

Compliments of the Hunter Education Program

This is a month of hellos and goodbyes at the Hunter Education Program. We say goodbye to our outstanding specialist, Hope Kanarvogel, who has offered such tremendous support for the program. More than just distribute equipment, Hope is smart, quick with a smile and a laugh, and has a great attitude about just about everything. Hope landed a permanent position with VT DEC in their Law Enforcement Division, and her last day at Hunter Education is today. We are sorry to see her go, but certainly happy for this wonderful opportunity. Please join me in congratulating Hope on her new endeavor! On a happier note, we say hello once again to John Pellegrini! John is back at work and feeling better after being out for a majority of the winter. Please join me in welcoming John back to work. This issue of Field Notes includes press releases from Fish & Wildlife as well as some articles written by staff members. If you have any articles, pictures, or comments, please e-mail them to Nicole.Corrao@state.vt.us

Insights

*Passing on the hunting tradition is important to me
because....*

"I know where my meat is coming from, and enjoying nature has its benefits!"
- Jeff Houde, Chief Instructor

"It is our right to manage the land!" - James Stoker

Why is protecting the environment important to you?

"Because I don't want my daughter living in the set of Blade Runner!" - Sean-Patrick Burke

"Because Earth is the only planet with people and litter—easier to clean it up than to move!" - VT Green and Clean

"To nourish soils for future VT gardeners and farmers, and to keep VT beautiful!" - VT Waste Prevention

Moose of a Lifetime

By Chief Instructor Mike Kolsun

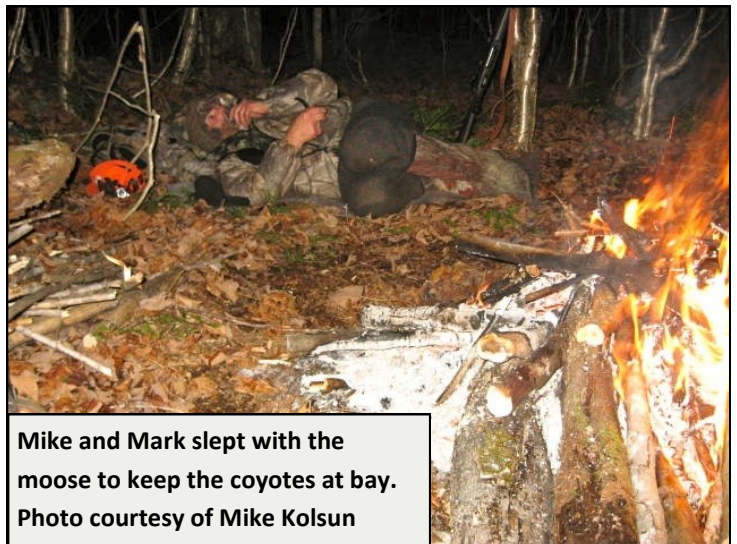
Hunter Ed Instructor Mark Lane (left) and Chief Instructor Mike Kolsun (right) with a 698 lb. cow taken last October in Morgan, VT. Photo courtesy of Mike Kolsun



Last year I drew a moose permit. In October, I went out hunting with my friend, Mark Lane, as my alternate. We were 2 and a half miles from when truck when I shot this moose. I couldn't have picked a better alternate than Mark. The coyotes howled all day during the hunt, and since the draft horse couldn't get to us and the moose until the next morning, we slept with the moose to prevent predation—and of course, it snowed that evening. We gathered wood, built a fire, and curled up on a 2x8 foot piece of plastic. I wore EVERYTHING I had in my backpack.

If not for the help of good friends Tom Decker, his three cousins Dale, Stan, and Darrell, and ex-Commissioner Wayne LaRoche, this would have been a hardship. Those guys walked in almost 7 miles to find us, then spent half a day contacting landowners for permission to access locked gates and make arrangements for the draft horse. They arrived to us at 7:30 the next morning.

This was the best hunt of my life. A huge cow and good friends there to help. What more can one want in life? This is what hunting is all about.



Mike and Mark slept with the moose to keep the coyotes at bay. Photo courtesy of Mike Kolsun

Remington Arms Announces Voluntary Product Recall

Remington Arms Company, LLC (“Remington”) announced on April 11th, 2014, a voluntary recall of Model 700™ and Model Seven™ rifles with X-Mark Pro® (“XMP®”) triggers, manufactured from May 1, 2006 to April 9, 2014.

