

Vermont Sporting Journal

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**Jesse Scott with
her black bear**

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Letter on Antis

by Mike Covey, Executive Director, Vermont Traditions Coalition

I want to discuss the root cause of the recent attacks on hunters in Vermont. This type of violence against community members who hunt is a direct result of the way anti-hunting groups in the state have chosen to vilify their neighbors who hunt. This is the natural result of seven years of propaganda and misinformation, and it is entirely predictable.

With terms like sadist, psychopath and abuser used to describe community members, it is no wonder that such an event has now occurred twice. The surprise, perhaps, is that it took so long. This event and last year's attack on another member of the community should send a message to everyone associated with these groups even peripherally that it is time to step back and reevaluate their support.

The folks who were attacked were victims, but the perpetrators of the recent attacks were also victims. Victims of an ongoing misinformation campaign that led them to make conscious decisions to harm fellow citizens- neighbors who were engaged in lawful activities and were harming nobody.

This event further highlights the need for enhanced penalties to be levied against individuals who choose to harass community members who engage in these outdoor pursuits. We need better deterrents to this type of unwarranted violence.

The facts support the value of hunting as it is carried out across the landscape of our state. Hunters are the single greatest contributor to the security of our wildlife through their financial and on-the-ground support of quality habitat and stewardship, and the value of the locally sourced, naturally occurring organic food that is represented by hunted game cannot be overstated. It is undeniable to anyone who can set aside their personal bias and take a look at the whole picture.

This is why those opposed to hunting feel such a desperate need to control the narrative — they use emotional appeals to cloud people's judgment and drive folks down a path, and they know that if they lose that control, they lose the audience. Meanwhile, people on both "sides" are left dealing with the anxiety created by this manufactured conflict.

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Bear Conflicts are Escalating in Vermont, Fish & Wildlife Department Urges Proactive Coexistence Steps

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

High-risk bear conflicts such as home and vehicle entries are being reported more frequently this summer than in previous years, according to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.

“Vermont’s black bears are learning to connect humans and food, and becoming bolder,” said wildlife biologist and Black Bear Project leader Jaclyn Comeau. “The number one cause of this dangerous, escalating behavior is Vermonters failing to secure food sources that attract bears. This failure is putting people and bears in danger.”



A black bear caught on security camera entering a garage to access food stored in a closed refrigerator ~ VTF&W photo

Bear incident reports to the department have been on the rise for a decade, from 135 reports in 2011 to 650 in 2021. This year, over 700 reports have already been submitted.

year, we receive just two or three reports of bears breaking into homes. This summer, we are hearing of two to three attempted or successful home entries per week.”

“We are receiving more bear incident reports, and more concerningly we are also receiving more reports of truly high-risk behavior by bears,” said Comeau. “In a typical

The department urges individuals, towns, and businesses to be proactive in keeping bears from seeking food near people. Securing garbage, taking down bird feeders, locking vehicles and making sure not to store food in vehicles, composting properly, and protecting backyard livestock with an electric fence are necessary.



Damage to a building exterior caused by a bear that became habituated to a birdfeeder on the property. ~ VTF&W photo

“Coexisting with our healthy bear population requires all Vermonters to remove potential sources of conflict before problems start,” said Comeau. “Preventing a conflict is much easier than resolving an ongoing conflict and is the safest option for both bears and people. Once a bear has learned truly high-risk behaviors like home entry, lethal control may be needed to protect human safety. No one wants to have to resort to that measure.”

Vermont's Resident Canada Goose Season, Sept. 1-25

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release



Vermont's resident Canada goose hunting season will be held September 1 through September 25 to help control Vermont's resident Canada goose population prior to the arrival of Canada geese migrating south from Canada according to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.

The season will be open statewide with a daily bag limit of five Canada geese in the Connecticut River Zone and eight in the rest of Vermont.

A second Canada goose hunting season for resident and migrant birds will be held October 15-November 13 with a daily bag limit of one Canada goose in the Lake Champlain Zone and Interior Vermont Zone.

In the Connecticut River Zone, the second Canada goose season will be October 4-November 6, and November 23-December 18 with a daily bag limit of two Canada geese.

New this year is a late Canada goose season targeting resident birds. Within the Lake Champlain and Interior zones, the season will be held from December 1 to January 21, with a five-bird daily bag limit. The season will run December 19 to January 21 in the Connecticut River zone and applies only to the lands of the zone, not Connecticut River waters.

A hunting license is required, and a waterfowl hunter 16 or older must carry current federal and Vermont duck stamps. [Federal stamps](#) are sold at post offices,

federal refuges and on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website <https://www.fws.gov/birds/get-involved/duck-stamp.php>. Vermont duck stamps can be added to your hunting license on Vermont Fish & Wildlife's website (www.vtfishandwildlife.com) and through license agents. The hunter must sign the federal duck stamp.

