



Compliments of the Hunter Education Program

Congratulations to those of you who received a moose permit yesterday!

It was pretty exciting to hear a few of your names over the radio. To those who did not receive one, keep trying! August came in ringing with inquiries about “the next hunter safety course”. Thank you to everyone who has submitted course information. Please remember we are switching over to Event Manager, a website instructors and students can use to plan and find hunter safety courses. Please call or email us with any questions or concerns you may have at (802)241-3720 or email mary.childs@state.vt.us

In this issue you will find VT Fish & Wildlife press releases, upcoming events, volunteer opportunities and a summary of our new instructor training at Buck Lake in Woodbury.

New Instructor Training 2013

VT Fish & Wildlife hosted 22 passionate hunters July 26th-27th at Buck Lake in Woodbury for a new instructor training. Each attendee learned the ins and outs of being a hunter safety instructor, practiced their teaching skills, shot a few rounds on the shotgun range, and enjoyed networking around an evening fire. These volunteers are on their way to becoming certified instructors. They may contact you for information, or look for an opportunity to assist in one of your courses. Please join us in welcoming all new instructors to our team!



Brock Quesnel, Conner Hunt, and Jared Hart lead a class demo on turkey hunting

Vermont Moose Hunting Permit Winners Are Drawn

The winners of Vermont's 2013 moose hunting permits were determined Thursday, August 1 at a lottery drawing in Montpelier.

Governor Peter Shumlin, standing alongside Fish & Wildlife Commissioner Patrick Berry, started the computer-generated selection process that randomly picked 405 winners among more than 11,900 lottery applications.

The drawing is done by a random sort of applications that were submitted by a July 5, 2013 deadline. Lottery applications cost \$10.00 for residents and \$25.00 for nonresidents.

As part of the regular lottery drawing, a "special priority drawing" was held for five permits to go to applicants who have received, or are eligible to receive, a Campaign Ribbon for Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom (in Afghanistan). The unsuccessful applicants from the Iraqi-Afghanistan drawing were included in the larger regular drawing that followed. All applicants for both drawings who did not receive a permit were awarded a bonus point to improve their chances in future moose permit lotteries.

The lottery was held for 50 moose permits to be used in the Vermont's October 1-7 archery moose hunting season and 355 moose permits for the October 19-24 regular moose season.

"Today's lottery drawing helps celebrate one of Vermont's successes in science-based wildlife management," said State Wildlife Biologist Cedric Alexander. "Vermont's first moose hunt was in 1993, when 25 moose were taken with 30 permits issued. We expect close to 200 moose will be taken this fall in a carefully regulated hunt."

Lottery winners will purchase resident hunting permits for \$100 and nonresident permits for \$350. Ten percent of the permits go to nonresidents. Payments for the hunting permits must be by money order, bank check or credit card. Personal checks are not accepted.

Winners in this year's moose hunting lottery are posted in a searchable database on the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department's website (www.vtfishandwildlife.com). Click on "Hunting and Trapping" and then on "Lottery Applications and Winners."

If your name wasn't drawn, you can still bid in Vermont's auction for five moose hunting permits, which is open until August 21. Sealed bids must be received by Vermont Fish & Wildlife by 4:30 p.m. that day. Contact the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department to receive a moose permit bid kit. Telephone 802-828-1000 or email (fwinformation@state.vt.us).



Governor Peter Shumlin and Fish & Wildlife Commissioner Patrick Berry conducted Vermont's 2013 moose hunting permit lottery August 1, at the Vermont State House in Montpelier

Intro to Waterfowl Hunting Seminar to be Held at Missisquoi NWR

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department will host a free seminar entitled “Introduction to Waterfowl Hunting” at the Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge on August 24, 2013. The seminar follows the curriculum of the popular Junior Waterfowl Hunter Training Program and will provide hunters of all ages with the opportunity to learn about waterfowl hunting.

Fish & Wildlife Warden Dan Swainbank and retired waterfowl biologist Bill Crenshaw will present on waterfowl hunting regulations, waterfowl identification, safety and ethics, and where to waterfowl hunt. They will demonstrate the use of decoys and blinds, and will give advice on guns and ammunition used for waterfowl hunting. Additionally, the Lake Champlain Retriever Club will demonstrate the advantages of using a retriever on waterfowl hunts.

The seminar will take place from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. and lunch will be provided. Registration is required by calling Mary Childs at (802) 241-3720 or by emailing mary.childs@state.vt.us. Please provide your full name, address, and phone number. You will receive a confirmation letter, including directions, following registration.



Photo: Bill Crenshaw

Volunteer Opportunity

The North Country Longspurs will be hosting their annual **Jakes Event September 14th**. They are in need of some help for their outdoor survival learning station and pond life station. Please contact Mary Childs at mary.childs@state.vt.us for more information.