Senior Remington engineers determined that some Model 700 and Model Seven rifles with XMP triggers could, under certain circumstances, unintentionally discharge.

IN THE INTEREST OF SAFETY, THESE PRODUCTS ARE BEING RECALLED.

Remington’s investigation determined that some XMP triggers might have excess bonding agent used in the assembly process, which could cause an unintentional discharge. Therefore, Remington is recalling ALL affected products to fully inspect and clean the XMP triggers with a specialized process. Remington has advised customers to immediately cease use of recalled rifles and return them to Remington free of charge. The rifles will be inspected, specialty cleaned, tested, and returned as soon as possible. Do not attempt to diagnose or repair recalled rifles. Remington established a dedicated website and toll-free hotline to help consumers determine whether their Model 700 or Model Seven rifle(s) are subject to recall:

- Website: <http://xmpprecall.remington.com>
- Toll-Free Hotline: 1-800-243-9700 (Prompt #3 then Prompt #1) Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EDT.

The website and hotline provide guidance on returning recalled rifles free of charge. “Remington takes safety extremely seriously,” said Teddy Novin, Director of Public Affairs and Communications. “While we have the utmost confidence in the design of the XMP trigger, we are undertaking this recall in the interest of customer safety, to remove any potential excess bonding agent applied in the assembly process. We have established significant safety and technical resources to determine which rifles are affected and to minimize any risks. Our goal is to have every recalled firearm inspected, specialty cleaned, tested and returned as soon as possible.”

“We’re putting our customers and their safety first by voluntarily recalling all potentially affected rifles. We also want to take this opportunity to remind everyone of the Ten Commandments of Firearm Safety,” Novin concluded.

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Boaters Reminded to Wear Flotation Vests

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department is reminding Lake Champlain anglers and boaters that New York State boating law requires all persons aboard motorboats, canoes, kayaks, rowboats, and sailboats less than 21 feet in length to wear a personal flotation device (PFD) while on New York waters from November 1 to May 1.

New York implemented this PFD law in the fall of 2009 after a spate of deaths involving people who were not wearing life jackets while boating during spring and fall cold water temperatures.

Sudden immersion in cold water after falling overboard or capsizing, particularly at water temperatures below 68°F, can overcome even the strongest swimmers. It may lead to sudden cardiac arrest or gasping and inhalation of water, the loss of swimming ability and grip strength, and eventually hypothermia and unconsciousness.

“After a long winter, the sight of open water and the feeling of warm sunshine can give boaters a false sense of security,” said Vermont State Fisheries Biologist Shawn Good. “The reality is, the ice has just gone out, and water temperatures are still extremely cold. We encourage anglers and boaters to be cautious and safe while on any watercraft in the early spring.”

Wearing a life jacket, no matter what the season, is the single best way boaters can keep themselves safe on the water, and it can significantly improve their chances of survival should something unexpected happen while boating.

Vermont Fish & Wildlife also reminds anglers and boaters that children under 12 years of age must wear a Coast Guard approved personal flotation device at all times while boating on any Vermont waterbody.

Trophy Trout Program Expanded to the Walloomsac River

A section of the Walloomsac River in Bennington has been added to the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department’s “Trophy Trout” stocking program on eight river sections and 15 lakes and ponds that receive two-year old trout, some over 18 inches long.

The section of the Walloomsac being stocked with trophy trout extends from the Vermont/New York border in Bennington upstream to the top of the former Vermont Tissue Plant Dam (downstream of Murphy Road). Fishing regulations have been changed for the trophy trout section of the river. Trout fishing opened April 12 and will continue through October 31. There is no size limit on trout harvested from this section of river, but the daily limit has been changed to two trout per day. Catch and Release fishing for trout using artificial flies and lures is allowed during the remainder of the year.

“The trophy rainbow and brown trout stocked in the Black, Winooski, Lamoille, East Creek, Missisquoi, Walloomsac, and Passumpsic Rivers, as well as Otter Creek, provide exciting fishing for many anglers of all ages and skill levels,” said State Fisheries Biologist Chet MacKenzie. “Large two-year old rainbows will also be stocked in selected lakes and ponds to provide excellent fishing opportunities.”