All migratory game bird hunters must also be registered with the Harvest Information Program (H.I.P.). This can be done on Vermont Fish and Wildlife's website or by calling toll-free 1-877-306-7091. After providing some basic information, you will receive your annual H.I.P. registration number, which you then need to record on your hunting license.

A printable copy of [migratory bird hunting regulations](#) can be downloaded from the Vermont Fish and Wildlife website under "Hunt" – "Waterfowl." A printed version will also be available from license agents and post offices.



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Vermont's Hunting Season for Gray Squirrels Opens September 1

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release



The hunting season for gray squirrels begins Thursday, September 1. The season runs through Saturday, December 31, according to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.

“Vermont has a healthy population of gray squirrels, concentrated in southern Vermont and the Champlain Valley,” said Hunter Education Coordinator Nicole Meier. “They’re a fantastic small game species for new hunters to learn the basics of reading the landscape, making a safe and ethical shot and cooking wild game.”

In Vermont, gray squirrels are often hunted with a .22 rifle, a shotgun or archery equipment. The department recommends that squirrel hunters wear a blaze orange vest or hat anytime they are afield.

The best habitat for squirrel hunting is stands of nut-bearing trees like oak, hickory and beech. Hunters can harvest four gray squirrels per day and can have up to eight squirrels in their possession—whether in their game bag or in their freezer—at a time.

“Gray squirrels are incredibly tasty—many would say better than rabbit,” said Meier. “You can find great gray squirrel recipes in classic cookbooks, trendy culinary magazines, and of course anywhere that publishes wild food recipes.”

Hunters can pursue one of Vermont's tastiest and most abundant small game species—the gray squirrel—anywhere stands of nut-bearing trees are found.

~ VTF&W Photo

Annual Rabies Bait Drop Set to Begin

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Distribution of baited rabies vaccine for wildlife to take place August 5 – 13

The annual Rabies Bait Drop is scheduled to begin on August 5, 2022. The week-long bait drop is part of a nationally coordinated effort between the State of Vermont and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services to prevent the spread of rabies – a fatal disease.

Rabies vaccine — in the form of a sweet-smelling oral bait that is attractive to raccoons and skunks — will be dropped in rural areas of Vermont from low-flying aircraft and placed by hand in residential centers. Pilots are able to control the release of bait in order to avoid residential areas. When an animal bites into the bait, it takes in the oral vaccine and will develop immunity to rabies. Approximately 450,000 quarter-sized blister packs containing rabies vaccine will be distributed in nearly 100 Vermont communities across 8 counties.

State Epidemiologist Patsy Kelso with the Department of Health said the annual bait drop represents the best in state and federal cooperation. “This is public health at work,” said Kelso. “The bait drop is an important part of our work to curb the risk of rabies in animals and humans. We value this years-long partnership with the Fish and Wildlife Department and USDA Wildlife Services in protecting the health of Vermonters.”

Rabies is a deadly viral disease of the brain that infects mammals. Rabies is most often seen in raccoons, skunks, foxes and bats, but unvaccinated pets and livestock can also get the disease. The virus is spread primarily through the bite of an infected animal. If a rabies exposure is left untreated, the disease is almost always fatal in humans and animals. However, treatment is

100% effective when given soon after a person is bitten by a rabid animal.

The bait packs are not poisonous and are not harmful to people, pets or wildlife. “You can’t get rabies from the bait,” said Kelso, “but if you find a bait pack, please don’t touch it unless necessary. Leave the bait undisturbed so it can be eaten by wild animals.”

If the bait must be moved, use gloves or a plastic bag. If your pet eats a bait, or if a child brings one home, let officials know by calling the Vermont Rabies Hotline at 1-800-4-RABIES (1-800-472-2437) or call the toll-free number printed on the bait.



Rabies vaccine in the form of a sweet-smelling oral bait that is attractive to raccoons and skunks.

So far this year, fifteen animals in Vermont have tested positive for rabies, four of which have been raccoons.

Wildlife officials reminded Vermonters to leave wildlife alone and enjoy them from a safe distance. “While rabid animals may change their normal behavior, you really can’t tell whether an animal has rabies simply by looking at it,” said USDA Wildlife Biologist Owen Montgomery. “People should not touch or pick up wild animals or strays – even baby animals that may appear abandoned. They most likely are not.” Montgomery also encouraged people to be sure pets and other domesticated or farm animals are up to date on rabies shots as appropriate.

If you suspect an animal may have rabies, call the Rabies Hotline: 1-800-4-RABIES (1-800-472-2437) or 1-802-223-8697

Learn more about rabies in Vermont at: healthvermont.gov/rabies

New Warden Service Division Director Announced

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release



*Game Warden Major Justin Stedman will be promoted to Colonel on September 24, succeeding Colonel Jason Batchelder as the new Warden Service Division Director.
~ VTF&W Photo*

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department announced on Monday that Major Justin Stedman will become the new Director of the Warden Service Division.

