



Compliments of the Hunter Education Program

Sap lines have been hung through the woods, birds are chirping, days are longer, roads are transitioning from ice to mud – spring is coming! Around this time of year the Vermont Hunter Education Program is usually ramping up for spring classes. This year, things look a little different. If you are planning on teaching an in-person class this spring, please get in touch with our office soon so that we can talk about options for in-person learning. Regulations are constantly changing, so we need as much heads-up as we can get. Thanks for understanding and for volunteering with the Vermont Hunter Education Program!

- Nicole Meier

Thanks For Sending Us Your Photos

We look forward to your hunting stories photos and lessons! If you or your family have photos, videos, short stories, poems or any other hunting and wildlife related works that you would like to share with us and your fellow instructors, please send them to us at

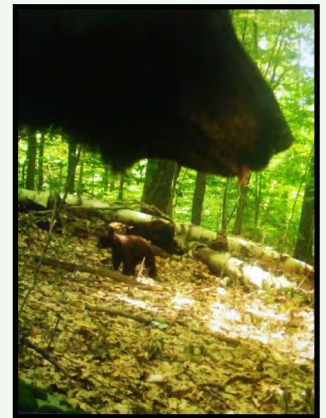
huntereducation@vermont.gov



Jeff Eastman with his 4pt buck.



Jeff Eastman with a bow season doe.



Trail cam footage courtesy of Dan Reap.



Kind words and a new experience from the perspective of a new hunter:

“This is our first deer ever (I’m 53 and my son is now 16). Harvesting a deer is truly a positive life changing experience in my opinion, especially during a pandemic.

This deer field dressed at 146LBs and yielded 70LBs of delicious and tender meat.” – Jeff Folsom

Instructor Professional Development Opportunity

Ready to hone your teaching techniques as you prepare to begin teaching classes again? Join us virtually for this upcoming event presented by the Let's Go Fishing Program. This workshop is a great way to get professional development credit as well as providing match dollars to the program! Please let us know if you attend so we can capture those hours.

To register please email letsgofishing@vermont.gov to receive the login info.

Outdoor Teaching Techniques for Environmental Educators

Guest Speaker: VTFPR Parks Interpretative Program Manager: Rebecca Roy

Date: 3/17/21



Migratory Bird Hearings

Virtual public hearings on the status of migratory game bird populations and proposed 2021 migratory game bird hunting seasons for the interior zone of Vermont and Lake Champlain zone in New York and Vermont will be held Tuesday, March 9 and Thursday, March 11.

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board virtual hearings will start at 6:30 p.m. on March 9 and March 11, 2021. Information to access the hearings is as follows:

Thursday, March 11

Direct Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87170690147?pwd=akJSV3pkNnJQL0F5T0tvejJ6cm1pQT09>

Meeting ID: 871 7069 0147

Dial in Phone Number: 1 (929) 436-2866

Passcode: 255897

We rely on our hunters to attend the hearings and share their preferences and opinions about the proposed seasons.”



Moose Hunt Proposed

A limited moose hunt in Vermont's Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) E in the northeastern corner of the state is proposed in order to reduce the impact of winter ticks on the moose population.

The proposal was presented by the Fish and Wildlife Department to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board at its February 17 meeting.

"Moose density in WMU E remains well above one moose per square mile, significantly higher than any other part of the state," said Nick Fortin, Vermont Fish and Wildlife's biologist in charge of the moose project. "Moose densities greater than one per square mile support high numbers of winter ticks which negatively impact moose health and survival."



The Fish and Wildlife Department recently partnered with University of Vermont researchers to conduct a study of moose health and survival in WMU E. The results of this study, in which 126 moose (36 cows, 90 calves) were fitted with GPS tracking collars, clearly showed that chronic high winter tick loads have caused the health of moose in that part of the state to be very poor. Survival of adult moose remained relatively good, but birth rates were very low and less than half of the calves survived their first winter.

The goal of the Fish and Wildlife Department's 2021 moose season recommendation, that was accepted by the Fish and Wildlife Board at their February 17 meeting, is to improve the health of moose in WMU-E by reducing the impact of winter ticks.

"Research has shown that lower moose densities, like in the rest of Vermont, support relatively few winter ticks that do not impact moose populations," said Fortin. "Reducing moose density decreases the number of available hosts which in turn decreases the number of winter ticks on the landscape."

The department would issue 60 either-sex moose hunting permits and 40 antlerless moose hunting permits in WMU-E for the moose seasons this October. That would result in an estimated harvest of 51 to 66 moose, or 5 percent of the more than 1,000 moose currently estimated to live in WMU E.