Vermont's Trophy Trout Stocking for 2014

Vermont's "Trophy Trout" stocking program for 2014 includes eight river sections and 15 lakes and ponds receiving the two-year old trout, some over 18 inches long.

"The trophy rainbow and brown trout stocked in the Black, Winooski, Lamoille, East Creek, Missisquoi, Walloomsac, and Passumpsic Rivers as well as Otter Creek provide exciting fishing for many anglers of all ages and skill levels," said Vermont's Director of Fisheries Eric Palmer. "Large two-year old rainbows will also be stocked in 15 additional lakes and ponds to provide excellent fishing opportunities."

Trout fishing opened April 12, and will continue through October 31 this year in the river sections listed below. There is no length limit. The daily creel limit is two trout.

Stocking of the river sections will occur throughout May. Anglers can check Vermont Fish and Wildlife's website (www.vtfishandwildlife.com) to see the stocking that has occurred. Click on "Fishing" and then "Stocking Schedule."

Black River: along Rt. 131 in Weathersfield and Cavendish, from Downers covered bridge upstream, approximately four miles, to the next bridge across the river, the Howard Hill Bridge.

Lamoille River: from the downstream edge of the bridge on Route 104 in the Village of Fairfax upstream, approximately 1.6 miles, to the top of the Fairfax Falls Dam in Fairfax.

Otter Creek: in Danby and Mt. Tabor - From the Vermont Railway Bridge north of the fishing access upstream, approximately 2 miles, to the Danby-Mt. Tabor Forest Rd. Bridge (Forest Road # 10).

East Creek: in Rutland City - from the confluence with Otter Creek upstream, approximately 2.7 miles, to the top of the Patch Dam in Rutland City.

Missisquoi River: in Enosburg and Sheldon, from the downstream edge of Kane Road (TH-3) bridge upstream, approximately 5.7 miles, to the top of the Enosburg Falls Dam in Enosburg Falls.

Passumpsic River: in St. Johnsbury, from the top of the Gage Dam upstream to the top of the Arnold Falls Dam. This section includes the Moose River from its confluence with the Passumpsic River upstream to the Concord Avenue bridge.

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.

Winooski River: in Duxbury and Waterbury, from the top of Bolton Dam upstream to the Route 2 Bridge east of Waterbury Village. This section includes the Little River: from its confluence with the Winooski River upstream to the Route 2 bridge.

A portion of the annual stocking of trout in these waters will also be trophy trout: Amherst Lake (Plymouth), Black Pond (Hubbardton), Echo Lake (Plymouth), Holland Pond (Holland), Kent Pond (Killington), Knapp Pond #1(Reading-Cavendish), Lake Paran (Bennington-Shaftsbury), Lake Raponda (Wilmington), Lake Rescue (Ludlow), Lake Shaftsbury (Shaftsbury), McIntosh Pond (Royalton), Mill Pond (Windsor), Miller Pond (Strafford), Stoughton Pond (Weathersfield), Sunset Lake (Brookfield).

Protections Remain in Place for Conn. River Salmon

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department reminds anglers that Atlantic salmon in the Connecticut River and its tributaries remain a protected species and should not be caught or killed. The once abundant salmon disappeared from the river in the early 1800s following the building of dams. In 1967, Vermont began partnering with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and other state agencies in an attempt to restore Atlantic salmon populations to the Connecticut River basin. Biologists released salmon into the river and then captured adult salmon returning from the ocean each year, bred them in fish hatcheries, and released millions of their offspring back into the river.

Despite this ambitious effort, the stocking program has not achieved the restoration levels anticipated, and the stocking was discontinued in New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Vermont in 2013. However, adult salmon will still be returning to the Connecticut River and its tributaries for the next several years and the state of Connecticut continues to stock these fish.

“Anglers should know how to identify Atlantic salmon when fishing in these waters,” said Eric Palmer, fisheries director for the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. “If they happen to catch one, they should put it back in the river immediately.”

“The number of adult salmon returning to the river is likely to drop off in four or five years, but it is possible that salmon will persist at some level through natural reproduction,” said Palmer.

Palmer pointed out that while Atlantic salmon can sometimes be mistaken for brown trout, all migrating salmon will be captured and fitted with a small yellow tag attached near their dorsal fin that identifies it as a salmon and directs anglers to release it immediately.