Stedman, an 18-year veteran of the Warden Service, will be promoted to Colonel on September 24. He will succeed Colonel Jason Batchelder, who has led the Warden Service since 2014.

with the Castleton and Montpelier Police Departments and the United States Coast Guard Reserve. With the Coast Guard, he was deployed on Homeland Security assignments following the September 11 attacks. Stedman is also a graduate of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Leadership and Management Program and the prestigious National Conservation Law Enforcement Leadership Academy.

“In his nearly two decades at the department, Major Stedman has been a driving force in the Warden Service’s most impactful partnerships with our biologists, educators, and leadership to safeguard Vermont’s natural resources for every citizen of this state,” said Commissioner Christopher Herrick. “The Warden Service could not be in better hands looking ahead.”

Stedman is a resident of Rutland County, where he enjoys fishing, hunting, boating and horseback riding with his family.

“Leadership transitions can bring uncertainty in a law enforcement agency, but in Justin’s case this promotion will only strengthen the Warden Service’s culture and unity with the Fish and Wildlife Department as a whole,” said Batchelder. “Leaving the Warden Service in Justin’s capable hands fills me with great pride and anticipation for the future.”

Stedman joined the Warden Service in 2004. After training Stedman was assigned as the District Game Warden serving Chittenden County’s Burlington District, where he was promoted to Senior Game Warden. He later served as Senior Game Warden in Rutland County’s Poultney District, where he was promoted to Central District Lieutenant. Most recently Stedman was promoted to Major in 2020.

Before joining the Warden Service, Stedman served

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Seeing the Trees and Through the Forest

by Brad Roy

One foot in front of the other, step by step I prowl through the dense underbrush of a thick patch of Vermont woodland. The sun high in the sky, beads of sweat accompanying my brow, and dark, wet stains adorning my armpits. The air is noticeably warm and thick for a late-summer-early-fall kind of day. As I walk, I begin to initiate an annual ritual of mine, a ritual that occurs each year as surely as a warm glove is to be dropped directly in the cold wet snow while baiting tip ups at the beginning of a long day spent ice fishing. Yes, I begin to beat myself up over my procrastination in finally getting out in the woods to prepare my stands for the upcoming hunting season. With each step uphill in the summer heat, I am reminded of my mistake just the same as one would be each time they adorned that cold, soggy glove for the rest of the day on the ice.

Each year brings with it the new glowing promise of finally being a successful entrepreneur in my elevated platform endeavors. After a long, dark winter hibernating near the embrace of the woodstove, the spring snowmelt brings with it yet again a fresh opportunity to beat the heat, prep all my gear early, and make sure my treestands are hung snugly in the most prime locations. After all; trimming brush, clearing shooting lanes, and hoisting hundred-sum-odd pound treestands high into the canopies of my chosen living ladders to the whitetail heavens is a task much easier performed before the snowblower is summarized and the lawnmower blades are sharpened. Thinking to

myself as I persist forward towards a watering hole I've had my mind on for a stand location since late last winter, "How incredible would it be to have an entire summer free from the guilt of not having my stands prepared for a change?" But alas, here we go again. The summer has all but come and gone, the velvet is falling from my target species now mature and pronounced antlers, and I once again still haven't prepared a thing for the upcoming season.

I take pause to catch my breath, and being the millennial I am, I must also pull out my cell phone to attend to the persistent buzzing I've felt in my pocket during my arduous hike in. I find multiple notifications from my new cellular trail camera, and when I unlock the screen, I am struck by the portraits of four deer quaintly browsing in my backyard at this very moment. I put the phone back in my pocket quickly and take a long drink of water. During this moment of rest, I contemplate why I even hunt in the woods in the first place rather than my own back yard. I then begin to calculate the ballistics of a 30-06 rifle and compare them with the depth of the pipes that lay within my mound septic system (which those deer were proudly snacking in front of). I conclude it may suffice as a pretty good back stop should the need ever arise...

My mind quickly turns back to the woods as the Harley Davidson roar of a partridge erupts from just a few feet ahead of me at the base of a girthy spruce tree. I am certain this bird was not startled by my presence, but much

more likely sick of waiting for me to recognize him as I stared at pictures of animals currently elsewhere. I watch him fly away and suddenly disappear into a dense thicket. I continue on meandering through the brush still further, finally approaching the location I've had on my mind for quite some time now.

Yes, this is quite the little honey hole that I am absolutely certain will produce for me this year. As a matter of fact, I cannot seem to recall a time in my adult life where I was ever so certain that the whitetails would all but come sprinting out of the woods to me. Except for maybe last year when I was prepping an ultimately unsuccessful stand site. "But this year will most definitely be different," I think aloud, possibly trying to convince myself that is the truth. I unslung my pack, set down the treestand, ladder, and various other accoutrements needed for its proper installation, and then begin the process of selecting the right tree.

