Coyotes

Eastern coyotes are common in New York, found throughout the State. There are regulated hunting and trapping seasons for coyotes in NYS. Eastern coyotes have a mix of coyote, wolf, and dog ancestry and are larger in size (about 40 pounds, on average) than coyotes west of the Mississippi. They are smaller than wolves, rarely weighing more than 50 pounds and standing less than 2 feet tall at the shoulder. Coyotes have long, narrow snouts that end in a point. Their ears are large relative to the head and are pointed in shape. Coyotes have smaller feet than wolves; their tracks typically measure 3 inches long by 2 inches wide. If you have a canine in a trap that is over 4.5 feet in length and is over 50 pounds, contact DEC law enforcement (1-844-332-3267) before dispatching the animal.

Coyote



Furbearer Trapping

Definition of Trapping

To trap means to take, kill, or capture wildlife with traps, deadfalls, and other devices commonly used to take wildlife, including the shooting or killing of lawfully trapped animals. It also includes all related activities such as placing, setting, staking, or checking traps or assisting another person with these activities. You do not need a hunting license to shoot a trapped animal.

Other Definitions

- **Public Highway:** The traveled portion of a public highway. Culverts, drainage ditches, and the area under bridges are not considered the traveled portion of a public highway.
- **Carcass:** The body or parts thereof, meat, organs or viscera of an animal, including fish. Feathers (including feathers with attached skin or entire bird wings), hair (with or without skin or hide), and bones that include no attached meat, organs, or viscera, are excluded from this definition.
- **Suspension:** This term applies to animals fully suspended in the air by means of the trap anchoring system (typically a chain, cable, or wire). It does not apply to traps set in water or to traps that are directly and firmly attached to an elevated structure, such as a tree.
- **Restraining trap:** A device used to capture and restrain a mammal. These traps include leg-gripping traps (foothold traps), foot encapsulating traps, and cage or box traps.
- **Foot encapsulating trap:** A trap with the following mechanical attributes: The triggering and restraining mechanisms are enclosed within a housing; the triggering and restraining mechanisms are only accessible through a single opening when set; the opening does not exceed 2 inches in diameter; and the trap has a swivel-mounted anchoring system.
- **Cage or box trap:** A type of restraining trap that fully encloses a captured animal within wood, wire, plastic, or metal.

Legal Traps

- You must put your name and address or your DEC customer identification number (see your hunting or trapping license) on all your traps.
- Foothold traps larger than 4 inches set on land must have a pan tension device and be covered when set.
- Teeth are not allowed on foothold traps.

Place your name and address or Customer ID # on all your traps.



- On land, foothold traps must be 5¾ inches or smaller (inside jaw spread). For information on how to correctly measure traps, see page 63.
- During beaver or otter season, foothold traps up to 7¼ inches are allowed if set under water.
- When the beaver or otter season is closed, foothold traps set in water may not be larger than 5¾ inches.
- A foothold trap larger than 7¼ inches is never legal to use.
- Body-gripping traps more than 7½ inches may never be used on land.
- Body-gripping traps more than 7½ inches may only be used in water during an open beaver or otter season.
- Snares may not be used for trapping.
- Box or cage traps are legal for all species.
- You may not use a cage trap that is designed to take more than one muskrat at a setting.

Trapping Methods

Checking traps

- In the Southern Zone: You must check traps once in each 24-hour period.
- In the Northern Zone, follow these rules:
 - » **WMU 5C, 5F, 5G, 5H, 5J, 6F, 6J, and 6N:** Visit once in each 48-hour period
 - » **WMU 5A, 6A, 6C, 6G, 6H, and 6K:**
 - **Traps set in water during the open season for beaver, otter, mink and muskrat:** Visit once in each 48-hour period
 - **Body-gripping traps set on land:** Visit once in each 48-hour period
 - **Restraining traps:** Visit once in each 24-hour period

Use of carcasses as bait

Any carcass, as defined above, used as bait and placed or used in conjunction with a foothold trap shall be completely covered at the time the trap is set or visited. Coverings shall include but not be limited to brush, branches, leaves, soil, snow, water, or enclosures constructed of wood, metal, wire, plastic, or natural materials, and must completely cover the carcass so that it is not visible from directly above.

Land trapping

- You may not set a trap in such a manner that it causes a captured animal to be fully suspended in the air.
- In the Central Adirondacks, body-gripping traps set on land may not be set with bait or lure when the fisher and/or marten seasons are closed.

Water trapping

- You may set a trap in a permanent body of water only when the mink, muskrat, otter, or beaver season is open.
- You may not disturb a muskrat house or den.
- You may not set a trap on or within 5 feet of a muskrat house.

Permit Requirements for Marten

A free special permit is still required to trap marten in New York State. To receive a permit, scan the QR code below or visit dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/trapping/regulations#Marten. You will need the following information:

- Name
- Mailing Address
- DEC ID # (from your trapping license)
- Phone number of email address



You can also apply by phone at 518-623-1240.

Adopt Trapping Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Trapping BMPs are scientifically-researched recommendations for traps and trapping systems used to capture furbearers in the U.S. Benefits of using BMPs include:

- Using devices that improve efficiency, selectivity, and the welfare of trapped animals.
- Instilling public confidence in and maintaining public support of trapping.

To view species-specific BMPs and a searchable database that provides information on traps that meet BMP criteria, scan the QR code or visit dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/trapping/best-management-practices.



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Furbearer Trapping

Land or water trapping

- You may use any legal method to kill a trapped animal. You do not need a hunting license to use a firearm to kill a legally trapped animal if you are 16 years or older. Junior trappers (ages 12–15) can only use a firearm if they also possess a hunting license and are accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or person with written permission from a parent or legal guardian.
- You may not set or stake a trap prior to 7:00 AM on opening day.
- You are not allowed to set a trap within 100 feet of a house, school, playground, or church unless you have permission from the owner of the land where the trap is set.
- You may not set a trap on a public road. You are allowed to set a trap in a culvert or ditch unless the property is posted or the landowner does not allow trapping.

Trapping near beaver dams and lodges

- You may not disturb a beaver lodge or beaver dam.
- You may not set a trap on or within 15 feet of a beaver dam, den or house, measured at ice or water level, except under the following conditions:
 - » during an open otter season, traps of any legal size may be set on or within 15 feet of a beaver dam, but not on or within 15 feet of a beaver den or house;
 - » during an open or closed otter season, any of the following traps may be set on or within 15 feet of a beaver dam, den, or house:
 - body-gripping trap that measures less than 5.5 inches,
 - foot-encapsulating trap,
 - foothold trap that measures 4¾ inches or less,
 - cage or box trap.

By limiting the trap sizes that are usable on beaver dams, this regulation provides opportunities for trappers while minimizing the accidental capture of otter.

Pelt Sealing

Otter, bobcat, fisher, and marten must have a plastic seal attached to the pelt or unskinned animal before:

- It is sold or ownership is transferred to another person, or
- It is mounted or tanned, or
- It leaves New York State, or
- Ten days have passed since the close of the season where the fur was taken.

The plastic pelt seals can be removed when the pelt is processed for taxidermy, tanning, or manufacturing.

How to get your pelts sealed: a two-step process

- **Step 1:** Fill out your furbearer possession tag.
 - » A possession tag must be filled out for each animal you take.

Reminders on Pelt Sealing

All bobcat, fisher, otter, and marten need to be sealed within 10 days after the close of the season in the WMU where the fur was taken. Some things to keep in mind to make the pelt sealing process go smoothly:

- Contact your local wildlife office to make pelt sealing arrangements prior to showing up.
- When freezing an unsealed pelt, make sure that the face is on the outside and easily accessible.

- » Possession tags must be filled out immediately after you reach your motor vehicle, camp, or home, whichever comes first.
- » Possession tags must stay with the animal or pelt at all times, but they do not need to be attached to the pelt.
- » Furbearer possession tags can be obtained from your Regional Wildlife Office (see page 6) or at dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/trapping/regulations#Seals.
- **Step 2:** Get your pelt sealed (see below).
 - » A completed furbearer possession tag must be submitted to obtain a plastic pelt seal.
 - » You can give your pelts to another person (other than a taxidermist) so he or she can get the pelts sealed or get them skinned. You must give that person your trapping license or a copy of your license and your completed possession tags while he or she has your pelts.
 - » Only authorized DEC representatives can attach the plastic pelt seals to otter, bobcat, fisher, or marten.
 - » Call a Regional Wildlife Office (see page 6) to make arrangements to get your otter, bobcat, fisher, or marten sealed. Seals for these species cannot be sent through the mail.
 - » If the plastic pelt seal is broken or damaged, contact your Regional Wildlife Office for a replacement seal.

Buying and Selling Fur

- Species requiring a pelt seal cannot be bought or sold or given to another person unless they have the plastic pelt seal attached to the animal. All other species may be bought, sold, and transported without restriction.
- Furbearers may be bought or sold either skinned or unskinned.
- People who buy fur do not need a fur buyer's license in New York State.

Rights of Trappers

- No one may disturb a trap lawfully set by another person.
- No one may remove a lawfully trapped animal from another person's trap.
- No one may harass a trapper while he or she is trapping.

- If freezing an animal whole with the intention of mounting it, you can insert a stick or similar object through a pre-made hole prior to freezing for easier sealing. Otherwise, the animal will need to be thawed enough to insert the seal through the foot or eye. Completely frozen carcasses cannot be sealed.
- For more tips on sealing, review the second page of the Furbearer Possession Tag: <https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/trapping/regulations#Furbearer> or contact your regional office.

License Responsibilities

- A license is not transferable and can be used only by the person to whom it was issued.
- A license to trap does not give the holder any right to go on private property without permission of the landowner.
- It is illegal to refuse to show your license on demand to a law enforcement officer or the owner, lessee, or person in control of the lands (or their designees) while on their property.

Trapping License Exceptions

All residents must have a valid trapping license in their possession except:

- Resident owners primarily engaged in farming, lessees, and members of their immediate families do not need a trapping license when trapping on farm lands they are occupying and cultivating, for bobcat, coyote, fox, mink, muskrat, raccoon, opossum, weasel, skunk, and unprotected wildlife that may be lawfully taken by trapping (**note: beaver, otter, fisher, and marten are not included**).
- Indigenous Peoples living on a reservation do not need a trapping license while trapping on reservation lands.

Incidental and Accidental Captures of Trapped Animals

There are no provisions in the Environmental Conservation Law allowing trappers to possess animals that are taken outside of the open trapping season.

You must attempt to release any animals that are accidentally captured when the season is closed or if the area is not open for trapping that species.

If the animal is injured to the extent you believe it will not survive, humanely dispatch it. If you are not sure, contact a DEC Regional Wildlife Office or ECO for assistance.

