



Photo courtesy of VTFWD

Compliments of the Hunter Education Program

Countdown to deer season! In mere hours hunters will be hitting the Vermont woods to try their hand for this deer season! Thanks to our wonderful instructors who are able to release safe and responsible hunters into the woods.

This issue of our newsletter includes press releases and articles written by staff. If you have any articles, pictures, or comments, please e-mail them to Nicole at Nicole.Meier@vermont.gov.

Bringing Bowhunter Education to Outright Vermont

by Kim Barrett

Broadening our student base at Hunter Education has been a major goal of mine this past summer. I've spent the last few months making connections with different organizations in the hopes of reaching groups that we currently are not engaging through our outreach initiatives. My research and newfound connections lead me to Outright Vermont; Vermont's only organization solely dedicated to supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning youth (LGBTQ). This organization provides support groups, mentoring, and other resources for youth in this community. Outright also openly welcomes anyone interested in learning ways to support youth in this community as well.

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Campers at the 2015 Outright Vermont Program
Photo courtesy of VTFWD and Outright Vermont

Bringing Bowhunter Education to Outright Vermont

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Outright Vermont runs a one week residential camp called Camp Outright which gives LGBTQ youth a traditional camp experience. I decided to create Bowhunter Education workshops for this year's camp program. My workshops were hands-on and covered everything from ethics, bowhunting history to treestand safety, archery skills and more. We spent time on the range working on accuracy and precision as well as on a 3D archery course in the woods to practice shooting from different angles. It was an honor to get the opportunity to work with this organization and most of all; the youth. The campers were interested, excited and engaged. I'll never forget the way one camper's face light up when she saw a crossbow for the first time. When I taught her how to properly hold the crossbow she was smiling from ear to ear. Despite having little to no hunting experience, they let me into their community to learn something new! Hopefully, next year I'll be able to do more workshops and certify campers.

For more information about Camp Outright and Outright VT go to www.outrightvt.org

Lessons From Bradie's Passing

By Former Fish & Wildlife Commissioner Patrick Berry

Every year some friends of mine release a couple hundred pheasants on a huge nearby farm. The birds fill into the hedgerows, creek bottoms, swales, cattails, and swamps that surround dozens of cut corn fields. Four guys were looking to hunt, but they didn't have a dog, and you really need one here. I offered to run Bradie for them for a short hunt yesterday morning.

During the morning, the guys has seen birds running on the ground at point blank range as Bradie pushed them up the hedgerows. No one pulled the trigger. At one point I thanked them all for passing on a shot where Bradie flushed and sat on a rooster that went low and away. At the time of the incident, five birds had already been killed, and number of birds missed. Bradie did everything he was supposed to do. I told the guys I had to go, but was convinced to run one more hedgerow. One of the older guys who I have known for years was having trouble with his gun so I had given him mine which I was carrying unloaded anyway.

At the end of the hedgerow, Bradie flushed a rooster and sat. The bird sailed through the other side and was killed stone-dead in some cattails by the guy with my gun.
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Bradie and Patrick.
Photo courtesy of Patrick Berry.

Lessons from Bradie's Passing

By Former Commissioner Patrick Berry



Bradie as a pup.
Photo courtesy of Patrick Berry.

I sent Bradie on the retrieve, which was no more than 40 yards. As he ran through the hedgerow, I heard the second barrel of my gun fire. And then I heard the most god-awful, spine-chilling cries from my beloved Bradie. By the time I ran the 20 yards and saw him on the ground, I knew he wasn't going to make it. I scooped him up and ran the mile to the truck as fast as I could, begging him-- pleading with him-- to hang in there. I could feel his body go limp about 200 yards from the truck. Nevertheless, I laid him gently in the backseat and drove like a wild-man to the vet's office, calling emergency service on the way. It didn't matter. He was already gone.

I threw away the clothes I was wearing and I'm having the gun dismantled and destroyed. As I mentioned, there is no room in my heart right now for anger, although I acknowledge that may come later. Bradie is dead, but this guy will have to live with his actions the rest of his life.