If the tag is missing, anglers can still differentiate an Atlantic salmon from a brown trout through characteristics such as spotting patterns, coloration, and the shape of fins and mouth parts, which are demonstrated in the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Law Digest or online at www.vtfishandwildlife.com.

“When in doubt, an angler should play it safe in the Connecticut River basin and release any fish they think might be a salmon unharmed,” said Palmer. “If anglers catch and keep one of these salmon, they can receive a substantial fine or lose their hunting and fishing license.”

Palmer noted that anglers may still harvest landlocked Atlantic salmon in Lake Champlain, Lake Memphremagog and their tributaries, along with other large lakes in Vermont’s interior. Protected anadromous salmon are found only in the Connecticut River and its tributaries.



Atlantic salmon will soon be making their way up the Conn. River and its tributaries. The salmon are identifiable by small tags attached near the dorsal fin and should be released unharmed. Photo courtesy of CT DEEP

Vermont's Walleye Fishing Starts May 3

The best walleye fishing in New England will begin soon in several Vermont rivers and lakes, according to the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. The department is reminding anglers that walleye fishing season starts in much of the state on the first Saturday in May and that regulations vary, depending on the water you are fishing.

In all waters of Vermont except Lake Carmi, Chittenden Reservoir and the Connecticut River, walleye and sauger have an 18" minimum length requirement and three-fish daily limit. The open season is from Saturday, May 3 to March 15, 2015.

Lake Carmi has a slot limit for walleye because of the lake's high productivity and high rate of walleye harvest. The minimum length is 15 inches, all walleye between 17 and 19 inches must be released. The daily limit is five walleye, but only one may be over 19 inches long. The season is open May 4 through March 15.

Chittenden Reservoir has special walleye regulations in order to produce large walleye that can help control its over-abundant yellow perch population and provide anglers with an opportunity to harvest a trophy walleye. The minimum length is 22 inches, the daily limit is two, and the season is open June 1 through March 15.

Connecticut River walleye fishing rules are set by New Hampshire. No walleye between 16 to 18 inches may be kept and the daily limit is four fish, of which only one may be longer than 18 inches.

Excellent walleye fishing opportunities occur each spring in the lakes mentioned above as well as in Lake Champlain and its tributaries: the Missisquoi River, Lamoille River, Winooski River, and Otter Creek. The Northeast Kingdom also offers walleye fishing opportunities in Salem Lake, Island Pond, Clyde Pond, and the Clyde River. Vermont's state record walleye weighed 14.55 lbs. and was caught in Lake Champlain by Richard Levesque of Swanton in 2010.

**Fisheries biologist Brian Chipman of Jericho, on a day off, with a nice walleye he caught in 2012 on the Winooski River.
Photo courtesy VTFWD**



Reptiles and Amphibians are on the Move

You may have already heard the spring peepers or wood frogs calling in your backyard. Or perhaps you've noticed salamanders crawling over rocks in a nearby stream. The arrival of spring brings the return of reptiles and amphibians to the Vermont landscape.

The frog calls you hear each spring are part of the animals' breeding behavior, according to Zoologist Mark Ferguson with the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department.

"Many frogs and salamanders are starting their breeding season," said Ferguson. "By late May, we should see turtles crossing the road to build nests in the sandy embankments."

Amphibians migrate by the thousands each spring in search of breeding pools. This migration frequently takes them across roads and highways, leading to high rates of mortality among some species. Roadkill mortality, forest fragmentation and loss of wetland habitat have contributed to the decline of several of Vermont's reptile and amphibian species.

"Most amphibian migration takes place over several rainy spring nights," said Ferguson. "On these nights, drivers should slow down on roads near vernal pools and wetlands, or try to use an alternate route."

Turtle activity peaks from late May through June. Drivers are urged to keep an eye out for turtles in the road, particularly when driving near ponds and wetlands.

"When you spot a turtle in the road, you may be able to help it across the road if you are in a safe spot to get out of your car," said Ferguson. "For a snapping turtle, we recommend pushing the turtle across the road in the direction it was going with an object like a shovel to avoid getting too close to the turtle's face."