Trainee instructors demonstrate firearm handling and map and compass at the Buck Lake new instructor training course July 27th.

Fish & Wildlife Dept's 'Landowner Incentive Program' Conserved Habitat for Imperiled Species

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department recently completed an eight-year program that provided federal funding to private landowners to conserve land for imperiled species in Vermont. The Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) brought nearly 1,600 acres under conservation easement, and helped create habitat and forest management plans for an additional 3,500 acres of privately owned land.

Biologist Jane Lazorchak, who spearheaded the effort for the department, said that many private landowners are unaware that they even have rare species on their property. "Prior to the start of LIP, we were unable to provide targeted assistance to landowners even if they were aware of their rare species and wanted to enhance the habitat," said Lazorchak. "The department did not have adequate resources to identify threats on private lands or to monitor changes in ownership."

The LIP program was established by the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund to provide financial assistance and biological expertise to private landowners. Financial assistance in Vermont was directed at landowners in the Champlain Valley, the region of the state that not only holds the greatest number of rare species but also the greatest concentration of people encroaching on increasingly scarce habitat.



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"This program provided us with the unique opportunity to protect Vermont's natural resources and provide public access while keeping land in private ownership," said Lazorchak.

Lazorchak pointed out that one of the goals of the program was to help landowners overcome the financial obstacles associated with land conservation. She cites Jason Bacon from Bristol, who had considered putting his nearly 200-acre parcel on the market for development. Now that the property is under conservation easement through the LIP program, the land will be protected in perpetuity through a management plan developed with assistance from Fish & Wildlife Department staff. The land will also be open for public access.

"Because of the LIP program, I was able to make a minor return on my investment while conserving a great piece of land," said Bacon.

Lazorchak says that the Fish & Wildlife Department partnered with The Nature Conservancy and the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board on the majority of LIP's conservation easement projects. The department also partnered with local land conservation nonprofits such as the Watershed Center in Bristol.

David Brynn, a board member at the Watershed Center, described LIP as critical to helping add nearly 300 acres to the list of conserved lands they manage. "LIP was absolutely essential in galvanizing public support and coordinating the conservation of this piece of diverse, productive, beautiful land."

The LIP program recently ended as a result of federal budget cuts. "LIP highlighted the important role of private lands in protecting wildlife habitat and public access," said Lazorchak. "With the conclusion of the program, the Fish & Wildlife Department will be looking for ways to continue to fund this type of work in the future."

Vermont Turkey Brood Survey Online

How many broods of wild turkeys are you seeing in Vermont, and how many young turkeys, or poults, are roaming with their mothers?

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department is asking people who see turkeys during August to report their sightings in the state's seventh annual online turkey brood survey.

The turkey brood survey can be found on the department's website (www.vtfishandwildlife.com). The survey allows entry of the numbers of adult males, adult females and poults as well as the date, time and location of the observations.

The data you report will help establish long-term trends in turkey reproduction and recruitment. This information will be extremely useful in the management of the wild turkey population. It will help answer questions concerning the impacts of spring and winter weather on the survival of poults and adult turkeys. It will help with the setting of turkey seasons and harvest limits that are designed to manage the Vermont's turkey population.



Vermont has excellent turkey hunting across most of the state that benefits the people of Vermont by providing hunting opportunity, economic activity and carefully regulated control of turkey numbers. Over abundant turkey populations can result in nuisance situations when crops or properties are damaged by turkeys.

Management of wild turkeys seeks to maximize the benefits of having turkeys while minimizing the liabilities. More than 6,200 wild turkeys were harvested in Vermont this past spring -- the highest harvest to date by Vermont hunters in both the May spring season and the youth turkey hunting weekend during the last weekend in April.

Despite the high harvest numbers, the Fish & Wildlife Department is concerned with turkey nesting success this year due to record amounts of precipitation.

"Turkey poults are very susceptible to mortality during their first two weeks of life from extended periods of rain," says turkey biologist Forrest Hammond. "Although hen turkeys will often renest if they lose their first clutch of eggs, nest success is usually lower for the second attempt, especially if wet conditions persist as they did this year."

Hammond reports that nesting conditions were good the last two years which helped boost overall turkey numbers but he says that he wouldn't be surprised if numbers are lower in 2014.

"Results of the August online turkey brood survey helps track the population fluctuations," added Hammond. "Please help us scientifically manage the turkey population by reporting your turkey sightings during the month of August. Your help is appreciated."

Migratory Game Bird Hunters Must Register for Harvest Information Programs

Montpelier, Vt – All Vermont migratory game bird hunters, including youth, permanent and lifetime license holders, must register with the Federal Harvest Information Program (H.I.P.) each year in each state that you hunt.