When you find an unintentionally captured animal dead in the trap, or when you must

dispatch an unintentionally captured animal due to a serious injury, you may remove it and lay it in the vicinity of the trap. There are no legal provisions for you to keep it, and you may not possess it even to take it back to your vehicle without permission from DEC.

DEC seeks information on all accidentally taken bobcat, otter, fisher, and marten, as well as other species of unusual nature. If the animal is dead, a DEC biologist will want to collect the carcass. Using the location and carcass data, biologists will be able to track the status of these species and study the age and reproductive data from the individual. The pelts from these carcasses will also be utilized in our trapper education classes.

Remember, you must contact the Regional Wildlife Office or an ECO as soon as possible to report the catch. You will receive instructions on what to do and information to provide.

Possession of Road-Killed Furbearers

If the trapping or hunting season is open for the species in a WMU, you may keep a dead furbearer found on roads within that WMU.

The requirements for possessing road-killed furbearers are the same as for trapping and hunting. For example, if you find a road-killed bobcat in an area with an open bobcat season, you can possess it if you have a hunting or trapping license, but you must fill out a furbearer possession tag and have the pelt sealed.

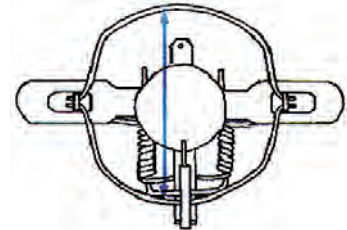
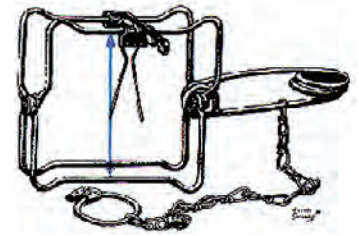
How to Measure a Trap

How to measure a body-gripping trap:

Measure the inside distance between the outer frames of the trap. The addition of one or more bars to the inside of the frame does not change the way these traps are measured. The measurement is still the MAXIMUM distance as shown in the top picture.

How to measure a foothold trap:

Measure the inside distance between the jaws excluding the gripping surface as shown. If the jaws have inside laminations, the measurement is the inside distance between the laminations. If the trap has double jaws, measure the inside distance between the outer jaws.



5¾" or less on land,
7¼" or less under water

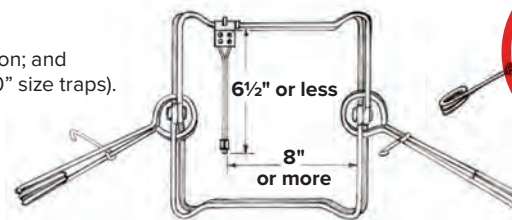
Trigger Regulations for Beaver Trappers

This regulation applies if you:

- Trap in a WMU in the Southern Zone during a closed otter season; and
- Use a body-gripping trap larger than 8½ inches (these are "330" size traps).

1. **Body-gripping trap with off-set parallel trigger:**
2. **Example of non-legal vs. legal trigger brackets:**

Non-legal: V-notch, four-way trigger
Legal: square-notch, two-way trigger



Two-way
tension
adjustable
(legal)

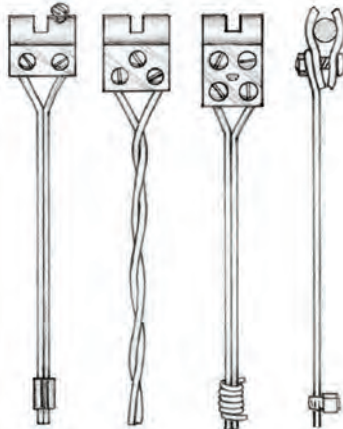


Two-way
non-tension
adjustable
(legal)



Four-way
trigger
(not legal)

3. **Examples of acceptable parallel triggers:**



4. **Tension-adjustable triggers and trigger stops are no longer required.**

The trigger must be 6½" or less.

Recommended tension: 8 to 12 oz.

Trigger wires must be joined together.

NOTE:

1. You can bait these traps in any manner. However, the trap must have all of the features noted above.
2. There is no exception for traps set under ice; traps set under ice, whether baited or not, must have all of the design features noted above.
3. There is no tension requirement. However, DEC research showed that 8 to 12 oz. of tension works best for protecting otter and catching beaver.

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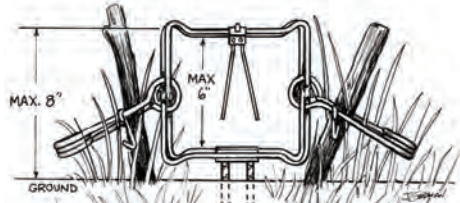
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hunting/hunter-education](http://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/hunter-education)

Furbearer Trapping

Regulations for Body-Gripping Traps Set on Land

Body-gripping traps set on land shall not be within 100 feet of a public trail except on Wildlife Management Areas.



A body-gripping trap measuring less than 5½ inches may be set in any manner **with or without the use of bait**. Body-gripping traps measuring 5½ inches to 6 inches, set without the use of bait, must be set so that no part of the trap is 8 inches or more above the ground. Body-gripping traps measuring more than 6 inches to 7½ inches may never be set in this manner.

NOTE: During a closed season for fisher and/or marten in the Northern Zone, body-gripping traps set on land may not be set with bait or lure.

Body-gripping traps 5½ inches to 7½ inches set **with the use of bait, lure, or other attractants** may only be used as follows:

✓ Four or more feet off the ground

OR

✓ In a container of the following design:

- Trap recessed minimum of 18 inches
- Opening height and width 10 inches or less

OR

✓ In a container of the following design:

- Only one entrance, facing the ground
- Container set so entrance is no more than 6 inches from ground
- Trap recessed minimum of 4 inches

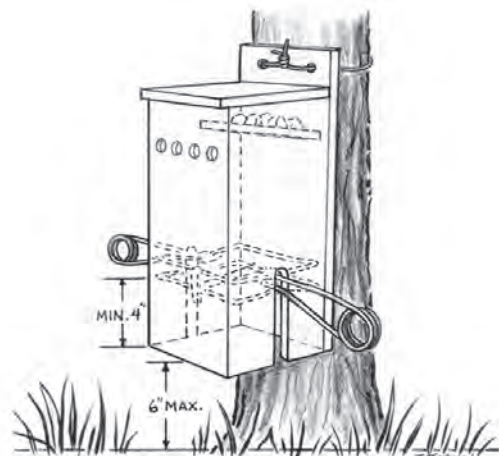
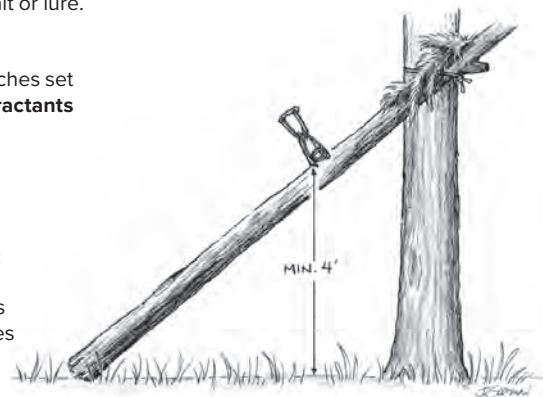
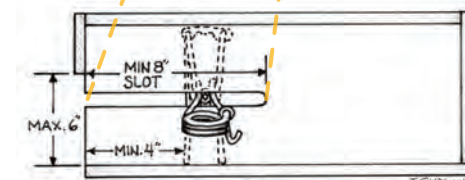
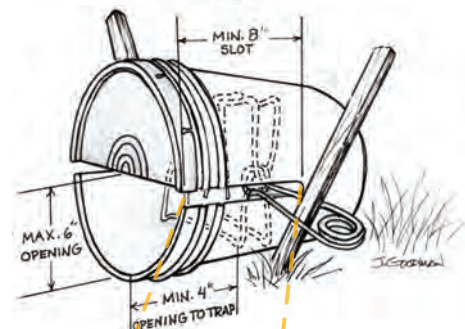
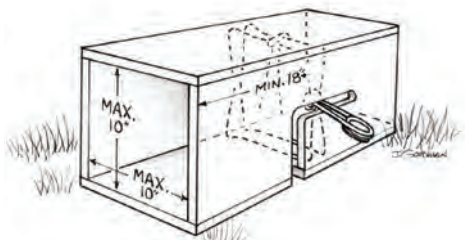
OR

✓ In a container of the following design:

- Opening height 6 inches or less
- Eight-inch minimum spring notches
- Trap recessed minimum of 4 inches

You may also build an enclosure of natural materials (e.g., logs or rocks)

- Opening height 6 inches or less
- Trap recessed minimum of 8 inches



Setting Trapping Seasons for Fishers in New York

The return of fishers to western New York is one of the state's greatest wildlife recovery stories. Once restricted to northern and eastern parts of the state, fishers can now be found throughout upstate New York. Research by DEC shows the population has continued to grow in recent years, even after a limited trapping season was introduced in parts of western New York, prompting an evaluation of existing trapping seasons.

To better understand trapper perspectives, DEC partnered with Cornell University's Center for Conservation Social Sciences to survey more than 7,000 licensed trappers. Trappers consistently identified seasons that overlap peak pelt quality, maximize opportunity (such as longer seasons), and support strong fisher populations as the key factors influencing their satisfaction with fisher trapping seasons. Trappers also valued avoiding overlap with deer seasons, but it was generally less important to them.

DEC biologists combined these insights with long-term biological data on fisher populations to evaluate season options that balance both biological goals and trapper preferences. The updated regulations expand opportunity by opening additional areas to fisher trapping and extending seasons in central and western New York. Seasons have also been adjusted later into the year to better align with when pelts are at their best.

To view the new seasons, see page 65.



To learn more about how these decisions were made, scan the QR code.



Fisher & Marten Trapping



To trap marten, you also need a free permit from a Regional Wildlife Office.

Season Dates

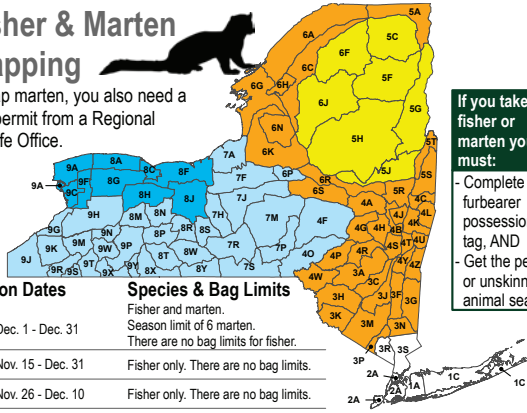
Dec. 1 - Dec. 31	Fisher and marten.
Nov. 15 - Dec. 31	Fisher only. There are no bag limits.
Nov. 26 - Dec. 10	Fisher only. There are no bag limits.
Dec. 5 - Dec. 10	Fisher only. There are no bag limits.
Closed	Fisher and marten.