For those whose feet rarely leave the cool soil of the forest floor, the process of selecting a tree from which to hang a stand may seem extremely daunting. But, for those who prefer to hunt from an aerial perch and are well-seasoned in the matter I can assure you it's much worse. The selection of a stand site brings with it a level of overthinking typically only rivaled by the jitters accompany a first date. Overthinking is the one personality trait that binds us sportsman together eternally, for we all can relate to lying awake in bed, silently working

on a master plan to concur our quarry the following morning. We overthink everything, from camouflage to scent use, moon phase to rut progression, even boxers or briefs, and it seems those endless hours on stand ultimately affords sportsman the opportunity to critically think about all kinds of non-critical stuff. To begin the process of overcomplicating tree-stand preparations; all decisions must be back-calculated beginning from the location you predict you will see your game animal of choice appear during your watch. The prediction

of this location has an ultimate success rate of approximately 0.37%, but nonetheless is a critical component of the stand preparation equation. Once determined, it is imperative that you stand in said location and begin to act like a deer. Getting down to their level, looking around at entry and exit points, as well as holding sticks above your head to serve as fake antlers and practicing vocal grunt calls while pawing the topsoil aggressively are just a few potential tactics that will ultimately improve your success in the long-term. Remember: To kill a deer, one must think like a deer. From this point you may begin the vetting process to determine which will be “The Tree.”

Much like choosing a spouse, choosing the right tree is not simply about selecting one that looks attractive at first glance. It is about selecting one that will be suitable for its intended use over the long-haul, and ultimately finding one that is capable of meeting your needs in perpetuity. However, in much the same way as choosing a spouse, determining the perfect tree is an act that is much more difficult to do in the dark, and likewise should never be performed while under the influence (both for safety reasons). Choosing the best-looking tree around is actually quite an easy task, in fact, all you must do is go to ANY location where you feel there is precisely no chance whatsoever of seeing your selected species, and through some sort of magic you will immediately and without question find the absolute perfect tree! Now, assuming your ultimate goal is to harvest an animal and not to simply hang your stand in the perfect tree, you will have to lower your expectations to possibly the

second, third, fifth, or seventh best tree in the area.

After going through the previously mentioned selection process, and with the proper looking tree selected--one sporting a nice wide base, solid canopy, and a handy limb set at just the right height to toss a rope over which will aid in hoisting my new stand into its permanent position--the real work has only begun. The instructions for this stand suggested I should be headed back to the cool air conditioner of my truck in less than 30 minutes, so it is only fitting that near 3 hours have elapsed before I affix my 6th and final ratchet strap to be absolutely and positively sure things are secure. A brief pause gives me satisfaction while I admire my work. I spend a few minutes daydreaming of the bounty of the land I anticipate harvesting from this new and exciting location. Having accomplished my mission for the trip with only minor injuries, I turn around to begin my long trek back to the truck, hardly noticing the walking any easier despite having unloaded about 150 lbs of gear and equipment. After taking no more than 7 steps I stop quickly. With a sheepish grin, I can only chuckle as I decide I like THIS tree I just stumbled upon much, much better than the one I just set up in. A quick glance skyward shows the sun persistently getting smaller on the horizon, and despite my desire to completely reconstruct my days labor just a few yards away in this new, much more magnificent tree, I determine my time is up and I must settle for the work I've accomplished. “oh well, there's always next season” I think as I slog down the hill back to the cold air conditioner of my pickup.



Trapline Talk

By Randy Barrows

Hope all is good for everyone. It's been a long hot summer but the good news is that in just 66 days as I write this it will be trapping season again. Now is time to check all your equipment and make sure you are ready to go. The most important part is asking permission to trap on property that is not yours. Even more important is to not to forget to thank the land owner when the season is done.

The Vermont Trappers Association is holding their 48th Annual Trappers and Sportsmen Rendezvous on September 24th and 25th 2022 at the Orleans County fairgrounds in Barton Vermont. Doors open at 07:00 and admission is \$5.00 per person and is good for both days. Camping hookups are available for those that would like to spend the night.

Some of the events are trapping and skinning demos, Saturday night pig roast black-powder and .22 pistol and rifle shoots, our annual VTA auction, annual membership meeting Saturday at 1:00 and gun raffles. Many vendors will be on sight hunting, fishing black-powder and trapping supplies. There will be food concession stands, pie baking contest, arts and crafts, door prizes, 50/50 raffle frying pan toss special events for kids. There will not be a trapper education class held this year. Public and new vendors are welcome.

For more information, please call Jim Calchera at 802-722-9790 or calcherajim@gmail.com. For any other info see the VTA website at vermonttrappers.com.

If you have never been before you need to treat yourself to this event. The amount you can learn during this weekend is well worth the trip up. Vermont's best professional trappers will be on hand to answer any question you might have. Bad questions are the ones not asked. Demo area is set up so we can do any set you would like to see made. The folks teaching are all well-seasoned trappers who have a vast amount of knowledge and will help you any way they can.

After a long day of teaching, we hit the pig roast which is widely renowned in area, It is always a sell out so get your

tickets early. After the pig roast it is time to gather around the campfire and re-hydrate and tell trapping lies, I mean stories under the stars.

