



# Compliments of the Hunter Education Program

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With Thanksgiving done and over with, and Hanukkah celebrations waning, everyone is really gearing up for Christmas. In the hustle and bustle of the season, we hope you are taking time to enjoy the company of family and friends. This issue of Field Notes contains press releases from the Fish and Wildlife Department, and interesting articles from around the Internet. As always, if you have pictures or stories you'd like to see here, please submit them to Nicole and you could be featured in an upcoming issue! E-mail your submissions or suggestions to [Nicole.Corrao@state.vt.us](mailto:Nicole.Corrao@state.vt.us)

## Insights

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### *Hunters Fighting Hunger*

During the holiday season, it is important that we remember all that we are thankful for, and it is even more important that we share what we have with the less fortunate whenever possible.

I'm a firm believer in eating game meat. I think it is delicious, and some of my favorite meals have been at game suppers. It is always ethical and neighborly to offer game meat to landowners, neighbors, friends and family, but can you use your game to help the less fortunate?

If you can spare it, consider donating some extra game meat to your local food pantry. Fish and Wildlife requires each package of donated meat to have the hunter's license number labeled somewhere on the package, but your local food pantry may have other requirements as well. Be sure to call ahead of time to ascertain the regulations for donating game meat.

Unfortunately, the Vermont Foodbank only accepts and distributes meat that is processed in a state or federally inspected facility. This is an internal policy of the food bank. Other local food shelves, however, may be able to accept your donation.

During this festive time of cheer and merriment, why not share your harvest?

Some food pantries in VT include the Brattleboro Drop-In Center, Worcester Food Shelf, and the West Fairlee Community Food Shelf.

A complete list of food pantries in Vermont can be found at:

[www.foodpantries.org](http://www.foodpantries.org)

# Rain or Shine, Campers Have a Blast at Green Mountain Conservation Camps

It was another great year for the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department's Green Mountain Conservation Camps (GMCC), Buck Lake in Woodbury and Edward F. Kehoe in Castleton.

GMCC has been operating for 48 years and runs from mid-June to mid-August. It is a week-long residential camp for youth ages 12-16 years old that focuses on environmental education and outdoor recreation skills. Campers are immersed in hands-on natural resources activities taught by trained natural resource instructors as well as agency biologists, foresters, and wardens. Campers get the opportunity to hike, canoe, go fishing, receive hunter education certification, orienteer, and learn about wildlife and their habitat requirements.

"Camper feedback was incredibly positive again this year," said Fish & Wildlife's Education Coordinator Alison Thomas. "When asked to evaluate their camp experience, campers repeatedly included participating in outdoor activities, learning about natural resources, and meeting new friends as their favorite part of camp. Comments like these make me confident that the program is providing fun and interesting environmental education and outdoor recreation activities for the campers."



Exploring a wetland at Fish & Wildlife's Green Mountain Conservation Camp in Castleton.  
Photo Credit: Fish & Wildlife

By the third week at GMCC, the majority of days at both Buck Lake and Kehoe were rainy and stormy. It was a damp camp start-up, but by the end of the season both camps were battling the heat with temperatures consistently reaching 90°. Despite the very wet and stormy beginning and hot and humid ending, GMCC staff continued to provide a wonderful experience for the campers. Constant revisions to the schedule of activities due to weather didn't cause the GMCC staff to lose sight of GMCC's goal, to teach kids about Vermont's natural resources.

## 2013 GMCC Totals

Basic Campers = 566

Advanced Campers = 235

Hunter Education Certificates = 516

Trapper and Waterfowl Education Certificates = 129

Registration for the 2014 GMCC program opens in mid-January. For more information about GMCC, contact [fwgmcc@state.vt.us](mailto:fwgmcc@state.vt.us) or 802-828-1460.

# This Deer Season, Dept. of Health Hunt for EEE Continues

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Erica Berl isn't a hunter, but she got up early on Saturday and bundled up for a long morning outside waiting for deer.

Berl's hunt came after the deer hunters, out for Vermont's annual youth hunting weekend, finished theirs. After pairs of hunters -- children with their older siblings, a parent or a family friend -- heaved deer onto the scale at the Department of Fish and Wildlife reporting station in Swanton, Berl and her team got to work.

