

Vermont Sporting Journal

Volume V, Issue 6 * May 2021



Brent Lafreniere & Brett Ladeau
19 pounds, 9 inch beards, and 7/8" spurs.



We return a portion of pre-tax profits as follows:
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Talking to gobblers on the roost. Taboo or Terrific Tactic??

By Ken Jones

During the 2019 campaign against the feathered demons I was on an evening recon mission trying to locate an evening camp of the enemy to formulate an attack plan for the following morning. As I rounded a curve just past a buddy's house, three uniformed officers were crossing the road headed up to roost. I kept the sighting in the file cabinet and when I was unable to locate any other platoons to attack, I reached out to my buddy to see if I could get in there with him and perhaps help him fill a tag. He responded that he had no intentions of turkey hunting that year with many things going on that simply wouldn't give him the time but, if I wanted to try he was fine with me going up behind his house in the am.

Following his instructions I drove through his yard and up the mountain to his sugar house that would put me on the same level or above the enemy encampment. I was instructed to cross a stone wall just south of the sugar house and that would be a good place to try and locate the officer's club. I hit a high note on an owl hooter

just after crossing the stone wall and it's a good thing I didn't go any further. My high note was answered by gobles that about knocked my hat off not more than 80 yards or so away!! Immediately I tucked up against the first bull pine along an old logging road that seemed to go right to the encampment. I let things take their natural course of waking up and listened to several owls and other gobblers in the distance.

As the three officers began getting more talkative they seemed to be shouting out orders to their troops on the day's events. Not hearing any female responses from the ranks I decided to announce my presence with a few very soft tree calls. They were met with immediate response from the officers but one general in particular, seemed to be interested.

I gave them little more as the day began to brighten up. An occasional soft yelp or two kept the attention of my one would be suitor. after a bit I caught a flash of the birds leaving the tree and soaring back down the mountain to the fields below where I

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Talking to Gobblers.	1
Vt Master Angler Program	4
Ramblings of a Traveling Turkey Hunter.	5
Vermont Outdoors Adds Features to VTF&W Mobile App.	8
VTF&W to Hold Electronic Deer Hearings in May	9
Hunt Safely This Turkey Season	10
Legislative Update with Evan Hughes	11
'Let's Go Fishing' Program Seeks Instructors	13
VT Allocates Moose Hunting Permits for 2021.	14
VTF&W Urges Sustainable Harvesting of Wild Plants	15
It's an Excellent Time to Use a Worm and Relax	16
A Face Only a Mother Could Love	17
Successful VT Hunters Can Report Their Turkey Online or at a Reporting Station	18
Young Wildlife Belong in the Wild	19
Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease May Threaten VT's Rabbits and Hares	20
The Gift.	21
Deer Ages Available on VTF&W Website	22
VTF&W Warden Service Pledges to Advance Women in Policing	23

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had seen them the evening before.

Just when I thought all was lost, the one officer that had heard my soft calling reported loudly and I knew I was still in his head!! A little more soft calling and a very short very soft two or three note fly down cackle brought another hard response from the tree. From there I just began scratching leaves to simulate a feeding hen that really could care less about this loud mouthed general in the tree.

After a few more hard gobbles I spotted this little white dot moving straight down a pine tree some 75-80 yards down the logging road and it soon materialized to be the gobbler flying down!! I could make out his wings and he seemed to drop straight down for a bit like he was riding a parachute. Then I realized he was getting closer!! As he glided to me I adjusted to my right and he soared right to about 15 yards and landed. Having already shouldered the gun, I found his head in the crosshairs and the battle was won!!! A beautiful adult gobbler that came straight from the limb to the gun!!

Now there are many unwritten rules in turkey hunting one of them being never call to a roosted gobbler, I was once a huge believer in this having made the mistake of over calling to many roosted gobblers only to have them either stay on the limb waiting for the hen to show herself or having an actual hen walk under and take him away. Until someone in a turkey forum said, "well, if you don't say anything how does he know you're there??" A valuable lesson learned on this beautiful May morning. I was able to convince this dude that there was a hen right

there with him.

Now to help some of us understand this tactic a little more I reached out to a few of my friends that also happen to be considered some of the top minds in turkey hunting in the country. Together these guys have more Grand National calling titles than I can count so, to say they know their way around the turkey woods would be an understatement.

Let's start with Chris Parrish. Chris is a three time senior open champ and spent many years with Knight and Hale game calls. Here's what Chris had to say.

"Each roost hunt has it's own set of circumstances. If I have a bird roosted from the night before I'll try and get in extremely tight to him. When I'm this close I likely won't say anything to him until he's on the ground. Most times he'll fly down in gun range. Now if he's roosted with hens. In this case i will purposefully back off to 75-100 yards of the roost to ensure I don't get busted by hens. If the hens are vocal I'll get vocal as well and often times the whole flock will come



to check me out.

If I just happen to locate one with enough darkness to set up I'll try and get within 125 yards or so then hit him with some very soft under your breath type calling. if he cuts me off I'll call a little more but very sparingly. He's interested and likely to pitch down and slide right to me. If he's reluctant to answer I'll wait til he's on the ground.

Once he's down I get a little excited to spark some excitement. Then I'll hold my ground and soft call until he's standing in front of me.

Next up is Scott Ellis of Woodhaven game calls. Scott has several head to head championships at Grand Nationals as well as an Owl Hooting win last february. Here's what Scott had to say.

"My basic roost setup begins with getting as tight to the gobbler as I can without spooking him. Using an owl hooter hopefully I can keep him gobbling while I move into position. I give him some very soft bubble clucks and tree yelps. I don't like to call too much to him on the roost. That very often will make him just sit up there and gobble waiting for the hen to show herself. You have to believe that gobbler knows exactly where you're

calling from, ground level not actually in a tree. I've always taken that into consideration. Now I might hit him with one more soft calling series. Now I wait til it's light enough for birds to start flying down. That's when the game begins. The only time I deviate from this tactic is if I hear hens with him. At that point I try to talk it up with the hens to try and get them to fly down to me. does not work very often but definitely worth a try.

Finally I talked with Steve Stoltz a long time member of the Drury team and Mad calls member now with Woodhaven. Steve won the Grand nationals open division before most of us knew there even was one!!! Here's Steve's take on the subject.

There are many variables to consider. The most important thing to remember is that the closer you get to him

the less and softer your calling has to be. Gobblers have an uncanny ability to pinpoint sound location (including depth perception of the sound). My basic rule of thumb is if he's close, just a few soft clucks and tree yelps. If he answers especially if he cuts me off I don't call anymore until he pitches down. He knows you're there and this puts his mind to maybe pitch in your direction. If I'm far enough away I might actually talk more to him in the tree to convince him he needs to head my way when he hits the ground.

So there you have it. Maybe it's time to not be so shy when sitting under a gobbler on the roost. However you handle this situation, remember, it's the gobble not the gobbler that makes the hunt.

Until next time be safe, have fun and shoot'em up!!!!

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The advertisement features a central photograph of a smiling man and a young boy in camouflage gear. Surrounding the photo are various outdoor and hunting items: a green maple leaf logo with 'CDL BARRE', a wood-burning stove, a bottle of maple syrup, a blue water filter, a yellow safety vest, a red and white traffic cone, a red and black tool, a blue Husqvarna circular saw blade, and a grey baseball cap with the Miles Supply logo. At the bottom, there is a circular logo celebrating 65 years of family ownership and a row of social media icons for Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter.

