



2021 VERMONT SPRING AND FALL TURKEY SEASONS



COVID-19 RELATED INFORMATION

2021 SPRING TURKEY SEASON

SPRING SEASON: May 1-31, 2021

SHOOTING HOURS: One-half hour before sunrise to 12:00 noon.

LIMIT: Two bearded turkeys for the spring season.

All Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) are open to hunting during the spring season.

[Wild Turkey Harvest Summary Reports](#)

LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

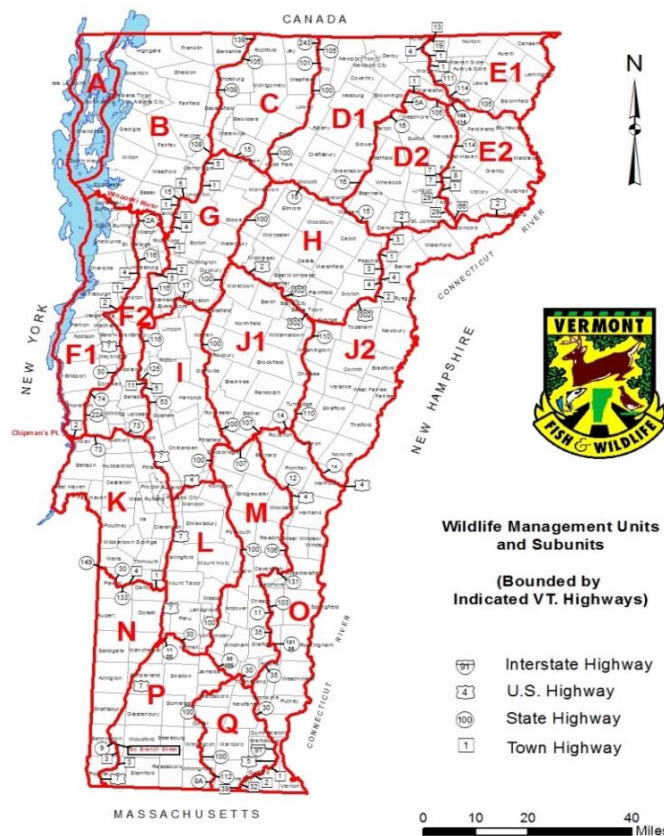
A current hunting or combination license and a current turkey license with tag are required to hunt turkey. In addition to a hunting license and a turkey license, a turkey hunter using a bow or crossbow must have a previous or current bow license or a certificate proving completion of a bow hunter education course.

LIFETIME AND PERMANENT LICENSE RENEWAL

If you intend to hunt, fish, or trap in 2021, you must update your lifetime, permanent disability, or permanent license regardless of whether or not you used your tags. This is a statutory requirement which was put in place to allow the department to collect accurate harvest and licensing information for lifetime license holders.

This updated license will include current year tags. You may update your license at no cost on-line at our [website](#). If you are unable to go online, you may go to any authorized license agent or Fish & Wildlife Office and request to have your license updated. You can also call us at 802-828-1190 to be updated. A license agent may charge you up to \$1.50 for a reprint.

[Purchase a License/Update a Permanent License](#)

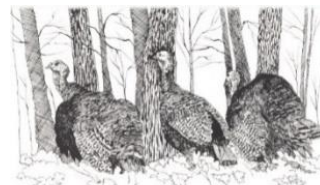


LEGAL METHODS OF TAKING

Only a shotgun, bow and arrow or crossbow may be used to take turkeys.

NEW THIS YEAR! Only number 2 and smaller shot shall be used or possessed, and an arrowhead must be at least 7/8 of an inch in width and have two or more cutting edges.

Rifles shall not be used or carried by any person while hunting turkeys. No person shall use electronic calling devices, bait, live decoys, or participate in cooperative drives. No person shall use dogs in the spring season.



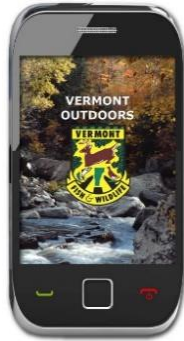
TAGGING

A hunter who takes a turkey shall immediately attach the proper tag to the carcass. The tag must remain on the carcass until the carcass is prepared for consumption.