In Swanton and at 22 other locations across Vermont, the Department of Health was piggybacking Saturday on the reporting requirements for hunting season in its continuing effort to track Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) across the state.

"Wherever EEE occurs, it tends to cause human illness in very focal areas, so it can be helpful to know where it's circulating and where there's enough of it that we think there's a risk to human or mammalian illness, especially horses," Berl said.

The teams collected blood samples from deer killed and asked hunters to point out on a map where they shot the deer. The state sends the blood samples to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, where they're tested for antibodies to EEE.

Unlike humans, who can become severely ill and -- in about 35 percent of cases -- die from EEE, deer form antibodies as an immune response when they're exposed, and do so without getting seriously sick. The antibodies stay in their system for months or years, Berl said, so they become walking evidence of EEE's presence in Vermont.



The Health Department has been testing deer blood since the 2010 hunting season, when it collected 489 samples and found that about 10 percent of them tested positive for EEE antibodies. It was the first evidence of the virus in the state, and it was widespread; deer that tested positive came from 12 of Vermont's 14 counties.

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Kristina Westgaard, a student volunteer with the UVM Wildlife and Fisheries Society, collects a blood sample. Photo credit: Taylor Dobbs/VPR

## ***This Deer Season, Dept. of Health Hunt for EEE Continues***

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Since then, the rate of exposure in the deer blood samples collected has held fairly steady, but the disease has also spread to humans and domestic animals. This year, two horses in Franklin County died as a result of contracting EEE. Two Vermont men died in 2012 from the virus.

There is no human vaccine for EEE, so Berl's efforts paired with Vermont's four-person mosquito surveillance team are the only thing between Vermonters and the severe illness that comes from being bit by an infected mosquito.

"Being forewarned about a possible illness, I think, will enhance people's use of personal protection measures," Berl said, such as wearing long-sleeved shirts, using repellent and staying inside.

Berl said her hope is that better knowledge of where EEE is most prevalent will help the Department of Health target its messaging efforts. But the deer serum survey is also the state's way of turning hunters into what is essentially a massive statewide data collection force that will help steer a smaller, more geographically focused force.

When the much smaller mosquito surveillance team headed by state entomologist Alan Graham resumes their work capturing and testing mosquitoes next spring, they will use the deer serum data to carefully select the small swaths of land they're able to cover.

"If we do see some clustering positivity near some wetlands," Berl said, "we may decide to then do increased mosquito surveillance in those areas. Because we can't do mosquito surveillance everywhere, we just don't have the resources."

But if there are no clusters, "then it actually raises more questions than we have answers for," Berl said.

Whatever the outcome, she said, "it's all very interesting."

This story was originally published by Vermont Public Radio on November 12th, 2013. For the full article and audio on the story: <http://digital.vpr.net/post/deer-season-dept-health-hunt-eee-continues>

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## **Onto Greener Pastures...**

On a bittersweet note, Mary Childs, a wonderful technician with the program, is leaving Hunter Education for greener pastures. In the past year, Mary has balanced her time between the Hunter Education Program and the White River National Resources Conservation District. Recently, she decided to expand her position as District Manager with the WR NRCD and leave her position with the Hunter Education Program. She is looking forward to pursuing her passion for water and soil conservation and will continue to be involved in Hunter Education as a volunteer instructor. We will miss Mary's smiling face, attention to detail, and positive attitude. We wish Mary the very best in her future!

# Hope's Cookhouse

Since everyone is busy with holiday cooking, I thought an easy recipe is in order! Stew is great because you just throw everything together in a crock pot before work and come home to great comfort food.

## Hope's Venison Stew

### Ingredients:

- 3 carrots, cut
- 5 potatoes, cubed
- 2 lb. meat, cut in 1 inch cubes
- 1 cup water
- 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 1 tsp. paprika
- Salt to taste



**Directions:** Put all ingredients into Crock Pot. Stir to blend in spices. Cook on low for 10 to 12 hours or on high for 5 to 6 hours.

