

Vermont Sporting Journal

Volume VI, Issue 12 * July 2022



Quinn Higgins with a 5 lb. Smallmouth Bass



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With Reports of Bear Conflicts Across the State, Fish and Wildlife Urges Proactive Steps for Safely Co- existing with Black Bears

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is receiving reports from across the state of black bears seeking food in yards, outbuildings and livestock enclosures this spring, and the department urges Vermonters to take proactive steps for safely coexisting with bears.

“Bears—and people—are at risk when bears spend time in human-dominated landscapes,” said the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department’s bear project leader Jaclyn Comeau. “Every time a bear finds an easy meal of birdseed, compost or unsecured garbage, they are learning a dangerous association between people and food. Coexisting with bears starts with Vermonters taking proactive steps to help keep bears wild.”

Today, Vermont is home to a stable bear population estimated at 4,600 to 5,780, almost four times the state’s estimated population of 1,200 to 1,500 bears in 1975. In Vermont, habitat loss, earlier spring weather due to climate change, and increasing development and human encroachment into remote areas can increase the odds of bears crossing paths with people.

In these situations, potential food sources for bears including birdfeeders, compost, or unsecured garbage can encourage bears to spend more time near homes or other development, bringing bears and people into conflict.

Many conflicts between bears and people can be prevented with some easy, proactive steps. The department recommends Vermonters follow these strategies for safely coexisting with Vermont’s healthy black bear population:

- **Take down birdfeeders until December.** Vermonters can attract

The Vermont Sporting Journal

is published bimonth

Advertising, editorial and circulation mailing address is:

The Vermont Sporting Journal

*29 Strong Road * Orange, Vermont 05641*

or email us at: vermontsportingjournal@gmail.com

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birds by planting bird-friendly native plants instead, according to [Audubon's Native Plants for Birds Program](#).

- **Make garbage inaccessible.** Store garbage in a secure structure and a bear proof container. The department's website has [instructions for bear-proofing a garbage container](#).
- **Dispose of garbage frequently.** Vermonters with pick-up services should wait until the morning of pick-up to put garbage out.
- **Demand bear proof dumpsters for your community.**
- **Compost responsibly.** Follow the [steps for composting in bear country on the department's website](#). Compost needs to be 3 parts brown materi-

als to 1 part kitchen scraps, turned frequently, and kept in a sturdy tumbler or bin.

- **Use electric fencing to keep chickens and bees safe.** Fences need to be 4,000-6,000 volts, tested regularly, and baited. The department's website has [guidance for bear-proofing chicken and bee enclosures](#).
- **Clean your grill after every use.**
- **Make bears feel uncomfortable in your yard.** Safe methods are yelling, banging pots and pans, or use other noise devices from inside your house. Never shoot a bear to scare it. Even BBs can seriously injure bears.
- **Please report your bear encounters to Vermont Fish & Wildlife.** Use the [black bear incident report](#) tab on the department's website or [contact your local game warden](#).

These reports allow us to help you prevent future bear incidents. They also give the department information to help all Vermonters better coexist with bears.

“Following these steps can save bears' lives, and help protect you, your neighbors, and your property,” said Comeau, adding that Vermonters can visit the department's [living with black bears web page](#) for more information. “Please do your part to be a good neighbor and help keep Vermont's bears wild!”



Bird feeders, compost, unsecured garbage, and other food sources left out during the warm months when bears have emerged from their dens are a serious source of risk to bears, potentially encouraging them to spend time in human dominated landscapes.

Electric Fencing Offers Protection Against Chicken Predation

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Keeping a small flock of chickens at home to provide eggs and meat has become increasingly popular, but many first-time small-scale poultry farmers are discovering that several species of wildlife like the taste of chicken as much as we do. The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department urges poultry owners to use electric fencing and follow other precautions to protect their birds from predation.

“We are receiving reports about bears, foxes, raccoons, fisher, coyotes, skunks, and bobcats preying on chickens,” said Jaclyn Comeau, Vermont’s bear biologist. “Many of the calls will be coming from people who are new at keeping chickens and who do not provide sufficient protection for their birds.”

“In 2021, we received 84 reports of bears getting after chickens. This number has been increasing in recent years with an average of 31 reports per year from 2011 to 2017 and an average of 113 reports per year from 2018 to 2021.”

Comeau urges people to keep their chickens contained inside electric net fencing and to make sure any wire fencing is secure. Use of one-quarter-inch hardware cloth, especially along the bottom of an enclosure will block most small predators. Weasels can get through a one-inch opening. The electric netting, however, is good extra protection even outside the wire netting – especially against black bears which are strong enough to break into most unprotected chicken coops. Several types of electric net fencing are available. The netting is portable and can easily be used with moveable chicken pens.

Here are additional tips to help keep your chickens safe:

- Baiting the fence is necessary to guarantee bears touch the fence with a sensitive part of their body. Apply bacon grease or peanut butter to a spot on the electric fencing..
- Cover the tops of pens with wire or plastic netting to guard against attacks from avian and climbing predators.
- Bury galvanized hardware cloth or netting 12 inches deep around the perimeter of the pen to prevent access by digging predators.
- A motion-activated light to illuminate the coop after dark will discourage some predators. Motion-activated alarms also can help deter them.
- Store poultry feed in a secure indoor location in tight containers, and only feed poultry the amount that can be consumed in one feeding.

Vermont Fish and Wildlife has more helpful information about Living with Black Bears on their website www.vtfishandwildlife.com. If you are having a problem with bears, please fill out the Bear Incident Report form on that page.



Avian Influenza Continues to Spread in Vermont's Wild Birds

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), commonly called avian flu, continues to spread among Vermont's wild bird population since its initial detection in a [pair of bald eagles on April 8](#).

HPAI has now been detected in four bald eagles, one red tailed hawk, three Canada geese, one wood duck, and one turkey vulture in Vermont. Infected birds have been found in all regions of the state.

"We ask Vermonters to continue reporting possible cases of HPAI in wild birds to wildlife officials," said David Sausville, Wildlife Program Manager for the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. "Public reports allow us to monitor the virus' spread for potential impacts to wild and domestic bird populations."

The latest guidelines for identifying and reporting possible cases of HPAI can be found in the [Wildlife Health Bulletin](#) on the department's web page. To conserve laboratory resources only new species will be tested in locations where HPAI has not been detected.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers the risk to the general public from this HPAI virus to be low. However, people who have job-related or recreational exposures to infected birds should take appropriate precautions outlined in [CDC guidance](#).

[Two human cases of avian influenza A\(H5\) virus have been detected](#), one in the U.S. and one internationally. The U.S. case was transmitted through contact with domestic poultry infected with HPAI.

"As of now, there have been no reports in Vermont of human infection resulting from exposure to HPAI in either domestic fowl or wild birds, and influenza in poultry does not constitute a food safety risk," said Dr. Natalie Kwit, state public health veterinarian with the Vermont Department of Health.

Sausville advised individuals with backyard flocks to be sure to review safety and biosecurity guidelines. In addition to practicing good biosecurity, all bird owners should prevent contact between their birds and wild birds, and birdfeeders should be taken down to reduce congregation by wild birds.

Those seeking information about avian influenza in domestic birds, including biosecurity guidelines and reporting, should contact the Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets' Animal Health Office at 802 828 2421.

Prevention and Antiviral Treatment of Bird Flu Viruses in People

- As a general precaution, whenever possible people should avoid direct contact with wild birds and observe them only from a distance.
- Wild birds can be infected with avian (bird) influenza (flu) A viruses even if they don't look sick.
- Avoid unprotected contact with domestic birds (poultry) that look sick or have died.
- Do not touch surfaces that may be contaminated with saliva, mucous or feces from wild or domestic birds.



Minimize contact with wild birds or sick or dead poultry by wearing gloves and washing your hands with soap and water after touching birds. If available, wear respiratory protection, such as a medical facemask.

~Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Federally Threatened Orchid Discovered in Vermont

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Botanists with the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department confirmed that a population of [small whorled pogonia](#)—believed to be extinct in Vermont since 1902 and listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act—has been documented on Winooski Valley Park District conservation land in Chittenden County.