Vermont Master Angler Program 2020 Annual Report Released

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department has released the Vermont Master Angler Program 2020 Annual Report with 1,035 entries and 63 Master Angler Award recipients.

Vermont's wealth of waters and abundant fish populations provide many opportunities to experience outstanding fishing. The Vermont Master Angler Program recognizes the achievements of anglers who catch trophy-sized fish from Vermont waters and celebrates the clean water and healthy habitats that allow these

fish to survive and grow to exceptional sizes.

The Vermont Master Angler program is a length-based program that sets "trophy sized" benchmarks for 33 eligible fish species. While these trophy-sized fish are a challenge to catch, they are attainable for anglers that develop the necessary knowledge and skills.

Anglers catching a fish exceeding the minimum qualifying length in any of the 33 species categories can receive a certificate

commemorating their catch. Their names and catches are also included in the Vermont Master Angler Annual Report posted annually on the Vermont Fish and Wildlife website.

Anglers demonstrating the skill necessary to catch multiple species that all exceed the minimum qualifying lengths in the same calendar year are recognized as "Vermont Master Anglers" and receive a unique one-of-a-kind lapel pin at the end of the

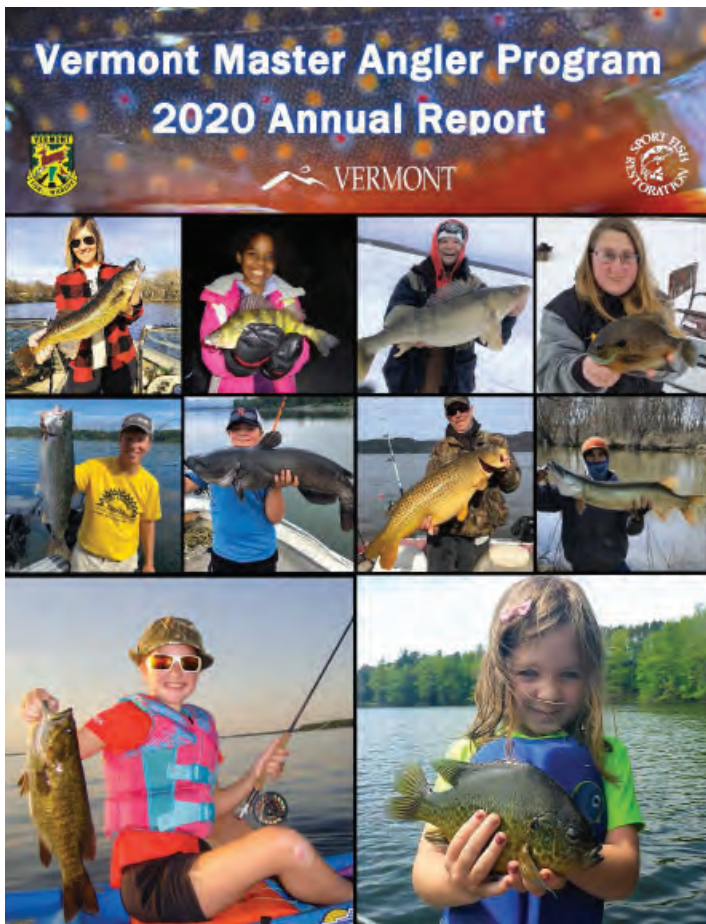
year. To qualify for the annual Vermont Master Angler Pin, an angler must submit qualifying entries for five or more species within a calendar year.

2020 was a record year for the program, with 1,035 entries approved, 385 of which were from youth anglers. Since the program began in 2010, the highest number of approved entries previously was 827 in 2017. There were also 63 Vermont Master Angler award recipients in 2020, 23 of which were youth anglers. Youth anglers have a slightly lower minimum qualifying lengths for each species.

"We saw fishing participation increase substantially in Vermont last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as people found themselves with more free time," said state fisheries biologist Shawn Good. "And it seems that a lot of new and established anglers discovered and participated in the Master Angler Program."

"Not only does the program provide the department with information on big fish throughout the state, but it also helps promote the many diverse fishing opportunities that Vermont has to offer. One of the best things about this program is that it provides some families with a little extra incentive to get outside and enjoy some quality time together on the water."

The 2020 Vermont Master Angler Program Annual Report is on Fish and Wildlife's website at: <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/fish/fishing-events-and-programs/master-angler-program>.



Vermont's Master Angler Program set a new participation record in 2020 with 1,035 entries and 63 Master Angler award recipients, 23 of which were youth anglers.



Ramblings of a Traveling Turkey Hunter

by Brett Ladeau

I spent my first 17 turkey season's chasing turkey in Vermont and New Hampshire exclusively. However, I started getting wanderlust about 2013 and decided I would add Maine to my travels. I hunted Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont with good success in 2013 and 2014. In the spring of 2015, I decided to try to shoot a spring bird in all 6 New England states, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. I started on Cape Cod with a friend that lived down there. Hunting Cape Cod was an interesting experience to say the least, but I was fortunate to harvest a bird on the first day. Next up was Rhode Island and I hunted a piece of public land that I picked out on a map. It took two days, but I finally found a response bird and got him shortly after flydown. Headed to Maine and hunted with my buddy, Peter "Uncle Pete" Wentworth and harvested a bird on the second morning in Maine as well. My home ground of Vermont and New Hampshire seemed to be challenging me but eventually I shot

a Vermont bird and decided to head to Connecticut for a one-day hunt. I ended up calling 7 male birds in and connected on one early in the hunt. I finished my New England Slam on a great New Hampshire bird on Mother's Day 2015.

I also started meeting other traveling turkey hunters, many on their quest to shoot a turkey in all 49 states that have a huntable population. I assisted several with their birds that spring and listening to their stories and the places they've been really started my wheels spinning. I was a little long in the tooth to start my own quest, but I decided I would throw my hat in the mix and even if I never get a bird in all 49 states I am sure I am going to have fun trying. It was 2015 that I also started hunting with Tj Jordan from New York. He was/is on the quest for the US Super Slam as well but is currently spending more time getting his son, Chase, on as many birds as possible. However, in 2015 we swapped a New York hunt for a Vermont hunt. I was fortunate to get a New York bird

on Memorial Day Weekend in 2015 and then Tj came over on Memorial Day and got his Vermont bird. From that point forward we have traveled together quite a bit. Tj's the connection maker for the most part and I am the silent partner. It seems like most traveling partnerships have a similar make-up. We have now hunted 13 states together and have shared many successful and few unsuccessful hunts together. I have also been able to video Chase shooting birds in Illinois, New Hampshire, Kansas, and Nebraska. Not too bad for an 8 year old.