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## FAQ with Nicole



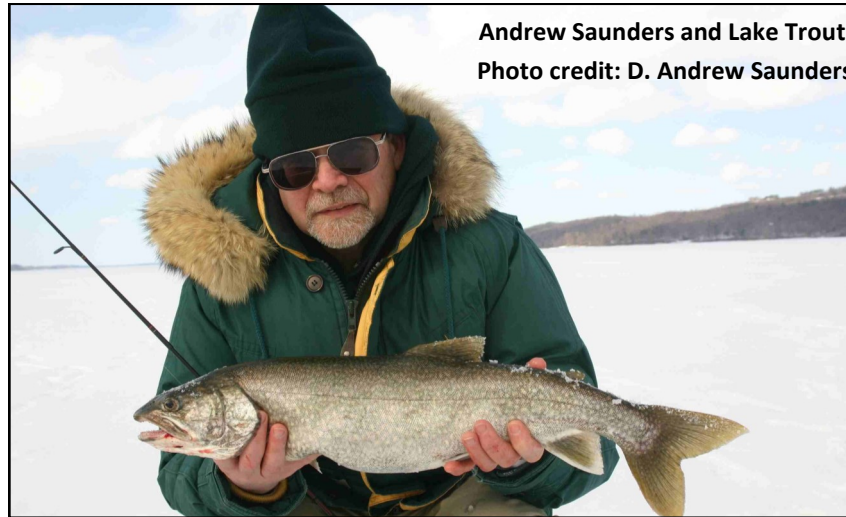
**Q:** Do I have to use Event Manager?

**A:** Yes and no. Fish and Wildlife is no longer using the traditional paper forms for classes. We will not order any more student registration forms (bubble sheets), student rosters, time and activity forms, etc. If you feel uncomfortable using Event Manager, contact Hope or me and we can talk to you about the program. We also suggest that you find a fellow instructor who is comfortable with Event Manager to help you learn to use it. If you have no access to a computer or internet, Hope and I can work with you to

input your class data. No worries, we will still use paper exams, exam answer sheets, answer keys, and certification cards.

# New Fishing Opportunities in 2014

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Andrew Saunders and Lake Trout.  
Photo credit: D. Andrew Saunders

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department says anglers will have several new fishing opportunities in Vermont beginning in January when a recently enacted regulation goes into effect.

Eleven new river sections will have catch-and-release trout fishing with artificial flies or lures outside of the normal trout fishing season, opening over 70 miles of river to year-round trout fishing.

A section of the Walloomsac River in Bennington is added to the trophy trout streams stocked with two-year old brown or rainbow trout with a daily limit of two trout per day.

Bass catch-and-release open water angling with artificial flies and lures (not ice fishing) outside the normal bass season will include all lakes, ponds and reservoirs not listed as “seasonally closed waters.” The list of seasonally closed waters is posted on Vermont Fish & Wildlife’s website ([www.vtfishandwildlife.com](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com)). Under Fishing, click on “Law Digest and Guide.”

“The department has made it a priority to increase opportunities for fish and wildlife-based recreation in which there will not be a biological impact,” said Vermont Fish & Wildlife Commissioner Patrick Berry. “This new fishing regulation will greatly expand angling opportunities and help promote open-water fishing during more of the year.”

The sections of streams listed below are open to trout fishing year round according to the following rules:

- Only artificial flies or lures may be used, except during the open season for trout (2nd Sat. in April – Oct. 31).
- Catch and release only (trout must be immediately released where caught), except during the open season for trout.
- During open season for trout, follow normal size restrictions, daily limits and possession limits.

(See the next page for the sections of streams open to trout fishing year round!)

# ***New Fishing Opportunities for 2014***

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Streams open to trout fishing year round:

- Black River: From the Connecticut River boundary upstream to the Howard Hill Road Bridge in Cavendish.
- Deerfield River: From the Woods Road (Medburyville) bridge in Wilmington upstream approximately 2 miles to the VT Route 9W bridge in Searsburg.
- East Creek (Rutland City): From the confluence with Otter Creek upstream (approximately 2.7 miles) to the top of the Patch Dam in Rutland City.
- Hoosic River: From the Vermont/New York border upstream to the Vermont/ Massachusetts border.
- Lamoille River: From the Lake Champlain boundary (top of Peterson Dam in Milton) upstream to the top of the Cady's Falls Dam in Morristown.
- Lewis Creek: From the Lake Champlain boundary upstream to the State Prison Hollow Road (TH#3) bridge in Starksboro.
- Missisquoi River: From the top of the Swanton Dam in Swanton to the top of the Enosburg Falls Dam in Enosburg Falls.
- Moose River: From the confluence with Passumpsic River upstream to the downstream edge of the Concord Avenue bridge in St. Johnsbury.
- Ompompanoosuc River: From the Connecticut River boundary upstream to the Union Village Dam in Thetford.
- Otter Creek: From the Lake Champlain boundary upstream to the Danby-Mt. Tabor Forest Road bridge (Forest Road #10) in Mt. Tabor..
- Passumpsic River: From the Connecticut River boundary upstream to the top of Arnolds Falls Dam in St. Johnsbury.
- Waits River: From the Connecticut River boundary upstream to the top of the Central Vermont Power Dam in Bradford.
- Walloomsac River: From the Vermont/New York border in Bennington upstream to the top of the former Vermont Tissue Plant Dam (downstream of Murphy Road) in Bennington.
- West River: From the Connecticut River boundary upstream to the Townshend Dam in Townshend.
- White River: From the Connecticut River boundary upstream to the bridge on Route 107 in Bethel.
- Williams River: From the Connecticut River boundary upstream to the top of the dam at Brockway Mills Falls in Rockingham.
- Winooski River: From the Lake Champlain boundary upstream to the VT Route 2/100 in Duxbury and Waterbury.

# 2014 Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Licenses Available Dec. 16

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Vermont hunting, fishing and trapping licenses for the new year will be available on the Fish & Wildlife Department's website ([www.vtfishandwildlife.com](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com)) on December 16.

New this year, online license purchasers will automatically be entered to win an Old Town canoe and other prizes. The winner of the canoe and a trolling motor will be drawn on May 15, while the winner of a hunting rifle and hunting jacket will be drawn at the Yankee Sportsmen's Classic in January, 2015. More information about the contest is available on the department website.

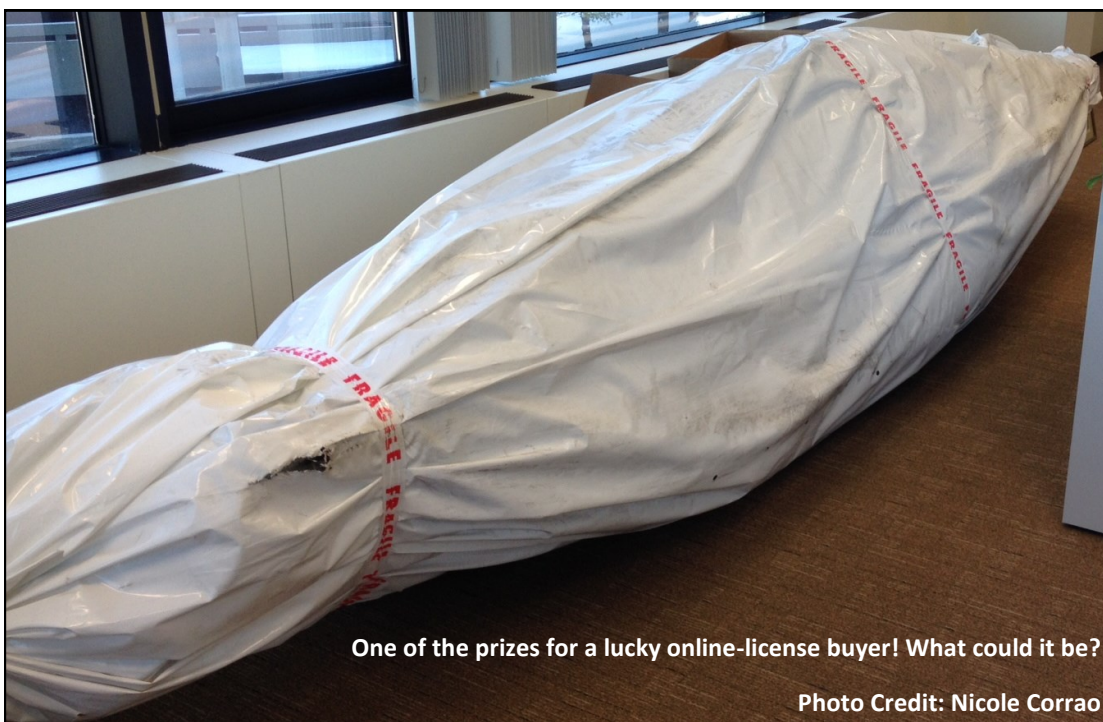
"Many people like to purchase new licenses for themselves, friends or relatives before January 1," said Vermont Fish & Wildlife Commissioner Patrick Berry. "Whether you want to give a license as a gift or purchase it for yourself, we want to make it as easy as possible with our online licensing system."