VERMONT OUTDOORS – MOBILE APP



Vermont Outdoors, our new mobile application, will connect you with department lands, fish and wildlife regulations, and up to date COVID guidance. The app will help new and existing recreationalists find opportunities to hunt, fish, trap, or view wildlife on public lands and waters. Additionally, you will have easy access to fish and wildlife law digests, bait fish dealers, department news and current events, and reporting fish or wildlife violations.



The app can be downloaded at the Apple App store for iPhones and Google Play for Android phones.

OPTIONAL VERMONT BIG GAME TAG

Optional Vermont Big Game Tags are available free from license agents as durable alternatives to the paper tags on licenses. Optional tags may be used to tag deer, bear, turkeys, or moose. Record your CONSERVATION ID number (top left corner of your license) on the Optional Big Game Tag. A qualifying landowner may use the tag by writing “landowner” in the same space.

The existing paper tag that comes with a license may also be used. Optional Big Game Tags may only be used by a person who has purchased the appropriate license and tag for the species they are hunting.

REPORTING TURKEY

A person taking turkey shall within 48 hours report the taking and exhibit the carcass to the nearest game warden, official Fish & Wildlife Department Reporting Station, or to a person designated by the commissioner to receive the reports. **Successful hunters may also report their birds using the new**

online turkey reporting tool. Hunters interested in using this option can find the tool, along with instructions, on the department’s website at vtfishandwildlife.com/hunt/hunting-and-trapping-opportunities/wild-turkey/turkey-harvest-online-reporting. No turkey carcass shall be transported out of state without first being reported. Furthermore, as part of our enhanced wildlife disease surveillance efforts, we ask that hunters contact their local game warden if they suspect their harvested turkey is diseased or otherwise unhealthy. Prompt reporting of such cases facilitates our ability to investigate the potential disease concern in a timely manner.

[Online Harvest Reporting and Big Game Reporting Stations](#)

YOUTH/NOVICE TURKEY HUNT WEEKEND

WHEN: Saturday, April 24 and Sunday, April 25, 2021

WERE: Statewide

LIMIT: One bearded turkey. This turkey does not count towards your regular spring limit of two bearded turkeys.

WHO:

Youth: Anyone who is 15 years old or younger on the weekend of the hunt and who has successfully completed a hunter education course and possesses a hunting license, turkey license, and youth turkey tag.

Novice: Anyone who purchased their first hunting license within the past 12 months and is 16 years of age or older and who has a valid Vermont hunting license, turkey license, and a novice turkey hunting tag.

SHOOTING HOURS: One-half hour before sunrise to 5:00 p.m. for this weekend season only.



[Find a Hunter Education Course](#)

YOUTH: Any resident or nonresident youth, 15 years of age or younger on the weekend of the hunt, who has successfully completed a hunter safety

course may obtain a free youth turkey hunting tag. A qualified youth must also purchase a Vermont hunting license and turkey license at a license agent by either showing proof of satisfactorily completing the hunter safety course or proof of having held a valid hunting license previously. The youth hunter's parent or guardian must sign the hunting license application in the presence of the license agent.

When hunting, the youth hunter must be accompanied by an unarmed adult over 18 years of age who holds a valid Vermont hunting license. The adult may accompany no more than two youth hunters at any given time. The adult must have **direct control and supervision**, including the ability to see and communicate with the youth hunter without the aid of artificial devices such as radios or binoculars, except for medically necessary devices such as hearing aids or eyeglasses.

The youth hunter may take one bearded turkey during youth turkey hunting weekend and may also hunt during the spring season and take two bearded turkeys during that season.

Landowner permission is required in order to hunt on private land with a youth turkey tag. All relevant game laws and regulations apply during Youth Turkey Hunting weekend, including the prohibition on baiting and road hunting. Landowners are not exempt from the requirement to purchase licenses to hunt on their own property on youth weekends.

The amount of a fine will be doubled for a violation on Youth Turkey Hunting Weekend, and the fine shall be assessed against the licensed adult who is accompanying the youth and who has the youth hunter in his or her charge.

