

Vermont Sporting Journal

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Randy Barrows with his beautiful 10 year old granddaughter, Shaley Brooke Gingras (and a curious fox)



Vt's Hunting Season for Gray Squirrels Opens Sept. 1

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE Press Release

The Vermont hunting season for gray squirrels begins Friday, September 1. The season runs through Sunday, 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. The daily bag limit is four gray squirrels, and the possession limit is eight.



“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&WD Photo
by John Hall

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**Vt Youth
Waterfowl
Hunting,
Sept. 23-24**
VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE
Press Release

*Vermont's youth waterfowl
hunting weekend is September 23 and 24 this year.*

VTF&W photo

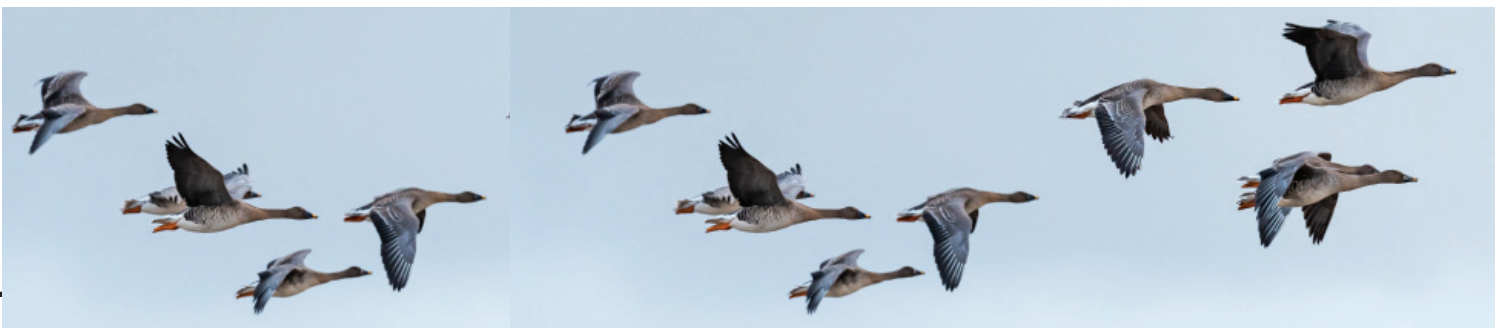
A youngster's first hunt can mark the beginning of a lifelong passion for the outdoors and a commitment to wildlife conservation. There is no finer time to begin this journey than during Vermont's upcoming youth waterfowl hunting weekend on September 23 and 24.

"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 23 and 24, 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 23 and 24 according to the bag limits set in the 2023-2024 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 Turkey Hunting!!

By Brett Ladeau



According to the latest copy of Turkey Call magazine, published by the National Wild Turkey Federation, there are 41 states that offer fall turkey hunting. In parts of the country the fall season has either been cancelled or significantly reduced due to declining turkey populations in those states. However, here in New England we have not yet experienced the decline that many regions have, and we offer a robust fall season.

In Vermont, we have some type of fall turkey season from October 7, 2023, to November 5, 2023, depending on weapon of choice, and the area of the state you are in. Check Vermont Fish and Wildlife website for full details. The main regulatory differences between fall and spring turkey season are, any turkey can be harvested in the fall season, and you can hunt all day in the fall (half an hour before sunrise until a half our after sunset).

According to the 2022 Vermont Turkey Harvest Report, on Fish and Wildlife website, 908 turkeys were taken in the fall of 2022, 655 with a shotgun, and 253 with archery equipment. The 3-year harvest average is approximately 685 fall turkeys. Fall harvest is greatly impacted by the spring hatch, and abundance of food. In years where the hatch wasn't great and/or we have abundance of food we

typically see a lower harvest. Obviously, if the hatch is poor there will not be as many turkeys to hunt in the fall, and on abundant food years, the turkeys are less visible in fields and don't need to travel far to find something to eat.

I've heard mixed results on our hatch this year but in my area, I am not seeing good poult recruitment/ Thus, the fall hunt might be a little more difficult. The hatch in my



area seems to have been impacted by all the rain we've received this summer, record setting rain in some areas of the state, and poult recruitment seems lower than the past few years.