I didn't travel much in 2016 due to family obligations but in 2017 I hunted Virginia with my friend Jeff Hoke. I wasn't able to fill a tag but we had birds gobbling and I think if I wasn't trying to film my hunt we might have been able to fill a tag. After Virginia, I met Tj in West Virginia at another friend's house and we were both able to get our birds on the West Virginia opening morning. A couple of epic West Virginia hunts that will be etched in my memory forever. We moved the 2017 road trip down to Kentucky and I was able to watch Tj get his bird on the first morning. We were on several birds in Kentucky and we had a hot one coming in beard swinging, however I had a swing and a miss. A bird that still haunts me to this day. Missing is part of the game but it hurts a little extra when traveling. Missing at home you can always go again tomorrow, but missing on the road might be your only opportunity on a short 2 to 3 day hunt, and means you need to return to a state if you're serious about the US Super Slam.

In 2018 we traveled to Nebraska and had early success there despite the weather. Another goal of mine was to shoot a gobbler with snow on the ground and that goal was met in Nebraska. The day we arrived in Nebraska it was 80 degrees out but had

a cold front and snowstorm coming in overnight. We woke to cold and blustery conditions but no snow on the ground. We had good luck early in the morning, but the weather turned for the worse by noon. The second day was a wash due to weather but started clearing out by evening. We roosted several birds and formulated a game plan for the next morning. It was cold and clear with about two to three inches of snow covering the ground. The woods were full of gobbles and we were literally surrounded by them.

Shortly after flydown we had a group of 3 longbeard come running to the decoy and carried all 3 out. Took some pictures of the snowbirds and then packed up to head to Missouri. I hunted Missouri solo on my way to



Brett Ladeau

Kansas but was unable to connect. I met a group of NWTf friends at a

turkey camp in Eastern Kansas for a 3 day hunt and was able to fill both tags on a couple of hybrid toms. Enjoyed the company of my friends and even got to witness one of them filling a tag. After filling my second Kansas tag I headed back to Missouri for another one-day hunt. I was on birds and ended up calling in a group of jakes that I elected not to shoot. That ended the 2018 road trip but we had continued success around the New York and northern New England states.

In 2019 I hunted Georgia in March and had a few jakes come in but no long beards. I hunted with a friend down there that I helped in Vermont. He was able to get his Vermont bird for state #48 and then shot a bird in Pennsylvania to complete his slam a day or so later. Later in the spring, I traveled to Maryland and had opportunities at a few jakes but elected not

to shoot again. Some of my traveling friends reminded me that jakes count towards the slam, but I had decided not to take one up to that point. I am certainly not against shooting a jake if the hunt feels right, but most of the time I will pass them up. However, in New Jersey I couldn't resist and ended up taking a jake. I

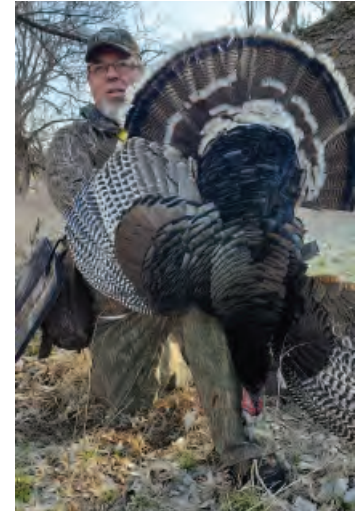
also revisited Connecticut and filled my tag on a nice longbeard. I made

a quick road trip to Pennsylvania but was unable to connect on a bird. I was lucky enough to shoot a few birds around New England but 2019 proved to be a very difficult season for me overall. Birds were just not that responsive to calls and spring was struggle.

In 2020 a lot of plans were changed but I was able to head to Illinois with Tj and Chase and we all connected on Illinois birds. My Illinois bird was my first true 1.5" spurred bird. I hunted locally for the most part and got to share the woods with several friends and family. Even with travel restrictions and the pandemic we were able to social distance and have some success. I did travel to Pennsylvania again and hunted with another friend down there. We got on a hard-gobbling tom but I might have rushed myself on the shot and ended up shooting a nice tree that was between the gobbler and me. Another bird to haunt me until I can revisit Pennsylvania.

As I type this story, I am just returning from a successful road trip to Kansas, South Dakota, and Nebraska. While

I already had a Kansas bird for the US Slam I had never shot a true Rio Grande. Tj had a great connection in Kansas and Chase accompanied us on the trip. We drove all night and all day to get there and as we are visiting with the landowner at the place were staying at we could see birds from the yard. After a quick change into our hunting gear we gained access to the land and went after the birds. It was youth season and early archery season. Chase was up to bat first, so I ran camera and was able to capture Chase shooting two longbeards within hours of us arriving in camp. The next morning, I was able to fill both my Kansas tags with a Rio jake and a Rio longbeard later in the morning. My first Rio's and my first birds with a crossbow. We packed up early and headed to South Dakota. It was 88 degrees when we left Kansas, but temperatures dropped as we traveled and before the end of the day we were in a sideways snowstorm. We stopped just short of South Dakota on a border town in Nebraska for the night. The next morning, we did some touristy stuff and visited Mt Rushmore, Crazy Horse, and ended up seeing some Black Hills turkey, bison, coy-



ote, and other wild game. Since we were slightly ahead of schedule, we headed to our hunting area in South Dakota and had time to sneak in an afternoon hunt. Chase and Tj went one way and I went another. They were able to get 3 birds that night and I had success on my first Merriam's as well. We met two friends later night and formulated a plan for the next morning, near where I had gotten my bird. My friend, Jeff, was able to harvest both of his birds early in the morning and Mike filled a tag on the way back to the truck. Mike and Tj filled tags that evening as well. I was the only one left with an unfilled



tag but due to weather and length of drive home I decided we should start our journey home. Just when you think we were done we started talking about a slight detour for a youth hunt in Nebraska for Chase. After a quick call to our buddy in Nebraska we decided to give it a try the next morning. We arrived in the early evening and in time to hear them gobbling on the roost. We knew where we wanted to be, so we got up early set up a ground blind and decoys and waited for the birds to come running to the call. Chase was able to harvest his bird and we were treated with several

other sightings that morning as well. Mid-morning on Saturday we closed shop and headed east. Another road trip in the books. Still plenty of 2021 plans on the schedule so you never know where we might end up. Hoping to add Michigan and Pennsylvania to my successful states later this spring. So far, in my US Super Slam Quest, I have hunted 19 states with 13 states checked off. I am also now three fourths of the way to a Grand Slam and only need an Osceola for that. I am already starting to day-dream about 2022 and maybe 2023 plans. I would like to complete a single season Grand Slam one of these

years, but I am not sure exactly when that will be.

The places the turkey has taken me and the people it has brought into my life are as important as the bird itself and in many ways more important. Traveling to turkey hunt has opened my eyes to many places, and I still have a lot more places to visit. I have a long-term goal but not at the expensive of my short-term goals. My short-term goals are to have as much fun turkey hunting as possible and to try to share the experiences with as many people as possible.

Vermont Outdoors Adds Features to Fish & Wildlife Department Mobile App

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Last fall the Fish and Wildlife Department developed a new mobile application to help people recreate outdoors in a safe and socially distanced manner. The app, Vermont Outdoors, connects the public with department lands, fish and wildlife regulations as well as up-to-date COVID guidance.

