

# Compliments of the Hunter Education Program

Happy spring and turkey season! We are very excited to introduce you to our new staff member, Kim Barrett. Kim will be helping out with Hunter Ed doing surveys, getting non-traditional audiences into our programs, doing research on new technologies to use in classes, and general outreach activities. See her intro below. 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](mailto:Nicole.Corrao@state.vt.us)

## Staff Introductions: Kim Barrett

Hello everyone. My name is Kim Barrett and I am the newest addition to the Hunter Education Team! Although this is my first season with Hunter Education, I've spent the last few summers working with the Department's Conservation Camp Program. Most recently, I was the Director at Kehoe and enjoyed every minute of it. This season I'll be doing a little of everything. I'll not only be packing materials for your classes and assisting students but I'll be utilizing my skills in media and technology to develop new outreach projects in hopes of broadening our hunter education family to include non-traditional audiences.



I grew up on Long Island, in New York where I got started volunteering in various environmental organizations during high school. Prior to moving to Vermont I travelled around the country working on various natural resources projects for different NR agencies. You could find me leading nature hikes, designing interpretive pamphlets, measuring Sockeye Salmon in Alaska, taking measurements of tree species in Australia or restoring trout habitat in the Northeast Kingdom to name a few. Vermont became my new home after I obtained degrees in Natural Resources Management as well as Environmental Education, and Communication from Green Mountain College in Poultney, VT. I'm beyond excited to be working with the department again and look forward to interacting with you all soon!

Kim showing off her guns.  
Photo courtesy of Kim Barrett

# New Instructor Training: Meet the Fresh Meat

On Saturday, April 11th, the Hunter Education Program drove down to the Stamford Fish & Game Club to train some new (and not so new) faces to be certified Hunter Education Instructors.

The day was cold, but the company was great, and the trainees were enthusiastic, bright, and friendly.

Thanks to all who came out to the training. We had a wonderful time and hope you all did, too. If you get a chance to meet one of these great trainees, invite them to a class, or just reach out to talk.

Name	Town	Name	Town	Name	Town
Randy Butler	New Haven	Robert Hamilton	Bennington	Dan Reap	Sandgate
Alex Cote	S. Londonderry	William Herring	Berlin/ Bennington	William Sullivan	Montpelier
Ally Degrassi	Milton	Christian Heubner	Reading	Valorie Titus	Poultney
Traci Godkin	Newport, NH/ Woodstock VT	Alden Jones	Bennington	Charles Valentine	Adams, MA/ Bennington



Thanks to all for coming out and participating in a fun training!

Photo courtesy of Nicole Corrao

# Governor Shumlin Appoints New Fish & Wildlife Board Members, Names Board Chair

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Governor Peter Shumlin has appointed two new members to the Fish & Wildlife Board and has appointed a new board chair.

Dennis Mewes of Dummerston has been appointed from Windham County to replace the outgoing board chair Brian Ames. Bill Pickens of Lamoille County has been named to replace Bob Shannon. The terms of both Ames and Shannon expired in February.

Governor Shumlin has also appointed current board member Kevin Lawrence of Orange County to the position of board chair.

The fourteen-member Fish and Wildlife Board is a group of Vermont citizens appointed from every county that enact fish and wildlife regulations. Members serve for six-year terms.

“I appreciate the invaluable role that the Fish and Wildlife Board plays in the conservation of our natural resources in Vermont,” said Governor Shumlin. “The board is made up of well-informed citizens who thoughtfully represent the perspective of Vermont’s hunters, anglers, wildlife watchers, and conservationists.”

Mewes was born and raised in Windham County and has worked for 27 years as a self-employed finish carpenter. He is an avid hunter, angler and outdoorsman, and has enjoyed spending time in the woods since he was young. Mewes credits his love for the outdoors to his family, particularly his parents and grandparents, who first introduced him to wildlife and nature.

Pickens is the former long-serving president of the Vermont Trappers Association and has worked closely with the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department to create trapping regulations that help conserve Vermont’s furbearer species. He is a native Vermonter originally from Northfield who recently retired from E.J. Prescott. When Pickens is not out deer hunting, he is working to foster cooperation and communication among Vermont’s various sporting clubs and organizations.