While on the website, license buyers are urged to sign up to join our mailing list to receive Vermont Fish & Wildlife news. They can also purchase a 2014 Fish and Wildlife calendar online or donate to the Nongame Wildlife Fund.

"Vermonters are exceptional wildlife enthusiasts," said Berry, "and their 2014 license purchases support wildlife conservation in Vermont year round."

Vermonters lead in the New England states in hunting and fishing with 26 percent of residents participating in one or both.

Printed copies of the 2014 Hunting, Fishing & Trapping Laws and Guide are also available from license agents. The department's website will soon have a link to an online version.



One of the prizes for a lucky online-license buyer! What could it be?

Photo Credit: Nicole Corrao



# Newport Man Sentenced for Deer Poaching Conviction

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A Newport man was sentenced to 30 days in jail following a conviction in Orleans County Superior Court. Michael Bickford, 33, was convicted of possessing big game taken during a closed season.

Bickford was found to be in possession of deer meat and a velvet antlered deer skull in September 2012, according to Sergeant Bradley Mann of the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department's law enforcement division. Sergeant Mann's investigation revealed that the deer was not legally taken and therefore could not be legally possessed.

Bickford pled no contest to the charge in court on December 3, 2013.

This was Bickford's third big game conviction in five years. He was convicted in 2008 of taking deer in closed season and again in 2012 of taking deer by illegal means.

In addition to jail time, Bickford will lose his right to hunt, fish and trap in Vermont for three years and will have to attend a remedial hunter ethics course. Because Vermont is a member of the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact, he will also lose the right to hunt, fish and trap in 39 other states.

"Most Vermont hunters pursue game lawfully and respect hunting regulations," said Col. David LeCours, head of law enforcement for Vermont Fish & Wildlife, noting that wildlife in Vermont is held in the public trust. "Those few that choose to break the law face serious consequences."

Vermont wardens continue to rely heavily on confidential information provided by the public. If you witness illegal activity, please alert a Vermont State Game Warden immediately by calling your local State Police Barracks. You can also contact Operation Game Thief at 1-800-75ALERT (1-800-752-5378) or online at [www.vtfishandwildlife.com/laws\\_thief.cfm](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/laws_thief.cfm). Rewards are paid for information leading to an arrest.



Warden Hungerford and Warden Taddei with a confiscated deer which was poached earlier this year. Photo Credit: Fish & Wildlife

# East Barre Woman Wins Vermont's Lifetime Hunting and Fishing License Lottery



Kathy Robinson of East Barre, VT, shown here with a deer she took earlier this year.  
Photo credit: Kathy Robinson

An avid angler and hunter from East Barre, Vermont is the lucky winner of a Vermont lifetime hunting and fishing license. Kathy Robinson, 51, won the license from a drawing of 2,149 lottery tickets.

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department holds an annual "Lifetime Lottery" in December each year and presents a lifetime hunting and fishing license to the winner. This year's drawing was held at the department's headquarters in Montpelier on December 12.

"The License of a Lifetime Lottery gives anyone, resident or nonresident, an opportunity to win a Vermont hunting and fishing license that is valid for the rest of his or

her life," said Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Patrick Berry. "Even if you don't win the license, by applying you have the good feeling of knowing you have contributed to fish and wildlife conservation in Vermont."

You can enter Vermont's License of a Lifetime Lottery by adding the \$2.00 entry fee when you buy your license on the Fish & Wildlife Department website ([www.vtfishandwildlife.com](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com)), or by applying at locations statewide wherever Vermont hunting and fishing licenses are sold, or with a printable application also available on the department website. There is no limit on the number of times you may apply during a year.