Species & Bag Limits

Fisher and marten.
Season limit of 6 marten.
There are no bag limits for fisher.

If you take a fisher or marten you must:

- Complete a furbearer possession tag, AND
- Get the pelt or unskinned animal sealed.



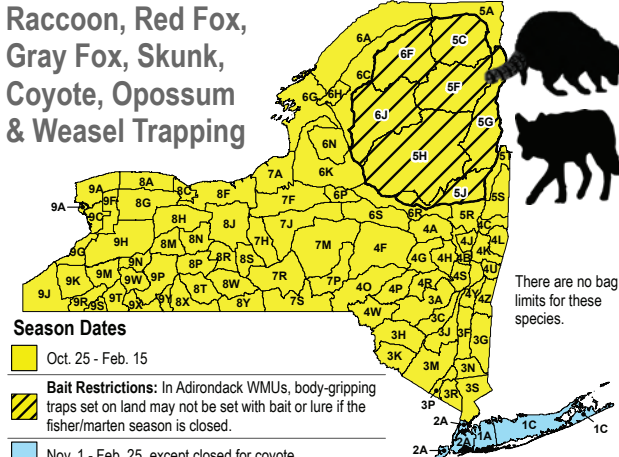
Raccoon, Red Fox, Gray Fox, Skunk, Coyote, Opossum & Weasel Trapping



There are no bag limits for these species.

Season Dates

Oct. 25 - Feb. 15	
Bait Restrictions: In Adirondack WMUs, body-gripping traps set on land may not be set with bait or lure if the fisher/marten season is closed.	
Nov. 1 - Feb. 25, except closed for coyote	



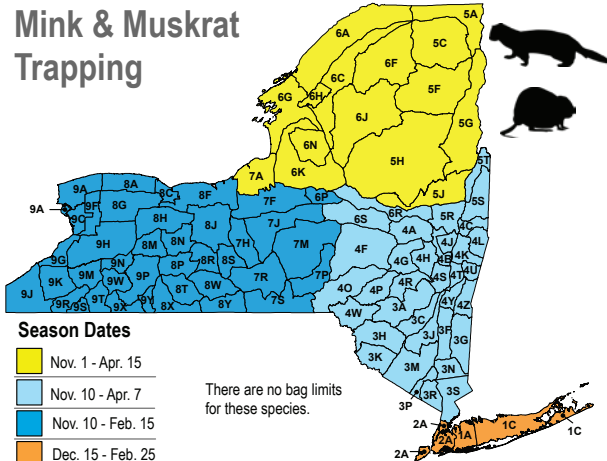
Mink & Muskrat Trapping



There are no bag limits for these species.

Season Dates

Nov. 1 - Apr. 15	
Nov. 10 - Apr. 7	
Nov. 10 - Feb. 15	
Dec. 15 - Feb. 25	



Bobcat Trapping

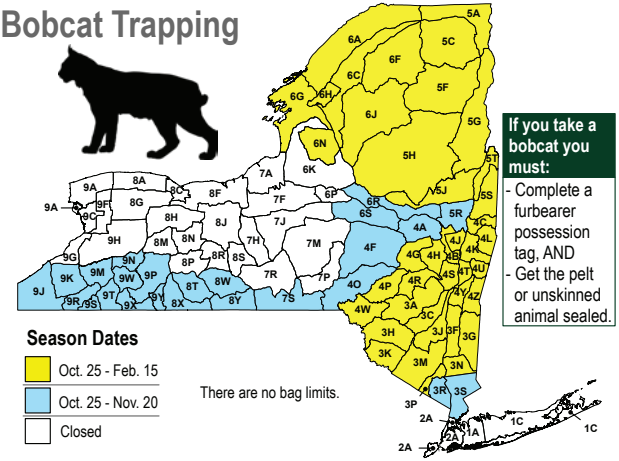


If you take a bobcat you must:

- Complete a furbearer possession tag, AND
- Get the pelt or unskinned animal sealed.

Season Dates

Oct. 25 - Feb. 15	
Oct. 25 - Nov. 20	There are no bag limits.
Closed	



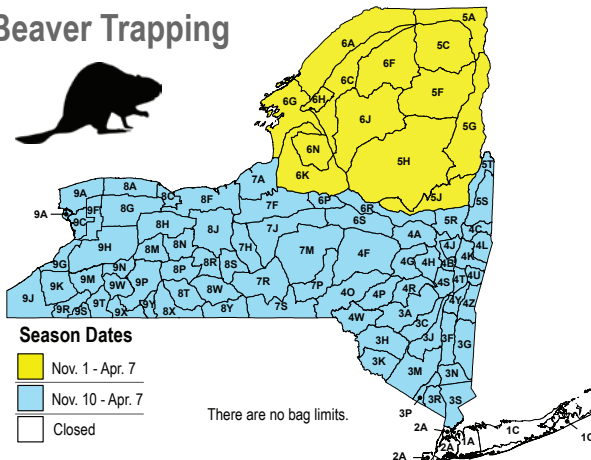
Beaver Trapping



There are no bag limits.

Season Dates

Nov. 1 - Apr. 7	
Nov. 10 - Apr. 7	
Closed	



River Otter Trapping

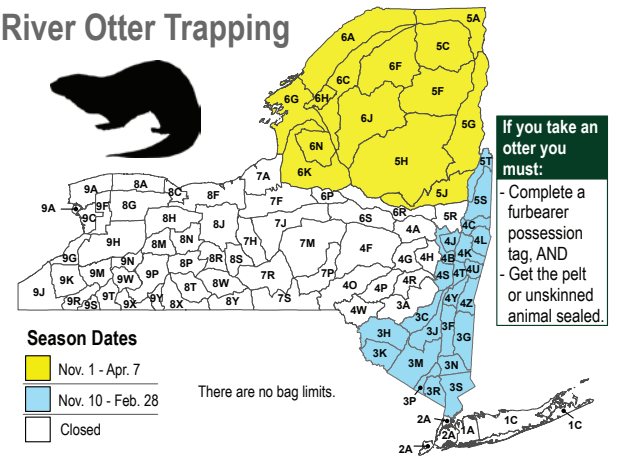


If you take an otter you must:

- Complete a furbearer possession tag, AND
- Get the pelt or unskinned animal sealed.

Season Dates

Nov. 1 - Apr. 7	
Nov. 10 - Feb. 28	There are no bag limits.
Closed	



A Tradition with Purpose: Trappers and Wildlife Management in New York



Licensed trapper Barry R. poses with DEC staff behind a chemically immobilized bobcat. Barry captured the bobcat as part of a DEC/Cornell University research project. The bobcat was outfitted with a GPS collar to allow biologists to follow its movements and released unharmed.

If you've ever spent time with a trapper, you know that they are among the most observant people in nature, recognizing that species not often observed are leaving clues all around us. If we look closely enough, we can learn valuable information about these secretive species. These observations sometimes alert wildlife managers to emerging wildlife issues more quickly than we'd notice on our own.

You may not realize that trappers have a long history of making substantial contributions to wildlife management in New York. Trappers have been integral to the restoration of river otters and fishers in the State. Fishers were brought back to the Catskill Mountains in the 1970s thanks to efforts by trappers to live-capture and move animals from the Adirondacks and Vermont. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, trappers captured nearly 280 river otters in eastern NY. These otters were then released into suitable habitat in the western part of the State. Today, both these species are thriving across New York.

Trappers continue to contribute to furbearer research today. They've been critical to the success of two major DEC research projects in recent years – one investigating survival and reproduction of fishers in Northern New York and another looking at bobcat movement and population status. Thanks to trappers, researchers were able to collar nearly 200 fishers and 16 bobcats to better understand these elusive species. Trappers have also submitted samples from several harvested furbearer species, which has allowed us to monitor age and health parameters including testing fishers and gray foxes for rodenticides and other contaminants, completing a diet analysis of fishers, and age monitoring of bobcat, fisher, and marten.

Let's put our hands together for trappers – thank you for your contributions to wildlife management!

Interested in other furbearer-related work DEC is doing?
Check out our annual Furbearer Newsletter by scanning the QR code.



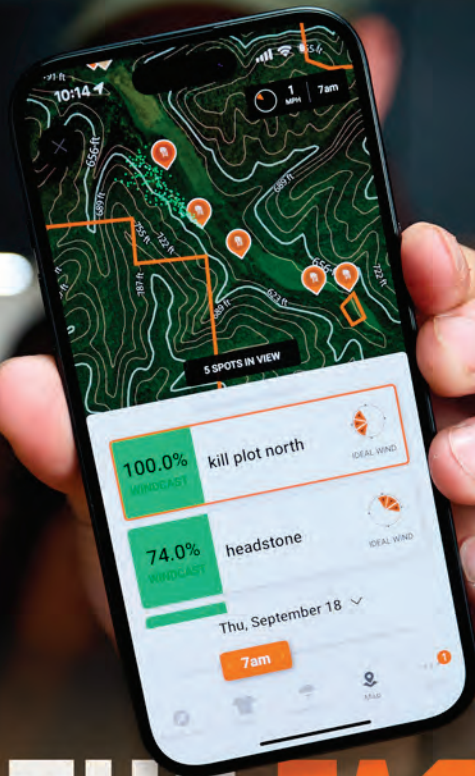
Hunters and Trappers as Conservationists – Public Lands

Hunters and trappers have been leading the way on wildlife conservation for the last century, and the conservation of lands and habitats is no exception. From the land ethic philosophy famously described in Aldo Leopold's seminal work *A Sand County Almanac* to today's world in which the sale of sporting licenses and hunting equipment contribute millions of dollars annually to the stewardship of public lands across the country, hunters and trappers are, and have long been, a meaningful part of land conservation and habitat protection in North America. Since time immemorial, humans have shaped our landscapes and ecosystems through hunting, trapping, and land use, and while our influence on land and habitats today may look somewhat different than it did millennia ago, hunters and trappers remain an integral, inseparable part of the ecology of NY's public lands.