“Mewes and Pickens are both avid sportsmen and they both share a strong interest in the sound management of these resources,” said Commissioner Louis Porter. “I’m sure they will add additional depth of knowledge on the issues facing Vermont’s sporting and conservation community to the board.”

Incoming board chair Kevin Lawrence is an educator and farmer from Bradford. Lawrence holds a master’s degree in natural resources management from Norwich University and comes from a strong hunting and fishing background. His father, Leo Lawrence, has been a hunter education instructor since the 1960s and raised four sons who are all certified instructors.

Lawrence has had a decades-long connection with Vermont Fish & Wildlife. He worked for five summers at the department’s Green Mountain Conservation Camps as a natural resources instructor and as the director. He has been a certified bow hunter education instructor for 32 years and is currently working to organize a ‘Let’s Go Fishing’ clinic at his local elementary school to teach kids about fishing and aquatic ecology.

“Kevin Lawrence has demonstrated a thoughtful and deliberate approach to debating hunting and fishing regulations as a board member,” added Commissioner Porter. “His composed demeanor and ability to see an issue from all sides will serve him well in the role of board chair.”



**Kevin Lawrence has been named the new chair of the Fish & Wildlife Board.**  
Photo courtesy of VT Fish & Wildlife

# F&W Board Votes on Proposed Deer Hunting Changes

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The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Board held a second vote on proposed changes to Vermont deer hunting regulations at their April 22 meeting in Montpelier. The board continued to expand hunting opportunities in Vermont, while taking a more conservative approach than initially proposed following the state's second severe winter in a row.

The board voted to add five days to the end of the October portion of archery season. It voted to allow crossbows for hunters aged 50 and older whenever a regular bow and arrow can be used for big game hunting. And the board voted to reduce the archery and muzzleloader season limits from three to two deer.

"After hearing from the public during the March deer hearings, as well as via emails and phone calls, the board responded by making a few changes to their previous proposal," said Louis Porter, commissioner of the Fish & Wildlife Department. "Rather than allowing all ages to hunt with a crossbow, the board voted to allow hunters aged 50 and older this opportunity."

"The board members also voted to add five rather than ten days to the archery season. These days were added at the end of the October portion of the season based on input from hunters who were looking for more hunting opportunities closer to the buck rut."

The Fish & Wildlife Board continued to take a strong stance to protect Vermont's deer herd against the potentially devastating effects of chronic wasting disease (CWD) by voting to ban the possession and use of natural deer fluids, including urine lures.

One more board vote will follow in the coming months. The proposed changes would take place beginning in 2016.

The first part of archery season would begin the first Saturday in October and run 28 consecutive days. The second part of archery season would remain the same to coincide with the December muzzleloader season – nine days beginning the Saturday after the end of the November deer season.

The lengths of youth deer season, November rifle season and muzzleloader season would remain the same.

"According to our most recent surveys, 68 percent of Vermont hunters are generally satisfied with Vermont deer hunting," said Commissioner Porter. "Based on that input, the department and the board are not looking for a major overhaul of deer hunting regulations at this time."

"We are continuing to work with the board to expand deer hunting opportunities in Vermont based on hunter input, while working to protect the health of Vermont's deer herd," said Porter.

The department will also conduct a three-year evaluation of the effects of the proposed regulation changes, including gathering more data on the current antler point restriction and examining the possibility of an early muzzleloader season.

# F&W Board Votes to Ban Natural Deer Urine Lures

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The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Board has voted to ban the possession and use by hunters of natural lures based on deer urine or other fluids beginning in 2016. By doing so the board hopes to reduce the threat of chronic wasting disease (CWD) entering the state, which has the potential to devastate Vermont's deer herd.

The disease is currently found in 23 states and two Canadian provinces. Ontario, Arizona and some areas of Pennsylvania prohibit the use of such lures. CWD is 100 percent fatal in infected individuals, and infection levels can approach 50 percent in adult bucks.