"This permit recommendation will help address winter tick impacts on moose in WMU-E by reducing the density of moose, but it does so slowly, over a period of several years," added Fortin. "This allows future moose permit allocations to be adjusted as new information becomes available. Given the poor health of the moose population in that area and a clearly identified cause, we need to take action to address this issue. Without intervention to reduce the moose population in WMU-E, high tick loads will continue to impact the health of moose in that region for many years."



No moose hunting permits are recommended for other regions of Vermont.

The 2021 Moose Season Recommendation and related information about moose research and management are available on Vermont Fish and Wildlife's website at www.vtfishandwildlife.com. Comments may be provided until March 31 by emailing ANR.FWPUBLICCOMMENT@vermont.gov or by calling and leaving a message on the Vermont Fish

Green Mountain Conservation Camp

A sleep-away camp teaching conservation and outdoor skills in week-long sessions for boys & girls ages 12-14.



Advanced Weeks available for Basic Week Graduates up to 16 years old.



learn more and register at
vtfishandwildlife.com



"I can't say enough about how much I love this camp. My son attended for the first time this year and he absolutely loved his time there...And he raved about the food. The best part of it is that he thoroughly enjoyed himself and made some great new friends." - 2018 Parent

GMCC Scholarships Available!

There is still availability at GMCC! If you know a child or family that would like to get their kids involved in camp, please share this information. Sponsorship is available through private organizations for individuals who reach out. You can see a full list of sponsors at the link below.

https://vtfishandwildlife.com/sites/fishandwildlife/files/documents/Learn%20More/General%20Education/Conservation%20Education/GMCC_Sponsor_List.pdf

Turkey Season is Right Around the Corner

Although most of us still have two feet of snow, it's time to start thinking about turkey season. The welcoming sound of robins returning from their winter voyage, the smell of blooming crabapple trees and freshly thawed mud, and the greenest green you've seen in months when the trees begin to sprout their new leaves. None of these things quite compare to the feeling you get at 6:30 in the morning, sitting on the edge of a field waiting for the fog to roll out. And when you're sitting there in silence as the world begins to awaken, you hear the first goosebump inducing gobble of the season. This is the start of your 2021 big game hunting.

While you plan your hunt for the bearded buggers that grew extra brave this winter, eating out of your back yard bird feeders, you may also start thinking about what you would like to accompany a roasted turkey breast on your plate. Take to the woods to forage for sides, garnishes and ingredients to enhance your freshly harvested meal, but be sure to educate yourself on your intended forage and the possibility of toxic look-a-likes.

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon lemon-pepper seasoning
- One large turkey breast cut into 4 filets (12oz)
- 3 tablespoons margarine or butter
- 2 ounces fresh morels or 1/2 ounce dried morels, rehydrated
- 2 tablespoons sliced ramp
- 1 ¼ cups half-and-half, light cream, or milk
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon dry sherry
- Fresh herbs (optional)



Jeff Eastman with two 2020 spring jakes.

Combine the 3 tablespoons flour, salt, and lemon-pepper seasoning; coat turkey with flour mixture.

In a large skillet cook turkey in 2 tablespoons of the margarine or butter over medium heat for 8 to 10 minutes or until tender and no pink remains, turning once. Transfer turkey to individual plates; cover to keep warm.

Cut any large morels into bite-size strips. For sauce, in the same skillet cook morels and ramps in the remaining margarine or butter for 3 to 4 minutes or until tender.

Combine half-and-half and the 1 tablespoon of flour; add to vegetables in skillet. Cook and stir until thickened and bubbly; add sherry. Cook and stir for 1 minute more. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Spoon some of the sauce over turkey and serve with fresh vegetables or on pasta. Garnish with fresh herbs .



Furbearer Facts and Fiction

Chief instructor, Paul Noel wrote in The Barton Chronicle in response to the negativity that was sparked by the posting of a legally taken bobcat by a local NEK resident. The following is one, if not the only positive and supportive responses to the photo.

“The recent bobcat photo on the front page of your paper caught my eye immediately. Being a sportsman for well over 50 years I find images of fish, deer, or any legally harvested specie interesting and worth noting. These photos are woven deeply into the fabric of rural living and the communities of the NEK. But more importantly they are also an integral part of fisheries and wildlife management.