From deliberate to incidental, hunters and trappers have many important functions and roles related to land conservation. At a foundational level, the mere existence of a public lands system in North America and NY is in part due to strong advocacy and support from hunters and trappers. These original conservationists were among the first to understand the connection between habitat protection and wildlife conservation, and to this day, hunters and trappers continue to provide critical support for land protection, habitat management, and access for many recreational activities, not just hunting and trapping. Through their purchases of sporting licenses, Habitat Conservation and Access Stamps, and firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment (which includes a federal excise tax that is redistributed back to state wildlife agencies through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program),

hunters and trappers serve as key financial supporters for land acquisition, habitat management and restoration, and access infrastructure on NY's Wildlife Management Area system and beyond. Through organized public land workdays, Volunteer Stewardship Agreements, and sponsored youth hunts, hunters and trappers also directly contribute thousands of volunteer hours and dollars each year across the state to make our public land system more welcoming for other users and wildlife. For example, during a 2025 event on Rattlesnake Hill WMA in Region 8 that was jointly sponsored by DEC and the National Deer Association (NDA) as part of NDA's Public Land Initiative, volunteers worked to release oak regeneration from competition with other tree species, helping to set the stage for a future forest that will provide valuable habitat for decades to come. And on a less visible level, the sustainable harvest of deer and furbearers from public lands helps to maintain healthy forests, protect water temperatures in headwater brook trout streams, and increase reproductive success for ground-nesting birds including turkeys, ruffed grouse, and grassland-dependent songbirds.

As a hunter and/or trapper, you can rightfully take great pride in your role as a conservationist. You stand with countless previous generations of hunters and trappers who have positively influenced and contributed to the conservation and stewardship of our lands and habitats. From advocating for the original protection of these lands to funding modern habitat restoration projects, hunters and trappers have long been providing both obvious and unseen support for wildlife and habitat on NY's incredible state land system.



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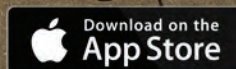


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New York State & Environmental Conservation Police

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). "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 and carcass tags, if the hunter is using e-tags.

Q: I'm using an app that shows land owned by New York 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. You can always contact your local ECO to determine legality (page 69).

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. If a portion of a DEC property is posted as being open to target shooting, you may not damage live trees and must remove all litter.

Q: When do tree stands have to be removed from state-managed lands?

A: On DEC-managed lands, tree stands (including scaffolds, raised platforms, ladders, steps, and other devices to assist in climbing) labeled with a name and address or DEC ID number may be left overnight but must be removed at the end of the hunting season. Tree stands (including ladders and steps) may not injure the tree.

Q: When do duck blinds have to be removed?

A: Hunting blinds placed in navigable waters must be labeled with the owner's name and address then removed from navigable waters no later than Mar. 15 each year.

Q: When waterfowl hunting, how far offshore are you allowed to anchor down? Is this considered trespassing?

A: Where a waterfowl hunter can anchor varies depending on the location. Ultimately, it is the hunter's responsibility to ensure they can legally anchor and hunt where they are discharging their firearm. In most non-tidal areas, the property boundary is the mean low water mark and hunters can legally anchor below this mark. However, the hunter should confirm the underwater lands are within the public domain. Most counties now have publicly accessible property boundary maps online. In tidal areas, the public domain typically extends to the mean high-water mark.

Q: Can I waterfowl hunt on a stream designated and posted as a NYSDEC "Public Fishing Stream"?

A: No, Public Fishing easements are for fishing only. Access for other recreational activities would require landowner permission.

Q: May I use a remote camera on public land to monitor wildlife activity?

A: No. Remote cameras may not be left on State Forests or Wildlife Management Areas unless specifically authorized by DEC.

Q: Can I use a remote camera to meet the trap check guidelines?

A: No, you need to physically check the traps within the trap check time regulations.

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 during 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: 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 County.

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

A: No, 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 (page 31) for more info.

**NOW AVAILABLE:
NYS Online Trapper
Education Course!**

Cost: Free

NYS residents only

Visit: dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/hunter-education



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Hunter Education Program

Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact

New York State is a member of Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact (IWVC), which is an agreement between 47 states to share information regarding hunting, fishing, and trapping convictions.

The IWVC gives members the capability to honor each other's license revocations so a violator convicted in one state may be barred from hunting, fishing, or trapping in all member states, at the discretion of each state.

Call NYSDEC Law Enforcement at 518-402-8816 or visit wildlifecrimestoppers.org.



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

dec.ny.gov/about/website-usage-and-policies/language-assistance

Kathy Hochul, Governor |

www.dec.ny.gov

Translation Available. Don't see your language? Ask!

English

To have sections of this document translated into a language you can understand, use the contact information below. There is no charge for the translation.

**Español
Spanish**

Si necesita la traducción de este documento a un idioma que pueda entender, utilice la información de contacto indicada abajo. La traducción es gratis.

Call: 518-402-8044 or email: public@dec.ny.gov

Contact an Environmental Conservation Officer (ECO) — 1-844-DEC-ECOS (1-844-332-3267)

Scan QR code for an up-to-date
list of ECOs in each region.



Report All Poachers and Polluters

1-844-DEC-ECOS (844-332-3267)



Approximately 250 field ECOs patrol the entire state. Their job includes enforcement of fish and wildlife laws and state environmental quality laws. ECOs rely on the eyes and ears of our dedicated members of the sporting community to report suspected violations. Poachers and other violators are stealing from you, your children, and our environment.

As soon as possible, call the hotline to report suspected violations. Dispatchers will assist you in filing a complaint.

Complaints are forwarded to an ECO for investigation. The sooner you call and the more detailed information you provide, the more likely the violator will be apprehended. Try to remember the “who, what, when, where, and how” of the event.

Keep your distance.

Do not approach or confront suspects. They may be dangerous, destroy evidence, or simply evade officers if forewarned.

Who did it?

Provide names, age, sex, height, weight, clothing, or vehicle descriptions, etc.

What occurred?

What exactly is the nature of the violation? Examples — taking deer using bait, over limit, shooting from roadway, trespass, using tags of another, after hours, non-resident buying a resident license.

When did it occur?

Dates and times. Has it already happened, is in progress, or yet to happen?

Where did it occur?

Provide exact street addresses, town/county, GPS locations, or other ways the officer can locate the scene, suspects, and evidence.

How did it occur?

What were the exact circumstances or actions associated with the violation?



Another successful mentored youth weekend in Southold, Suffolk County, for youth turkey hunter Daniel H. and ECO Cacciola. This youth hunt was possible thanks to a local farmer who gave these hunters permission to hunt on their land.



ECOs Doig (left) and Osborne (right) with three illegal deer that were seized as evidence on opening weekend of rifle season. One of the deer was illegally killed while trespassing, and the other two were killed using bait.

JOIN THE THIN GREEN LINE

Become an
**Environmental
Conservation
Police Officer**



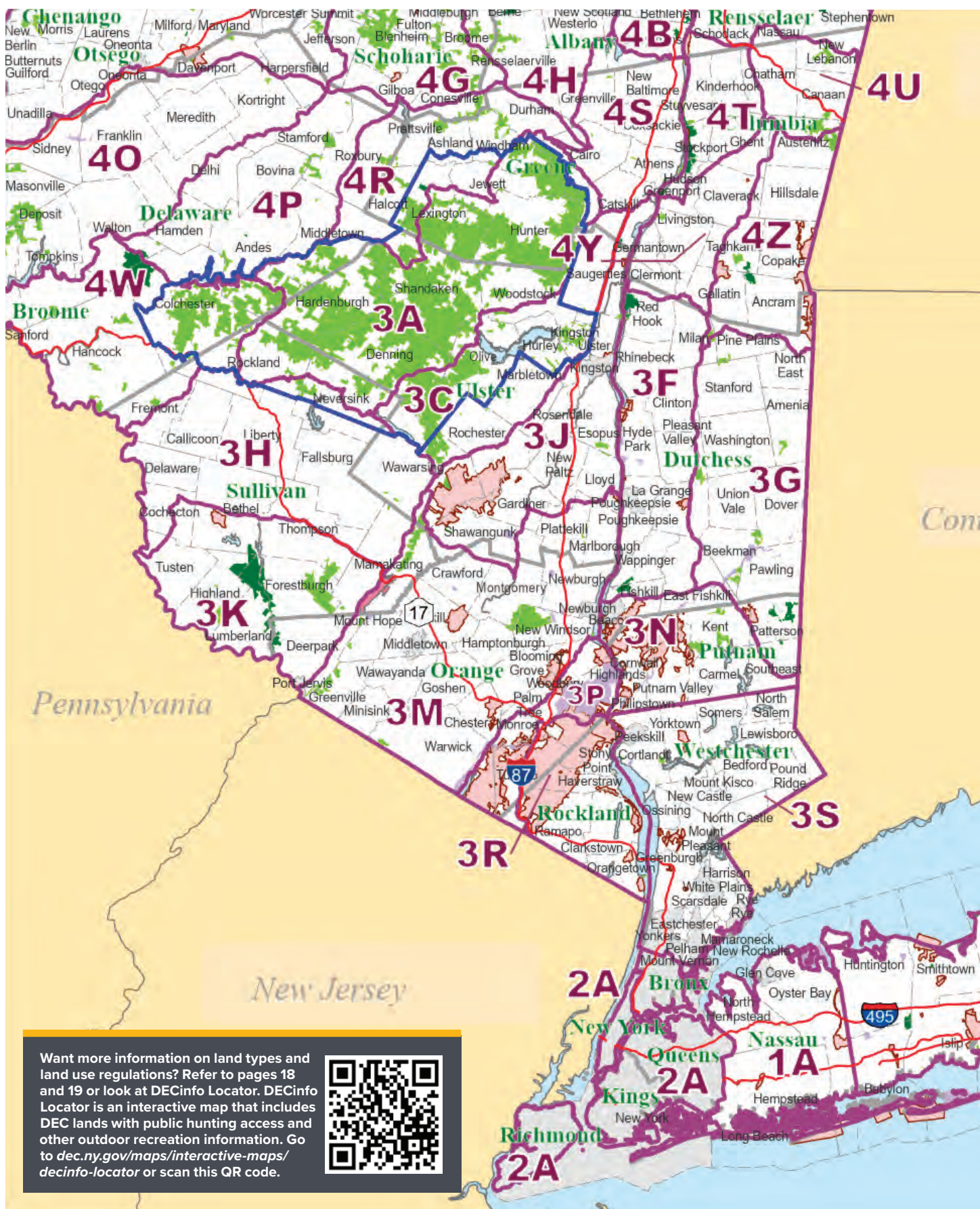
Department of
Environmental
Conservation



LEARN MORE AT:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/about/746.html>

Regional Maps



WMA Accessible Features for Regions 1 and 3

Suffolk

Otis Pike Preserve (Riverhead, Brookhaven)

- Parking, blind

Randall Pond, Ridge Conservation Area (Ridge)

- Parking, fishing access, permit station, viewing area, viewing platform, 2.1 mi foot trails, restroom

Sullivan/Orange

Bashakill WMA (Mamakating, Deerpark)

- Parking, blind, fishing access

Mongaup Valley WMA (Forestburgh, Highland, Lumberland, Deerpark)

- Parking, eagle blind, restroom

* CP-3 - Motorized Access Program for People with Disabilities. Go to dec.ny.gov/places-to-go/accessible-recreation/mappwd for application instructions and forms.