"The Fish & Wildlife Department fully supports the board in this important step to protect Vermont's deer herd," said Mark Scott, director of wildlife for the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. "This rule still allows hunters to use synthetic lures which pose no threat to the herd."

CWD can be spread in deer urine, feces and saliva, and deer may not show symptoms of the disease for several years after being infected. CWD can be deposited in soil and remain infectious for decades. The form of the disease found in sheep has been infectious 18 years after being deposited in soil, according to wildlife veterinarian Dr. Walter Cottrell.

Dr. Cottrell has worked closely with the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department as a contract wildlife veterinarian since retirement as wildlife veterinarian for Pennsylvania. He presented on the science of CWD to the Fish & Wildlife Board at their April 22 meeting.

"Because of its long incubation period of months to years, when this disease arrives in a new place, it can potentially be there for a long time before it is detected," said Dr. Cottrell. "And once the disease is there the genie is out of the bottle. Based on the experiences of the affected states and provinces it never leaves."

Dr. Cottrell outlined how quickly the disease can spread among deer populations. In Wyoming, 12 percent of the mule deer population was infected in 1997, while 47 percent of the population is infected today.

According to Dr. Cottrell, there currently is no test for CWD on living animals – tests are performed on

**Finally, our urine is safe.**  
Photo courtesy of Dave Adams.

deer only after they die. Deer are able to contract CWD and spread the disease for up to a year and possibly longer before they demonstrate any clinical signs of the disease. Deer urine lures are not tested for CWD, nor is it possible to track and



recall bottles of lure that have been sold from a facility that later tests positive for the disease.

Captive deer populations have been implicated in the spread of CWD in several states.

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## ***F&W Board Votes to Ban Natural Deer Urine Lures***

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While many captive deer facilities claim that their facilities are 'CWD-free,' urine lures from different sources are commonly mixed so hunters are unable to tell the origin of their product. The first case of CWD in Pennsylvania was recorded in a captive deer facility that was considered 'CWD-free' and was selling deer urine lures online, according to a letter to the board from Dr. Krysten Schuler, a researcher at the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine.

"Pennsylvania officials have been unable to trace the source of CWD in their captive cervid industry, nor has the source been determined for CWD-positive facilities detected in the last five years in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Missouri, Iowa, Utah, and Alberta, Canada," said Dr. Schuler in a letter to Vermont Fish & Wildlife. "Once CWD is established in wild cervids, no state or province has been able to control or eliminate it despite monumental efforts and expense. Therefore, implementing strong preventative measures is the only tool available to combat this disease."

Dr. Cottrell agreed, saying that banning natural deer urine lures is one of the few things the board can do to prevent the spread of CWD into Vermont.

Dr. Nancy Matthews performed research on CWD in Wisconsin for 13 years before taking on the role of Dean of University of Vermont's Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources. In a letter to the Fish & Wildlife Board, Dr. Matthews also expressed her support for the science behind the ban.

"Based on my personal research and an understanding of the existing scientific literature, I fully endorse the proposed ban," wrote Dr. Matthews. "Simply put, it is in the best interest of the deer and moose populations in the state."

One more board vote will follow in the coming months. The proposed ban would become effective in 2016.

## **Hammond Cove Range Temporarily Closed til Renovations, New Rules in Place**

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The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department is temporarily closing its Hammond Cove Shooting Range in Hartland to public use while facility improvements and new operation rules are being completed.

The closure will begin on Wednesday, May 6.

Planned upgrades include improved acoustic tiling in the covered shooting ports, the installation of security cameras and access road work.

"As the only publically accessible shooting range in Vermont, Hammond Cover has seen more use than we ever anticipated," said Louis Porter, commissioner of Fish & Wildlife. "These renovations and revised range rules will help reduce noise and moderate usage to a manageable level."

The department expects the range to re-open in early summer.

# Vermont Moose Hunting Applications Are Available

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Vermont moose hunting permit applications are now available on the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department's website ([www.vtfishandwildlife.com](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com)).

Printed applications will be available from Vermont license agents in early May.