We are so sorry for the loss of Bradie. Dogs are family to many of us. Our heartfelt condolences go out to the Berry family, but they hope that this can serve as a lesson to hunters. Remember to identify your target from tip to tail. None of us is immune from making mistakes, but we can all prevent tragedy if we play it safe and responsible.

Vt Moose Hunters Had a Successful Season

Vermont moose hunters had a successful hunting season according to the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. A record bull was taken in the October 1-7 archery moose hunt, and the regular moose hunting season was October 17-22.

"A preliminary count shows that by October 26 the department had received official reports of 8 moose being taken by 42 hunters in the archery season and 107 moose taken by 230 hunters in the regular season," said Cedric Alexander, Vermont's moose project leader. He said a few additional reports may still be sent in from other reporting agents.

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Vt Moose Hunters Had a Successful Season

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For the first time in Vermont, bulls-only permits were issued in most of the 17 Wildlife Management Units open to moose hunting. This change was made to increase population growth in order to achieve goals called for in Vermont's Big Game Management Plan. Only in northern Vermont were hunters able to take moose of either sex.

The overall regular season hunter success rate reported to date is 47 percent, down slightly from 52 percent last year. Either-sex permit holders enjoyed a 70 percent success rate while hunters restricted to harvesting only bulls averaged a lower success rate of 36 percent.

Pre-season scouting in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom paid off on the second morning of the archery moose hunt for Tammy Miller of Fairfax, Vermont. Using a compound bow, Miller took a 931 lb. bull moose with an antler spread of 53 ³/₄ inches while hunting in Norton with her husband, Eric. Miller's huge bull topped the 919 lb. previous archery record moose taken last year by Kevin Rice.

A final report on Vermont's moose hunting season will be available in January when all of the 2015 data have been received and reviewed.



Photo courtesy of George Bosworth.

Congratulations to the Smith Family!

On 11/4/15 at 6:38am, Chief Instructor Jamie Smith and his wife welcomed their first child! Fox and mom are doing great, and the family is home together.

Jamie remarked that his family is already fighting over who is buying Fox's lifetime license. If Fox chooses to be a hunter, the youth deer weekend birthday could be a great way to carry on the family hunting tradition while enjoying his birthday!

Join us in congratulating Jamie and his family on their newest addition!



FAQ with Nicole

Q: Where can I get a copy of my orange card?

A: Replacement orange cards can be printed online! If you entered your class on Event Manager, the student will be able to find their replacement card on the online database on the Monday after the course! Now is the time of year where many students are looking to replace an orange card, so you can tell them to visit www.vtfishandwildlife.com and click the link on the left hand side of the page that says "Replace Your Orange Hunter Ed Card." If they can't find it online, have them call our main office at 802-828-1193 with their name, date of birth, and a phone number. We can look them up in other, top secret Hunter Education ways!

Q: What are you going to do to make equipment distribution smoother next teaching season?

A: Next season, we are not going to schedule drop-offs and pick-ups with our instructors. Instead, a new "requisition form" will be created. This requisition form will need to be submitted to our office at least one week before an instructor needs to pick up supplies. A designated staff member will spend a full day at a regional office twice per week with all requested equipment. Our instructors can then come to the regional office to pick up or drop off equipment. We can reimburse our instructors for their mileage to pick up and drop off equipment. Regional offices include Essex, Rutland, Springfield, St. Johnsbury, Montpelier, and Kehoe. More information will be revealed at the IHEA Conference.

Hunters Asked to Help Collect Deer Biological Data

Ever wonder how old the buck was you took in deer season? Vermont hunters who harvest a deer during the November rifle season will have the opportunity to find out, if they submit the proper tooth from their deer.

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department is asking hunters to help in gathering more biological data on the state's deer population. Hunters who get a deer during the November 14-29 rifle season are asked to provide an incisor tooth from their deer when they go to a reporting station.