“Discovering a viable population of a federally threatened species unknown in our state for over a century is astounding,” said Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department Botanist Bob Popp. “It’s Vermont’s equivalent of rediscovering the ivory-billed woodpecker.”

The small whorled pogonia is a globally rare orchid historically found across the eastern states and Ontario. Previous searches for the species in Vermont have been unsuccessful. As with many orchids, little is understood about the species’ habitat needs. Populations in Maine and New Hampshire are found in areas of partial sun including forest edges and openings.

“A challenge of locating rare orchid populations for conservation is that so much of where they grow is determined by things we can’t easily see or measure, like networks of fungi in the soil,” said Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department Assistant Botanist Aaron Marcus. “These kinds of discoveries are only possible because of the vibrant communities of enthusiasts and professional botanists who work together to understand and document Vermont’s plant diversity.”

Marcus says the department was first notified of a possible small whorled pogonia population in Vermont thanks to the observations of two community scientists: John Gange of Shelburne and Tom Doubleday of Colchester.

“John is a passionate and skilled botanist who specializes in orchids and closely follows the sightings people report on the community science app iNaturalist,” said Marcus. “John noticed that birder and retired greenhouse manager Tom Doubleday had used iNaturalist to ask for help identifying an unfamiliar wildflower last July and reached out to us with the news that the small whorled pogonia had very likely just been discovered in Vermont.”

Popp, Marcus, Doubleday, and Gange returned to the site together this spring and confirmed the presence of small

whorled pogonia, which was in bloom at the time. Rare orchids are at high risk from illegal collection and accidental trampling by passive visitors, according to Marcus. To protect the pogonia’s location from potential disturbances, Doubleday removed the public coordinates from his post using iNaturalist’s privacy settings.

The department’s next steps will be to work with the Winooski Valley Park District to look for the small whorled pogonia on nearby conservation land and monitor the population to make sure this species has the best possible opportunity to flourish in Vermont’s portion of its native range.

“We’re incredibly fortunate that this small whorled pogonia population is on land protected by the Winooski Valley Park Dis-

trict,” said Popp. “It speaks to the importance of habitat conservation. When we conserve a piece of land, we rarely know all the species that are there, but we do know that conserving intact natural communities yields the best odds for supporting Vermont’s biodiversity, from common species to rare ones.”



A small whorled pogonia blooms on Winooski Valley Park District conservation land.

VTF&W photo courtesy of John Gange

Fires and Swimming are Prohibited at Fishing Access Areas

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

With the beginning of summer and anglers fishing from shore, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department reminds people that open fires and swimming are prohibited at all Vermont state fishing access areas.

Open fires and their remnants, create unsafe areas for other anglers and boaters to use and enjoy. The remnants of these fires are also unhealthy for the animals and fish that live in the adjacent waters. Fish and Wildlife cleans up the toxic waste left by open fires on state lands annually at considerable expense.

Swimming at fishing access areas is prohibited due to safety concerns and because the primary uses of the fishing access areas is for launching and retrieving motorboats and for shore fishing.

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department maintains 196 developed fishing access areas on lakes and rivers throughout the state. These areas have allowed uses determined by law, and swimming is not one of them.

The access areas were purchased and are maintained with funds derived from the sale of fishing licenses and motorboat registrations, as well as a federal excise tax on fishing equipment, fishing tackle, and gasoline for motorboats. These funding sources explicitly prohibit activities that are in conflict with fishing and boating.

Fish and Wildlife regulations prohibit certain uses of fishing access areas including, but not limited to -- swimming, littering, camping, picnicking, making a fire, parking of vehicles not related to priority uses, and commercial activity.

“Vermont State Game Wardens will be strictly enforcing the rules at state fishing access areas this summer,” said Col. Jason Batchelder, Vermont’s Chief Game Warden. “Please help keep our lands clean and open for others to enjoy, and report violations to your local warden or use the anonymous Operation Game Thief hot line at 1-800-75ALERT. Reports of time-sensitive violations should be called in to a local State Police radio dispatcher who can contact a warden.”

VTF&W photo by John Hall

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Game Warden Responds to Coyote Attack in Panton

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

The Vermont Warden Service responded to a coyote attack in Panton on June 19. The complainant is a resident of Panton who has not responded to a request to be identified in this release.

The complainant reported that they were walking a farm road through an un-mowed pasture behind their residence with their dog, when an apparently healthy coyote emerged from the grass. They reported that the coyote attacked their dog—which the complainant has not confirmed was leashed—and subsequently attacked and bit the complainant, leaving a puncture wound in their cheek.

The complainant separated themselves from the coyote and retreated with their dog while shouting to keep the coyote at bay.

Emergency medical services (EMS) and Game Warden Wesley Butler responded to the scene. The coyote was not present when Warden Butler arrived. The complainant was treated by EMS on site and was advised to seek medical advice regarding precautionary treatment for rabies.

“The complainant did many things right in this incident,” said Game Warden Wesley Butler. “Resolving the immediate threat, making loud noises to deter the coyote from attacking further if applicable, and retreating from the area and contacting emergency services are what we would recommend in any similar situation.” Butler added that there have not been further reports of a coyote in the area.

Coyote attacks on people are rare in Vermont. Since 1991 there have been only four prior coyote attacks in Vermont, [one of which involved a rabid animal](#).

Other states advise that aggressive behavior by healthy coyotes is most common during the late spring and summer when coyotes defending young will [be protective of the area around their dens](#), or in cases when coyotes have become [habituated to finding food near people’s residences](#).

The Fish and Wildlife Department recommends avoiding recreating near known den sites through September, making sure to keep dogs leashed, and using deterrence techniques like making loud noises, waving your arms, or throwing sticks or stones if approached by a coyote.

“Coyotes are important members of our ecosystem and Vermonters have a good track record of living safely alongside our state’s healthy, stable coyote population,” said Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department Wildlife Biologist Chris Bernier. “Coyotes are naturally avoidant of people, but also adaptable. To help keep Vermont’s coyotes wild, we recommend similar steps to those advised for bears: minimize attractants like unsecured garbage or livestock, use deterrents like loud noises to haze individuals away from your property, and report coyotes that show consistent bold behavior or little fear of people to Fish and Wildlife.”

Gov. Appoints Three New Fish & Wildlife Board Members

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE
Press Release

Governor Phil Scott has appointed Nicholas Burnham of Hartland, Neal Hogan of Bennington, and Robert Patterson of Lincoln to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board.

Burnham, Hogan and Patterson are passionate about Vermont’s outdoors, participating in activities ranging from backcountry skiing to mentoring new hunters. All three cite a love of hunting that began during childhood as a driver of their commitment to conservation.

“I look forward to growing, preserving and protecting all the outdoor benefits the State of Vermont offers,” said Burnham.

Fish and Wildlife Board members serve six-year terms, with one board member appointed from each of Vermont’s 14 counties. The board is a citizen panel that sets the rules regulating hunting, fishing, and trapping, informed by expert input from Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department staff.

“Each of our new board members brings a lifetime of experience to this work,” said Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife Christopher Herrick. “They appreciate Vermont’s fish, wildlife and habitats through their perspectives as hunters and anglers—and also as hikers, educators and stewards.”

In addition to the three new board members, the Governor has also appointed current board member Brad Ferland of Hardwick as the new board chair.



Help Conserve 344 Acres Forever

Parcel to be conserved and added to Otter Creek WMA, Photo by Matt Peters

Exciting News!

The department, partnering with the Trust for Public Land, is working to conserve more than 344 acres of wetlands, uplands, and riverfront to expand Otter Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Located to the north of Danby and Mt. Tabor in Wallingford, the addition of these parcels will conserve diverse natural habitat, offer public access for recreation, and improve migration corridor connectivity between the Taconic and Green Mountain ranges. Donations to the Habitat Stamp fund in May will support this important acquisition.

Location, Location, Location

The location and geography of the parcels make it a prized biodiversity hotspot. It is adjacent to 271,000 acres of Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF), state land, and private conservation land, including the soon-to-be conserved White Rocks Gateway addition to the GMNF.