Did you know, in 2025 DEC Forest Rangers

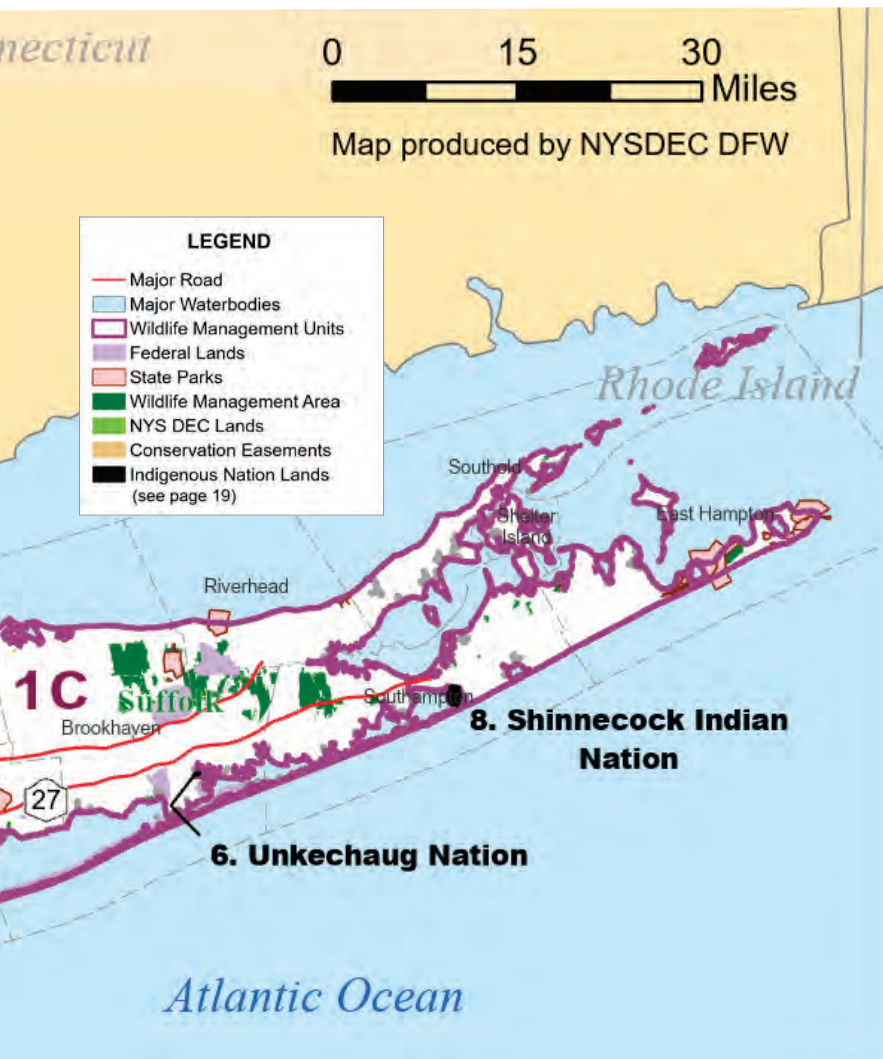
- Patrolled 27,371 miles of trails by foot,
- Patrolled 1,796 miles of interior boundary line,
- Participated in 457 public outreach events,
- Conducted 362 search and rescue missions.

dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/public-safety/forest-rangers

1-833-NYS-RANGERS (1-833-697-7264)

PROTECT YOUR WATERS

Clean. Drain. Dry.
Boating and Fishing Equipment



10 HIKING ESSENTIALS

Carry these essentials on all hikes for a safe and enjoyable experience.

- 1 NAVIGATION** – map, compass, GPS system, extra batteries
 - 2 INSULATION** – waterproof/windproof jacket, hat, gloves, thermals, wool socks. Pack extra in case you get wet.
 - 3 LIGHT** – headlamp, flashlight, lanterns, extra batteries
 - 4 FIRST-AID SUPPLIES** – use a pre-made kit or build your own.
 - 5 EMERGENCY KIT** – whistle, signal mirror, duct tape, pocket knife/multi-tool, etc.
 - 6 FIRE** – matches in waterproof container, lighter, fire starters
 - 7 NUTRITION** – choose high-protein, and high-calorie items, and be sure to pack extra food.
 - 8 WATER** – carry more than you think you need and a water filtration system.
 - 9 SUN PROTECTION** – sunglasses, sunscreen, hat
 - 10 EMERGENCY SHELTER** – tent, space blanket, tarp
- ★ **CARRY OUT WHAT YOU CARRY IN!**



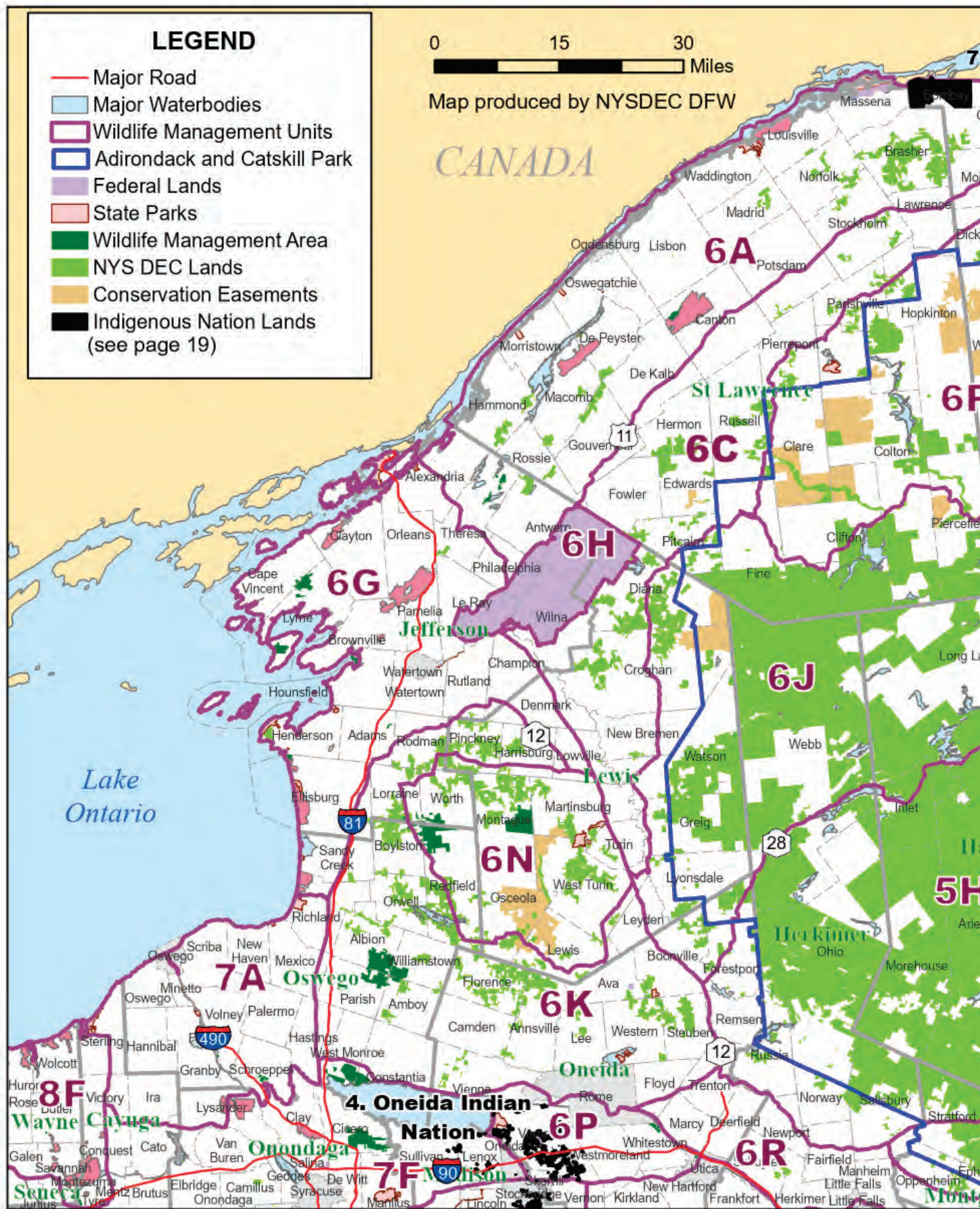
Department of Environmental Conservation