"I am so excited to hear that I've won", said Kathy Robinson. "I've been hunting and fishing with my family since forever. We always consumed the food we harvested and it's great to know I won't ever have to buy a license again!"

For more information on hunting and fishing in Vermont, contact Fish & Wildlife by calling 802-828-1000 or by emailing [fwinformation@state.vt.us](mailto:fwinformation@state.vt.us).

# Vermont Birders Join Annual Christmas Bird Count

This holiday season marks the 114th annual Christmas Bird Count, a favorite tradition among Vermont's birding community. Starting December 14, birdwatchers across the state will be participating in the count. Many hope to catch a glimpse of majestic snowy owls, which have been seen around Vermont in unusually high numbers this year.

"I've been participating in the annual count since 1980, and it's really worthwhile," said Vermont Fish & Wildlife biologist Steve Parren. "You can see some cool species such as horned grebes or red-bellied woodpeckers."

The Christmas Bird Count originated in 1900 with ornithologist Frank Chapman, an officer in the Audubon Society, who updated what had been a traditional Christmas morning bird hunt to include a census of the wintering locations of various bird species. The count started with just 27 observers and has grown into one of the largest birding events in the world, with tens of thousands of people participating every year.

In Vermont, there are more than a dozen count areas where birders gather together to conduct the Christmas Bird Count. The events begin on December 14 and run through January 4. The dates and contact information for each event are listed on the Vermont eBird website at [www.tinyurl.com/XmasBirdVT13](http://www.tinyurl.com/XmasBirdVT13).

"The Christmas Bird Count is one of the longest-running citizen science projects in the country and possibly in the world," said Mark LaBarr, conservation program manager for Audubon Vermont. "Not only does it provide critical data for scientists, but it's also a great time for folks who participate."

Even novice birdwatchers can participate because every event is led by an experienced birder. Organizers and participants include birders and biologists from Audubon Vermont, Middlebury College, the North Branch Nature Center, the Northwoods Stewardship Center, and the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department.



Mourning Dove. Photo credit: Linda Morse

"People who actively interact with wildlife, whether it's watching birds at a backyard bird feeder, angling for fish in a local stream, or even going moose hunting, seem to have a deeper connection with nature," added Parren. "To do these things, you need to care about wildlife on some level. Vermonters have an exceptionally high interest in the natural world."

Parren encourages all Vermonters who are looking for a fun way to see wildlife and participate in citizen science this holiday season, to grab their binoculars and join in on this year's annual Christmas Bird Count.

# Snowy Owls Descend on Vermont from the Arctic



Snowy owl. Photo credit: D. Andrew Saunders

Snowy owls have been spotted in locations throughout Vermont as they descend from the Canadian Arctic in what scientists are calling a rare event. They have been most frequently noticed in the flatter, wide open areas of the Champlain Valley.

The birds are usually an uncommon sight in Vermont. Major snowy owl irruptions typically occur only once every four years or so, but in recent winters they have become more frequent with large numbers sighted in the continental United States during 2011 and 2012.

Vermont's birding community is excited about the owls' arrival. Birders are reporting owl encounters on birding websites, claiming sightings of the birds in locations throughout Vermont.

"This is a tremendous event for Vermont's birders," said John Buck, nongame bird project leader for the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. "These large, majestic white birds are seldom seen here. It is a real treat to catch a glimpse of one."

To increase your chances of viewing a snowy owl, Buck recommends that you check fence posts along open fields. "Snowy owls are typically found in open areas, and unlike many owl species, they are active both day and night."

Buck noted the reason for the birds' appearance is more abundant food in Vermont than in their northern winter habitats. The owls primarily feed on lemmings, which rely on the protective insulation of a deep arctic snowpack to stay warm. When the snowpack becomes thinner in arctic areas due to rain or temperature fluctuations, lemmings are exposed to cold winter temperatures and their populations can plummet.

"Snowy owls migrate south when populations of rodents, their main food source, start to decline up north," said Buck. "Ironically, spells of warmer arctic temperatures or rain can cause rodent populations to decline, driving snowy owls south in search of food."