Wildlife Habitat and Wildlife Abound

The project parcels contain a variety of biodiversity features of interest with eight state-significant rare natural communities, unfragmented and varied mast-producing forest, and contains 225 acres of one of the largest deer wintering areas in the state.

Safeguarding Water Quality

Forever conserving this area, with 107 acres of wetlands, floodplain and river frontage, will safeguard water quality of the Otter Creek and increase flood resiliency on the landscape, reducing flood risks and potential damage downstream.

Looking Forward

Once acquired, the property will be managed for protection and enhancement of biodiversity, native natural communities, riparian areas, and wetlands. Public access will be open to the land for walking, snowshoeing, skiing, and wildlife viewing. The property will be open and available to dispersed pedestrian use for hunting, angling and trapping, with hunting for deer, turkey, grouse and woodcock expected. River access to Otter Creek provides paddling and cold-water-fishery angling opportunities for brook, brown and rainbow trout, along with some bass and northern pike.

Join the Effort with a 2022 Stamp!

All Habitat Stamp donations during the month of May are supporting the conservation of these parcels, and there's still time to help get us over the finish line. Don't forget, a Habitat Stamp donation leverages federal dollars, meaning your \$15 Habitat Stamp becomes about \$45 (it can vary a bit) for conserving this land, protecting clean waters, and restoring crucial habitat for Vermont's fish and wildlife. Help conserve the wild places we cherish with a 2022 Habitat Stamp and display it proudly.



New Laws on Coyote Hunting with Dogs, Recovery of Game and Furbearers, and Trapping Best Management Practices

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Hunters and trappers need to be aware of new legislation taking effect

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department says [three new hunting or trapping related laws](#) passed by the Vermont Legislature during the 2022 session are going into effect.

Under the new laws: hunting coyotes with dogs and training dogs to hunt coyotes will be temporarily banned in Vermont starting July 1; the retrieval and use of game and furbearing animals by hunters and trappers are now required with some exceptions; and the Fish and Wildlife Department is beginning a process with the Fish and Wildlife Board and Legislature to identify and implement new best management practices for trapping in the state.

“These laws are the outcome of a collaborative approach by legislators and the Fish and Wildlife Department,” said Christopher Herrick, Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife. “Vermonters care deeply and sometimes disagree vehemently about topics like wanton waste, hunting with dogs, and trapping. The three laws passed this session show that good public process backed by good science can guide us towards compromises that benefit wildlife and people.”

Per [S.281](#), hunters will only be able to pursue and take a coyote with dogs if they are on their own property and acting in defense of a person or property, or if they have signed permission from a landowner who has a legitimate defense of persons or property concern. This moratorium on pursuing coyotes with dogs will last from July 1, 2022, until the board is able to put rules in place requiring permits.

The department will not be able to issue any permits until the rules are finalized after a lengthy process that requires several approvals, public notice and public hearings. The board will begin the rule-making process in the coming months.

When the board rules on coyote hunting with dogs become effective, it will be prohibited to release a dog onto posted land with the purpose of pursuing coyotes and to release a dog onto any land for the purpose of pursuing coyotes if in the previous 365 days a dog has been found on that land and its owner or handler was told to leave by law enforcement. The first violation will result in five points on the hunter’s



Hunters and trappers need to be aware of new legislation taking effect, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department says.

VTF&W Photo courtesy of the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies:

license and the second and any subsequent offenses will be 10 points.

Per [H.411](#), the requirement for retrieval and use of certain wild animals when legally taken is now in effect. The requirement includes moose, deer, bear, wild turkeys, gray squirrels, cottontail rabbit and snowshoe hare, game birds, crows, and furbearers.

The covered wild animal must be processed as food, fur, hide, or feathers, or used for taxidermy. This does not apply to a coyote that has been legally shot. A coyote or its parts, or parts of any of the other covered wild animals, may not be left along a public right-of-way or highway, on posted property without landowner permission, or where otherwise prohibited by law.

Exceptions include animals unfit for consumption, theft, loss to another wild animal, lack of access because of posting, defense of a person or property, and animals that are sick or diseased.

Per [S.201](#), the department has begun a process to identify new best management practices that modernize trapping and improve the welfare of wildlife taken with the use of traps. This will result in a recommendation from the commissioner to the legislature, and a revision of existing trapping regulations based on that recommendation by the board. Updated trapping regulations from this process are not expected until the 2023 hunting and trapping season at the earliest; no changes to trapping regulations are in effect for the 2022 season.

Links to the new laws are available on the [Vermont Fish and Wildlife website](#).

Muzzleloader Antlerless Deer Permit Applications Available

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Vermont's muzzleloader season [antlerless deer permit applications](#) are available online at Vermont Fish and Wildlife's website and from license agents. A link to the information and online applications is on the home page.

The muzzleloader seasons on October 27-30 and December 3-11 will have antlerless permits available for 19 of Vermont's 21 Wildlife Management Units.

Landowners who post their land may not apply for a landowner priority muzzleloader antlerless deer permit. They are eligible to apply in the regular lottery for an antlerless deer permit.

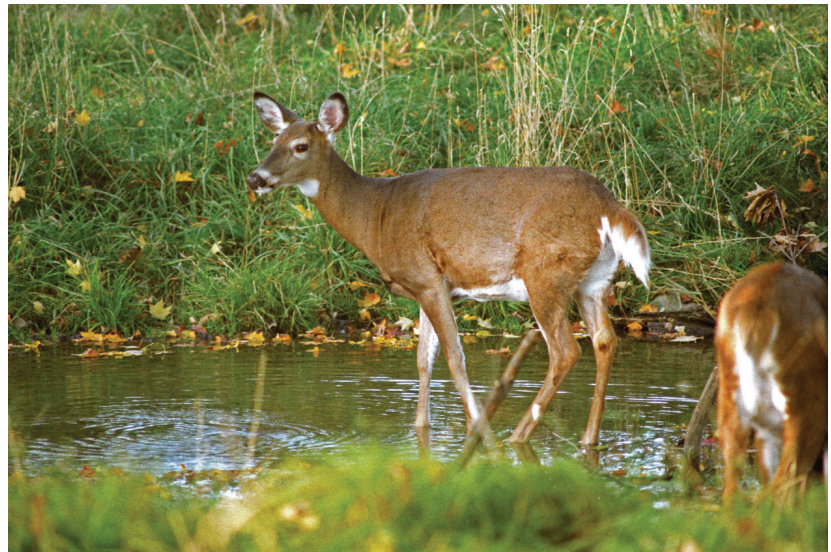
"In recent years, the department has successfully reduced deer numbers in many parts of Vermont to bring populations into balance with their habitat," said Nick Fortin, deer and moose project leader for the Fish and Wildlife Department. "As a result, the goal is now to maintain current deer numbers in most of the state."

Deer populations in five wildlife management units, primarily in the Champlain Valley, remain above their respective population objectives. The goal is to reduce deer numbers in those areas."

The deadline to apply for a muzzleloader antlerless deer permit is August 3.

VTF&W photo by John Hall

Vermont's muzzleloader season antlerless deer hunting permit applications are available on Vermont Fish and Wildlife's website (www.vtfishandwildlife.com).



Public Reminded to Not Disturb Spawning Sea Lamprey in Connecticut River Drainage

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is reminding anglers and the public to avoid disturbing spawning sea lamprey that may currently be found in the Connecticut River and several of its tributaries.

“Sea lamprey are native to the Connecticut River basin and play a vital role in the ecosystem,” said Lael Will, fisheries biologist with Vermont Fish and Wildlife.

Vermont is also home to a separate population of sea lamprey that are actively controlled as a nuisance species in Lake Champlain. Confusion can arise over the differing management goals for these two populations of Vermont sea lamprey. We believe it is important to highlight and contrast the conservation value of Connecticut River sea lamprey, educate the public and encourage folks to do their part to protect this important population of fish.”

“If you happen to see a spawning sea lamprey or a lamprey carcass, don’t be alarmed,” said Will. “The fish provide a number of important ecological benefits and are considered a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in both Vermont and New Hampshire.”

Each year sea lamprey spawn during the spring in the main stem of the Connecticut River as far upstream as Wilder Dam as well as in many of its tributaries, including the West, Williams, Black, and White Rivers.