Biologists are collecting middle incisor teeth from all rifle season deer in order to evaluate regional differences in ages and antler characteristics of bucks as well as to help estimate population size, growth rate, health, and mortality rates. Each tooth will be cross-sectioned to accurately determine the deer's age, and the results will be posted on the Fish & Wildlife website next spring.

Hunters are asked to obtain a tooth envelope from the reporting agent. Write your name, Conservation ID number and date of kill on it. Remove one of the middle incisor teeth, being careful to include the root. Place the tooth in the envelope and give it to the reporting agent.

Instructions on removing the tooth will be posted at reporting stations, and a video showing how will be available on Fish & Wildlife's website www.vtfishandwildlife.com.

The department is also asking hunters to keep the antlers from their deer at home so they can be examined by Fish & Wildlife personnel after the deer season in order to collect additional biological data on antler development.

"Information about the ages of deer in the population is critically important, and more information allows us to make better management decisions," said Nick Fortin, Vermont Fish & Wildlife's deer project leader. "To get accurate population estimates, and to better assess our current management strategies, we really need to get teeth from as many deer as possible."

Hunters who submit a tooth will be entered in a drawing to win one of five \$50 Cabelas gift cards.

Remove one of the middle incisors including the root



Hunters who get a deer during the November 14-29 rifle season are asked to provide an incisor tooth from their deer when they go to a reporting station.

Photo courtesy of VT Fish & Wildlife

Vermont Craft Brewery Sponsors Rattlesnake Conservation

The next time you raise a glass of Vermont craft beer, you could be helping to save an endangered species. Brocklebank Craft Brewing in Tunbridge is donating ten percent of sales proceeds from its Timber Rattler IPA to the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department. The funds will support efforts to conserve Vermont's imperiled timber rattlesnake population.

Dubbed a 'nanobrewery' because of its small size, Brocklebank Craft Brewing is owned by owners Ben and Anne Linehan and located on a former dairy farm in eastern Vermont. According to Anne, the idea to donate part of the proceeds from the beer started when she heard a Vermont Public Radio story on Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department biologist Doug Blodgett and his efforts to save Vermont's rattlesnakes.

"Our customers are always fascinated to hear that there actually are timber rattlers in Vermont," said Anne Linehan. "Although we're a tiny new brewery, we do hope to help raise awareness of this issue."

Currently found in two small populations in western Rutland County, timber rattlesnakes are a state endangered species in Vermont.

"We greatly appreciate Ben and Anne's help in our work to save this native species," said Doug Blodgett, who has worked on rattlesnake conservation for several years. "Gestures like this go a long way towards gaining wider acceptance of rattlesnakes as an important and necessary part of Vermont's ecosystem."



Wildlife biologist Doug Blodgett raises a glass of Timber Rattler IPA with Brocklebank Craft Brewery owner Anne Linehan at the Tunbridge brewery. A portion of the proceeds of the beer will be donated towards Blodgett's work on the conservation of Vermont's timber rattlesnake population.

Photo courtesy of VT Fish & Wildlife.

THE SMUT: STORIES OF POACHING IN VERMONT

Mature Buck Poached in Stowe



This 180lb buck was poached in a field in Stowe.

Photo courtesy of VT Fish & Wildlife

Central Vermont game wardens are asking for your help.

On Sunday morning, November 1, wardens responded to a report of a dead six-point buck in Stowe. The deer was found in a field near Maple Run Road at approximately 8:30 a.m. by a father and son who were scouting for a place to turkey hunt.

The deer appeared to have been killed by gunfire the previous evening based on the evidence found at the scene and statements made by residents. The deer was approximately 1/4 mile away from the road where it was shot and left to waste. It weighed 180 lbs.

“Each of Vermont’s wardens covers an average of 300 square miles and depends heavily on assistance from the public when conducting investigations,” said Vermont’s Chief Warden, Col. Jason Batchelder. “Protecting Vermont’s wildlife and serving our hunters, especially this time of year, is a monumental task. Any of us would report a theft or a break in without a second thought. I truly hope someone comes forward with information about this illegally killed Vermont buck.”