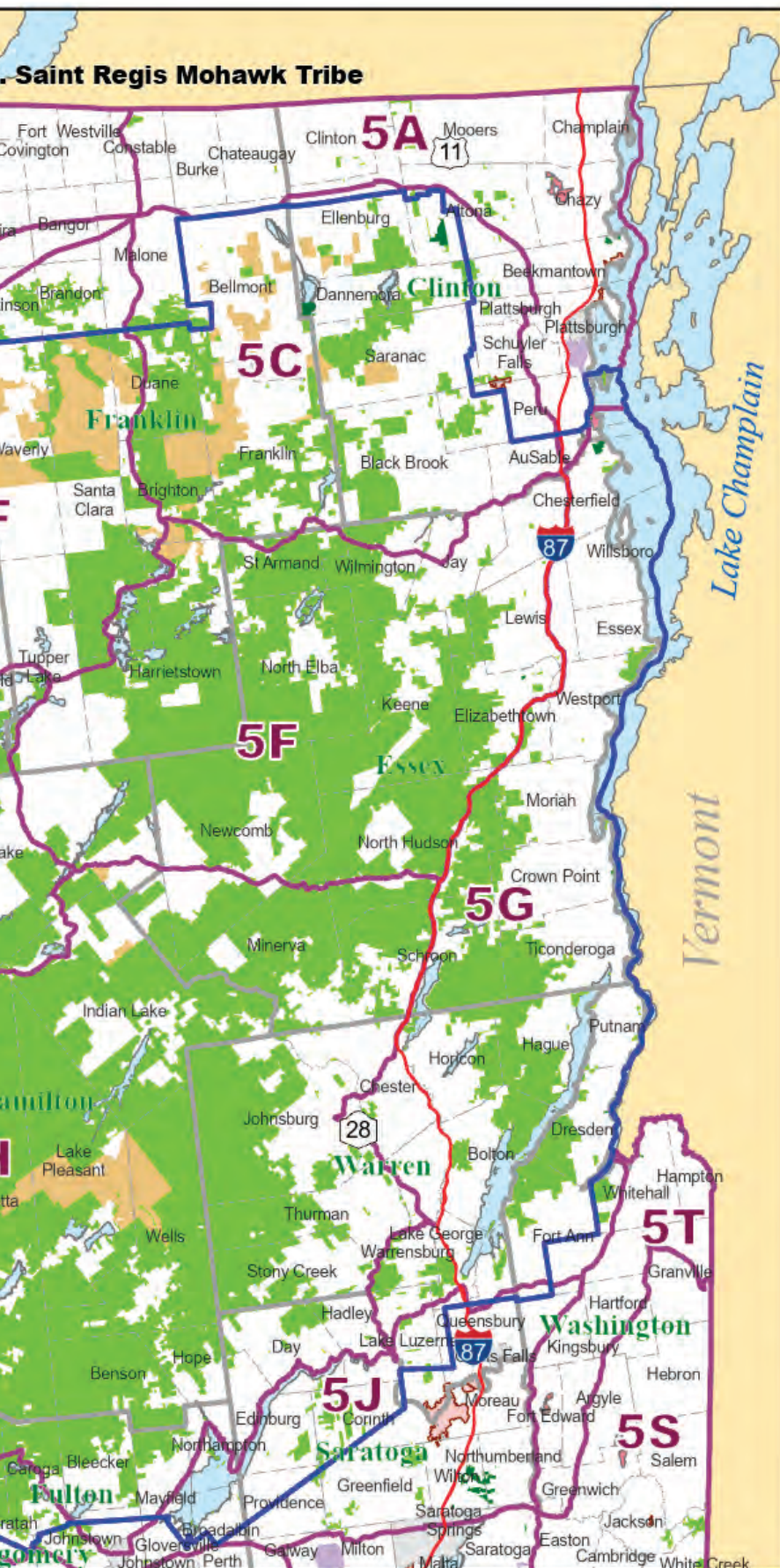


IN AN EMERGENCY, CALL: 911

833-NYS-RANGERS (833-697-7264)
<http://on.ny.gov/NYSForestRangerRoster>
Cell service not available in all areas.

Regional Maps





WMA Accessible Features for Regions 5 and 6

Clinton
Ausable Marsh WMA (Peru)
• Parking, viewing platform
Kings Bay WMA (Champlain)
• Parking, 150 ft path, viewing platform
Lake Alice WMA (Chazy)
• Parking, 2 blinds, fishing access, nature trail, 0.4 mi CP-3 trail*
Essex
Wickham Marsh WMA (Chesterfield)
• Parking, viewing platform, 0.1 mi foot path
Jefferson
Ashland Flats WMA (Lyme)
• Parking, observation tower
Black Pond WMA (Ellisburg)
• Parking, fishing platform, viewing platform, 0.3 mi foot trail, 0.88 mi CP-3 trail*
French Creek WMA
• Parking
Lakeview WMA (Ellisburg)
• Parking, fishing platform, 0.6 mi foot trails, restroom
Lewis
Tug Hill WMA
• Parking
Oneida
Oriskany Flats WMA (Rome)
• 1.16 mi CP-3 trail
Saratoga
Saratoga Sand Plains WMA Archery Range (Wilton)
• Parking, path
St. Lawrence
Upper & Lower Lakes WMA (Canton)
• Parking, portable blind pads, 0.5 mi foot trails, viewing area
Wilson Hill WMA (Louisville)
• Parking, blind, boardwalk, viewing platform, 1.2 mi foot trails
Washington
Carters Pond WMA (Greenwich)
• Parking, viewing platform, 0.2 mi foot trail
East Bay WMA (Whitehall)
• Parking, 0.1 mi path, viewing platform
Washington Co. Grasslands WMA (Fort Edward)
• Parking, viewing platform

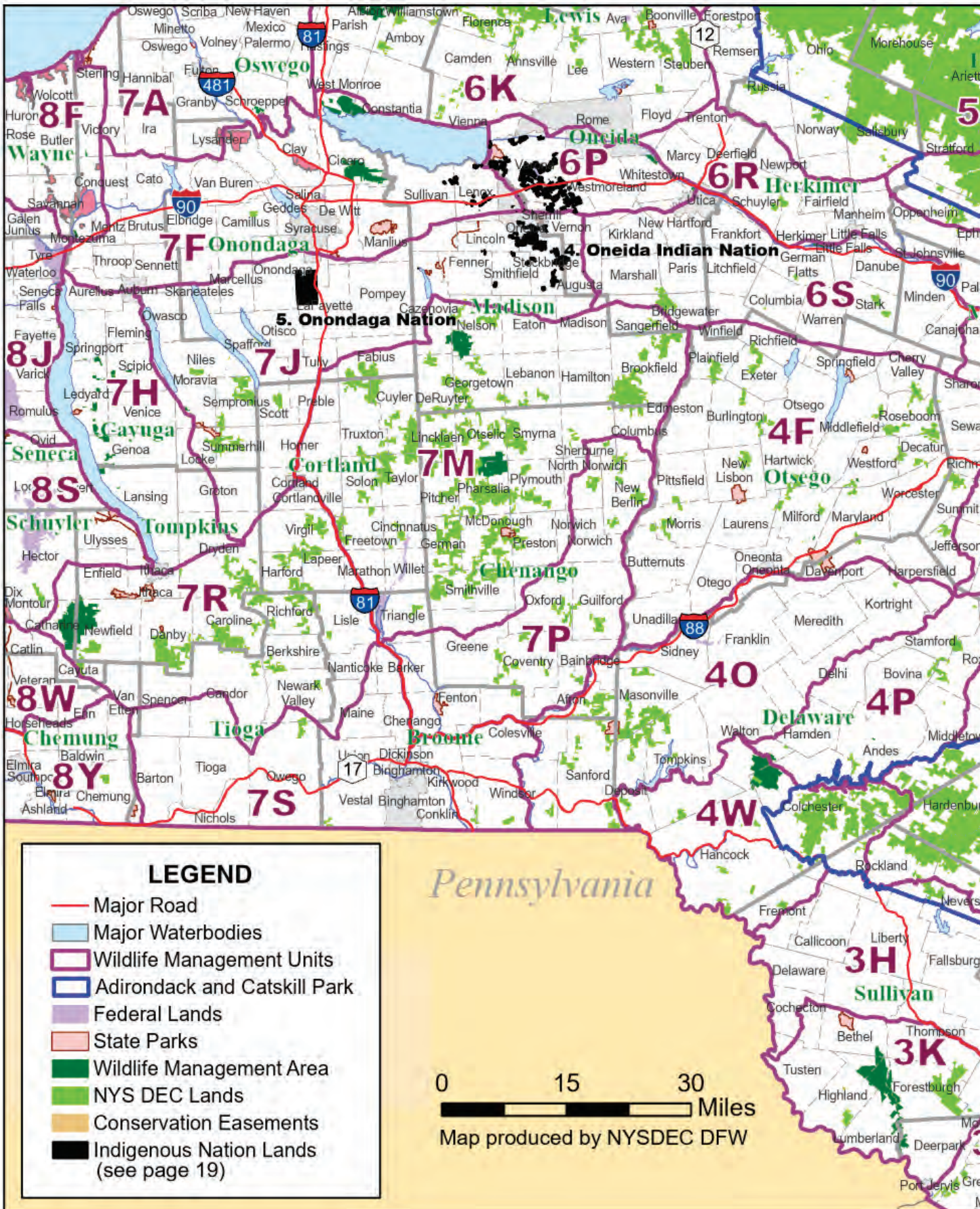
* CP-3 - Motorized Access Program for People with Disabilities. Go to dec.ny.gov/places-to-go/accessible-recreation/mappwd for application instructions and forms.

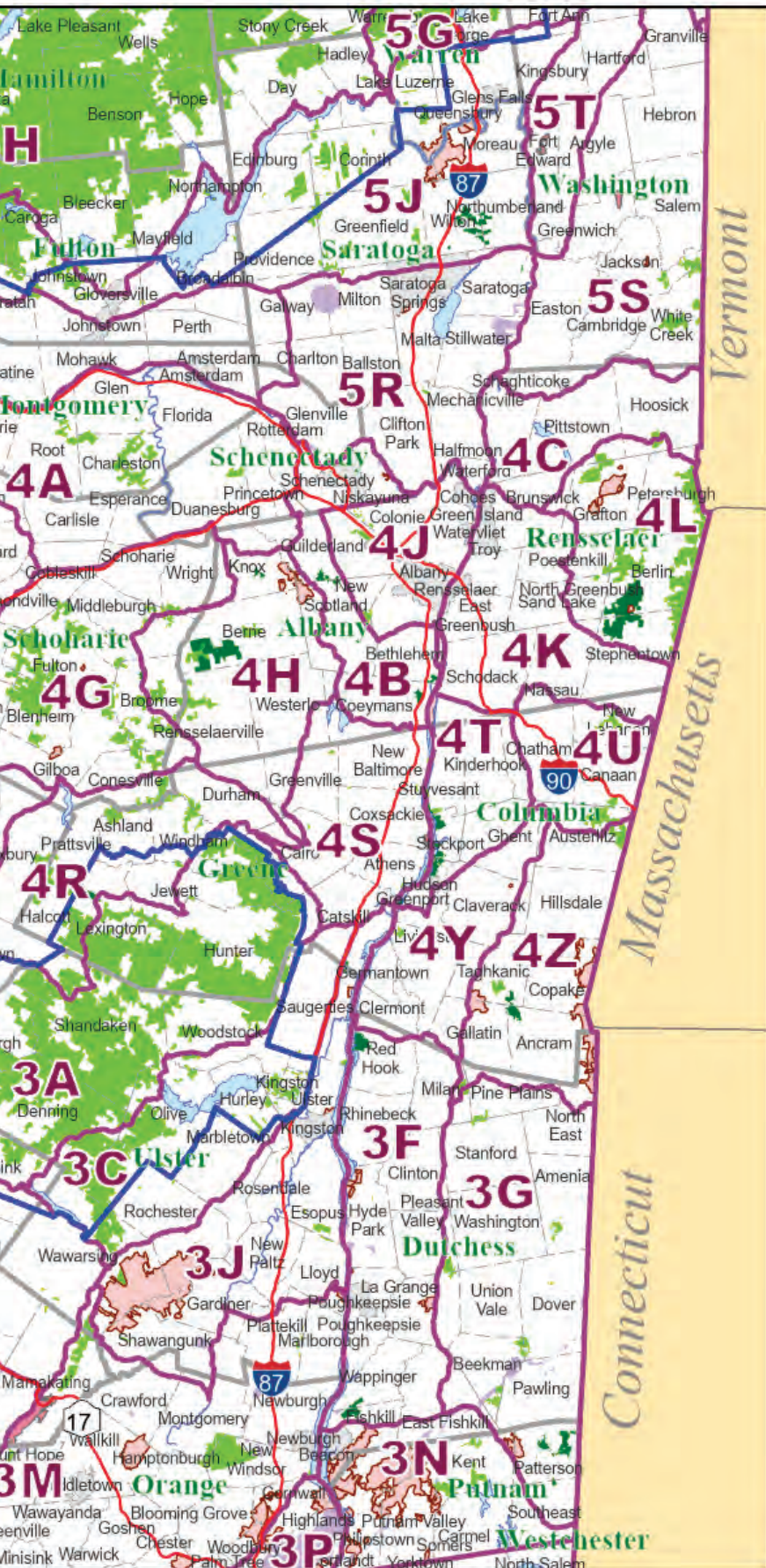
Conservation Easements

Public hunting and trapping is allowed on the conservation easements shown on these maps, but because rules and regulations are different for each conservation easement, members of the public wishing to hunt or trap on a particular easement property are strongly encouraged to contact the local DEC office (see page 6) before planning a trip.