Upon returning to freshwater to spawn, adult sea lamprey are non-parasitic and die shortly after spawning, and their carcasses play a critical role in cycling important marine nutrients into freshwater ecosystems.

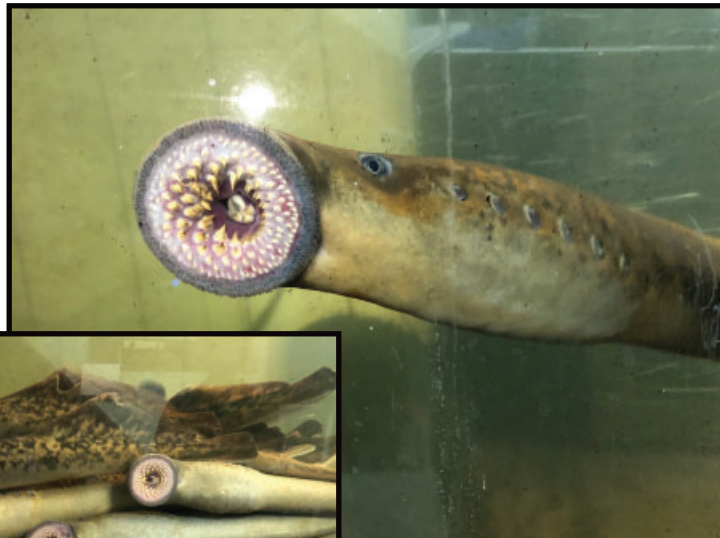
In the Connecticut River, larval lamprey live in freshwa-

ter the first few years of their lives, remaining sedentary and burrowed in sandy substrate while filtering detritus from the water for nutrition. At around five years of age, they transform into juveniles and emigrate to the ocean where they attach to and feed on fish as parasites. In turn, lampreys are a food source in the estuarine and marine environment for a number of fish, marine mammals and birds.

While existing for over 350 million years in the Atlan-

tic, anadromous sea lamprey have co-evolved with their oceanic hosts and their populations are considered to be in balance.

The species is currently managed under the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission, which includes four state agencies, two federal agencies and representatives of the public. Among other efforts, Vermont Fish and Wildlife has been working



Sea lamprey are native to the Connecticut River basin and play a vital role in the ecosystem.

VTF&W photos

to improve fish passage facilities within the Connecticut River drainage to enable native sea lamprey to successfully complete their migrations to spawning habitat.

“In 2021, more than 20,000 sea lamprey passed the Holyoke Dam in Massachusetts, and our goal is to continue to improve fish passage and flows on the river to not only help lamprey spawning, but to also support all migrating fish species,” Will said.

To learn more about Vermont Fish and Wildlife’s various fisheries management programs, visit www.vtfishand-wildlife.com.



VTF&W Provides New Streambank Management Area Maps

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is providing new maps on its website of lands it owns along streambanks.

Fish and Wildlife staff have developed maps for [Streambank Management Areas](#) for over 200 parcels spanning nearly 100 miles of streambanks statewide. These newly created maps depict streambank areas providing public access for perpetuity. A user-friendly overview map has narratives describing the stream sections and their associated fisheries.

“These maps will help people who are hunting, fishing, trapping, or viewing wildlife along Vermont’s rivers and

streams,” said Vermont Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Christopher Herrick. “The lands were purchased with funding primarily provided by the sale of fishing licenses and federal taxes on the manufacture of fishing tackle.”

From the left side of Vermont Fish and Wildlife’s [home page](#), click on Fish and then Fishing Opportunities to go to the maps.

VTF&W photo by Levi Brown

A map of the [Wells River Streambank Management Area](#) in Newbury is one of more than 200 newly created maps of streambank areas that provide public access for perpetuity.

Legislative Update with Evan Hughes

On Thursday, June 23, the Supreme Court of the United States published a monumental win for gun rights. In the case, *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen*, the SCOTUS upheld that a private citizen's right to keep and bear arms was not restricted to a citizen's residence.

The SCOTUS written opinions in (*NYSRP v. Bruen*) may be viewed below:

https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/20-843_7j80.pdf

While a permit to carry concealed may be required, the citizens do not have to justify a need to carry, only that they are not prohibited from carrying. This overcame the unduly restrictions of New York. New York and six other states impose a «may issue» standard. Many of the other states have «shall issue» for citizens not prohibited from possessing firearms.

25 states do not require a permit to carry a firearm concealed. This is commonly referred to as «constitutional carry.» Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont are constitutional carry states, and are routinely the three lowest violent crime states in the nation in the annual FBI Uniform Crime Report (UCR) Program.

Gun ownership has been growing. In just the last several years, there has been a substantial growth in firearm purchases by minorities, women, and first time gun buyers. The rapid expansion of states allowing carry without a permit, the citizen unwillingness to be dependent on depleted police ranks, and the lack of prosecution of repeat violent felony criminal attackers are likely contributing factors.

It is a safe bet that the states that were «may issue» states will delay, deny, and obstruct any attempts for citizens to receive carry permits under the terms of the recent SCOTUS opinion. Just like the preceding SCOTUS decisions on guns, *Heller* (2008) and *McDonald* (2010), the gun control embracing state and local governments, and numerous lower courts acted in open contempt of the SCOTUS decisions.

It will take years of litigation for the application of the *Braun* decision to become the process for the laws in the obstructive gun control embracing states.

Vermont and the rest of the nation are stunned by the drastic increase in extremely violent crime. Gun control supporters call for more restrictions on the owning of firearms. They refuse to look at how these drastic violent crimes are committed by the same repeat violent criminals.

There will no doubt be an effort by gun control activists, politicians, and the media to call for more gun control laws in Vermont. Never mind that the laws they seek to enact have not worked in New York! Never mind that Vermont is routinely in the three lowest crime rate states in the country!

They will demand for more gun control, not because it is sound public policy that deters violent crime, but because it makes for their political advantage and persistent messaging.

Be it in Vermont or anywhere else, it is gangs and drugs that are a far too common factor in these violent crimes. It is inexcusable that our elected officials are not grasping the fact that the reality is many of the dangerous and deadly crimes are the result of gangs and drugs.

All over this nation we have illegal drugs pouring over our southern border. It is the sale of these drugs that feed crime and fund dangerous gangs. Illegal heroin, cocaine, and opioid drugs are surging over the southern border because of a complete collapse of border protection enforcement. Fentanyl is a poison manufactured in Mexico from Chinese made components.

The illegal drug overdose deaths in the U.S. reached a record of over 100,000 in 2021!

The interdiction of illegal drugs and those who market this chemical addition is the most viable means of deterring violent crime in Vermont, not more useless state gun control laws.

The 2021-2022, Vermont Legislature Biennium ended with fall of the final gavel on Thursday, May 12. After the elections of November, the newly elected legislators will arrive in Montpelier in early January.

There has been an extremely large number on Vermont incumbent elected officials not running for re-election. The legislative landscape will change drastically, with new office holders in most of the state-wide elected, legislative leadership positions, committee chair positions, committee members and the body of both the Vermont house and senate having markedly new members.

H.411, a bill on «Wanton Waste» has become law, after many years of kicking around the state house.

A summary of the bill, now Act 110, is directly below:
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/ACTS/ACT110/ACT110%20Act%20Summary.pdf>

S.201, a bill to establish «trapping best management practices» has become law as Act 159:
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/ACTS/ACT159/ACT159%20Act%20Summary.pdf>

S.281 started out as a ban on hunting coyotes with dogs and evolved into a bill that would establish rules similar to those existing for hunting black bears with dogs. A summary of the bill, now Act 165, is below:

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/ACTS/ACT165/ACT165%20Act%20Summary.pdf>

S.281, Act 165 made it legal to use suppressors on firearms for hunting in Vermont.