NOVICE: A person who has purchased their first hunting license within the past 12 months and is 16 years of age or older. To participate in the novice season, a qualified person must have a valid Vermont hunting license, turkey license and a novice turkey hunting tag and follow the requirements of the youth turkey hunting weekend.



The novice hunter must be accompanied by an unarmed adult who holds a valid Vermont hunting license and who is 18 years of age or older. An adult accompanying a novice shall accompany no more than two novice hunters at one time. "Accompany," "accompanied," or "accompanying" means **direct control and supervision**, including the ability to see and communicate with the novice hunter without the aid of artificial devices such as radios or binoculars, except for medically necessary devices such as hearing aids or eyeglasses.

No novice hunter shall hunt on privately owned land without first obtaining the permission of the owner or occupant.

[Information on Youth Hunting Programs](#)

2021 FALL TURKEY SEASONS

SHOOTING HOURS: One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

LIMIT: One turkey of either sex for the fall season.

DATES AND WMUs OPEN TO FALL HUNTING:

- ↘ Archery only: October 2-22, 2021 in all WMUs statewide
- ↘ Shotgun or Archery: October 23-31, 2021 in WMUs B, D, G, H, I, J, L, M, O, P and Q.
- ↘ Shotgun or Archery: October 23-November 7, 2021 in WMUs F, K, and N.

CROSSBOWS

A crossbow may be used as a means of take by any person during any hunting season that permits the use of bow and arrow.

Unless otherwise provided, any game which may be taken by shooting may be taken by use of bow and arrow or crossbow.

All arrows, including crossbow arrows, must have an arrowhead of at least 7/8 of an inch wide and at least two cutting sides.

A crossbow may not be transported cocked in a motor vehicle.

Any person wishing to hunt **turkey, bear or deer** with a bow and arrow or crossbow must hold proof of having held an archery license or a certificate of satisfactory completion of a bowhunter education course from Vermont or another state or province in Canada.

[Hunter Education](#)

CROSSBOW SAFETY

Keep these tips in mind when using a crossbow to ensure a safe and enjoyable hunt.

USING A CROSSBOW:

- ↘ Keep the string waxed and lubricate the rail periodically.
- ↘ Make sure your fingers are well away (below rail) from the path of the string and cables.
- ↘ Never dry-fire a crossbow.
- ↘ Make sure the limbs are free of obstructions before firing; be particularly careful if you are hunting from a ground blind.
- ↘ Never use a cocking device to uncock unless you have a model that is specifically designed to do so. Most are not.
- ↘ To uncock, shoot a specially-designed unloading point or a field tip into soft ground; or shoot a field tip into a target.
- ↘ Practice often and avoid shots at game that are beyond your effective range, generally less than 40 yards.

TURKEY HUNTING SAFETY TIPS

While hunting-related shootings are rare, precautions are necessary. Because birds can see color, camouflage or drab colored clothing is almost mandatory to outwit a keen-sighted turkey. Unfortunately, camouflage also prevents other hunters from seeing you.



The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department urges hunters to review the following safety tips:

1. **Never shoot unless you're absolutely sure of your target and what is beyond it.** 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. Be sure to have a good backstop any time you shoot a firearm or bow.

2. **Never stalk a gobbling turkey.** Your chances of getting close are poor, and you may be sneaking up on another hunter.
3. **Avoid red, white, blue and black in clothing and equipment.** A tom turkey's head has similar colors.
4. **Stick with hen calls.** A gobbler call might draw in other hunters.
5. **Avoid unnecessary movement.** This alerts turkeys and attracts hunters.
6. **Don't hide so well that you impair your own field of vision.**
7. **Wrap your turkey in blaze orange for the hike back to the car.**
8. **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.
9. **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.
10. **Wear hunter orange while moving from set-up to set-up.** Take it off when you are in position.

Remember, only turkeys stalk turkeys! Hunt smart. Hunt safe.

FLUORESCENT ORANGE

Hunter orange is not required by law in Vermont, but wearing it might save your life. Almost all of Vermont's hunting-related shootings could have been prevented if hunters had been wearing hunter orange.