# Vermont's New Free Ice Fishing Day

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Always wanted to go ice fishing but couldn't find a good excuse to get away? The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department has found that excuse for you: a "free ice fishing day" on the fourth Saturday in January.

Saturday, January 25, 2014 is Vermont's new free ice fishing day – a day when anyone, resident or non-resident, may go fishing without a fishing license.

"We worked with the Legislature to create a free ice fishing day to encourage individuals, friends and families to get out and try one of the most popular fishing methods enjoyed in Vermont," said Fish & Wildlife Commissioner Patrick Berry.

"I know some Vermonters who go because they have more free time in the winter months," he added. "Others go because they enjoy the tremendous fishing opportunities to be found this time of year. And still others simply enjoy getting out together to have fun and catch a few truly fresh fish to bring home for dinner."

Vermont's premier fishing destination, Lake Champlain, offers many ice fishing opportunities. Quality fishing for many species is easy to find on this 120-mile long lake, including landlocked salmon, lake trout, northern pike, yellow perch, white perch, walleye, and crappie. "Lake Champlain attracts twice as much fishing activity during the winter as during the summer, particularly in the northern third of the lake," said State Fisheries Biologist Brian Chipman. "The plentiful yellow perch is the mainstay of the winter fishery, but many ice anglers also find good fishing for other species." (continued on next page)



Biologist Shawn Good showing off his catch.

Photo Credit: Shawn Good

## ***Vermont's New Free Ice Fishing Day***

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Traditional northern pike hotspots include Lake Champlain's Kelley Bay, Missisquoi Bay, Dillenbeck Bay, Carry Bay, Keeler Bay, St. Albans Bay, the shallow flats south of the Sandbar Causeway between Milton and South Hero, and the area south of the Champlain Bridge from Addison to Benson. Later, as more ice forms, landlocked salmon can be caught in the Inland Sea north of the Sandbar Causeway. There is no closed season for trout and salmon on Lake Champlain.

If cold weather provides good ice on the deep-water areas of the lake, lake trout will be found off the west shore of Grand Isle and in Outer Mallets Bay, Shelburne Bay, Converse Bay, and Button Bay south to the Champlain Bridge. While walleyes can show up anywhere in Lake Champlain, the most consistent winter action can be found in the southern end of the lake off Benson and Orwell, as well as the northern end in Swanton and Alburg.

Yellow perch and other panfish are being caught at sheltered Lake Champlain bays and shallows as well as on some other Vermont waters.

Vermont's ice fishing season for trout, salmon and bass starts January 18 and continues through March 15 on 40 large Vermont lakes. For a list of those lakes, go to page 60 of the 2014 Vermont Guide to Hunting, Fishing and Trapping, available where licenses are sold and at [www.vtfishandwildlife.com](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com). To locate places to stay and help on the latest fishing activity, go to the Vermont Outdoor Guides Association website ([www.voga.org](http://www.voga.org)) and click on "ice fishing."

An Internet search for Vermont Ice Fishing also will yield helpful information from several websites. If you would like to learn more about ice fishing, be sure to attend the free fishing day ice fishing festival being held January 25 at the Larrabee Point Fishing Access Area on Lake Champlain in Shoreham. Vermont Fish & Wildlife staff and experienced volunteer ice fishing enthusiasts will be there from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m. to help everyone, young and old, learn how to enjoy this unique and popular type of fishing. For more information, contact Nicole Corrao by calling 802-318-1347 or emailing ([Nicole.Corrao@state.vt.us](mailto:Nicole.Corrao@state.vt.us)).

# 'Twas the Night Before Christmas...

## Fish and Wildlife Style

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The following poem was written by Tom Rogers and Nicole Corrao of Fish and Wildlife. Part of it will be tweeted on the Fish and Wildlife Twitter account on Christmas Eve (Dec 24th). Below is only a portion of the poem, so be sure to follow us on Twitter and on Facebook to enjoy the full poem!

Merry Christmas!

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through Vermont,  
The night was quite still, so I went for a jaunt.  
The moon lit the way, as I tromped through the meadows  
(Boots would have been smarter, why did I wear stilettos?)