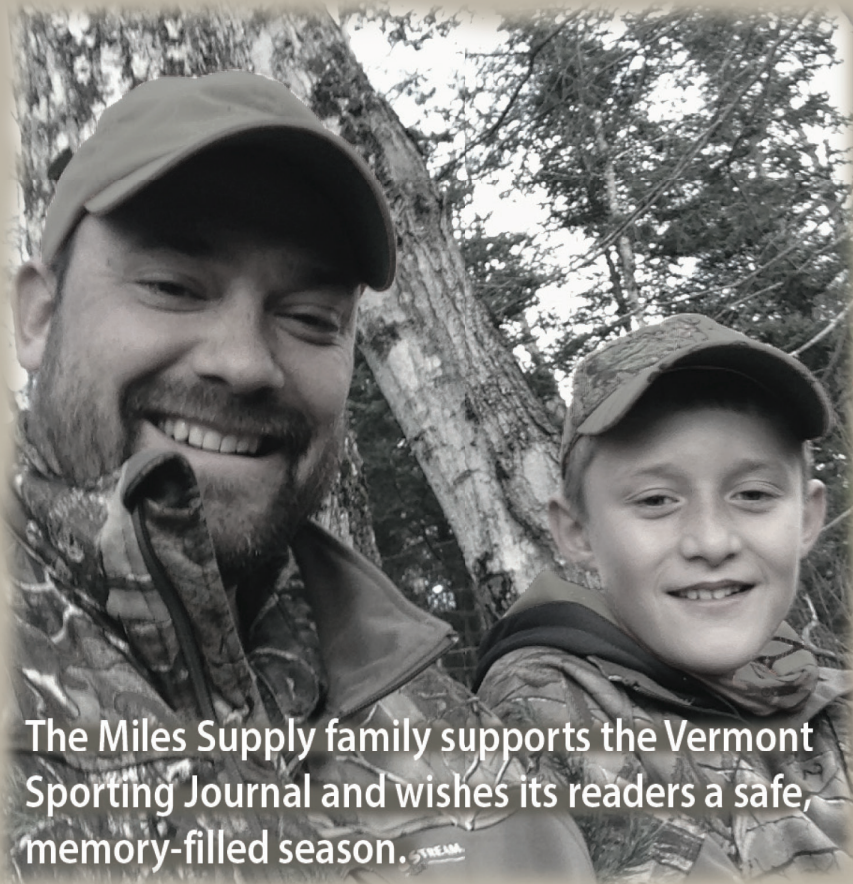
S.129, a bill to restructure the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Board from a body of experienced and knowledgeable representatives, one from each county, to work with the Fish & Wildlife Dept. to develop rules regulating hunting and fishing. S.129 would have drastically changed the Board and did not move forward.

Voting is a right and a duty. Voting and getting other freedom embracing folks to vote is best for our freedom.



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Passing It Forward

By Randy Barrows

It was many years ago that I was involved in hunting accident, A few friends out for an afternoon bunny hunt on a cold day. No bunnies were to be found so the next best target of the day was a ice covered ledge. A few rounds flew and the ice crashed down. Unknown by us was the fact that some of the rounds were ricochet it over near the other half of our group. Of course, they joined in and before we knew it one of the hunters was down with a bullet wound to the neck. The ER doc said he was lucky, a quarter inch over and he would have died on the spot.

Our local game warden at the time thought it would be a good idea to go to a hunter safety class and share our accident with other upcoming hunters, to let them know how easily crap happens when you are not playing by the rules.

These events happened 40 plus years ago but remain crystal clear in my old mind. I accepted the invite from Warden Donald Collins and have never looked back. I made myself a promise that I would teach hunter safety until the day I stopped breathing in hopes of teaching folks safe hunting practices.

The Hunter Safety program is run by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife department. Vermont has over 400 current instructors and once a year they hold an appreciation banquet to thank all of the volunteers. Due to covid there has not been a banquet for the last two years. This year though the VFG went over and above.

The mid-June setting for the banquet was in Waterbury at the fish and game club. What a beautiful facility. The weather was beautiful and a little over 100 volunteers enjoyed the day long events. Excellent food and great friends made the day a good one.

The reason for this story is important. For many years I taught the course alone. Slowly we started adding to the ranks and now have a team,10 t/- that teach multiple classes every year in Milton. At every banquet the FW folks hand out years of service certificates and the Milton team certainly shined this year. Our team consists of myself, Paul Conover, Adele Brady, Bill Brady, Dennis Briggs, Mike Menoski, Chris Stafford and Paul Trono and Mike Frisbee.

The awards consisted of:

Paul Conover
30 years of service and
Instructor of the year2021

Randy Barrows
40 years of service

Dennis Briggs
30 years of service and
high hours of 399 for the year 2021

Mike Frisbee
Mentor of the year.

I want to thank all these folks for all they do to make sure folks are safe in the woods every year. Never would I have thought way back then that 40 years later I would still be teaching. Thousands of folks have been through classes I have taught and when the big guy decides it is my time to go, I will go with a smile a mile wide knowing that just maybe my time was well spent.

Also a big thanks to Nicole, Allison, Nate, Olivia and the whole team at Fish and wildlife department for all you do, and again the Waterbury Fish and Game club for using your beautiful facility.

Protect Nesting Loons and Loon Chicks

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Few birding experiences rival hearing the haunting call of the loon or seeing them glide by in protected coves on a lake. However, for the birds' protection, the [Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department](#) is asking boaters and anglers to enjoy loons from a safe distance this summer.

“Loons were removed from Vermont’s endangered species list in 2005, but they face continued threats from human disturbance during the breeding season and ingestion of fishing gear,” said Doug Morin, wildlife biologist with Vermont Fish and Wildlife.

“Many areas where loons nest on Vermont’s lakes are surrounded by signs reminding people to give loons the space they need, but not all nesting areas are marked. We’re asking people to enjoy loons from a distance rather than approaching them, whether you are in a boat or on shore.”

Morin also reminds people to avoid lead fishing tackle. Every year Vermont loons die from lead poisoning after swallowing fishing tackle. Lead sinkers weighing one-half ounce or less are prohibited in Vermont, but larger tackle still has the capacity to slough off lead into the environment over time. Morin also recommends anglers to be careful to not attract loons to their bait and lures, and especially to not leave any fishing line behind as it can entangle and kill loons.

Eric Hanson oversees the [Loon Conservation Project](#) for the [Vermont Center for Ecostudies](#) in partnership with the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. He and his colleagues monitor Vermont’s loon population and have put out game cameras around loon nests to monitor the behavior of people around them. Hanson says most people are respectful of nesting loons and give them space, but people sometimes inadvertently harm loons without meaning to.

“Loon chicks can be difficult to see, so we ask motorboaters to note where loon families are and to avoid those areas,” said Hanson. “We also ask that motorboaters obey ‘no wake’ laws within 200 feet of shorelines because boat wakes can flood and destroy shoreline loon nests.”



Loons nesting along lake shorelines are susceptible to human disturbance, and their nests can be flooded and destroyed by motorboat wakes.

VTF&W photo by Tom Rogers

As Vermont’s loon population continues to increase and canoeing and kayaking continues to become more popular, there is greater potential for people to come into conflict with loons. Hanson reminds boaters to avoid pursuing loons in a canoe or kayak, especially loons with young.

“Occasionally a loon will be curious and approach people and if that happens, just enjoy it,” said Hanson. “However, loons that are constantly swimming away from you are stressed and may abandon their young if they feel they are in danger.”

Hanson also urges shoreline property owners to maintain appropriate habitat for loons, including a forested area along shorelines where loons can nest. Having shrubs and trees instead of lawns along shorelines also improves water quality which is essential for healthy lakes and loons.

Volunteers interested in monitoring loons for the Loon Conservation Project should contact Hanson at loon@vtcostudies.org. Volunteers can monitor lakes all summer long with a focus on lakes with loon pairs and nesting.

Volunteers can also survey one or two lakes on [Loon-watch Day](#), being held on July 16 this year, between 8 and 9 a.m. The goal is to survey all lakes greater than 20 acres at the same time, which provides a population count and checks on small lakes that are surveyed less often during the rest of year.

Quebec and Vermont Fishing Regulations on Lake Memphremagog Are Now Compatible

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department says the Quebec Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks (Quebec Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs) has announced that its fishing regulations for Lake Memphremagog now match Vermont's fishing regulations on the lake.