To report an amphibian or reptile sighting, visit the Vermont Reptile & Amphibian Atlas website at <http://community.middlebury.edu/~herpatlas/>. Jim Andrews with the Atlas website helps identify stretches of road that are hotspots for amphibian migration, and he works with other groups and volunteers to move the animals across the road and make drivers aware of these potentially high-mortality sites.

In an effort to allow wildlife to safely cross the road, the Fish & Wildlife Department is working with the Vermont Agency of Transportation to include culverts and wildlife barriers in road construction plans.

Spotted salamanders like this one will soon be crossing Vermont roadways to reach wetlands where they will breed. Drivers are urged to keep an eye out for them on the road.

Photo courtesy of John Hall



FAQ with Nicole



Nicole on the range
Photo courtesy of instructor DJ Rousseau

Q: When is the next Event Manager Training?

A: We had an Event Manager training on Thursday, May 8th at Kehoe. We will have more coming your way!!

Bennington Firehouse: May 13th, 6pm-7pm

Fish & Wildlife Essex Regional Office: May 21st 6pm-7pm

Fish & Wildlife Montpelier Office (Dewey Building): May 28th 6pm-7pm

Fish & Wildlife Springfield Office: June 12th: 6pm-7pm

This training counts toward instructor development as in-service training. Non-certified instructors and volunteers are welcome to attend.

Please bring a laptop or tablet if you have one. RSVP by the day before the training.

More trainings will be announced soon based on demand!

John's Back!

By John Pellegrini

As you all probably know, I was in an automobile accident in December. As a result, I suffered a concussion, as well as a back injury. This made for a very long winter of healing, however I am happy to report that I have now returned to work, and am ready for our busy season to begin. I would like to thank all the people that reached out to me to wish me well. I can still be reached at 802-272-2909, and by email at john.pellegrini@state.vt.us. Do not hesitate to call me with any question.



Greener Pastures

We are all sad to see Hope leave Hunter Education, but we are thrilled that she has accepted a full time position in DEC's division of Law Enforcement. Lucky for us, she will be literally right down the hall! Hope's tenacity, passion for hunting, and stellar attitude will not be easy to replicate or replace! If you have any questions or equipment needs, please call Nicole at 802-318-1347 or e-mail Nicole.Corrao@state.vt.us

Living with Black Bears

People love to see the black bear in its natural surroundings. But when bears venture into human territory, problems can occur. Often, bears pay the price.

People often encourage bears to come out of the forest by providing food without realizing it. Once bears become used to these food sources and come into frequent human contact, people sometimes call them "nuisance bears." But, they are just being bears! It is nearly impossible to relocate a nuisance bear – they frequently have to be put down.

Some of the most common sources of food that attract bears are: pet food, bird feeders, barbecue grills, garbage, household trash containers, open dumpsters, and campsites with accessible food and food wastes.

Purposely feeding a bear is not just bad for the bear, it's also illegal.

Vermont law also states that residents must take reasonable measures to protect their property from bears before lethal force can be taken. Some of these measures include:

- Keep chickens and honeybees secure within an electric fence or other bear-proof enclosure.
- Never feed bears, deliberately or accidentally.
- Feed your pets indoors.
- Do not feed birds April 1 through November 30. Bringing feeders in at night doesn't work, because of seed that is spilled on the ground.

Store trash in a secure place. Trash cans alone are not enough!

You can learn more about living with Vermont's black bears on the Vermont Fish & Wildlife website (www.vtfishandwildlife.com). Fish & Wildlife also asks that you use a form on their website to report any incidents you may have with Vermont bears.



Bears that learn to find food near people often get into trouble that can spell their demise. People can help by removing all potential food sources that might tempt bears.

Photo courtesy of VTFish and Wildlife and Jacob Zorn

Green Mountain Conservation Camp Opens Additional Week

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department is now accepting applications for one additional week at Green Mountain Conservation Camp. The additional week is available due to the cancellation of Military Week, a result of federal budget sequestration cuts.

“Although it’s unfortunate the National Guard was unable to fund Military Week this year,” said Alison Thomas, education coordinator, “we know other families will be glad to have this opportunity open up for their children to attend the camp.”

The week of July 6 – 11, 2014 is now a boys’ basic week at GMCC Kehoe, located on Lake Bomoseen in Castleton, Vermont. The Department is accepting applications from boys who will be 12 to 14 years of age at the start of camp.