The 225 regular moose season permits to be issued this year represent a 21 percent decrease from the 285 permits issued last year. Hunters are expected to harvest close to 110 moose during the regular season hunt which starts October 17 and ends October 22.

An additional 40 permits are designated for the October 1-7 archery moose season when hunters are expected to take about 12 moose.

"We recommended a reduction in permits this year based on the biological data we have collected on Vermont's moose and our calculated population estimates indicating moose densities are below management goals in some areas," said biologist Cedric Alexander, Vermont's moose project leader. "It's the intent of this proposal to allow population growth in most regions while continuing to stabilize moose numbers elsewhere."

Lottery applications are \$10 for residents and \$25 for nonresidents. The deadline to apply is June 10. Winners of the permit lottery will purchase resident hunting permits for \$100 and nonresident hunting permits for \$350. Hunters also will have the option to bid on five moose hunting permits in an auction to be announced later.

Alexander estimates Vermont has 2,400 moose statewide with the greatest concentration in the Northeast Kingdom.



Photo courtesy of Wayne Laroche

# Apply Online for a Moose Permit, Win a Muzzleloader

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Photo courtesy of George Bosworth, Chief Instructor.

Applying for a moose hunting permit on Vermont Fish & Wildlife's website by a June 17 deadline will get you a chance to win a new Thompson Center "Triumph" muzzleloader.

"Moose lottery permit applicants can help us improve efficiency of the permitting process by applying online, rather than by using one of our traditional paper applications available from license agents," said Commissioner Louis Porter. "Online applications are quick and easy for the applicant, and they save data entry time for us, which translates into having that money go toward other Fish & Wildlife work."

The .50 caliber Thompson Center muzzleloader has a stainless steel barrel and black stock. The winner will be drawn on Thursday, July 16, 2015.

Vermont moose hunting permit applications are now available on Vermont Fish & Wildlife's website ([www.vtfishandwildlife.com](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com)).

Hunters can apply for one of 225 regular moose season permits available for the regular season hunt which starts October 17 and ends October 22, or for one of 40 permits for the October 1-7 archery moose season.

Lottery applications are \$10 for residents and \$25 for nonresidents. The deadline to apply is June 17. Winners of the permit lottery will purchase resident hunting permits for \$100 and nonresident hunting permits for \$350. Hunters also will have the option to bid on five moose hunting permits in an auction to be announced later.

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# Green Mountain Conservation Camp Workcation Weekend

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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 2015 season. This year, the GMCC Kehoe “workcation” weekend will be May 16-17 and the GMCC Buck Lake workcation weekend will be May 23-24.

“We look forward to workcation weekend all winter long,” says Alison Thomas, education coordinator. “With the help of local volunteers, we spruce up both camps in readiness for the summer and enjoy being outdoors knowing it’s for a good cause—environmental education for kids.”

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 and dinner will be provided.

The Buck Lake camp is located in Woodbury and the Kehoe camp is on Lake Bomoseen in Castleton. 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 as a volunteer for one of these weekends, please email [corey.hart@state.vt.us](mailto:corey.hart@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.

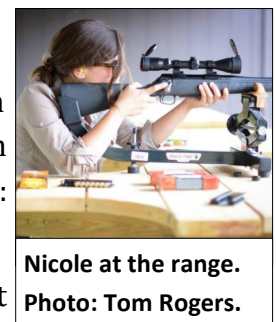
The Green Mountain Conservation Camp program's greatest strength is connecting young people to the outdoors. The camp program is sponsored in part through a grant from the Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Program.

## FAQ with Nicole

**Q:** When’s the next New Instructor Training ?

**A:** We just had a really successful New Instructor Training in Stamford on April 11th. Our next training is scheduled for August 22nd at Camp Kehoe in Castleton. You can sign up for this training online: <http://www.register-ed.com/events/view/61036>

We expect to add another training for the late summer/early fall in the Northeast Kingdom, so if you’re waiting for a training up that way, sit tight!



# Conservation Camps Still Have Openings



The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department says there are still openings in its Green Mountain Conservation Camp summer camp program for 12 to 14 year olds that want to learn about Vermont's wildlife and gain outdoor skills.