I have trapped for 54 years and in my humble opinion I am pretty good at it. But every single year I learn something new, whether it's at this rendezvous or a national rendezvous. I guess you are never to old to learn new tricks.

Fur demos are also done showing you the latest and greatest techniques on how to handle your fur. As with hunting the work begins when the animal is put down. You will be shown how to achieve the best results with your pelts.

The vendors on site will have all you need for your trapline. It's easier to pick items up at these events as you can look at them, handle them and not have to pay the high cost of postage if you go the online way.

Something to keep in mind this fall while you are out on the line is how much you enjoy this activity. Believe it or not there are folks in this state that are pushing hard to stop all trapping in Vermont. This has been going on for as long as I have been trapping and they have failed every year. With the internet now they are growing in numbers, money, and they are loud and obnoxious. And they are getting the ear of our folks in "Montpeculier". Last session a team of 6 senators laid down some new proposals that the VTA has to address in the near future. One rule is to alter every trap you own so it fits the best management trapping procedures. That may not sound too bad on the surface but if the folks mandate every trap you own has to be center swiveled with a certain amount of chain for every species you intend to trap, this is going to be the end of trapping in a round-about way. The worst part is that none of these 6 have ever trapped in their lives and openly admit it. They refuse to listen to sound science and jump all over the basic rhetoric provided by the antis. Trying to reason with them is fruitless. I have invited every one of them to come out on my trapline so I could show them how stupid they really are and they all refuse. Politics is bad business.

Also, a wanton waste law is upcoming. This law mandates that every animal you harvest has to be used in some way shape or form. Trappers for ever have never had a problem with this. WE use every animal to the fullest extent possible. WE use their furs, eat the ones we can, donate their bones to schools for classes, and use the rest for bait making purposes. The infamous six added crow to this law. I have eaten a lot of wild animals but the thought of eating dump chickens kind of sickens me. Why they did this you ask. Just to be a bunch of @#\$%&(@%!@#\$(*&^%. I hunt crow often to lessen the burden on ground nesting fowl and small game. I can guarantee you

no matter how hungry I am I will never eat one!!!! So I have decided to gift them. My list is long. If you do not believe this when you are bored go to the Vermont energy and public resource page and click on their zoom meetings. It's all public record. They should be ashamed of themselves for conducting business the way they do.

I for one would be angry if trapping went away in Vermont.

Enjoy the rest of your summer and I hope to see you at the rendezvous!



Warning Shot

By Ken Jones

Having been a bow hunter since I was fourteen years old, I have used a lot of different gadgets and sights throughout the years. Most of these products like most hunters I saw being used on outdoor TV shows. One of my favorites back in the late 90s early 2000s was a show called “The Wild Outdoors “.

For quite some time I had gotten away from a peep sight on my compound bow. Then they showcased a peep that I felt was the answer to my problem. I had gotten away from peeps because I couldn't find one that let enough light to my eye during those low light conditions that you tend to get opportunities during early mornings and late afternoons. I ordered one up and installed it with plenty of time to get used to it before the 2013 season started.



The author's bow set up with the string splitter peep and

That season I had planned a hunt in Ohio the first week of November and was hoping for some fresh venison from home to bring along. To say it would be tough at home is an understatement.

On the 21st day of what at that time was a 25-day season I hadn't seen a single deer. Being self-employed offers me the luxury of leaving work early enough to hunting every day of the season. Twenty-one days man. Twenty-one days. The weather had been unseasonably warm and I'd actually been run back to the truck a couple evenings from violent thunder storms.

Finally, the weather broke and we had a cold front moving through and I was excited to get in the stand that night. It was a little windy but the Temps were right down into the upper 30s compared to the 70s and even 80 plus degree afternoons we'd been dealing with.

Being this chilly, I had on some extra clothes, including a neck gator to protect from the elements.

The first couple hours in the stand were quiet but the witching hour had just started when I looked down and a nice chunky little fork horn buck was strolling in!! He was headed to cross at about 25 yards and I'd have a broadside shot. He passed behind a large hickory tree and I drew. As I went to anchor my thumb on the back of my neck, I realized that in the excitement, I never pulled the gator down. Now I'm at full draw with a buck crossing in range trying to pull the gator down with my thumb so I can get anchored and bump!!! I bump the trigger on my release and the arrow drives in the ground about five feet in front of the buck!!!

Not sure what exactly happened he wheeled around the way he came and took about three good bounds and stopped. I quickly knocked another arrow, made a quick yardage adjustment with my single pin sight, drew and the wide separation in my string allowed me to quickly

acquire my pin, get it on the buck's vitals and release. I estimated him to be at 40 yards maybe a tick less. At the edge of where I don't like to shoot but, it felt good and I squeezed it off and made the best shot I'd ever made on a deer with a bow. Ten ring. He wheeled back to the cover he came out of but I could see his legs going as he bounded out of sight and then the high grass thrashing around when he crashed just out of sight.