Prior to the recent regulation change, Quebec anglers were allowed to harvest 30 salmonids (trout and salmon) per person per day from Memphremagog. The new regulations match Vermont regulations which allow a cumulative harvest of 2 trout or salmon in any combination of brook trout, brown trout, lake trout, rainbow trout or landlocked Atlantic salmon.

“This regulation change should improve the fishery in the tributary rivers of Lake Memphremagog where the adult fish return to spawn,” said Vermont Fish and Wildlife fisheries biologist Pete Emerson. “The Barton, Black and Willoughby River steelhead rainbow trout spring spawning runs and the Clyde River landlocked Atlantic salmon runs in both spring (feeding) and autumn (spawning) should respond positively following the harvest limit in Quebec.”

Fish with a Warden Sessions Offered

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release



Trying to figure out Vermont fishing regulations? Wondering what kinds of fish are in a lake? Looking for new fishing tips? The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is offering [“Fish with a Warden” sessions](#) to help with questions like these.

“We know many anglers have questions they would like to ask a warden, and we know many of our wardens also

like to go fishing,” said Education Specialist Corey Hart, “so our Vermont State Game Wardens have teamed up with Forests, Parks and Recreation staff to offer Fish with a Warden sessions at State Parks across Vermont this summer.

Hart says the purpose of the sessions is to provide an opportunity for the public to go fishing with Fish and Wildlife Department personnel and have their questions answered. These programs are the perfect steppingstone for new anglers that would benefit from a mentored fishing outing before heading out and fishing on their own.

The Fish with a Warden sessions will last an hour or more. Participants need to bring their own fishing equipment. The state park day use fee has been waived for the duration of the program for participants that have registered in advance.

A list of dates, times and locations for the sessions and pre-registration for up to 30 people for each session are available at this link on Fish and Wildlife's website: <https://www.register-ed.com/programs/vermont/256-let-s-go-fishing> and in the list of [Upcoming Events](#) on the right side of the home page.

Turtles on the Roadway Need Your Help

Drivers should be alert, especially near ponds and wetlands

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release



Turtle nesting activity peaks between late May and early June, and drivers are urged to keep an eye out for turtles on the road – especially when driving near ponds and wetlands.

“When you spot a turtle in the road, you may be able to help it across. First be sure you’re in a safe spot to stop and get out of your car, as human safety comes first,” said Groff. “If you’re going to move a turtle off the road, always move it in the direction it was traveling. They know where they’re going.”

Most turtles can be picked up and carried across the road. However, if the turtle has no colorful lines, spots, or other markings, it is probably a snapping turtle, so people

Turtles are out digging their nests and may be on the shoulders of roads. Drivers are urged to keep an eye out for them.

VTF&W photo by Luke Groff

Vermont’s turtles will be on the move this spring, and the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is asking for the public’s help in keeping them safe. Female turtles will be looking for places to deposit their eggs, sometimes choosing to lay them along the shoulders of roads, which can bring them into the path of motor vehicles.

“Turtles often move across roads as they search for a nest site,” said Luke Groff, biologist for the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. “They are usually slow-moving animals, so they have a tough time making it safely across the road. Turtles grow slowly and live a long time, so losing a mature breeding female may be a huge loss to a turtle population.”



should stay alert to avoid being bitten. Snapping turtles’ necks are long. Instead of picking up the snapper, try pushing the turtle across the road with a shovel or pulling it across the road on a car floor mat.

Trap Line Talk

By Randy Barrows

Happy summer to all. The weather has been, well horrible. I hate heat. 90 plus degrees and high humidity make me a prisoner of my own home. The only thing saving me is every day that passes means we are one day closer to fall, my favorite time of year.

Fur Harvesters auction just ended and as of this writing they have not listed any of the prices. Usually when that happens it is not good news. We were all warned that would be the case this year. Those of us that don't do it for the money do not care regardless.

The last few years I have trapped only on my own property. I own 25 acres right on the edge of town. I would have never thought that about every critter on earth occupies this small area. I put trail cameras out all got photos of coyote, fox, fisher, coon, skunk, bobcat. When I bought my land, it was all mature growth and did nothing for wildlife. I contacted the county Forrester who did a walk through and prescribed a timber harvest that would be most beneficial to small game.

I love to hunt partridge, woodcock, bunnies and squirrels, and turkeys. I even put in a small pond for their water supply. I was shocked at the trail cam pictures to learn every egg eating varmint was competing against me for the small game. So, I trap for the species above hoping I can save some small game for my belly.

tion after a kamikaze one blew through two windows on my three-season porch last fall. He tasted fine but the price of the windows was expensive.

I have a pretty good handle on the critters that compete against me. I understand I will never rid my woods of the nest robbers but keeping them in check will help. I got very little for the fur I harvested by I remind my self that I made zero dollars deer hunting last year!! It's a fact I made zero dollars hunting everything I hunted last year!!!!!!

Monpeculier was somewhat not good for trapper's last season. They antis started with a total ban on trapping. WE got out of it with a plan to re-visit best management practices. Ten years ago, a huge study was conducted that resulted in a management advisement one what traps to use on what critters we trap. Well know not to use #4 coil 4 spring traps to trap fox and muskrat. Kind of a no brainer for obvious reasons. I guess my question is has anything changed in the last 10 years?? Every year these freaks attack our way of life and have no knowledge of trapping, and when invited refuse to go. It would be hard to promote their wrong info once they learned the truth.

Secondly, you can not hunt coyotes with dogs until the F&W department sets up some rules to follow.

Third, if you kill it you have to utilize it. Not a problem for most of us. But to show how lame they are they added crow to the list. The even sadder part is the knit wits sitting on the Natural Resources and energy commission have NEVER, NOT ONE OF THEM ever trapped, hunted coyotes with hounds , or eaten crow before. Pathetic is the word that comes to mind. How can this group make up laws we need to follow with no knowledge of the sport?

I better stop here. If this bothers you at all I am sorry. If we sit back and let them go they will chip away at our rights every year. If you choose to sit on your hands and let someone else decide our future, go for it. Please do not whine to me when it happens.

WRITERS WANTED



Have you always wanted to write for an outdoor publication? Now is your chance.

Contact
vermontsportingjournal@gmail.com

There is no better sound than to lie in bed at daybreak and listen to a partridge drum on the roost. Although I may have to re-think the partridge popula-

Vermont Turkey Brood Survey Starts July 1

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release



Starting July 1, VT Fish & Wildlife is asking people who see wild turkey broods during the month to provide information about their sightings via a survey on the department's website.

VTF&W photo by John Hall

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is seeking the public's help with monitoring wild turkeys.

Since 2007, the department has run an annual online survey for reporting turkey broods in August. Beginning in 2021, the survey was expanded to include the month of July. The use of "citizen scientists" in this way facilitates the department's ability to collect important turkey population and productivity data from all corners of the state.