Campers participate in hands-on courses regarding natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation. Courses include forestry, orienteering, hunter and bowhunter education, safe firearm and archery techniques, swimming, canoeing, fishing, wildlife biology, and more while in an attractive outdoor setting.

Tuition is \$250 for the week, including food, lodging and equipment. Full and partial scholarships are available.

For more information about Green Mountain Conservation Camp, go to www.tinyurl.com/GMCCcamps, email fwmcc@state.vt.us, or call 802-828-1460.

Vermont's conservation camp program is unique because it is sponsored and directed by Fish & Wildlife Department professionals -- the same people who manage Vermont's fish and wildlife species. Working biologists, foresters, wardens, and conservation educators teach young people about their role with Vermont's forests, wetlands and wildlife through interactive activities. The program's greatest strength is connecting young people to the outdoors. The camp program is sponsored in part through a grant from the Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Program.



Students line up for a canoe trip.
Photo courtesy of VT Fish & Wildlife

Give Nesting Bald Eagles Space

As bald eagle nests become more common in Vermont, the Fish & Wildlife Department is asking bird-watchers to enjoy the birds from a safe distance to avoid disturbing them. Photo courtesy VTFWD



The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department is asking bird-watchers to give nesting bald eagles a hand this spring by enjoying them from a safe distance.

Bald eagles are slowly recovering in Vermont after being absent in the state for decades. Their nests are mostly found along the Connecticut River and the surrounding waterways, although some bald eagle pairs have begun nesting in other parts of the state.

“Nesting bald eagles need their privacy,” said John Buck, migratory bird biologist for the Fish & Wildlife Department. “This is a very crucial time of year for the birds. Most bald eagle pairs are now incubating eggs or may even be tending to newly hatched eagle chicks.”

According to Buck, eagles are very sensitive to disturbance from humans. Activity too close to their nest can result in them abandoning their young. Without a source of food and protection the young eagles will not survive.

Buck recommends that people view eagles with a good spotting scope or binoculars from a distance of at least 300 feet, or roughly the length of a football field.

“Where possible, bird-watchers should try to conceal themselves behind trees and bushes,” added Buck. “If the eagles change their behavior, birders should leave the area.”

Harassing nesting bald eagles not only harms the birds, but is also illegal and a violation of the state endangered species statute.

“Bald eagles invoke a sense of wonder in the natural world and viewers understandably want to get close,” said Buck. “However, as with many nesting birds, eagles need room to rear their chicks. Armed with a pair of binoculars--and from a considerate distance--birders can share in the return of these majestic birds and help ensure their continued survival in Vermont.”

Vermont's Free Fishing is Saturday, June 14

If you've been looking for a good excuse to give fishing a try, here it is! Saturday, June 14, is Vermont's open-water Free Fishing Day -- the one day in the summer when residents and nonresidents may go fishing in the Green Mountain State without a fishing license.

Fishing is a quiet, relaxing way to enjoy Vermont's scenic outdoors with many accompanying benefits. You can release any fish you catch, or take home some very fresh fish for dinner.

Anglers in Vermont can try for brook, brown or rainbow trout, landlocked salmon, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, yellow perch, walleye, and northern pike as well as other several other species.

At the same time, you will likely see several species of wildlife while fishing in Vermont. A bald eagle or osprey soaring overhead is an experience you will always remember. Whether you get out there alone, or take friends or family, a good day of fishing makes memories that will last a lifetime.

Vermont has 284 lakes and over 7,000 miles of clear streams offering the greatest variety of high quality fresh water fishing in the Northeast, according to the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. Finding a place to fish in Vermont is easy, but the department also hosts a special event especially for kids on Free Fishing Day in Grand Isle.

The "Grand Isle Fishing Festival" will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Free Fishing Day at the Ed Weed Fish Culture Station in Grand Isle. Designed for young anglers, this free event offers basic fishing instruction and the chance for kids to catch big trout in a pond next to the hatchery.

To find out more about Vermont's great fishing opportunities and to plan your fishing trip, contact the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department at 802-828-1000 and ask for a copy of the "Hunting, Fishing & Trapping Laws and Guide." E-mail fwinformation@state.vt.us for any questions or discover more from the website (www.vtfishandwildlife.com).

While there, check the new interactive page about Family Friendly Fishing spots: http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/fish_familyfishing.cfm

A Free Fishing Day for ice fishing will be announced later for next winter.