The blood trail from the rage in the cage was easy to follow and short. A season that had been one of the hardest I'd ever been through, turned around in a matter of seconds.

I didn't kill a deer on my Ohio trip that year but we ate some good Vermont venison thanks to the string splitter peep allowing me to overcome the warning shot I gave that little buck. I now have three different Matthew's bows all fitted with string splitter juniors. I like to keep my sight pictures consistent but that's another story.

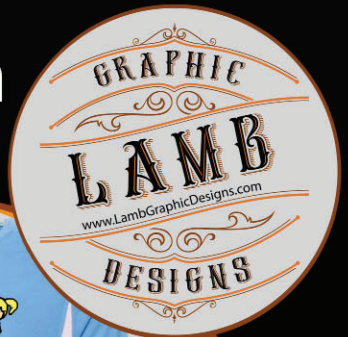
Bow season is fast approaching so, be safe, have fun and shoot'em up!!!



The warning shot buck of 2013.

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PARROSCUNRANCE

Vermont Youth Waterfowl Hunting September 24-25

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

A youngster's first hunt can mark the beginning of a lifelong passion for the outdoors and a commitment to wildlife conservation. There is no finer time to begin this journey than during Vermont's upcoming youth waterfowl hunting weekend on September 24 and 25.



Vermont's youth waterfowl hunting weekend is September 24 and 25 this year.

~ VTF&W photo

“Vermont's youth waterfowl hunting weekend helps ensure that young hunters get the quality training and experiences they need for lifelong participation,” said Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Christopher Herrick. “By design, the youth weekend hunt reinforces the route of initiation that is critical in recruitment -- learning from an experienced adult role model.”

On September 24 and 25, hunters 17 years of age or younger may hunt ducks and geese in the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont waterfowl hunting zones. The age requirement is 15 and under in the Connecticut River zone.

The youth hunter must have a Vermont hunting license and must be accompanied by an unarmed adult, 18 years of age or older, who also has a Vermont hunting license. Youths 16 and 17 years of age must have state and federal duck stamps. All youth hunters must also register with the Harvest Information Program (HIP) in each state that they hunt. This can be done on Vermont Fish and Wildlife's website or by calling toll-

free 1-877-306-7091. The adult may not hunt waterfowl or carry a firearm while accompanying the youth when the youth is hunting waterfowl.

Ducks and geese may be taken by youth hunters on September 24 and 25 according to the bag limits set in the [2022-2023 Syllabus of State and Federal Hunting Regulations for Migratory Birds in Vermont](#), available from Vermont post offices and as a downloadable file from www.vtfishandwildlife.com under Hunt – Waterfowl.

Fall for Turkey

by Brett Ladeau

Those that choose to only hunt turkey in the spring are truly missing a great opportunity to learn the vocabulary and behavior of a turkey flock. Plus, fall was the original turkey season. Sure, there is hardly anything I'd rather hear than the gobble of a longbeard on an early spring morning, but you may get that same kind of action on a fall hunt too. I have had several encounters with fall turkey's where you would think it was peak breeding season based on all the gobbling you hear.

Check your state regulations but most New England states offer some type of fall turkey hunt. Fall is a wonderful time of year to be in the woods too. The leaves are changing, the weather is usually still decent, and if you target turkey, your competition is usually not that stiff. The fall season is full of potential hunting opportunities for big game and small game but dedicating a day or two to turkey can be a rewarding experience. Heck, if you are lucky, you might be able to get it done in part of a day.

Fall tactics are endless but here are some of my favorites. Like any type of hunting, you need to know where turkeys are. If I am lucky, I will know where a flock is roosted and will sneak into the area before daylight and setup close to the roost. I sometimes use a blind in this situation because I like to get right under them if I can and it helps me go undetected.



As the flock wakes up you will typically hear all types of turkey vocalization, from tree talk, flydown cackles, excited yelping, assembly yelping, cluck and purrs, gobbling, fighting purrs, and pretty much any other vocalization a turkey makes. Of course, this depends on the day and the flock make-up, but the anticipation of hearing turkeys communicate just adds to the hunt in my opinion.

If my roost hunt doesn't produce or I wasn't fortunate enough to set-up under a flock, I typically spend time trying to find birds. I rarely just set up in an area and wait them out but might if I know they typically visit that location. I am not the most patient turkey hunter, so I am typically on the move. However, there is nothing wrong with holding tight if that is something you are comfortable doing. I am sure I have walked away from an area before I should, and it's probably cost me an opportunity at a turkey.

If I see a lone bird in my travels, I will try to figure out what direction they are traveling and do my best to get in front of them. Once set up I will start with some yelping and get more aggressive if I am not getting a response. You would be surprised at how responsive to calling fall turkeys are. I have had them come running to the call a lot more in the fall than in the spring.