The one-week camp program is held at two locations -- Lake Bomoseen in Castleton and Buck Lake in Woodbury. Campers participate in hands-on learning experiences about fish and wildlife conservation, ecology, forestry, orienteering, safe firearm and archery techniques, swimming, canoeing, fishing and more in an attractive outdoor setting. Natural resource professionals come to the

**Vermont Fish & Wildlife has openings in its Conservation Camp summer camp program for 12 to 14 year olds interested in learning about Vermont's wildlife and outdoor skills.**

**Photo courtesy of Vermont Fish & Wildlife**

camp during the week to share information on their programs and take campers out for field activities.

Conservation Camps open June 21 and continue until August 21. Tuition is \$250 for the week, including food, lodging and equipment.

Check the Fish & Wildlife website ([www.vtfishandwildlife.com](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com)) for general information as well as scholarship availability. Information about the program and an online application can be found under "Education and Training" on the left side of the home page. A printable application also is available.

For more information about Green Mountain Conservation Camps contact: [fwmcc@state.vt.us](mailto: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 resources. Working biologists, foresters, game wardens, and conservation educators teach young people about Vermont's forests, wetlands and wildlife.

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

# Hunt Safely This Turkey Season

Hunting safely during turkey season is easy if you follow tips issued by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department.

In Vermont, May first is the beginning of spring turkey season, a day almost as important as the opening of deer season. While Vermont's spring turkey seasons are safe (Vermont has not had any incidents in the last five years) precautions are needed to ensure they stay that way. Camouflage or drab colored clothing is almost mandatory to outwit a keen-sighted gobbler. Unfortunately, camouflage often makes it just as hard for hunters to spot one another as it does for turkeys.

"Almost all of the incidents during turkey season have been caused by hunters who didn't positively identify the target before they pulled the trigger," said Chris Saunders, hunter education manager. "And the person they mistake for a turkey is often a friend trying to stalk a turkey call."

With the opening of spring turkey hunting season near, the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department urges hunters to consider these safety tips:

- Never shoot unless you're absolutely sure of your target. Look for a beard as only turkeys with beards are legal during the spring season. If you're not sure, skip the shot. Lack of positive identification could result in shooting an illegal bird, or worse, another hunter.
- Never stalk a gobbling turkey. Your chances of getting close are poor, and you may be sneaking up on another hunter.
- Avoid red, white, blue and black in clothing and equipment. A tom turkey's head has similar colors.
- Stick with hen calls. A gobbler call might draw in other hunters.
- Avoid unnecessary movement. This alerts turkeys and attracts hunters.
- Don't hide so well that you impair your field of vision
- Wrap your turkey in blaze orange for the hike back to the car.

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Ethan Havill and the beautiful tom he shot on youth weekend. Congrats, Ethan! Stay safe out there so that hunters like Ethan have a good example to aspire to!  
Photo courtesy of the Havill family.

## ***Hunt Safely This Turkey Season***

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- Always sit with your back against a tree trunk, big log or a boulder that is wider than your body. This protects you from being accidentally struck by pellets fired from behind you.
- Place decoys on the far side of a tree trunk or a rock. This prevents you from being directly in the line of fire should another hunter mistakenly shoot at your decoy.
- Wear hunter orange while moving from set-up to set-up. Take it off when you are in position.

This year the department's hunter education program is helping the local chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation pair up new hunters of all ages with experienced NWTF hunters for turkey season. The NWTF is also offering new hunters a chance to meet experienced hunters interesting in taking on mentors for turkey season at their JAKES Day event at the Waterbury-Stowe Fish and Game Club on April 19. For more information, call Ron LaFreniere at 802-434-4274.

"Turkey hunting in Vermont is rapidly becoming a beloved tradition and it not only helps us better manage wild populations but also brings fresh local food to our tables." Saunders notes. "This spring we encourage all hunters to give it a try and to hunt safely."

Hunt smart. Hunt safe. Wear orange.

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## **Vermont's Spring Turkey Hunting Starts Soon**

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Hunters are gearing up for Vermont's spring youth turkey hunting weekend later this month and getting ready for the regular spring turkey hunting season that starts May 1.