A New York study found that 94% of hunters involved in mistaken-for-game accidents were not wearing hunter orange. This is even more startling

when you consider that 81% of New York hunters wear hunter orange.

Most states and Canadian provinces require it for hunting upland and big game animals.

Wearing at least a florescent orange hat and vest will help other hunters see you. It's your responsibility to follow the four basic rules of safe hunting:

1. Treat every gun as if it is loaded.
2. Point your gun in a safe direction.
3. Keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot.
4. Be sure of your target and beyond.

TAKE THE LEAD AND GO NON-LEAD

Venison and bear meat are fantastic table fare providing a healthy, natural, locally sourced alternative to meats and other proteins purchased in stores. Knowing where your food came from and that it is free of additives is important to many hunters and their families.

Traditional lead-based bullets which have been in popular use for big game hunting can fragment and leave small unseen particles in your meat, often a distance from the wound channel exposing you to lead. In addition, portions of the carcass (gut piles) left in the field can expose scavenging animals to lead sometimes with deadly results. Lead is a well known toxin to people and animals and even in small amounts can have adverse health effects. This is especially true for many birds.

Non-lead alternative ammunition is available in most popular big game calibers as well as for shotguns and muzzle-loading firearms. The performance is excellent and the cost continues to come down as more people give it a try. Look to pay about the same for it as any premium quality ammunition. Best of all, you will help ensure that the quality, locally sourced and delicious table fare you worked hard for will be just that. And you will be reducing risks to the wildlife around you. It's a win-win.

WHERE CAN I HUNT IN VERMONT?

Vermont has more than 800,000 acres of federal and state public land open to hunting: **National Wildlife Refuges**, the **Green Mountain National Forest**, and all **state forests**. **State Parks** are open to hunting outside the operating season.

Perhaps the crown jewel of hunting in Vermont is the state's system of 100 **Wildlife Management Areas**, or **WMAs**. All WMAs are open to hunting, trapping, fishing and other wildlife related outdoor activities.

Information about shooting ranges is available on our [website](#).

Wildlife Management Areas	Vermont Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation
Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge	Silvio O. Conte National Fish & Wildlife Refuge
Green Mountain National Forest	Vermont Shooting Ranges
Hammond Cove Shooting Range	West Mountain Shooting Range

TIPS FOR HUNTERS – Being a Good Land User

Landowners who permit you to hunt on their land are doing you a favor and placing their trust in you. Here are some recommendations to prove their trust was not misplaced, help with your relationship with the landowner, and portray a positive image of hunting.

- ↘ Respect the landowner's property – hunting, fishing, trapping or otherwise using it only when and where the landowner approves.
- ↘ Understand clearly where you can and cannot drive or park your vehicle and abide by those restrictions.
- ↘ Leave your name, address, phone number and also make, model, and license number of your vehicle with the landowner or use the Courtesy Permission Cards.

- ↘ If you have permission to return, find out if there are certain times or places that you should avoid. Always attempt to let the landowner know where you will be and when.
- ↘ Know the property boundaries and do not trespass on adjacent property.
- ↘ Try to keep the size of your hunting party small and always let the landowner know exactly who else will be hunting with you.
- ↘ Don't walk through unharvested crops or hunt near livestock or buildings.
- ↘ Leave gates as you find them. Cross fences in a manner that will not break or loosen wires or posts.
- ↘ Don't litter. Carry away litter left by others.

[Courtesy Permission Card](#)

SALE OR PURCHASE OF GAME

BIG GAME: The only time it is legal to buy or sell big game or the meat of big game within the state is during the open season and for 20 days after the season ends. The meat of big game animals is not to be bought or sold to be transported out of the state. It is illegal to buy or sell anadromous Atlantic salmon taken in the Connecticut River Basin and/or to buy or sell wild turkey at any time.