Photo courtesy VTFWD

Kid's Fishing Events Being Held This Spring

Here's a great opportunity for young people to give fishing a try. The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department has released a list of upcoming fishing events, most of them intended just for kids.

The department has a "Children's Fishing Program" which provides kids with the opportunity for a fun and successful fishing experience at locally organized fishing events. Organizers of these events often are charitable, community, or non-profit groups such as fire departments, fish and game clubs, Rotary, Lions, town recreation committees, 4-H clubs, and scouts.

Most kids' fishing events are open to the public, although they may be restricted to town residents or to a particular group of individuals. The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department provides about 15,000 eight-to-ten inch trout for the program, with each event receiving 100 to 400 fish.

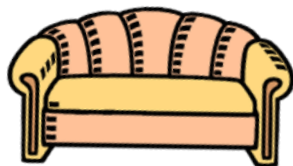
Kids' fishing events generally start in the spring and continue through June. A list of the events, which is periodically updated, appears on Fish & Wildlife's website (www.vtfishandwildlife.com). Click on "Fishing" and then on "Kids Fishing Events."

Vermont Fish & Wildlife also has a "Let's Go Fishing" Program where trained volunteers teach and encourage young people and their families how to fish. The volunteer instructors teach fishing skills, how to use different types of tackle, the importance of good aquatic habitat, fishing ethics and fishing regulations. Clinics are planned throughout the state during the spring and summer months. Check your local newspapers and bait shops for clinics in your area. You can learn more about "Let's Go Fishing" on Fish & Wildlife's website under Fishing or Youth Pages.

Wanted: Furniture for GMCC!

By Camp Coordinator, Ray O'Connor

Hello. Hunter Ed. Instructors! I hope that spring is finding you well. I am trying to revamp the décor at the Conservation Camps, both Buck Lake and Kehoe. Our instructors and junior counselors have been sitting on moldy, rotten couches for too many years now! If anyone is getting rid of any furniture that is still in usable condition, please let me know! I am looking for couches, chairs, tables, patio furniture, and a chest of drawers. I would be happy to arrange a pick-up. Please contact me at 802-461-6487 or at Rachel.OConnor@state.vt.us. Thank you!



Cliff Tops and Overlooks Closed to Protect Nesting Peregrines

Hiking Vermont's hillsides is a great way to enjoy a spring day, but the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department and Audubon Vermont recommend you check to see if the area you're planning to hike or climb is open. Several cliff areas are currently closed to protect nesting peregrine falcons.

"Peregrine nesting is well underway this spring," said John Buck, Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department biologist. "The falcons are very sensitive to human presence so we ask climbers and hikers to please avoid the nests with a respectful distance. The closures help people to choose an alternative route in advance."

Barnet Roadcut (Barnet) – Rte 5 pullout closed

Bolton Notch (Bolton) – upper upper west cliff closed to climbing

Deer Leap (Bristol) - closed

Fairlee Palisades (Fairlee) – cliff top closed

Marshfield Mt (Marshfield) – portions closed to climbing

Mt. Horrid (Goshen) – Great Cliff overlook closed

Nichols Ledge (Woodbury) – cliff top closed

Rattlesnake Pt (Salisbury) – cliff top closed

Snake Mountain (Addison) – overlook south of pond closed

"The areas closed include the portions of the cliffs where the birds are nesting and the trails leading to the cliff tops or overlooks," said Buck. "In many cases the lower portions of the trails are still open. We will update the closure list as more nesting data are reported."

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department partners with Audubon Vermont to monitor the sites throughout the nesting season. These sites will remain closed until August 1, but if a falcon pair doesn't nest or if the nest is not successful, the sites will be reopened sooner.

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Hikers can help nesting peregrine falcons by avoiding nine Vermont cliff areas listed on VT Fish & Wildlife's website

Photo courtesy of VTFWD and Cathy Merrill

Cliff Tops and Overlooks Closed to Protect Nesting Peregrines

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According to Margaret Fowle with Audubon Vermont, 32 of the 37 territorial pairs monitored in 2013 attempted to nest. Twenty-one nesting pairs were successful, producing at least 50 young falcons. The peregrine's recovery is a great success story," said Fowle. "The population continues to thrive thanks to the efforts of our many volunteers and partners."