Recent additions to the app include a variety of maps that allow you to obtain locations and driving directions to Fish and Wildlife Department points of interest, including boat ramps and fishing locations, big game reporting stations, fish stocking locations, and shooting ranges. App users can now submit reports to the Department as well. These include nuisance black bears reports, master angler submissions and suspected fish and wildlife violations with Operation Game Thief.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, participation in outdoor recreational activities has exploded. With the Fish and Wildlife's 100 wildlife management areas (WMA) and nearly 200 fishing access areas, this app will help new and existing recreationalists find opportunities to hunt, fish, trap, boat, or view wildlife on

public lands and waters. They will have easy access to fish and wildlife laws, department news and current events, and a variety of fish and wildlife observations.

This project was paid for with COVID stimulus funds (CARES Act) to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities. Other CARES funded projects included improvements to boat ramps and other water access points, WMA roads, parking areas, and informational signage.

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

For more information, please call F&W Lands and Facilities Administrator Mike Wichrowski at 802-917-1347.



VTF&W to Hold Electronic Deer Hearings May 11 and 13

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department will hold two more virtual public hearings on May 11 and 13 to solicit input on deer.

These online hearings will be held via ZOOM Webinar starting at 6:30 p.m.
May 11 Virtual Deer Hearing
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82416709759?pwd=Zkh3K3dUdEFYem9kaGp1MVRhTnQzQT09>
Webinar ID: 824 1670 9759
Passcode: 392775
Phone: (929) 436 2866

May 13 Virtual Deer Hearing
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84257620866?pwd=NzRVZlpmcjJjSHF6YXJP L29taHptdz09>
Webinar ID: 842 5762 0866
Passcode: 472529
Phone: (929) 436 2866

To participate via smartphone or tablet, download the free ZOOM App and enter the appropriate meeting ID.

The telephone number is the same for both meetings, but each meeting has a unique ID number and weblink.

The department urges people to review information that will be discussed by going to <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/public-hearings-schedule> prior to the hearings. This includes last year's deer season results and the recommendation for this year's antlerless hunting during archery, youth, novice, and muzzleloader seasons.

"The winter of 2021 was relatively easy for deer throughout Vermont," said Fortin. "Lack of substantial snow across most of the state for much of the winter allowed deer to utilize habitats outside of their traditional wintering areas and access the best available foods. As a result, overwinter mortality was minimal."


Deer populations in 7 WMUs are above their respective population ob-

jectives, and the recommended antlerless harvest is intended to reduce deer populations in these WMUs.

Populations in all other WMUs are close to their population objectives, and the recommended antlerless harvest is intended to stabilize populations and provide additional harvest opportunities in those WMUs.

The 2021 antlerless recommendation is expected to result in the harvest of approximately 10,660 antlerless deer during the archery, youth, novice, and muzzleloader seasons.

Public comments and questions will be taken at the virtual hearings but also can be provided by emailing ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov or by calling and leaving a message on the Vermont Fish and Wildlife public comment voicemail at 802-265-0043. Comments will be taken until May 14.




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Hunt Safely This Turkey Season

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Hunting safely during Vermont's May 1-31 turkey season is easy if you follow tips issued by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.

With the opening of spring turkey hunting season on May 1, Fish and Wildlife urges hunters to consider these safety tips:

- Never shoot unless you are 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.
- 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, or black in clothing and equipment. A tom turkey's head has similar colors.
- Stick with hen calls. A gobble call might draw in other hunters.
- Avoid unnecessary movement. This alerts turkeys and attracts hunters.



Emily Asenath-Smith of Norwich, VT with a nice gobbler she got as a novice hunter and wearing orange after her success.

- Don't hide so well that you impair your field of vision.
- Wrap your turkey in blaze orange for the hike back to your vehicle.

- 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.

- If you see another hunter, call out to them, but don't move until they respond. You may ruin the hunt, but you may have avoided injury.

- Make sure you know your effective range when shooting. For the most clean and ethical shot, make sure your shotgun is patterned and you are shooting within your effective range.

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Legislative Update with Evan Hughes

Vermont has long been one of the very lowest violent crime rate states in the nation, as are Maine and New Hampshire. All three states have very similar criminal laws governing firearms. These laws work, as proven by the cited violent crime rate data from annual FBI crime statistics reports.

Years ago, the senior Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Vermont, William C. Hill, stated an opinion advising citizens and their lawyers seeking judicial protection of their constitutional rights, that they would do better to petition the state courts, not the federal courts as the best judicial forum to hear their case.

Justice Hill had served as a Republican member of the Vermont House of Representatives for Hinesburg for several terms. Prior to being appointed to the SCOV, he had served as a Superior Court Judge and the Chief Judge for the Superior Courts. If he were to read the SCOV opinion in the recent firearm magazine ban case,

«Judge» Hill, as he liked to be called, would certainly wince in disagreement with this recent decision.

This article is by Stephen Halbrook, one of the very best gun rights lawyers in this country. He reports bluntly on the SCOV opinion.

<https://fedsoc.org/commentary/fedsoc-blog/new-gun-rights-decision-state-of-vermont-v-misch>

Over the course of recent years, the Vermont courts, especially the Supreme Court of Vermont, have established a track record of upholding and expanding the powers of government, ruling over the public and protecting only the PC rights of citizens. Very sad.

The Supreme Court of the United States recently agreed to hear a challenge to a New York firearms law in the case New York State Rifle & Pistol Association Inc. v. Corlett. The Vermont Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs and the Vermont State Rifle & Pistol Association are parties to an

amicus brief on the appeal of this case to the SCOTUS.

Late last year the legislature was in an election year rush to pass something, anything on police use of force. The Senate took up S.119 and the House Judiciary Committee turned the bill into an unrealistic mess. S.119 was returned to the Senate Judiciary Committee which heard the objections of Vermont law enforcement about the amendments of the House.

This was late September and S.119 was subject to challenges before the entire Senate. The bill passed on a voice vote. It was difficult to tell if it passed. There was not call for a roll call vote. Apparently the Senators were not interested in knowing how they truly voted on S.119.

S.119 passed into law without the signature of Governor Scott. When the new legislature returned in January, they went to immediately taking up H.145, a bill to correct the serious problems with S.119 that they had passed three months ago.

The public has a right to laws that are sound public policy and in compliance with the Vermont and United States Constitutions. The gun control laws of 2018, including the firearm magazine ban, S.119 and proposed legislation do not begin to meet this very basic and reasonable standard for our laws.

S.30 is yet, another gun control bill from Senator Phil Baruth (D) Chittenden Country. The bill has numerous structural problems, vague terms of enforcement and is a solution in



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search of a problem. There are numerous existing laws that are more viable and do not trample on the rights of citizens. The bill still passed the Senate in a form that gun rights advocates opposed and the Defender General related was unnecessary, due to those previously mentioned existing laws.

There are bills to ban trapping, to make hunting bears with dogs virtually impossible, and to create a California-style «Environmental Stewardship Board» over the Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Fish & Wildlife, and the Fish Wildlife Board. The anti-hunting crowd really opposes the Fish & Wildlife Board. There is a bill, H. 411, on disposal of taken game that the Fish & Wildlife is working hard to amend so that it really works.

All of these bills are listed below, with links to read the bills as introduced. H.411 is of value, if the suggestions of the Vermont F&W Dept. are added to the bill.