If you have information about this deer, or any illegal activity relating to Vermont’s wildlife, you may anonymously call Operation Game Thief at 1-800-75ALERT (1-800-752-5378). Rewards are paid for information leading to arrests. You may also contact your local warden via a Vt State Police dispatcher.

Two Morristown Men Charged in Deer Poaching Case

Andrew Fecteau, age 23, of Morristown and Thomas Chamberlin, age 29, of Morristown were arrested on October 22 by State Game Wardens in an attempted deer poaching case.

Responding to tips that deer poaching was occurring at night in the area, Vermont State Game Wardens were operating a deer facsimile that evening in Morristown, near the Elmore town line.

At about 10:40 p.m., Andrew Fecteau drove by the facsimile, turned around, drove back and stopped, letting his passenger, Thomas Chamberlin, lean out the window and shoot the facsimile while the vehicle headlights illuminated it.

Wardens stepped out of the bushes, ordering the men to stop and shut off the car. Fecteau instead proceeded to accelerate and drive directly at one of the wardens at a speed of approximately 25 mph, striking the warden, injuring him slightly. The other warden obtained the license plate of the vehicle as it sped away. Within the hour, Morristown Police officers located the vehicle at Fecteau's residence, hidden on the property with plates removed. The bow that was used was found in the bushes one quarter mile from where the facsimile was shot, after having been thrown from the passenger window.

Fecteau and Chamberlin were found at their residences and taken into custody.
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Two Morristown Men Charged in Deer Poaching Case

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Fecteau was charged with aiding in the violations of taking deer by illegal means, taking deer in closed season, shooting from a vehicle, as well as eluding an officer in a negligent manner, and assaulting an officer. Fecteau was cited to appear in Lamoille Superior Court on October 28, where he was represented by a public defender. He denied the charges.

Chamberlin was charged with taking deer by illegal means, taking deer in closed season and shooting from the road. He was cited to appear in Lamoille Superior Court on October 28 where he pled guilty to taking deer by illegal means. The guilty plea carried with it a three year suspension of Chamberlin's rights to hunt, fish and trap in Vermont and 43 other states as well as a \$722.00 fine. Chamberlin also forfeited his archery equipment as part of the fine and penalty.

"I commend the wardens involved for their professional conduct, and I am reminded that courage as well as vigilance is sometimes required when protecting Vermont's natural resources," said Col. Jason Batchelder, Vermont's chief game warden.

"People who poach deer are not representative of Vermont's hunters," added Batchelder. "Most hunters see poaching as a serious threat to our wildlife resources."

Vermont wardens 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 <http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/cms/one.aspx?objectId=166957>. Rewards are paid for information leading to an arrest.

Eden Man Arrested for Attempted Poaching

A Lamoille County man was apprehended by State Game Wardens on October 11 for taking big game by illegal means. Elwin H. Gale, 52, of Eden was arrested by wardens after he shot his bow and arrow at a deer facsimile with the aid of his vehicle headlights in Stowe.

Wardens witnessed Gale exit the driver's side of his vehicle and shoot an arrow at the facsimile while it was illuminated in the vehicles headlights. Vermont law prohibits taking big game with the use of lights.

A person convicted of taking big game by illegal means loses their right to hunt, fish or trap for three years and faces a fine up to \$1,000.00 and up to 60 days in jail.

Gale's arraignment date in Lamoille Superior Court is November 25.

"People who poach deer are not representative of Vermont's hunters," said Col. Jason Batchelder, Vermont's chief game warden. "By far, the majority of us who hunt see poaching as a serious threat to our wildlife resources."

Vermont wardens 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. Rewards are paid for information leading to an arrest.

Richford Man Arrested for Shooting from the Road



A Franklin County man was apprehended by state game wardens on October 16 for shooting from the road in an attempt to poach deer.

Bradly A. Conger, Sr., 42, of Richford was arrested by wardens after he shot his bow and arrow from a road in Montgomery at a deer facsimile. Wardens witnessed Conger exit from the passenger side of a vehicle, draw a compound bow and shoot while standing in the travelled portion of the road. Vermont law prohibits shooting at wildlife from within 25 feet of the travelled portion of a public highway.