As noted by a previous writer bobcat eat many small mammals and are rarely seen. They are secretive by nature but are very common and widely distributed across Vermont and the United States. Their presence along with coyotes and other predators are welcomed and the role they play in a healthy ecosystem should be admired and valued. That respect and admiration is not felt more than by the hunters and trappers that harvest these animals for natural and organic fur. And the biological data supplied annually to the VT F/W Department by hunters and trappers cannot be overstated. All harvested bobcat pelts along with fisher and otter must be tagged by a game warden within 48 hours of the close of the season. The carcasses are then surrendered to be later examined by biologists and university researchers. Data points such as location of harvest, sex, age, reproductive history, parasites, and overall condition are gleaned from this incredibly important research strategy. Furbearer biologists can keep a finger on the pulse of the health and abundance of these species and can alter harvest parameters as needed.

But yes there are some that believe the consumptive use of our wildlife is not necessary or even detrimental to their populations. We live in a world of many opinions, some based on science and some not. Loss of adequate habitat and connective corridors is the biggest threat facing our wildlife today. Hunters, trappers, and anglers are the heart and soul of our conservation model and their role will increasingly become more vital and important with increased development and other challenges of the future. That role has evolved and will continue to do so as needed.

I know by experience that the F/W biologists and F/W board members listen very carefully to all citizens of all persuasions. We enjoy freedom of speech and we should listen respectfully to each other with an open mind. And that attitude should also be deeply woven into the fabric of our rural culture.”



Paul Noel with a recently trapped otter

“[The responses are] a reflection of some of the opinions out there even in the rural NEK and also illustrates the unwillingness of other sportsman/women to stand up for their culture and wildlife management” -Chief Instructor, Paul Noel.



The photo submitted to The Barton Chronicle.

Tanning Small Hides

A valuable skill for any hunter is the ability to maximize your harvest. However, many hunters do not know how to tan hides. Below is a simplified method of tanning the hides of rabbits, foxes, and other small mammals.

- 1. Remove the Pelt:** After harvest, remove the pelt with care as to not tear or cut holes in it. Once the pelt is removed, cool in order to harden skin and fat.
- 2. Flesh the Pelt:** Pin or staple the pelt, fur side down to a wooden board or slide the hide over a fleshing beam and begin scraping away as much flesh and fat as possible with a knife or fleshing tool. A two handled knife may be useful as well. Again, be cautious of working the pelt to hard or tearing holes in it. Fleshing may need to be done at multiple points throughout this process
- 3. Rinse and Dry:** Rinse in soapy water to remove any dirt or blood from the pelt. Make sure to have a bin of clean water to do a final rinse with before hanging to dry.
- 4. Apply Salt:** After fleshing, cleaning and drying, pour a heavy amount of non-iodized salt on the fleshy side. Salt should cover the skin completely. Keep the pelt flat and let the salt sit on the flesh for 2 days to a week depending on pelt size. Add salt as needed. Once pelt has dried, remove salt and scrape away any remaining fat, skin and salt.
- 5. Soak in a Salt Bath.** Use a ratio of 1/2 pound of salt to 1 gallon of water. Use large grain non-iodized salt in your salt bath at the fine grains of table salt may cause fur and hair to fall out. Fill a tote or bin with just enough salt water to just cover the pelt. Foxes and thin skinned animals should sit in the salt bath for 6-8 hours while thicker skin animals like beavers or raccoons may sit for 12-16 hours. Stir every two hours or so. Rinse thoroughly with clean water when done.
- 6. Apply Tanning Solution:** on a damp (not soaking wet) hide, apply a tanning solution such as Deer Hunter's and Trapper's Hide and Fur Tanning Formula to the skin. Apply a generous amount of solution to the pelt and knead into skin with hands. Be sure that all parts are covered and let dry.

- 7. Softening:** after the skin is completely dry you may choose to soften it. If you are planning for a wall hanging pelt, this may not be necessary, but for garments you will want to soften the pelt. Here is a great tutorial on a softening a rabbit pelt:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7atip1S_a8
Softening the pelt is simply a process of loosening and breaking collagen bonds in the skin. You can do this by hand or by running the hide over the edge of a board, barrel, or PVC pipe. The more you work the pelt, the softer and more flexible the skin becomes.
Here is a great tutorial on applying the Hunter's and Trapper's Tanning Solution and softening the hide:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEeAfGE_Y-E
- 8. Your Pelt is Ready!** Use your pelts to make hats, wall hangers, mittens, or scarves. Get creative and don't forget to send us photos of your pelts or tips for others



Contact Us!

This is YOUR newsletter!

We want to hear from you!

Have a photo or story you'd like to share?

E-mail us with your suggestions, stories, pictures or other input!

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Have a Fantastic Spring!

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