For more information on conservation easements, visit: dec.ny.gov/nature/forests-trees/conservation-easements.

Regional Maps





WMA Accessible Features for Regions 4 and 7

Albany
Partridge Run WMA (Berne)
• Parking, observation tower, 0.6 mi foot trail, CP-3 trails*
Delaware
Bear Spring Mountain WMA (Walton)
• CP-3 trails*
Greene
Vosburgh Swamp WMA (Coxsackie, Athens)
• Parking, boardwalk, waterfowl hunting/viewing blind
Onondaga
Hamlin Marsh WMA (Clay)
• Parking, boardwalk, blind, viewing platform, 0.1 mi foot path
Three Rivers WMA (Lysander)
• Parking, viewing platform, 0.2 mi gravel foot path to hunting blind
Oswego
Deer Creek Marsh WMA (Richland)
• Parking, 0.1 mi foot path
Rensselaer
Capital District WMA (Stephentown and Berlin)
• CP-3 trails*
Schoharie
Franklinton Vlaie WMA (Broome)
• Parking, viewing pavilion, viewing platform, fishing/viewing access

FIREWOOD WARNING

Your firewood may be hiding invasive pests that are killing our trees and forever changing the forests we love. Protect our trees.

Buy Local, Burn Local.

- It is illegal to bring untreated* firewood into New York State
 - It is illegal to transport untreated firewood more than 50 miles from its source or origin
 - When transporting firewood, you must carry proof of source (receipt from a vendor), origin (self-issued certificate from DEC website), or treatment (label showing treatment method)
- * Treated firewood has been heated to 160°F for 75 minutes to eliminate pests living inside the wood. Treated firewood can be moved without restriction.

Failure to follow these regulations may result in a ticket.

For questions, call toll-free:

1-866-640-0652

State and federal quarantines exist that further restrict the movement of firewood. For more information, visit www.dec.ny.gov and search for "invasive insects".



Department of
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Conservation

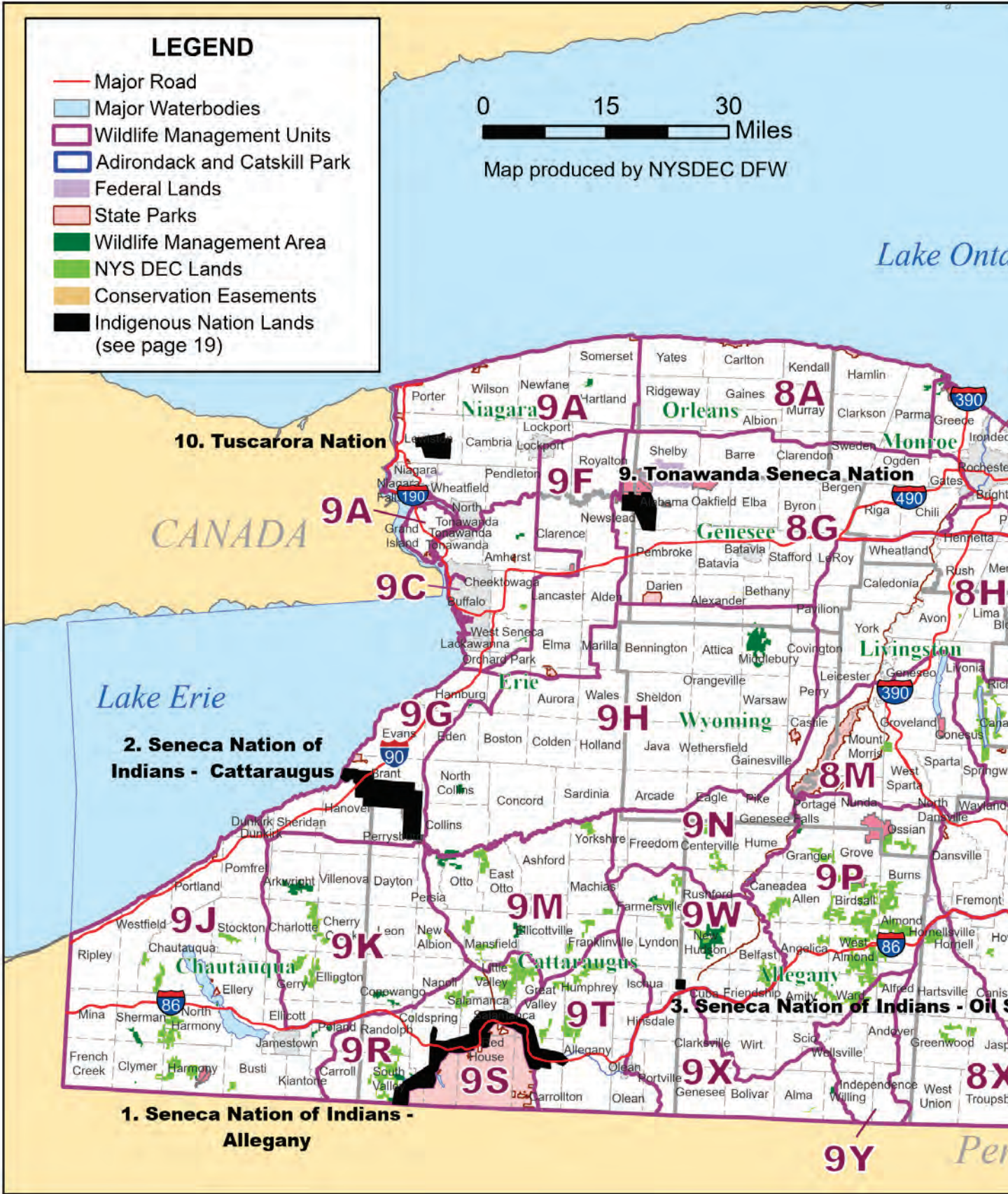


**What's lurking in
your firewood?**

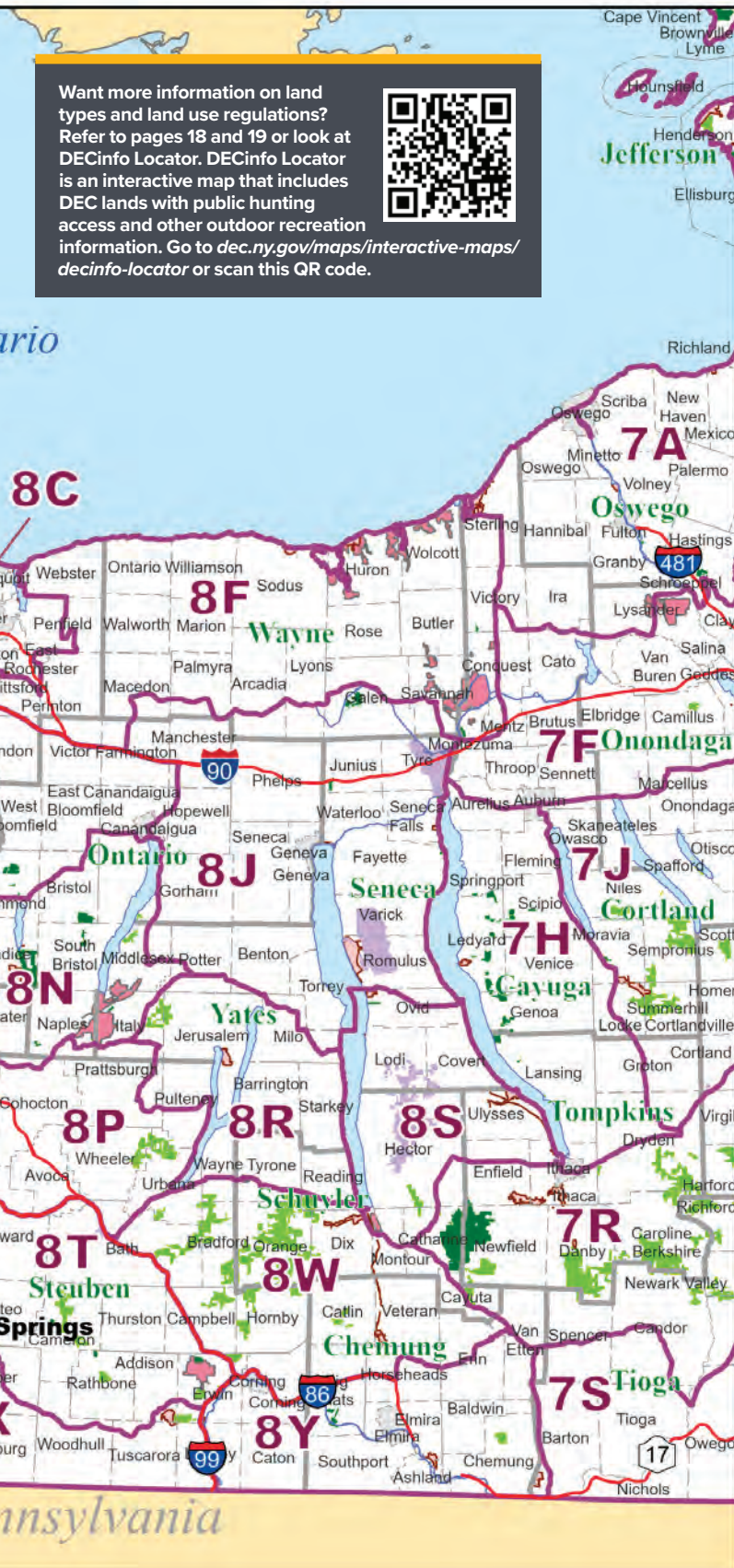
ASIAN LONGHORNED
BEETLE

EMERALD
ASH BORER

Regional Maps



Want more information on land types and land use regulations? Refer to pages 18 and 19 or look at DECinfo Locator. DECinfo Locator is an interactive map that includes DEC lands with public hunting access and other outdoor recreation information. Go to dec.ny.gov/maps/interactive-maps/decinfo-locator or scan this QR code.