Mr. Conger was previously convicted of shooting his muzzleloader from a vehicle in 2004 and failure to tag a deer in 2011.

A person convicted of shooting from the road loses their right to hunt, fish or trap for one year and faces a fine of up to \$1,000.

“People who poach deer are not representative of Vermont’s hunters,” said Col. Jason Batchelder, Vermont’s chief game warden. “By far, the majority of us who hunt see poaching as an inexcusable threat to our wildlife resources.”

Vermont wardens 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 <http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/cms/one.aspx?objectId=166957>. Rewards are paid for information leading to an arrest.

On a Happier Note: Photos from Vermont's 2015 Youth Deer Season!

Some photos submitted to us via e-mail, Facebook, and snail mail! This isn't a complete list, but check out the smiles from kids who got out there and gave the youth weekend their best shot!

Congratulations to all of the kids, parents, guardians, grandparents, and mentors who went out for youth weekend. Congratulations and a big thank you to all of the Hunter Education Instructors who certified these students over the teaching season! This is why our instructors volunteer—to see the smiling faces of people enjoying the outdoors, interacting with wildlife and spending time with their families and loved ones.

We can't wait to see more pictures from the regular season!



Fish & Wildlife and Trout Unlimited continue multi-year stream habitat restoration project in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom

Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department and Trout Unlimited recently kicked off work on a cooperative, multi-year stream restoration project in the Paul Stream watershed aimed at improving riverine habitat and boosting native brook trout populations.

The project, which will consist largely of strategic woody habitat additions to six individual streams, as well as stream crossing replacements, will ultimately result in over 6 miles of restored habitat.

“Similar to the adjacent Nulhegan River watershed, the Paul Stream watershed suffers from problems caused by the log drives of the late 1800’s, and repeated clear cutting cycles through the 20th century,” said Joe Norton, project manager with Trout Unlimited. “Based on the similarities of the two watersheds and early success we’ve seen from habitat work in the Nulhegan River watershed, we’re optimistic that we can restore various sections of stream in the Paul Stream watershed that are critical to supporting brook trout and other native species.”

Vermont Fish & Wildlife and Trout Unlimited identified the Paul Stream watershed project after examining its likeness to the Nulhegan River watershed, and reviewing results from a study implemented to determine factors limiting native brook trout abundance in northeastern Vermont.

“The study found that water temperature and instream woody habitat were the two most important factors affecting brook trout abundance in this area,” said Jud Kratzer, fisheries biologist with Vermont Fish & Wildlife.

In response to these findings, Vermont Fish & Wildlife and Trout Unlimited, with support from Plum Creek Timber Company and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and grants from The Upper Connecticut River Mitigation & Enhancement Fund, have begun the strategic habitat additions using chain saws and a grip hoist to place large woody material into the various stream sections.

“Our innovative use of a grip hoist, which is like a come-along on steroids, allows us to strategically position trees where they can do the most good,” said Kratzer. “This process increases the stability of added structures, creates better fish habitat and more positively influences the stream channel.”

In addition to felled trees, root wads are also being added to the streams to create improved habitat in select locations of the watershed. Paul Stream, North Branch Paul Stream and Madison Brook are slated for habitat restoration over the next few years. Work in Granby Stream, Fitch Brook and Stony Brook is planned for the future.

Paul Stream empties into the Connecticut River in Brunswick, Vermont. The project will benefit fish that are residents in the Paul Stream watershed, as well as trout that come upstream from the Connecticut River.

“The project is a continuation of other stream restoration projects we’ve worked on with Vermont Fish & Wildlife in recent years,” said Norton. “This has been a strong partnership and one that we think will pay dividends for Vermont’s streams for years to come.”

To learn more about Vermont Fish & Wildlife’s fisheries management programs and fishing in Vermont, visit <http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com>. For more information on the work of Trout Unlimited, visit <http://www.tu.org/>.

Contact Us!

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Sound Off!

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.Meier@vermont.gov with your suggestions, stories, pictures or other input!.

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