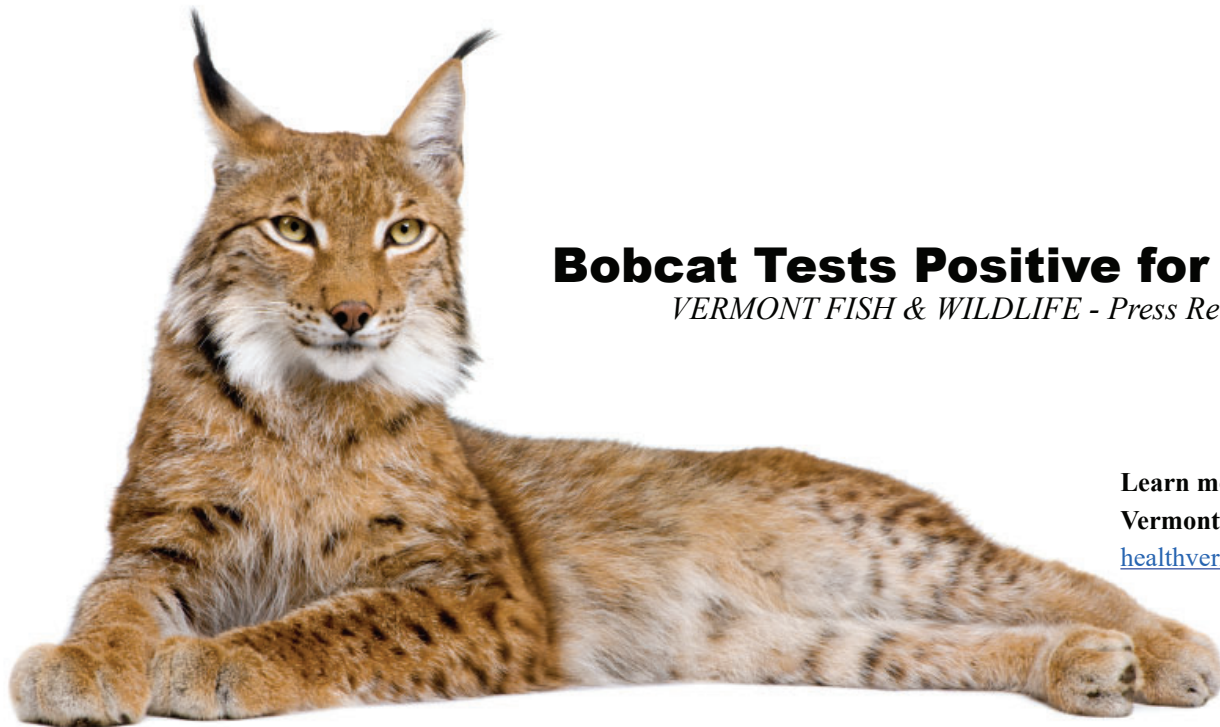
If you see a flock of turkeys in Vermont during July and August, the department asks you to go to the turkey brood survey on its website (www.vtfishandwildlife.com) and report your observations including where and when you observed the turkeys along with the number of adult and young turkeys, or poults you observed. The value of the data collected from this survey is wholly dependent on the number of people who participate.

"Information gathered from this survey helps us monitor long-term trends in the productivity of Vermont's wild turkey population," said Vermont Fish and Wildlife's turkey biologist Chris Bernier. "It also helps us assess the impacts of spring weather on the survival of poults and adult turkeys which is an important consideration in the management of turkeys."

"We monitor and manage wild turkey numbers annually in order to maintain a healthy, abundant and sustainable population of these iconic and ecologically significant birds throughout the state," added Bernier. "Beyond providing Vermonters with a local source of protein and an enduring connection to their environment, turkey hunting is the principal mechanism for managing Vermont's turkey population. Please help us scientifically manage the turkey population by reporting your Vermont turkey sightings during July and August."



"We moved from an August-only survey to a July and August survey last year in order to bring our survey protocol into compliance with the regional protocol. One of the biggest benefits of this survey is being able to compare productivity trends across turkey range and the only way we can do this effectively is if all the Northeast states collect these data in the same way."



Bobcat Tests Positive for Rabies

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Learn more about rabies in Vermont:

healthvermont.gov/rabies

The Vermont Departments of Fish and Wildlife and Health report the bobcat that bit a man in Windsor last Friday has tested positive for rabies. The individual is receiving post-exposure medical treatment, which, when given promptly, is 100 percent effective at preventing rabies.

Vermont State Game Wardens euthanized the bobcat and transported it to the Department of Health Laboratory to be tested for rabies.

“I thank our wardens and officers from the Windsor Police Department who responded quickly and professionally to resolve the problem before more people could be bitten,” said Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Christopher Herrick.

Rabies is a viral disease of mammals most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. The rabies virus infects the central nervous system, ultimately causing disease in the brain and death. The virus is transmitted only when it is introduced into a bite or scratch wound, open cuts on the skin, or onto mucous membranes like the mouth and eyes.

Cases of rabies are reported annually from across the state in a variety of mammals, most commonly in raccoons, skunks, bats, and foxes. This is the first bobcat to test positive for rabies in 2022. One tested positive in 2021.

Vermonters are reminded to make sure their animals are vaccinated against rabies, and Commissioner Herrick also urged people to not touch or pick up wild or stray animals – including baby animals – or to try to make them into pets. “Contact with wild or stray animals – no matter how cute and harmless they may appear – can put you or your family at risk,” Herrick said. “It is not always apparent from looking at it that an animal has rabies, but any animal that is acting strangely or aggressively should be avoided and reported.”

People are urged to call the Vermont Rabies Hotline for information about rabies, or to report any animal which may be sick with the disease at 1-800-4-RABIES (1-800-472-2437).



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News Release

Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge

29 Tabor Rd., Swanton, VT 05488-8159
802/868-4781 Fax: 802/868-2379
<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/missisquoi/>

FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE June 23, 2022

Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge
JUNIOR WATERFOWL HUNTER TRAINING PROGRAM
SATURDAY, AUGUST 20, 2022 (8:00am – 4:30pm)
Sportsman's Club of Franklin County

The Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge Junior Waterfowl Hunter Training Program is being offered to young hunters who want to learn more about the sport of waterfowl hunting and experience a high quality waterfowl hunt. The program is offered to youngsters 12 to 17 years of age who have an adult waterfowl hunter to serve as a mentor.

The Junior Waterfowl Hunter Training Program is a joint educational effort of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl, the Sportsman's Club of Franklin County and volunteers to teach young hunters about waterfowl hunting. The program focuses on the knowledge and skills necessary to become responsible, respected individuals who strive to learn all they can about waterfowl and to become knowledgeable in firearms safety, hunter ethics and wildlife conservation.

Mentors and youths who would like to participate in this year's program must pre-register with the Refuge by Friday, August 5. Participation in the program will be limited to 30 enrollees.

All mentors and young hunters must attend the one-day training session on Saturday, August 20, with instruction beginning at 8:00 AM at the Franklin County Sportsman's Club on Route 36 (Maquam Shore Road) in St. Albans. The training session will be held rain or shine, so participants should dress appropriately. All youth participants should bring the shotgun they intend to use for hunting to the training for a patterning session.

Junior Hunters and their mentors, once they complete the training, are awarded exclusive use of several premier hunting areas at Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge for the first four weekends of the waterfowl hunting season. Juniors are only permitted to shoot for the first two weekends, mentors will be permitted to shoot alongside their juniors the last two weekends of the junior hunt. Blind sites and hunting dates for the Jr. Hunters are determined by a lottery conducted at the annual training session.

To register for this year's program, call refuge headquarters at 802-868-4781. Please include the mentor's name and youth's name and age, address and telephone number.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov

Get the Funk Out of Here!!!

By Brett Ladeau

As a semi-professional procrastinator I usually need a gentle reminder regarding an article for the upcoming Vermont Sporting Journal from John Pellegrini, but for some reason, this month it took two gentle reminders and still some patience after that. Probably because of the premise of this article. A little post season turkey funk. I was struggling with my creativity and trying to come up with an article idea.

By all counts I had a great turkey season. I started April 9, 2022, in Virginia with my good friend Jeff Hoke, and ended it on June 4, 2022, in Maine, also hunting with Jeff. I ended up hunting in 9 states and traveled thousands of miles. Spent a lot of days hunting with friends, family, and some new hunters. We had varied levels of success in Iowa, Nebraska, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, and Maine. In fact, the last hunt in Maine was about as good as it could get for an early June day. Jeff and I started in two separate locations and both worked birds, but they weren't really interested in what we were offering. We finished our hunt with Tim Cote around noon and saw a few but the weather and turkeys weren't really cooperative. After we parted ways with Tim, Jeff and I checked a few areas we had hunted in past years. We saw lone hens, hens with poults, but no gobblers anywhere. We were checking a few new areas when I looked at onX and I saw a waypoint I had added many years before. Since we were close, I suggested we go take a look. We both recognized the spot from prior hunts. However, this year it was a Hunt by Permission only property. We drove by the old farm house and checked an area. My box call yelping was immediately answered by distant gobble. After Jeff and I gave each other permission to hunt we went after the gobbling bird. Not really, we actually returned to the farm and gained permission to hunt the property. We returned to the spot where we had the bird respond. We walked into the woods and called again to relocate the turkey. Again, he responded immediately, only this time MUCH closer. He answered every call with a thunderous gobble and closed the distance quickly. I could see him approaching through the thick cover but was having a hard time finding him in my sight picture. I tried some subtle adjustments but it was too late. He spotted me and

made a quick U-turn and after a desperation shot attempt, he removed himself from my life as quickly as he had introduced himself. Just like that the 2022 turkey season was over.