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department provides migratory game bird hunters with a H.I.P. registration process online and by phone. Vermont, like other states, is required to annually provide a list of hunter names to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The list is used for their national migratory game bird harvest surveys.

H.I.P. enables the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (U.S.F.W.S.) and state fish and wildlife agencies to develop reliable estimates of the number of migratory game birds harvested throughout the country. These estimates are important in making sound decisions about setting hunting season dates, bag limits and population management for ducks, geese, coots, snipe, and woodcock.

Hunters of migratory game birds are required to register on Vermont Fish & Wildlife's website (vtfishandwildlife.com) or by calling toll-free 1-877-306-7091. After providing basic information, you will receive your annual H.I.P. registration number which you need to record on the H.I.P. section of your hunting license.

Hunters who have a permanent or lifetime Vermont hunting license should print out the website response form showing the H.I.P. number and carry this with them while hunting. Permanent and lifetime license holders who register by telephone between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday will receive a number over the phone for their license.

Hunters who have registered for H.I.P. and have lost their license or H.I.P. number can look up their number on Vermont Fish & Wildlife's website

Waterfowl Meetings -- Aug. 6, Whitehall, NY -- Aug. 7, Burlington, VT

Public meetings on the status of waterfowl populations and waterfowl hunting seasons for the State of Vermont and Lake Champlain zone in New York will be held Tuesday, August 6, in Whitehall, New York, and Wednesday, August 7, in Burlington, Vermont. The annual meetings are being held by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department.

The August 6 meeting will be held at the Skenesborough Rescue Squad building in Whitehall, New York. The August 7 meeting will be held at the University of Vermont's Billings Lecture Hall. Both meetings will run from 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. Those attending the Burlington, Vermont meeting should park off Colchester Avenue.

Vermont and New York waterfowl hunters are encouraged to attend one of these meetings and share their preferences and opinions with other waterfowl hunters and Vermont and New York wildlife personnel.

Under Federal regulations, waterfowl seasons, bag limits, and shooting hours in the Lake Champlain Zone must be uniform throughout the entire zone. Therefore, waterfowl seasons in New York's portion of the Lake Champlain Zone must be identical to the waterfowl season in Vermont's portion of the Zone.

Comments received at the August meetings, as well as input and recommendations from the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department and the New York Department of Environmental Conservation, will be reviewed by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Board

VTrans, Fish & Wildlife Partner to Improve Wildlife Crossings

When wildlife ventures onto roads and highways, the results can be devastating for people and animals. In addition to creating roadkill, highways act as barriers that can halt animal migration, isolating wildlife and promoting inbreeding among disconnected populations.

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department and VTrans are undergoing a two-year study to learn how to mitigate the effects of highways on wildlife populations and improve highway safety. The study area extends from Waterbury to Bolton Village, where researchers say wildlife populations are divided by I-89, US Route 2, a railroad line, local roads, and the Winooski River.

The VTrans wildlife transportation committee has been working to improve wildlife migration corridors along roads for nearly a decade. Tropical Storm Irene and other recent flooding events have demonstrated the need for larger road culverts to improve flood resiliency. Jens Hawkins-Hilke, conservation planning biologist for the Fish & Wildlife Department, sees these larger culverts as an opportunity to give wildlife the chance to cross roads without incident.

Hawkins-Hilke works with communities to improve migration corridors for wildlife. He cited this particular stretch of highway as a major roadblock for animal, particularly larger species such as bear, deer and moose.

“A bear looking to move from the Mt. Mansfield area to Camel’s Hump in search of food or a mate is going to encounter a number of obstacles along the way,” said Hawkins-Hilke. “When they arrive at the highway, there is low concrete barrier blocking their way. Assuming they find their way around that, they still have to cross the interstate, Route 2, several town roads, and the railroad, any of which could end fatally for them and create a dangerous situation for drivers.”

Vermont’s bear population is higher than it has ever been right now, resulting in an increase of crashes involving bears. And in 2012 Vermont motorists were involved in 98 collisions with moose, which frequently total vehicles and can be fatal to the driver.

The study will deploy game cameras to measure the abundance of wildlife species and to determine areas along the road with a high incidence of wildlife crossing. Researchers hope to use this information to assess the current level of use of existing wildlife crossing structures and to prioritize locations for similar structures in the future.

“These culvert improvements really are a win-win for people and wildlife,” said Hawkins-Hilke. “They improve the infrastructure, increase flood resiliency, and allow wildlife to migrate safely without creating a hazard for drivers.”



“What was big was not the trout, but the chance. What was full was not my creel, but my memory.”

-Aldo Leopold