Very few people would argue that the Fish & Wildlife Department and the Fish & Wildlife Board are perfect. They do very use a science-based approach to managing the state's wildlife resources and enacting regulations for hunting and fishing. The attacks on them, particularly the personal attacks on individuals, are too often truly ugly.

Fish & Wildlife Department Commissioner Louis Porter made a point of explaining to the Senate Natural Resources Committee, during an April 16th hearing on S.129, that a 2019 U.S. Department of Commerce Report recognized Vermont as the 4th

highest state in outdoors revenue and hunting and shooting were the 2nd highest source of economic funding drivers. Fish & Wildlife Department management has a strong impact on businesses in the state's rural areas, especially during critical times of the year when there is little else for business.

You can hear these comments about 10 minutes into his testimony in the video below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bE6be-lZWmk>

Commissioner Porter gave his testimony on S.129, a bill designed to strip the Fish & Wildlife Board, of its hunting and fishing rules regulation authority.

Bear in mind that the laws we have long had for firearm ownership work for Vermont. The way our wildlife is managed by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Dept. and Fish & Wildlife Board work and the citizens who use firearms, hunt, trap, fish, in the vast majority are safe, responsible, and people of good character.

We must stand together to support all in our ranks. This solidarity is very important to the continued existence of our rights and interests. The folks in our ranks also need to vote and encourage others to vote. No group of citizens survives by sitting out involvement in elections.

S.30 as it passed the Senate:

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/BILLS/S-0030/S-0030%20As%20passed%20by%20the%20Senate%20Official.pdf>

H.167 as introduced to create Environmental Stewardship Board:

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/BILLS/H-0167/H-0167%20As%20Introduced.pdf>

H.172, as introduced for bans trapping and hunting bears with dogs

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/BILLS/H-0172/H-0172%20As%20Introduced.pdf>

H.316, as introduced. would end bear hunting with dogs

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/BILLS/H-0316/H-0316%20As%20Introduced.pdf>

H.411, as introduced «An act relating to the retrieval and disposal of wild animals.

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/BILLS/H-0411/H-0411%20As%20Introduced.pdf>

S.129, as introduced: VT F&W Board stripped of hunting & fishing rule making.

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/BILLS/S-0129/S-0129%20As%20Introduced.pdf>

The Vermont Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs tracks legislation that are our interests in the state house. To view these bills just click on:

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/csbtvtfsc/pages/1/attachments/original/1618527817/2021-22_legislation.pdf?1618527817

'Let's Go Fishing' Program Seeks Instructors

Training workshop set for May 20 and 21

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Vermont Fish and Wildlife is seeking volunteers to become 'Let's Go Fishing' instructors to pass on Vermont's fishing tradition to the next generation of Vermonters.

The course will take place in a hybrid format. On May 20 instructors will participate virtually from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. On May 21, the group will meet at the Buck Lake Conservation Camp in Woodbury for an in-person session from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Instructors must attend both sessions.

Instructors in the 'Let's Go Fishing' program organize and instruct clinics in their communities for Vermonters of all ages. Participants in the training workshop will learn how to teach a basic fishing clinic, as well as learn about regulations and ethics, aquatic ecology, fisheries management, habitat conservation and tackle craft. They will also be introduced to conducting specialized fishing clinics, including clinics on ice fishing and species-specific fishing. The class



is informal, and it is not necessary to have a high level of fishing expertise to become an instructor.

"This is an excellent opportunity for people passionate about fishing to share their love of the sport with others. It is also an excellent resource for educators seeking to bring important topics such as aquatic ecology and habitat management into their classroom through hands-on activities," said Fish and Wildlife's Corey Hart.


There is no charge for the training, and all curriculum materials will be provided. Educators looking to earn

one graduate level credit through Castleton University may participate on the training through a course titled Experiential Education in Aquatic Ecology & Habitat Conservation. The Castleton University course takes place the same days and time but includes additional work.

Pre-registration is required, and you must be 18 years of age to participate. Those interested can register online at <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/node/232> or by emailing letsgo-fishing@vermont.gov.

Once completed, pending a background check, attendees will become certified instructors and have access to program equipment and resources for their programs.

COVID-19 guidelines must be followed by all participants including wearing face coverings throughout the course. More information on protocol for the course participants will be shared upon registering.




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Vermont Allocates Moose Hunting Permits for 2021

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board voted on April 7 to have 60 either-sex moose hunting permits and 40 antlerless moose hunting permits available this year for a hunt limited to Vermont's Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) E in the northeastern corner of the state. The science-based hunt will 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.

Permit applications are now available on the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department's website www.vtfishand-wildlife.com.

"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



photos by Jake DeBow, Josh Blouin, John Hall

of the calves survived their first winter.

The goal of the Fish and Wildlife Department's 2021 moose season recommendation 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."

"These permits 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 ad-



The high number of moose in northeastern Vermont has stimulated a dramatic increase in winter ticks, causing moose health to severely decline. As many as 90,000 winter ticks have been found on one moose. More than half of moose calves have died in recent winters due to blood loss caused by the winter ticks. VTF&W explains that reducing the number of moose will reduce the number of parasitic ticks and improve moose health.

dress 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.”

Lottery applications for hunting permits are \$10 for residents and \$25 for nonresidents. The deadline to apply is June 30. Winners of the permit lottery will purchase resident hunting permits for \$100 and nonresident hunting permits for \$350.

Nonresident applicants are encouraged to consider COVID-19 travel restrictions before applying as permits issued in 2021 will not be held to the following 2022 hunting season.

Hunters who held a permit within the past five years are not eligible to apply for a permit or to buy a bonus point. Applicants must continue to annually submit a moose permit application if they wish to retain their past bonus permits and accumulate subsequent bonus points.

By law, five permits will be available to Vermont military veterans and up to three permits will be available for



“Special Opportunity” recipients with life-threatening illnesses, and three permits will be auctioned in accordance with regulations.

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.

VTF&W Urges Sustainable Harvesting of Wild Plants

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Early spring is a great time to get outside for hikes, birding and collecting wild edibles. High on the list of the latter category are fiddleheads (the unfurling leaves of ostrich ferns) and ramps (wild leeks). Both species are quite common in Vermont, but excessive harvest has resulted in local population declines, according to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.

While commercial harvest of either of these species is prohibited on state and conservation lands, there is no regulation on private property.

“Studies have shown that heavy harvest of fiddleheads significantly reduces the number of fronds, or leaves, produced over the next few years,” said Vermont Fish and Wildlife Botanist Bob Popp. “These studies indicate that

limiting harvest to less than 50 percent of the fronds limits its impacts and does not reduce availability the following year.”

Popp says the impact of harvesting wild leeks is even more severe because typically the entire plant is removed, but that it can be done sustainably by leaving the bulb in the ground and harvesting only the leaves. He points out that leeks mostly reproduce vegetatively by sending out underground stems, but that only the larger, older bulbs are capable of this doing this.