"We appreciate the public's support in respecting the cliff closures," said Buck. "The peregrine falcon was removed from the endangered species list in 2005 due, in part, to people respecting the falcon's nesting period. Continued respect for the falcon will help ensure that peregrines remain part of Vermont's landscape."

Updated information on cliff closures is listed on the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department website: www.vtfishandwildlife.com or by calling 802-828-1000. You can report peregrine sightings by calling Vermont Fish & Wildlife or emailing fwinformation@state.vt.us.

Green Mountain Conservation Camp Volunteer Weekend

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department is looking for volunteers to join friends of Green Mountain Conservation Camp for fun-filled weekends to get the camps ready for the 2014 season. This year, the GMCC Kehoe work weekend will be May 17-18 and the GMCC Buck Lake work weekend will be May 24-25.

Volunteers can participate for as long as they are able to – one hour, one day, or both days. They are welcome to stay overnight in onsite cabins or they can bring their own tents. Lunch & dinner provided.

The Buck Lake camp is located in Woodbury, Vt and the Kehoe camp is located on Lake Bomoseen in Castleton, Vt. This is an excellent community service opportunity for boy scout and girl scout groups, as well as high school and college clubs.

The Conservation Camps are looking for help with general repairs, construction, landscaping, painting, plumbing, cooking, firewood, electrical work and gardening. Participants are encouraged to bring their own tools, but the camps will have some available.

For more information and to register, email Rachel.OConnor@state.vt.us, or call 802-461-6487.

Vermont's conservation camp program is unique because it is sponsored and directed by Fish & Wildlife Department professionals -- the same people who manage Vermont's fish and wildlife species. Working biologists, foresters, wardens, and conservation educators teach young people about their role with Vermont's forests, wetlands and wildlife through interactive activities.

The program's greatest strength is connecting young people to the outdoors. The camp program is sponsored in part through a grant from the Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Program.

Young Wildlife Belong in the Wild

Watching wildlife is enjoyable, especially when young animals appear in the spring. But it's best to keep your distance. Picking up young wildlife can do more harm than good, according to the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. It's also against the law.

When people see young animals alone, they often mistakenly assume these animals are helpless or lost, in trouble or needing to be rescued. Bringing young wildlife into a human environment often results in permanent separation from their mothers and a sad ending for the animal.

Handling wildlife could also pose a threat to the people involved. Wild animals can transmit disease and angry wildlife mothers can pose significant dangers.

Department scientists encourage wildlife watchers to respect the behavior of animals in the spring and early summer, and to resist the urge to assist wildlife in ways that may be harmful. Some helpful tips:

Deer and moose nurse their young at different times during the day, and often leave young alone for long periods of time. These animals are not lost. Their mother knows where they are and will return.

Young birds on the ground may have left their nest, but their parents will still feed them.

Young animals such as fox and raccoon will often follow their parents. The family of a "wandering" animal searching for food is usually nearby but just out of sight to a person happening upon it.

Animals that act sick can carry rabies, parasites or other harmful diseases. Do not handle them. Even though they do not show symptoms, healthy-looking raccoons, foxes, skunks, and bats also may also be carriers of the deadly rabies virus.

Many wildlife species will not feed or care for their young when people are close by. Obey signs that restrict access to wildlife nesting areas, including hiking trails that may be temporarily closed.

Keep domestic pets indoors, leashed or fenced in. Dogs and cats kill many baby animals each year.

Avoid projects that remove trees, shrubs and dead snags that contain bird and other nests during the spring and summer.

For information about rabies and nuisance wildlife, call the Vermont

Rabies Hotline at 1-800-4RABIES (1-800-472-2437). If bitten or in contact with a raccoon, fox, skunk, or bat, or a domestic animal that has been in contact with one of these species, call the Vermont Department of Health at 1-800-640-4374.

For the safety of all wildlife, taking a wild animal into captivity is illegal, even one you suspect is sick, injured or has been abandoned. If you do find an orphaned animal you can contact the nearest rehabilitator specializing in the species you've found. To learn about Vermont's wildlife rehabilitators, see Vermont's Fish & Wildlife's website <http://tinyurl.com/896alaq> or contact the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department at 802-828-1000 if you have any questions.



Photo courtesy VTFWD

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Sound Off!

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