The squirrels were nestled all snug in their nest,  
While well-hidden acorns allowed them their rest.  
And the black bears and turtles made barely a tap,  
For they had just settled their brains for a long winter's nap.

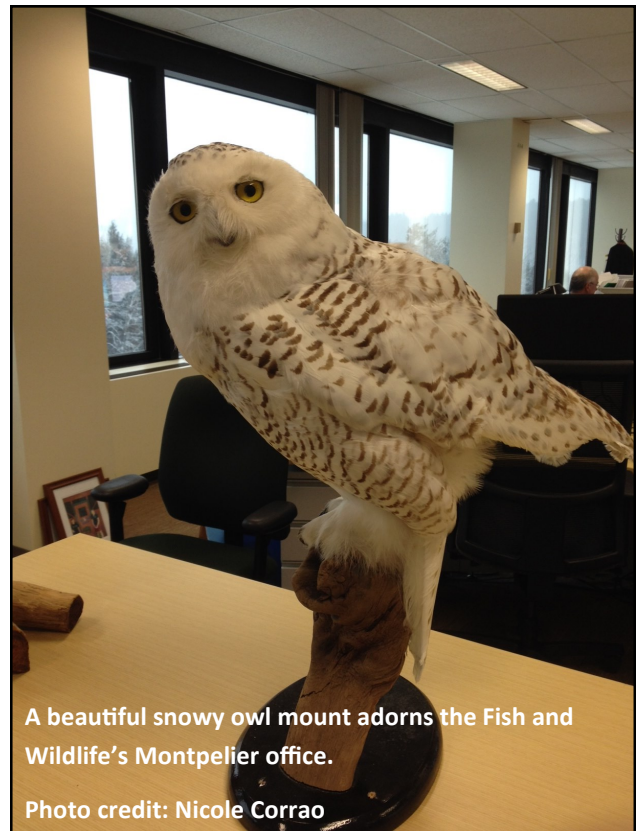
The field mice and meadow voles scurried deep under  
The snowpack that kept the coyotes asunder.  
I found some mouse bones in a pile of poo,  
As a I looked for a culprit, an owl said "Who!"

Yes Who?, who indeed, has left this owl pellet  
From a big bird's mouth it popped out and then fell. It  
Tumbled down silent to the base of the tree,  
And who should have come and found it? Why me!

When out of the shadows flew a pilot so quiet,  
I knew it a bird, but my brain would not buy it.  
It was giant and white, a right jolly old hooter,  
So this was my culprit, my pellet poo-shooter!

Yes upon a snowy owl I found myself gazing,  
It was like a nice dream, but much more amazing!  
For rarely are these birds seen in Vermont,  
And never before on my own woodland plot...

Catch the conclusion on Facebook and Twitter!



A beautiful snowy owl mount adorns the Fish and Wildlife's Montpelier office.

Photo credit: Nicole Corrao

# There's Still Time!

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Youngsters have until December 31st to enter the Youth Memories contest for 2013! Entries should demonstrate why hunting is important to the young hunter and should demonstrate one of their most memorable hunting experiences. Entries will be judged based on creativity as well as a strong display of hunter ethics, good landowner relations, an appreciation for wildlife, a respect for hunting heritage, a strong hunting skillset, and a connection to family.

Hunters 9 years old and younger should submit a drawing or painting. Hunters 10-12 years old should submit a photograph, and hunters aged 13-16 should submit a YouTube video 3 minutes or less in length. Entrants may choose to include a short narrative essay along with their submission, but it is not required.

For a complete list of contest rules, visit [tinyurl.com/FWYouthMemories2013](http://tinyurl.com/FWYouthMemories2013)

Good luck!

## Sound Off!

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This is YOUR newsletter! Have a photo or story you'd like to share? Is there something that's missing in the newsletter? E-mail [Nicole.Corrao@state.vt.us](mailto:Nicole.Corrao@state.vt.us) with your suggestions, stories, pictures or other input!

### Check Us Out:

**Hunter Ed:** <https://www.facebook.com/vthuntereducation>

**Fish and Wildlife:** <https://www.facebook.com/vtfishandwildlife>

<https://twitter.com/VTFishWildlife>