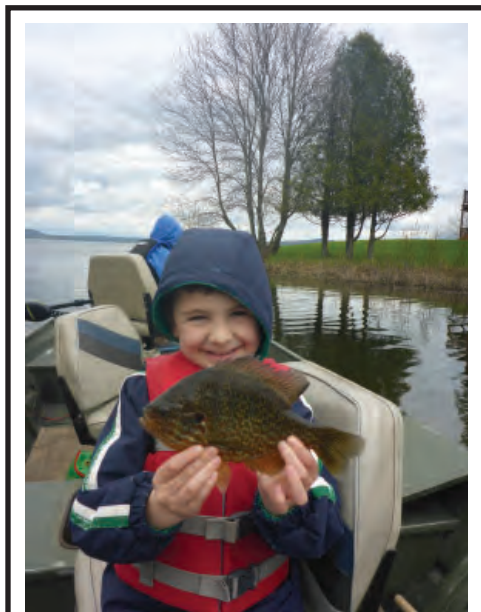
“We encourage outdoor activities,” he added, “but we want to remind foragers to harvest sustainably and be aware of the level of previous harvesting before adding to that impact.”

It's an Excellent Time to Use a Worm and Relax

Get outside, have fun and catch dinner

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department says as temperatures warm, songbirds return and the ice recedes, a shift in fish behavior also occurs. Many fish species found in lakes and ponds throughout Vermont become more active, feed more regularly and provide a great fishing opportunity.



Species such as this pumpkinseed, as well as bluegill, crappie, rock bass, and yellow perch are common in many Vermont waters and become more active this time of year. They can be caught from shore, making them ideal for a variety of anglers looking to enjoy spring fishing in Vermont.

Fisheries Biologist Bret Ladago. “Species such as bluegill, pumpkinseed, crappie, rock bass, and yellow perch are common in many of our waters and become more active at this time of year as they prepare for spawning. These fish can be easily accessed from shore, making them ideal for a variety of anglers looking to enjoy spring fishing in Vermont. Using only a hook, worm and bobber, you can catch fish, have fun and relax.”

Rig your bobber at least one to two feet above the hook. Most fish will not be right at the surface, so the deeper you can get your bait the better. If the bobber is too far from the hook, it will be difficult to cast and may become tangled. Bait the hook with a worm, or any other tasty fish treats.

If you do not want to venture to a store, bait like worms and grubs can be found in gardens, compost piles and under logs and rocks. Cast your bait out at least 10 feet and wait. Sit back and enjoy being surrounded by nature but keep an eye on your bobber. Once you see the bobber move, wait a few more seconds, set the hook and then reel in your catch!

Try to match the size of your hook to the fish you are catch-

ing. If the hook is too small, it will be easier for a larger fish to swallow. If it's too large, they may not be able to get it in their mouth. Consider pinching the barb on the hook if you do not intend to keep your catch.

“For folks who want to eat their catch, there's nothing better than a fresh meal of perch, crappie or bluegill caught in our local waters,” added Ladago. “They make for an excellent, healthy, locally-sourced meal for your family.”

For more information, see the fishing regulations and [Fishing Basics](#) on Vermont Fish and Wildlife's website (vtfishandwildlife/fish).

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“While some anglers focus on the challenge of catching trout during early spring, there are other ways to enjoy fishing without having to wade through ice cold water,” said State

A Face Only a Mother Could Love

By Brad Roy

Sitting on a sandy bank as the spring suns warming rays retreat back into the skies red streaks, a Heron finishes its final moments of hunting the shallows before it suddenly bursts into the sky with a deliberate “woosh woosh woosh” of wings overhead. When darkness fills the landscape and the still waters turn inky-black, a rod tip begins to bounce around in the dull glimmer of a hissing Coleman lantern. At the end of that rod and line, a modestly-sized bottom feeder tugs like a playful puppy at a ball of night crawlers resting on the silty bottom.

Early spring becomes one of the busiest times of the year around our household, but despite the desire to catch up on projects that have been lost to winters icy grip the past



The black bullhead or black bullhead catfish (Ameiurus melas) is a species of bullhead catfish.

six months or so, spring bullhead fishing is always a top priority. Bullhead, also commonly known as bullpout, catfish, and hornpout, are an abundant species in New England; and although not coveted like other “sexier” gamefish, they certainly deserve a seat at the table of worthy species. The Brown Bullhead is found in waterbodies all over our area, and fishing for them can be an absolute blast in the spring and early summer.

As the bullhead make their way to shallow, slow-moving areas of lakes and ponds to spawn, they also become especially vulnerable to some old-school bank fishing tactics. Typically, all that’s needed is a pack of hooks, some bait-casting sinkers, and a big bucket of night crawlers to supply all the equipment needed for an evening of bullhead action. The most common rigging method is an old standard: Slip a heavy egg or teardrop sinker onto your line, then tie on a swivel to act as a stop. Attach a snelled bait-holder hook to the open end of the swivel and bait with

a healthy portion of night crawler. I often like to make a bit of a ball of crawlers on the hook when targeting bullheads, but keep the tails from dangling too much. It seems these bottom-feeders will happily suck up the ball of bait, but it helps prevent small perch and other species from nibbling at the worms. My personal favorite bait for bullhead though is chicken livers, which are readily available, cheap, and if the fishing doesn’t go well; also go great in the fryer! You can also fish bullhead with a standard split shot rig, or with a modified drop-shot rig where you attach leadered hooks or snells perpendicular to the main line via a swivel with a sinker at the end of the line. The most important thing you have to think about when bullhead fishing is don’t overthink it. If the fish are there, and you have a hook out with bait on it, your chances are pretty good.

Cast your rig straight out from shore and let it sink to the bottom. Once its settled, very slowly reel in until the line gets tight. At this point I find its best to set the rod down and pull on the line so there’s about 2 feet of slack like hanging down between your rod tip and the water. This system allows a bullhead to grab the bait, then swim away a few feet while the slip sinker stays in place. Almost immediately the line will begin to lift and tighten, alerting you that something is swimming away with it. Make sure to bring plenty of hooks, and don’t bother with fancy tackle. Bullhead love to swallow bait, and for fish destined for the dinner table, it can be easier to simply cut the line then try to extract your hook.

While there are all sorts of ways you can be alerted to a fish taking your bait, including modern electronic gadgets, one of the best ways is to take a piece of paper, toilet paper, or paper towel and tear a small square out of it about the size of matchbook or smaller. Tear this piece down the middle halfway, and slip it on your line after you’ve set your rod up. With this piece in place, you now have an indicator you will see rising into the air when a fish is pulling on the line. Because bullhead fishing is at its best at night, this will help you recognize a fish is on the line with ease when visibility is poor. An old word of wisdom I like to believe is that the more you cast out and drag the bait back to shore, the more of a scent trail you

leave, in turn guiding any passing fish to your bait as the evening goes on.

Bullhead are plentiful and a blast to catch, and on a warm spring night it doesn't get much better than a group of friends filling a bucket with them as they tell stories and lies around a crackling driftwood campfire. Another bonus is that bullhead fishing gives you the opportunity to catch many other species too, I've caught everything from perch to pike, carp and even eels while in search of bullhead, so make sure you have a stout enough rod and line

to handle any surprise "bonus" fish as well.

With a face only a mother could love, many people are put off from bullhead as table fare, but just like a classic fried southern catfish, bullhead are perfectly suited for a bath in hot oil. Cleaning them takes a little practice, but there are many videos and guides available online to help out with that part. Just watch out you don't get stung by the spines in the dorsal and pectoral fins when handling. With that said, I hope you take the chance to get out this spring and catch a few for yourself!