IT IS UNLAWFUL TO -

- Hunt or take deer, bear, turkeys, or waterfowl with bait
- Take game except with a gun, bow and arrow, or crossbow
- Set or use a snare
- Set or use any device to discharge a firearm for the purpose of taking any wild animal
- Take waterfowl, wild turkeys, or moose with the aid of an electronic calling device
- Use laser sights for hunting
- Cast the rays of a light in order to spot, locate, take or attempt to take any wild animal. The only exception is for raccoon hunting with a dog and only after the raccoon has been treed.

- Use planes, helicopters, or unmanned aerial drones to scout for game, hunt, or assist in hunting.

VERMONT HABITAT STAMP

Monies raised from sales of Vermont Habitat Stamps go to the Species and Habitat Conservation Fund, which is used to purchase and maintain Wildlife Management Areas.

Projects Supported by the Fund Include:

- ↘ Purchase lands for Wildlife Management Areas
- ↘ Improve public access to land for fish and wildlife-based activities such as bird-watching, hunting, fishing, enjoying wildlife or simply connecting with nature
- ↘ Protect and improve wetlands
- ↘ Protect and restore state-owned riparian stream banks
- ↘ Protect and enhance deer wintering areas
- ↘ Implement habitat enhancement for turkeys, bears, deer, songbirds, bats, moose, aquatic organisms, and all of Vermont's native wildlife
- ↘ Use our [online donation form](#).
- ↘ **Hunting and Fishing License Purchase:** Donate when purchasing a hunting or fishing license by simply including your contribution when applying.

When you purchase a Vermont Habitat Stamp, you help improve wildlife habitat and open land for outdoor recreation.



Please note: A stamp is not required to hunt, fish or trap, nor do you have to buy a sporting license to donate for a stamp.

HUNT, POST, SHARE, LIKE



Vermont Fish & Wildlife suggests the following tips to accurately reflect a positive hunting experience in social media.

- ↓ Display respect for the animal in its life and in its death. Ask yourself if your non-hunting friends would view the photo as respectful of this animal's life.
- ↓ Make sure the animal looks its best. Place the tongue back in mouth and try to minimize blood in the photo to instead focus on the beauty of the animal. Try to take a photo of a successful hunt in the animal's natural habitat. Blue sky, forest, and mountains place hunting in the context of its natural surroundings.
- ↓ Don't just post 'grab and grin' photos after a successful hunt. Show all the aspects of the hunt to give people a more complete picture of what hunting means to you. Post photos of a silent snowy forest or quality time spent outdoors with friends and family.
- ↓ Include posts from after the hunt too. A photo of you enjoying a plate of tasty venison with friends and family will help people make the connection that wild meat is a healthy, local, sustainable food source.
- ↓ If you see friends posting unethical behavior, don't be afraid to speak up. Please forward any posts that include illegal activity to the [Vermont Fish & Wildlife's Facebook page](#) so our wardens can look into it.

If done properly, social media can be a great opportunity to show non-hunters why you are passionate about hunting and to inspire conservation and spark interest.

HUNTERS, TICKS AND LYME DISEASE

Lyme disease has started to become more prevalent in Vermont during the last 10 years. Ticks that cause Lyme disease are still active in the fall in Vermont so hunters that spend time in tall grass, weed, and brushes, along with successful hunters handling a deer, should follow a few simple tick-repelling precautions.

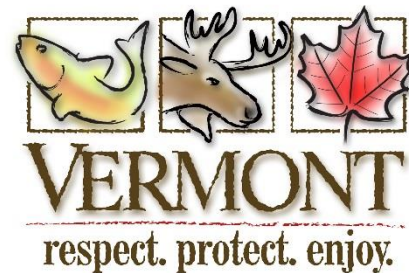
Treat your clothing and gear with permethrin before you hunt, making sure to follow the product instructions. Tuck your pants into your socks or boots to keep ticks from crawling up your legs. After returning from the hunt, check all over your body for ticks including your hair, and shower immediately.

Successful hunters handling a deer should remain vigilant for ticks even after they've returned from the field. Place a pan of soapy water under a hanging deer to kill any ticks that fall off the deer.



[Be Tick Smart](#)

[Preventing Ticks Among Hunters Factsheet](#)



VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

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www.vtfishandwildlife.com

www.facebook.com/vtfishandwildlife



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