Vermont offers some of the best turkey hunting in New England according to the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. In 2014, Hunters took 5,160 turkeys in both the youth weekend and regular seasons, and 1,232 turkeys in the fall season.

What makes Vermont's spring gobbler season special? Vermont's turkey hunting is statewide during the spring season. Vermont's turkey population is one of the highest in New England. You can buy a turkey hunting license without having to go through a lottery. The turkey license comes with two spring tags for two bearded birds and one tag for a turkey of either sex in the fall season. Plus, you get to hunt the entire weekend, because hunting is allowed on Sundays.

Youth turkey hunting weekend is April 25-26 this year. Landowner permission is required to hunt on private land. To be eligible, a youth must be age 15 or under. The youth must have successfully completed a hunter education course and possess a hunting license, a turkey hunting license and a free youth turkey hunting tag.

The youth also must be accompanied by an unarmed adult who holds a hunting license and is over 18 years of age. Shooting hours are one half hour before sunrise to 12:00 Noon. The youth may take one bearded turkey during youth weekend and two bearded turkeys in the regular May hunting season. Last year, young hunters took 547 turkeys during Vermont's two-day youth hunt.

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## ***Vermont's Spring Turkey Hunting Starts Soon*** *(Continued from previous page)*

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The regular spring turkey hunting season is May 1-31. Shooting hours are one half hour before sunrise to 12:00 Noon. Two bearded turkeys may be taken, and all of Vermont is open to turkey hunting during the youth weekend and regular spring season.

A shotgun or bow and arrow may be used in the youth turkey or regular spring turkey hunting seasons. Shot size must be no larger than #2 and no smaller than #8.

"Last year's brood production was right around average," said Vermont turkey project leader Amy Alfieri. "Even though turkey flocks are being seen across the state, the long winter with deep powder may result in a slightly lower than average harvest."

Vermont was the first New England state to re-establish wild turkeys when it released 31 wild birds from New York in 1969 and 1970. Today, the Green Mountain State has an estimated 45,000-60,000 turkeys.

Vermont's wild turkey restoration program is a tremendous wildlife management success story funded entirely by hunters through the sale of hunting licenses and a federal tax on hunting equipment. Now, hunters are reaping the benefits by seeing excellent turkey hunting in Vermont. And, all Vermonters are enjoying watching the big birds as they roam hillsides they had been absent from for almost a century.

To find out more about wild turkey hunting in Vermont, contact the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department by telephone at 802-828-1000 or check in at their website ([www.vtfishandwildlife.com](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com)). The 2014 Turkey Harvest Report, available on the website, has details to help you plan your hunt, including the number of turkeys taken in each town.

Licenses are available on their website and from agents statewide.



**Vermont's regular spring turkey season runs May 1-31.  
Photo courtesy of John Hall**

# It's Time to Remove Bird Feeders

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The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department recommends taking down bird feeders from April 1 through November 30 to avoid attracting black bears that will be coming out of their winter dens to seek an early spring meal.

Bears are attracted to suet and bird seed, especially black oil sunflower seed. Bringing feeders in at night doesn't work, because bears will still feed on seed that is spilled on the ground.

Bird feeders are just one of the things that can attract hungry bears. Other sources of food that bears find appealing are: pet food, 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.
- Store trash in a secure place. Trash cans alone are not enough!



Some bears are quite the acrobats.  
Photo courtesy of Ontario DNR.

# Cliff Tops and Overlooks Closed to Protect Nesting Peregrines

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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 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
- Table Mt (Manchester) – 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.

According to Margaret Fowle with Audubon Vermont, 36 of the 40 territorial pairs monitored in 2014 attempted to nest. Twenty-seven 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 do well 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."