Successful VT Hunters Can Report Their Turkey Online or at a Reporting Station

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

A successful hunter in Vermont's April 24-25 youth and novice turkey weekend and the May 1-31 spring turkey season must, by law, report their turkey within 48 hours to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. The department says hunters can [report their turkey online](https://www.vtfishandwildlife.com) through its website www.vtfishandwildlife.com or at local big game reporting stations.

"Online reporting was used successfully last year," said turkey biologist Chris Bernier. "It is convenient for the hunter, and the information collected has proven to be

just as valuable for monitoring and managing wild turkey populations."

The information needed to report turkeys online is the same as what has been traditionally collected at big game reporting stations including license, tag and contact information, harvest details, and biological measurements.

There are a few things hunters can do in advance to make submitting a report easier such as having their Conservation ID Number handy (located on their license), knowing what town and Wildlife Management Unit the bird was harvested in, and completing all the necessary measurements such as beard and spur lengths, and weight.

Although not required, the department also requests that hunters use the online reporting tool to upload a digital photo showing the bird's beard and properly tagged leg. Hunters who provide a valid email address will receive a confirmation email when they successfully submit a turkey harvest report using this new online reporting tool.

The department reminds hunters to wear a face covering and practice social distancing if they bring their turkey to a reporting station.

Vermont's [big game reporting stations](#) are listed under "Hunt" on the left side of Vermont Fish and Wildlife's website home page.



Vermont hunters who take a turkey this spring can report it online at Vermont Fish and Wildlife's website or at a big game reporting station.

Young Wildlife Belong in the Wild

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

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

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

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

Department scientists encourage wildlife watchers to respect the behavior of animals in the spring and early summer,

and to resist the urge to assist wildlife in ways that may be harmful. Here are some helpful tips:

- Deer and moose nurse their young at different times during the day, and often leave young alone for long

periods of time. These animals are not lost. Their mother knows where they are and will return.

- Young birds on the ground may have left their nest, but their parents will still feed them.
- Young animals such as fox and raccoon will often follow their mother. The mother of a wildlife youngster is usually nearby but just out of sight to a person happening upon it.
- Animals that act sick can carry rabies, parasites or other harmful diseases. Do not handle them. Even though they do not show symptoms, healthy-looking raccoons, foxes, skunks, and bats may also be carriers of the deadly rabies virus.
- Many wildlife species will not feed or care for their young when people are close by. Obey signs that restrict access to wildlife nesting areas, including hiking trails that may be temporarily closed.
- Keep domestic pets indoors, leashed or fenced in. Dogs and cats kill many baby animals each year.
- Avoid projects that remove trees, shrubs and dead snags that contain nests during the spring and summer.



Picking up young wildlife can do more harm than good, according to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. It's also against the law.

For information about rabies and wildlife conflicts, or truly orphaned wildlife (i.e. the adult has been hit by a car) call the Vermont Rabies Hotline at 1-800-4RABIES (1-800-472-2437).

For the safety of all wildlife, taking a wild animal into captivity is illegal, even one you suspect is sick, injured or has been abandoned.

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease May Threaten Vermont's Rabbits and Hares

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department says a disease affecting rabbits and hares previously found in western states may be moving eastward. Rabbit hemorrhagic disease (RHDV2) is a virus known to be extremely lethal to wild and domestic rabbits, including cottontail rabbits and snowshoe hares.

RHDV2 was first found in New Mexico in 2010, but it has spread rapidly to other [western states](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/maps/animal-health/rhd) (<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/maps/animal-health/rhd>), and a case involving a domestic rabbit was reported in Florida in late 2020.

Infection with the virus usually results in the quick death of a rabbit, often in only a few days. The virus is transmitted through direct contact between wild rabbits, domestic rabbits, or between wild and domestic rabbits. It is also easily spread indirectly through contact with dead infected rabbits, infected food and water supplies, personal clothing, and domestic rabbit cages.

The virus withstands environmental stresses such as heat, cold, wet, or drought conditions and it can live in the environment for months. Rabbits infected with the virus may have blood from body openings, appear listless or lethargic, and they usually die within a few days. The disease does not affect other wildlife, dogs,

cats, or humans.

The likely path of this virus coming to Vermont is through importation of a domestic rabbit, imported rabbit products, or by people coming back to Vermont from states that have the RHDV2 virus.

“We are cooperating with the Ver-



VTF&W photo by John Hall

mont Agency of Agriculture, which regulates the domestic rabbit trade in the state, to raise awareness of this disease and minimize the likelihood of introduction of the virus into Vermont's rabbit populations,” said Vermont Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Louis Porter.

Here is what you can do to prevent the virus from getting to Vermont:

1. If you own pet rabbits, do not let their food or droppings be exposed to wild rabbits. Keep their quarters clean and use approved disinfectants for the RHDV2 vi-

rus or a 10 percent bleach solution regularly. Do not release domestic rabbits into the wild.

2. Wildlife rehabilitators should not let wild rabbits in their care come into contact with domestic rabbits or their cages, food dishes, or any other domestic rabbit items.

All rabbit equipment including cages, food and water dishes, and other materials should be cleaned with a [disinfectant approved by the EPA](https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-o-disinfectants-use-against-rabbit-hemorrhagic-disease-virus-rhdv2) for RHDV2 virus (<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-o-disinfectants-use-against-rabbit-hemorrhagic-disease-virus-rhdv2>).

3. If you find a dead rabbit in the wild, do not touch it. If you see more than one dead rabbit report it to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.

4. Hunters should not handle wild rabbits after harvesting without wearing nitrile gloves. Dispose of the gloves, carcass remains and entrails in plastic bags using appropriate sanitation methods or by burying in the ground at least two feet deep. Wash hands, hunting equipment and clothing thoroughly after cleaning game. If hunters are hunting rabbits in other states do not bring those harvested rabbits into Vermont.

5. Report unusual wild rabbit mortalities or unusual rabbit behavior to Vermont Fish and Wildlife.

The Gift



You can't watch a TV show about hunting or fishing without getting a message on passing on the traditions of hunting, fishing, or trapping. In nearly 11 years of publishing, I have consistently preached the message of doing just that; passing on our beloved traditions. Everyone who hunts and fishes had the tradition handed down to them by someone. In my case, it was my dad. I was only about 8 or 9 years old when my dad took up hunting and fishing. He met a man named Kenny St. John, and Kenny got him into deer hunting and being a participant at the rural Hunting Club in Washington. The camp was owned by a bunch of guys, mostly from Barre, and nearly all of them were Italians. My dad was a guest there for the first weekend of deer season. On Sunday evenings, I would wait by the door for him to come back from camp, hoping he would bring home a big buck. But that day never came. I longed for the day when I would be old enough to go out hunting with my dad and the guys from the rural hunting camp.

Somewhere during that time, my dad purchased a rustic camp in Woodbury on a quarter of an acre, complete with a well across the street. I always looked forward to spending time up there. There was no power there, and we heated the camp with wood slabs gleaned from my dad's granite shed. But I am getting ahead of myself

My 14th birthday came and my parents gave me a .410 shotgun as a present. I was beyond thrilled. I dreamed over and over again, night after night, of my downing a big buck with a slug from that gun. The following Sunday, Vermont bird hunting season opened up and my dad promised to take me up to our camp partridge hunting. My time had come!