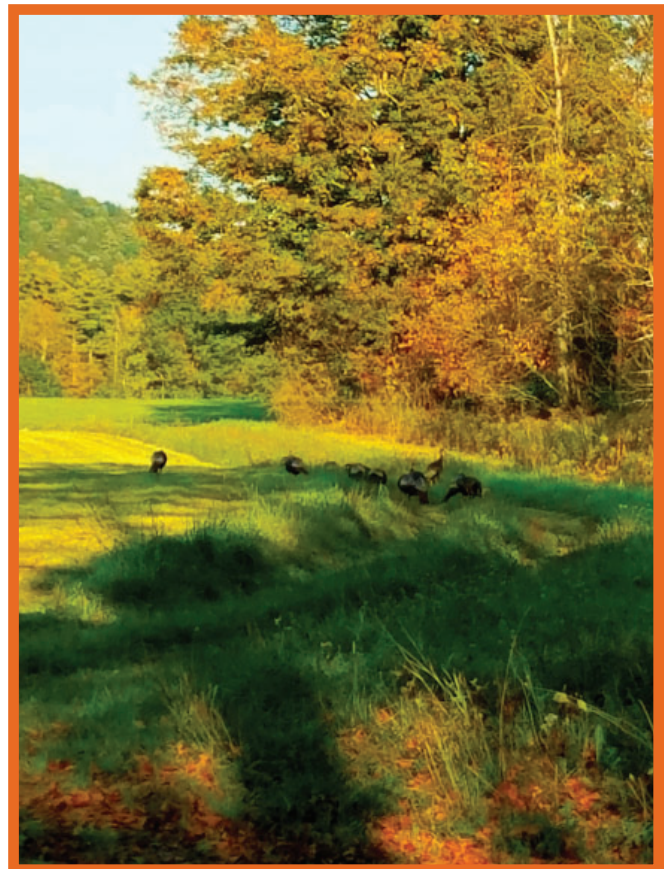
Another technique is to locate a flock and try to scatter them by either running at them or using a trained dog. If you're successful, this can be another opportunity to hear some great turkey vocalization as the flock reassembles. I would set up in the area that the flock scattered from and wait until I heard a bird call out before I started calling. Again, the type of calling depends on the flock make-up. Kee kees, assembly yelping, jake or gobbler yelping have often produced great results. The kee kee and assembly yelping would be my go-to calls if I scattered a flock of hens and poults, and jake and gobbler yelping if I scattered a group of male turkeys. I have also found fighting purrs and gobbling effective, so do not be afraid to throw the kitchen sink at them. It sure is exciting to have birds sounding off and coming in from all directions. It's hard to know where to focus and can be intense. This is a good time to have a partner or two. That way you can cover many different directions. If you are lucky to get one, I would sit still and see if the other birds will still come in. I was on a hunt with my friends, Dave Laskey, and Diane Levin, and we shot 3 birds out of the same flock at three different times.

If you don't have a dog or cannot get close enough to scatter the flock, you can still try to call them in. I have

found challenging them with aggressive calling works best but isn't always the answer. I would start soft and work up the aggression if they are not responding. It usually happens fast but I have worked a flock that I could see for over an hour before they finally broke and came to the call. That day it was an aggressive gobblers and fighting purrs that made the mixed flock respond and I was lucky enough to get a nice longbeard out of the group.

I have yet to use decoys on a fall hunt but from stories I hear they are perhaps more effective in the fall than spring, especially if you use a male decoy. I have heard stories of a gobbler flock charging into the decoy and putting on a great show. I hope to find myself in this situation this fall. It sure would be exciting to see. Hens are also responsive to decoys in the fall and will often approach aggressively in the fall.

Toward the end of the day, I might set up near a known roosting area and wait them out. They often are roosting in the same location daily. I have gone out on an afterwork hunt and had this technique work to perfection. I had watched a group of longbeards roost in this same area on





several occasions but had not taken the time to hunt them there. Finally, I decided to go set up near the roost sight and ended up watching these birds for several hours before they finally got close enough for a shot. I did call to them early in my hunt, but it was obvious they wanted nothing to do with the call. Since I was able to see them, I just waited them out, and well before flyup they worked into range and the rest is history.

In a lot of states the fall archery season for deer overlaps archery season for turkey too. I have found several deer hunts turn into turkey hunts, so don't forget to bring a call to the woods with you. I also use the midday to hunt turkey after my morning sit and before my afternoon sit for deer. Who knows, this might lead you

to a hot spot for deer too. The more time in the woods the better.

My hope is that you will give fall turkey hunting a try this fall. It might just become your new favorite way to turkey hunt or spend a fall day in the woods. Good luck, and feel free to let me know how you do.

Be Alert to Avoid Moose on the Highway

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Drivers need to be alert and cautious because moose are on the move, according to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. Moose are more likely to be crossing roadways at this time of year, especially after dark or early in the morning because this is breeding season for moose.