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## ***Cliff Tops and Overlooks Closed to Protect Nesting Peregrines***

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Hikers can help nesting peregrine falcons by keeping off cliff areas.  
Photo courtesy of C.P. Merrill

What you can do to help Vermont peregrines:

Respect cliff closures, and retreat from any cliff where you see peregrines

Report any disturbance of nesting peregrines to your local game warden

Report any sightings by calling Vermont Fish & Wildlife at 802-828-1000 or emailing [fwinformation@state.vt.us](mailto:fwinformation@state.vt.us)

Updated information on cliff closures is listed on the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department website: [www.vtfishandwildlife.com](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com) or by calling 802-828-1000.

## **Lake Champlain Alewife Die-off**

Large numbers of small fish called alewives are washing up on the shores of Lake Champlain in Milton and Georgia. State fisheries biologists from the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department say it is an example of the kind of problems a non-native invasive species can cause.

First documented in Lake Champlain in 2005, alewives have since been found throughout most of the lake.

"Unfortunately, dead alewife washing up on the shores of Lake Champlain following a winter die-off is now a common occurrence," said State Fisheries Biologist Shawn Good. "Alewives are an exotic fish species native to the Atlantic Ocean, and they are not well adapted to winters in freshwater lakes such as Lake Champlain. They are highly susceptible to fluctuations in water temperature that occur in the winter and are easily killed when this happens."

Good says dead alewives tend to stay preserved for long periods of time in cold water, but as ice cover melts in the spring, they float to the surface and wash up on shore in large numbers.

"This is exactly why it is illegal to move fish from one water to another or to introduce new species to Vermont lakes," said Good. "While some anglers may think introducing a new fish species to their favorite lake or pond will provide a new fishing opportunity, or provide food for game fish already inhabiting the waterbody, the reality is that non-native fish introductions almost always have unwanted, negative consequences."

Good says anglers should be aware of the risks involved with introducing new species to new waters.

"The great fishing we enjoy today could be gone tomorrow if aquatic nuisance fish species are allowed to spread," he cautioned. "We all need to work together to slow or prevent the spread of exotic species and protect Vermont's native fish and the fishing opportunities they provide."



# Draft Kingdom Heritage Lands Recreation Management Updates for Public Review

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Photo courtesy of VT Fish & Wildlife

Updated proposals for managing hiking, snowmobiling and horseback riding across much of the Kingdom Heritage Lands of northeastern Vermont will be available for public comment online and in a public meeting on April 9, 2015.

The Kingdom Heritage Lands cover 132,000 acres in Essex County and are composed of the West Mountain Wildlife Management Area, the Silvio Conte National Wildlife Refuge (Nulhegan Basin Division) and the Plum Creek private timberlands.

Concentrated recreational uses on the West Mountain WMA and Plum Creek timberlands are managed by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources through agreements

with designated corridor manager organizations. Currently, the Green Mountain Club manages hiking trails, the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers manages snowmobile trails, and the Vermont Horse Council manages equestrian trails.

Each of these organizations has provided an updated proposal detailing corridor locations, uses and management practices on the WMA and timberlands. No new organizations have submitted proposals to become corridor managers.

The public is invited to an open meeting to hear about the proposals and submit comments from 6 p.m.-8 p.m. at Brighton Elementary School (825 Railroad Street, Island Pond, Vermont) on Thursday, April 9, 2015.

Proposals may also be viewed on the webpages of the Fish & Wildlife Department and Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation beginning April 10, 2015, and comments may be submitted from April 10, 2015 to May 10, 2015 to: [Doug.Morin@state.vt.us](mailto:Doug.Morin@state.vt.us) or

Doug Morin  
Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department  
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These proposals build on updated 10-year plans for management of the West Mountain Wildlife Management Area and public access on the Plum Creek Timberlands, which are available online at [http://fpr.vermont.gov/state\\_lands/management\\_planning/documents/district\\_pages/district\\_5/kingdon\\_heritage](http://fpr.vermont.gov/state_lands/management_planning/documents/district_pages/district_5/kingdon_heritage)

# Reptiles and Amphibians Are on the Move

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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 nesting 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.



Drivers are urged to avoid hitting salamanders like this Eastern red-spotted newt that will soon be crossing Vermont roadways to reach wetlands where they will breed.

Photo courtesy of John Hall.

## **Contact Us!**

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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!.

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