We got up bright and early the Saturday morning and headed to our camp in Woodbury. We both needed to purchase our hunting licenses, and we stopped at Thorpe's General store, as he was also the Town Clerk of Woodbury. I will never forget the feeling I experienced when he handed me my first Vermont Hunting license. I was truly thrilled.

We got in the car and headed for our hunting camp. The plan was to walk the logging roads out back of our camp and hunt for partridge. But I didn't have to wait long to get my first action. We crested the first hill toward our camp, and there in the road was a partridge sunning himself. My dad told me to get out and take a shot at the bird. I jumped out of the car and followed the bird off the road and up the bank. I aimed, took a shot andMISSED! My dad was laughing, but I was heartbroken. He seemed thrilled with the scenario, and I could not understand at the age of 14 why he was feeling so good. I had just missed the first partridge of my young life. Until you have kids of your own, you won't understand such "nonsense". Later that evening, I replayed that shot over and over again. We hunted a lot that fall, but I never shot a partridge that year.

That deer season, my dad and I headed up to our camp to spend the first weekend. I was very excited for the opening day to arrive. The Thursday before the opening day, my dad and I went up to camp to build a fire that would hopefully take the chill off when we arrived a day later. We hung around camp until the fire was blazing, and then headed home. On the way home we saw three deer cross the road near Woodbury Lake. I was totally excited.

The following day the end of school could not come fast enough. I rushed home and as soon as my dad got home from work, we headed to camp. We got to camp around dark, lit the kerosene lanterns, started a fire and settled in. After dinner we talked about hunt-

ing until nearly 10:00 and then retired for the evening. I was so psyched I couldn't get to sleep. A buck would surely fall to my little .410.

The next day finally arrived, and at first light we headed for our stands. The stands were no elaborate hunting blinds, but usually a pile of brush dragged around a rock to conceal your body. We stayed on stand for about three hours, and then my dad came and got me. He had been within earshot of me the whole time. We trudged back to camp for a late breakfast and to get ready for the afternoon hunt. I was disappointed, to say the least.

We were passing time at camp, when we heard three shots that seemed very close to camp. I jumped up, and dad and I headed out the logging road that led to the large swamp out back. As we entered the swamp, I noticed up ahead of us a huge set of antlers coming through the trees. A big buck! His head was swinging side to side and he was hooking the softwood bows and he trotted. I jumped ahead of my dad, took aim

and let the shot fly from my .410. I missed it. As I only had a single shot, I stepped aside to let my dad shoot. I watched as he cocked the hammer back on his 30:30 and fired four shots at the running buck as he took off up the road. Dad missed, too. Needless to say I was heartbroken. I looked at my dad and he was laughing... again. He seemed to have a pretty weird sense of humor when it came to missing game. I wouldn't understand that until I had my own son. I relived that moment for a long time. Dad and I hunted that buck for the rest of the season, but came up empty handed. Starting that day, my dad let me carry his 30:30, as he thought I needed a bit more firepower.

I didn't harvest a deer that year, but following the encounter with that big buck, it was needless to say that I was hooked on deer hunting. Once the season was over, I thought that hunting season would never get here. My dad and I had many great experiences in the woods and on the water. I was hooked on the outdoors and am forever grateful for my dad giving me "The gift"Thanks dad!!



Deer Ages Available on VTF&W Website

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Hunters who provided the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department with a tooth from their deer can now find out how old their deer was by visiting the [department's website](#).



A total of 2,025 teeth were received from successful hunters in 2020. When added to the 606 deer examined by biologists during the youth and rifle seasons, the department was able to get accurate ages for 2,631 deer.

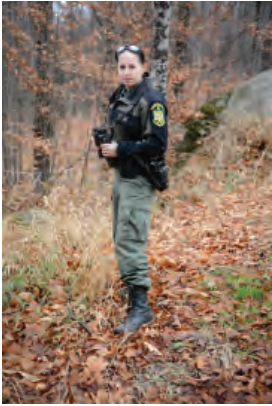
"We are thankful to the thousands of hunters who supported our deer management efforts by providing us with a tooth from their deer," said Deer Project Leader Nick Fortin. "This age information helps us estimate deer population size and assess the health of deer. It is also critically important for understanding the effects of new hunting regulations on the deer population and buck age structure."

The oldest deer harvested was a 19-year-old doe taken in Ripton. The oldest buck was 12 years old and was taken in Somerset.

The [deer ages](#) can be found on the Vermont Fish and Wildlife website with a link from the home page.

Vermont Fish & Wildlife Warden Service Pledges to Advance Women in Policing

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release



The ultimate goal of the 30x30 Initiative is to have 30 percent of police recruits be women by 2030 and to ensure policing agencies are truly representative of the jurisdiction the agency serves. While 30x30 is focused on advancing women in policing, these principles are applicable to all demographic diversity, not just gender.



National 30x30 Pledge Aims to Bring More Women into Policing to Improve Public Safety, Community Outcomes, and Trust in Law Enforcement The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Warden Service has signed on to the 30x30 Pledge to adopt a series of low and no-cost actions policing agencies can take to improve the representation and experiences of women in law enforcement.

“This pledge means that the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is actively working toward improving the representation and experiences of women officers in our department,” said Colonel Jason Batchelder, Vermont’s chief warden. “We are honored to be the first fish and wildlife agency in the nation to make this critical commitment, and we look forward to working with and learning from other agencies across the country who share our priority.”

- Are named in fewer complaints and lawsuits
- Are perceived by communities as being more honest and compassionate
- See better outcomes for crime victims, especially in sexual assault cases

The activities are designed to help policing agencies assess their current policies on gender equity of personnel and assist them in developing and implementing solutions to eliminate barriers and advance women in policing. These actions address recruitment, assessment, hiring, retention, promotion, and agency culture.

More than 35 agencies – from major metro departments including the New York City Police Department, to mid-sized, rural, university and state policing agencies – have signed the 30x30 Pledge. The Pledge is based on social science research that greater representation of women on police forces leads to better policing outcomes for communities.

“We are grateful to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Warden Service for being one of the first in the nation to commit to being a part of this growing movement,” said Maureen McGough, co-founder of the 30x30 Initiative, Chief of Staff of the Policing Project at the New York University School of Law, and former policing expert at the U.S. Department of Justice. “We believe strongly that advancing women in policing is critical to improving public safety outcomes. We look forward to having more agencies follow Vermont Fish and Wildlife Warden Service’s lead by signing the pledge and improving the representation and experiences of women in policing.”

The 30x30 Pledge is the foundational effort of the [30x30 Initiative](http://www.30x30initiative.org) – a coalition of police leaders, researchers, and professional organizations who have joined together to advance the representation and experiences of women in all ranks of policing across the United States. The 30x30 Initiative is affiliated with the Policing Project at NYU School of Law and the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives (NAWLEE).

Currently, women make up only 12 percent of sworn officers and 3 percent of police leadership in the U.S. This underrepresentation of women in policing has significant public safety implications. Research suggests that women officers:

For more information, visit www.30x30initiative.org.

- Use less force and less excessive force

State Game Wardens Jenna Reed and Abigail Sera are two of three female wardens currently working for the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Warden Service.