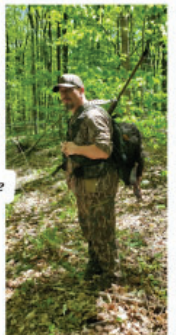
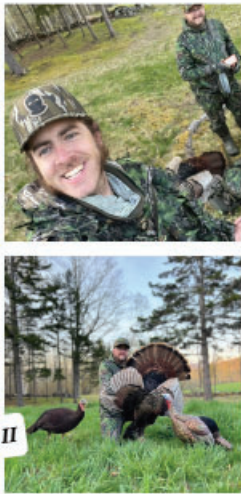
The first few days after turkey season are usually good. I finally take some time to reflect on the entire season and reminisce about hunts with everyone I shared a tree with. After that, I seem to fall into a funk, almost depressed feeling. It typically takes several weeks for me to fully recover and get back to a "normal" life. I wondered if I was the only one that struggled with these post turkey season feelings and emotions.

I recently made a Facebook and Instagram post asking about 4000 of my closest friends if I was the only one that had those types of feelings after turkey season ends. To my surprise, I received nearly 100 responses. The overwhelming majority of people seemed to share some type of feeling after turkey season. I had asked if "post turkey season depression" was real? If so, what do you do to combat it?

Some of my friends helped me rethink my terminology a little. Tenley Skolfield questions whether it was depression or despair? I actually like despair better than depression. It does seem to a more accurate descriptor. However, I did have several friends agree with the term "depression".

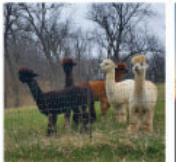
Ralph Martone concurs, and says he takes it seriously. He combats it by not sleeping in. He sets his alarm for the same time he was getting up at the end of the season. He slowly, every few days, adds 15 minutes more sleep. He also continues to get in the field with a camera instead of a gun. He's an outdoor writer and photographer by trade, so he has a little extra motivation. He enjoys getting a great photo of a hen with her poults but does acknowledge a few great photos of a gobbler can bring on another bout of post season depression. He feels it's worth the risk for a top-notch photo.

My friend from Maryland, Ryan VanNosdeln calls it a yearning for the connection with nature. He says all of



Vermont Part 1

New Hampshire





it's a bummer in spades....."

Glenn Motz says, "It sure is real Brett, I struggle a month or two. Helps with I see hens with poults though."

Carter Heath, our local Regional Director for the National Wild Turkey Federation concurs with Glenn. He told me that it helps him seeing healthy hens with solid broods. Carter says, "Just knowing that the next generation is on the landscape

his senses get engaged when he is hunting turkey. "You hear the gobbles, taste the rubber from the call, smell the dirt and leaves, see a beautiful sunrise, and with any luck, feel the recoil.

A call maker from Georgia, Dean Redbeard Mundhenke says, "Yes it's real. I buy stuff like fishing lures, knives to end the depression."

James Aldrich, a person I have known since he was in elementary school, says, "Turkey season is my escape from reality. For one whole month my focus is on that next turkey." He also spends many hours with his friends, and sometime turkey season is the only time he gets with them.

Another friend, Terry Smith, from Canadian Wild Turkey Federation (CWTF) says, "Try not hunting turkey from May 209 til April 25, 2022. It wasn't easy." The US/ Canadian border had been shut down due to Covid. He got his fix through watching social media posts from some of us in the United States. He further states, "There's nothing that can replace spring turkey hunting, it's in my blood and it is what it is."

Brett Bowes, from Virginia, says he's call it "disappointment" instead of depression. Mark Green, from Vermont, calls it "withdrawal".

Mike Battey, a well-known turkey call making innovator, says, "On what your asking about only happens to dyed in the wool..... Turkey Hunters. Those who's favorite true Passion is Hunting Turkeys and or its a subject or includes the subject 365 days a year. Yes. Heck, even if I miss one or a hunt gets buggered up for any reason.....

cheers me up."

Sandy Brady, my North Carolina friend, true inspiration, and one of the nicest people I have ever met, says, "I am ready for it to go out, and anticipating the next season the next day." Sandy has a way of making people feel special no matter how long he has known you. I aspire to be more like Sandy every day.

A few people indicate that they don't really feel any post season funk. They have other passions they can just jump into. Jeff Hoke is one of those. He hunts year-round so once turkey season ends, he is on to the next species.

Before I conclude the article, I'd like to thank everyone that responded. I read everyone's response and got something out of all of them. I appreciate all you for taking time to respond.

I guess my biggest take away is that we all process things differently. While the bulk of my friends indicated that they felt some kind of way about the season ending, some were just able to press on.

Call it post turkey season funk (PTSF), post turkey season blues (PTSB), or despair, disappointment, withdrawal, yearning, or any other term, it definitely seems real for many of us. We all combat it in different ways. Some just move on, others plant food plots, fish, hunt something else, and other can just stop "cold turkey". I guess there is no 100 percent answer. Just know that if you have a funk after turkey season, know you are not alone.

To read all of the comments checkout my Facebook and Instagram Post from July 1, 2022.

Calling Turkeys For Competition

The alarm goes off at 3:30 am. You spring out of bed with excitement and anticipation of what's to become of the day. Gather up gear, turkey calls etc. but this is no hunt you're going on.

When I was twelve, Before I ever turkey hunted my older brother had some buddies that were into it. One day while I was hanging around being a little brother, they had some diaphragm calls and were practicing their calling. I was immediately enthralled with the fact that this was not only hunting, but you were actually talking to the critter!!!

After talking with my dad about this cool new hunt that was happening, (this was 1978 and turkeys were pretty new to the area) he could see my interest was piqued. That spring, about a month before the turkey season. There was a turkey hunting seminar at one on of the local high schools and dad brought me. I'll never forget it. The speaker was a

man named Wayne Bailey. I've since found out he was instrumental in some of the first ever trap and transfer of wild turkeys in West Virginia.

They gave away some door prizes and I won my very first diaphragm call. I remember making yelps on it before we were backing in the driveway.

Fast forward 15 years to 1992. I'm now approaching 30 and the turkeys have been thumping me pretty hard for years. Now I hear about this turkey calling contest. People had been telling me I sounded like a turkey so I gave it a shot. I entered the amateur division and finished third.

This is now my thirtieth-year contest calling. The people I've met and the friends I've made have made it all worth it. I've spent thousands of dollars on calls and travel and entry fees and I don't want a dime of it back.

So after sometimes a four hour plus drive, (that's kind of a short stint) you arrive at the venue, sign up for whatever divisions you want to call in, pay your entry fee and look at the call lists.

The format goes like this. Callers in each division draw numbers for calling positions. Whoever draws number one immediately draws another number. Caller number one in each division is for the judges to get an ear (for lack of a better word) for what this division has to offer. Caller number one's score is thrown out.

Most contests consist of five judges that are concealed behind a curtain so that they cannot see the competitors and judge only the sound of the calling. Competitors are referred to by the emcee only by their numbers.

In each division callers are usually asked to make four of the common calls that turkeys make. A common call list might look like this.

Open division
Plain yelp of the hen
Kee kee run
Cluck and purr
Fly down cackle

Your number is called and you step to the stage or stage area. As you're asked each call, there's a scenario, a hen, a bird you've listened to and you visualize her in your head. You give it everything you got. Trying to be as realistic as you can.

Of the five scores given, the highest and lowest are thrown out and the remaining three are added to give you your final score.

I've come out on top of these things and I've finished dead last. I've won titles in five northeastern states and by winning, I've been invited and competed in the NWTF's grand national calling contest. The feelings while you're up there, the adrenaline really compares to having an old gobbler responding and when they hand you that first place trophy. It's just like slingin him over your shoulder.

So, if you enjoy running turkey calls, and can't seem to shake that turkey fever. Try a calling contest. Just go to nwtf.org and click on the events page to possibly find your calling.

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



The author competing in the Grand national calling contest.