“Motorists hit 49 moose on Vermont highways during 2021 and 23 so far this year,” said State Game Warden Major Justin Stedman. “We are asking drivers to be especially careful and for people to enjoy watching moose from a distance. Moose can be unpredictable and dangerous if you get too close and they feel cornered or get irritated.”

Moose are a threat to motorists, but there are measures you can take to avoid hitting them, according to Fish and Wildlife:

- Always be aware of the danger -- moose cross the road randomly, as well as at their regular crossings.
- Increase your roadside awareness and reduce your speed when you see MOOSE CROSSING signs along the highway. When on secondary roads, the recommended speed is 40 mph or less in these moose crossing areas.
- Drive defensively and don't overdrive your headlights. Moose are more active at night and early morning, and they are difficult to see because of their dark color.
- If you see a moose ahead, slow down or stop. Trying to speed past them before they can move can be a serious mistake.

Vermont highway sections most frequented by moose:

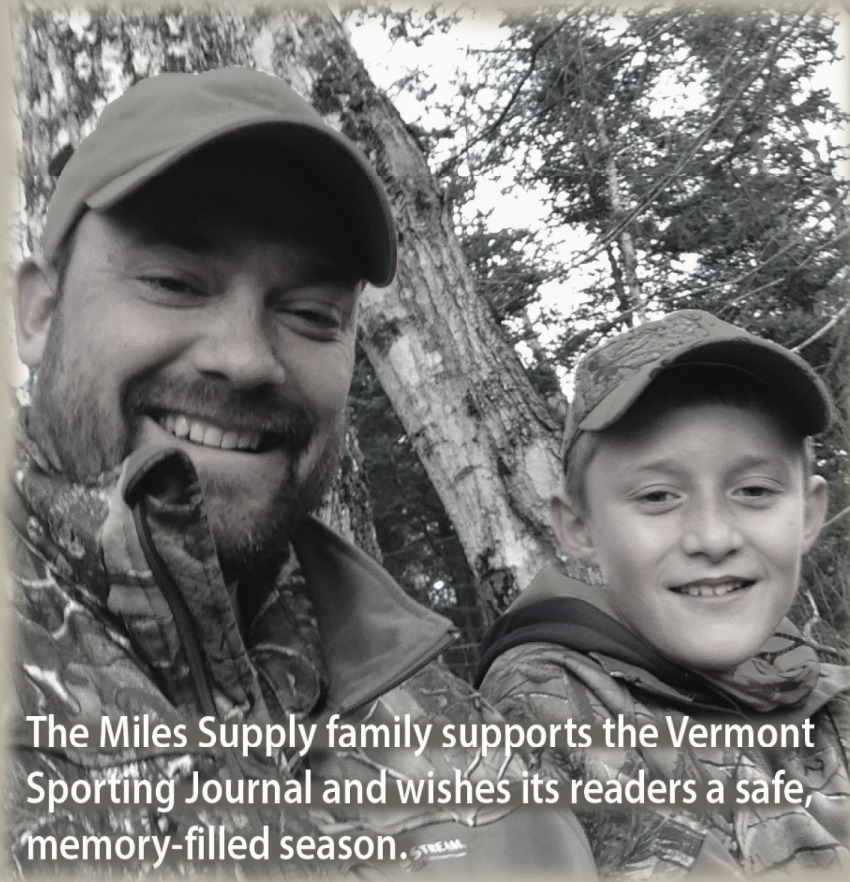
- Rt.105 from Island Pond to Bloomfield.
- Rt.114 from East Burke to Canaan.
- Rt.2 from Lunenburg to East St. Johnsbury.
- Interstate 91 at Sheffield Heights.
- Interstate 89 from Bolton to Montpelier.
- Rt. 12 from Worcester to Elmore.
- Rt 118 near Belvidere Corners and the Rt. 109 intersection.



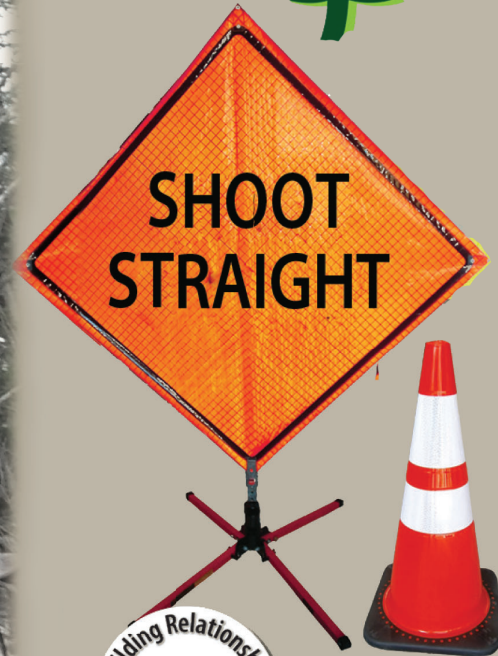
Nineteen people have died in motor vehicle collisions with moose on Vermont highways since 1985.

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