WMA Accessible Features for Regions 8 and 9

Allegany
Hanging Bog WMA (New Hudson)
• 0.14 mi CP-3 trail*
Cattaraugus
Birch Run Ponds FWMA (Allegany)
• Parking, fishing access, 0.3 mi foot trail, seasonal restroom
Cayuga/Wayne/Seneca
Northern Montezuma WMA (Victory, Conquest, Mentz, Montezuma, Butler, Savannah, Seneca Falls)
• Parking, viewing platform, 1.4 mi foot trails, restroom
Chautauqua
Chautauqua Lake FWMA (Ellery, North Harmony)
• At Stow Farm: parking, blind/viewing platform, 0.2 mi foot trail
Watts Flats (Harmony)
• Parking, viewing platform
Erie
Spicer Creek WMA (Grand Island)
• Parking, 2 blinds, 0.4 mi foot trail
Genesee
John White WMA (Alabama)
• Parking, blind, 0.62 mi CP-3 trail*
Livingston
Conesus Inlet WMA (Conesus)
• Parking, 0.1 mi foot path, viewing area, 1 mi CP-3 trail*
Livingston/Allegany
Rattlesnake Hill WMA (Nunda, Ossian, Grove)
• Parking, viewing platform, 9.3 mi CP-3 trails*
Monroe
Braddock Bay WMA (Parma, Greece)
• Parking, fishing access, viewing platform, kayak launch
Ontario
Honeoye Creek WMA (Richmond)
• 2.8 mi CP-3 trails*
Ontario/Yates
High Tor WMA (Naples, Italy Middlesex)
• Parking, fishing access, hand launch, 8.4 mi CP-3 trails*
Orleans/Erie/Niagara/Genesee
Tonawanda WMA (Shelby, Newstead, Royalton, Alabama)
• Parking, blind, 0.16 mi foot trail
Orleans/Genesee
Oak Orchard WMA (Barre, Shelby, Oakfield, Alabama)
• Parking, viewing platform, pavilion, 0.14 mi foot trails, 3.2 mi CP-3 trails*
Schuyler
Catharine Creek WMA (Dix, Montour)
• 2 mi CP-3 trails*
Waneta-Lamoka WMA (Tyrone)
• Parking, hand launch
Steuben
Erwin WMA (Erwin)
• Parking, 5.38 mi CP-3 trails*
Wayne
Galen WMA (Galen)
• 2.2 mi CP-3 trails*
Lake Shore Marshes WMA (Rochester, Oswego)
• Parking, fishing access, hand launch, seasonal restroom
Wyoming
Carlton Hill MUA (Middlebury)
• Observation/hunting blind, 0.6 mi CP-3 trails*

* CP-3 - Motorized Access Program for People with Disabilities. Go to dec.ny.gov/places-to-go/accessible-recreation/mappwd for application instructions and forms.

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Game and Fish Department

Certificate Number
1119630

Certification Date
4/30/15

Birth Date
08/22/89

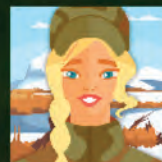
Instructor
Hunter Ed

JOHN HUNTER
123 ANY STREET
ANYTOWN, ST 12345-0000
USA

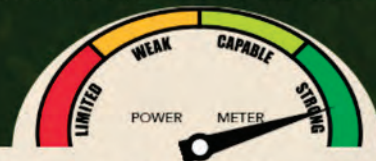


HUNTER EDUCATION CARD

ilearntohunt™



brn2hunt likes to hunt **Caribou**



Interactive Hunter Achievements

Level 1 - The Basics



Firearms Basics

★★★



Ammunition

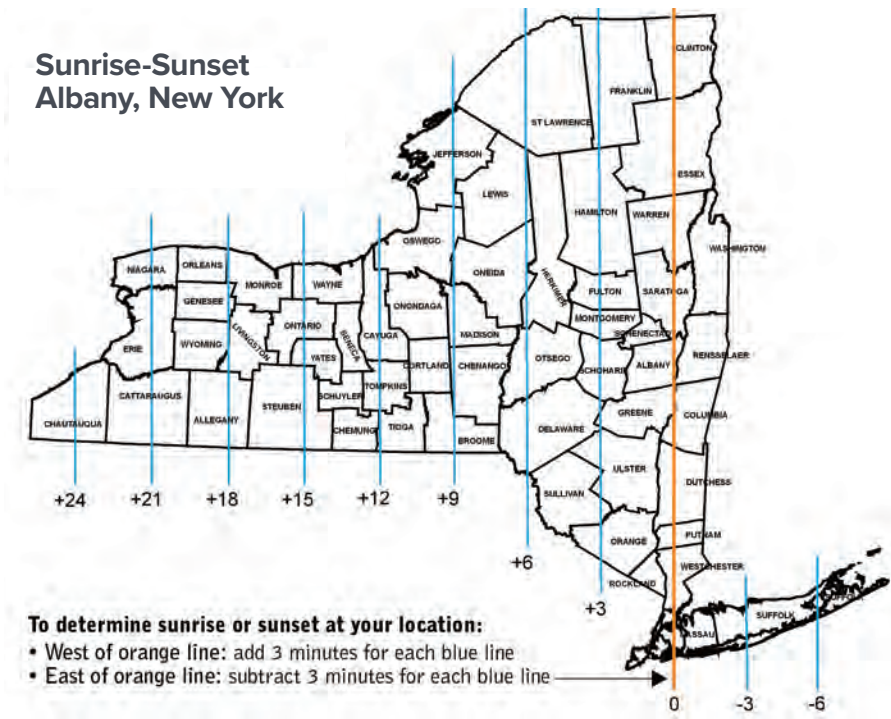
★★★

Level 2 - Safe Firearm Handling



Safe Handling 1

★★★

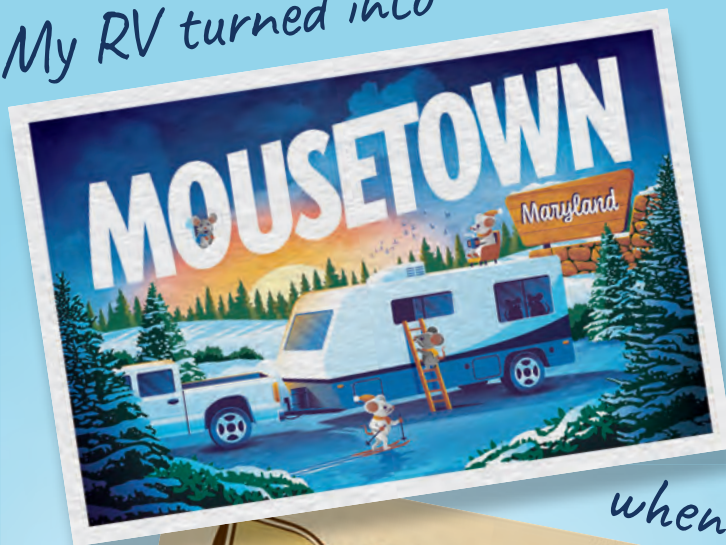


When Hunting for Wildlife, All Shooting Hours are Sunrise to Sunset, Except:

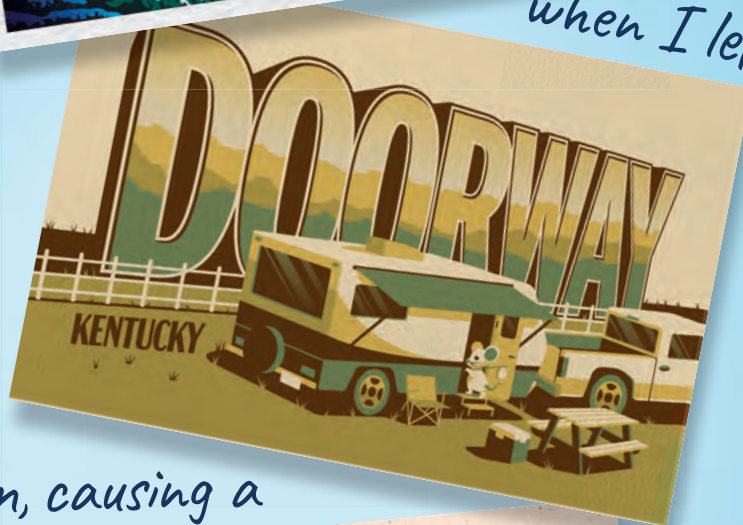
- Unprotected wildlife — any hour.
- Furbearers — after sunrise on the opening day of each respective season, bobcat, raccoon, skunk, red fox, gray fox, opossum, and coyote may be taken at any time of day or night.
- For most migratory game bird species, including ducks, geese, snipe, rails — ½ hour before sunrise to sunset.
- Spring turkey — ½ hour before sunrise to noon.
- Big game — ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.

Day	SEPT		OCT		NOV		DEC		JAN		FEB		MAR		APR		MAY	
	Rise AM	Set PM	Rise AM	Set PM	Rise AM	Set PM	Rise AM	Set PM	Rise AM	Set PM	Rise AM	Set PM	Rise AM	Set PM	Rise AM	Set PM	Rise AM	Set PM
1	6:19	7:29	6:52	6:36	6:28	4:47	7:05	4:22	7:25	4:32	7:09	5:08	6:30	5:44	6:37	7:20	5:49	7:55
2	6:21	7:27	6:53	6:34	6:30	4:46	7:06	4:22	7:25	4:32	7:08	5:09	6:29	5:45	6:35	7:22	5:48	7:56
3	6:22	7:25	6:54	6:32	6:31	4:45	7:07	4:21	7:25	4:33	7:07	5:10	6:27	5:46	6:34	7:23	5:47	7:57
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6	6:25	7:20	6:57	6:27	6:35	4:41	7:10	4:21	7:25	4:36	7:03	5:14	6:22	5:50	6:29	7:26	5:43	8:00
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25	6:45	6:46	7:20	5:57	6:58	4:24	7:23	4:26	7:15	4:59	6:37	5:39	6:49	7:12	5:58	7:48	5:24	8:20
26	6:46	6:45	7:21	5:55	6:59	4:24	7:23	4:27	7:15	5:00	6:35	5:40	6:48	7:14	5:56	7:49	5:23	8:21
27	6:47	6:43	7:22	5:54	7:01	4:23	7:24	4:28	7:14	5:01	6:34	5:41	6:46	7:15	5:55	7:50	5:22	8:22
28	6:48	6:41	7:23	5:53	7:02	4:23	7:24	4:28	7:13	5:02	6:32	5:43	6:44	7:16	5:54	7:51	5:22	8:22
29	6:50	6:39	7:25	5:51	7:03	4:23	7:24	4:29	7:12	5:04			6:42	7:17	5:52	7:52	5:21	8:23
30	6:51	6:37	7:26	5:50	7:04	4:22	7:24	4:30	7:11	5:05			6:41	7:18	5:51	7:53	5:20	8:24
31			7:27	5:48			7:25	4:31	7:10	5:06			6:39	7:19			5:20	8:25

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