Hatch results may be different in your area though. National Wild Turkey Federation Regional Biologist, Matt DiBona says, "Despite the wet, challenging weather this summer, I'm hearing a decent number of anecdotal reports of hens with broods. In some cases, we are seeing hens with younger broods than would be expected for August, which indicates a successful second nesting attempt after a failed nest earlier in the summer. All of which suggests we should have good numbers of turkeys going into the fall season."

Whether your area has a low hatch or not, all isn't lost. We still have a strong turkey population based on better than average hatches in 2021, and 2022. The key, like always, is finding flocks to hunt. Focusing on available food will be my preferred technique this fall. A late spring frost has limited mast production in my area this year, so I expect turkeys to be more visible in fields and in alternate food sources.

Unlike spring, finding a gobbling/vocal turkey might be a little more challenging in the fall, but listening for a fall gobble or some yelping will help locate birds. I walk through hardwood areas looking for fresh scratching, where turkeys are feeding, and might sit in those areas and call for a bit.

If possible, I like to pattern fall turkeys. Meaning, if I see a flock in an area around the same time each day, I will likely try to be in that area around that time too.

Finding roost areas or seeing turkeys fly to roost is a favorite technique in the spring or fall. Knowing where turkeys are is half the battle, and if I know where a flock is roosted, I feel like I have the advantage. I will sneak in extra early and sit underneath roosted turkey, sometimes in a ground blind, but often with no blind. Sitting still in these situations is critical, because if the birds see you before fly down the hunt is essentially over, at least initially. I have had a hunt materialize after accidentally walking under roosted turkey and having them scatter all over the place. My initial response was to pack up and head elsewhere, but a favorite fall technique is scattering the flock and calling them back in. After getting over my initial reaction of busting the flock off the roost, I settled into the area and before too long I heard birds kee keeing, and yelping. What felt like a bust turned into an awesome hunt filled with turkey vocalization and ended with success.

Another popular fall technique is scattering the flock with a well-trained dog or a fast human that can make the flock scatter in multiple directions, setting up in the center of the scatter, and calling the flock back in. This works better on a mixed flock or a flock of hens and poults but isn't impossible on a gobbler flock. Patience is the key on getting gobblers to reassemble. I personally have not had a lot of experience with a successful scatter



though. I don't own a well-trained dog and for some reason a fat bald guy slow trotting at a flock of turkey doesn't really scare the birds enough to make them fly in a lot of different directions. However, on the rare occasions I do scatter the flock successfully, the hunts have always been exciting, and filled with various turkey vocabulary, and even if they get away, just interacting with the flock makes for a good time.

For fall calling sequences, I usually use several calls on a single set-up, trying to sound like an entire flock. I will use mouth calls, pot calls, box calls (long and short), and sometimes throw a gobble/gobbler yelp into the mix, trying to entice male turkeys into range. For safety purposes, I wouldn't suggest this strategy in the spring woods. Contrary to popular belief, turkeys still gobble in the fall, and if you get on the right bird, they will gobble like it is early May.

None of these fall techniques are fool proof but having multiple tools in the tool shed help put the odds in your favor. Good luck this fall and if you have time to dedicate a day or two to a fall turkey hunt, I'd highly recommend giving it a try.



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Vermont's Resident Canada Goose Season, September 1-25

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE Press Release



VTF&W photo

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 14-November 27 with a daily bag limit of three Canada geese in the Lake Champlain Zone and Interior Vermont Zone.

In the Connecticut River Zone, the second Canada goose season will be October 5-November 3, and November 22-December 21 with a daily bag limit of two Canada geese.

For a second year, a late Canada goose season will be held targeting resident birds. Within the Lake Champlain and Interior zones, the season will be held from December 1 to January 6, with a five-bird daily bag limit. The season will run December 22 to January 6 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 is not one of the states where you can buy an electronic federal duck stamp, but you can purchase one from any state that sells them.

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 is available from license agents and post offices.

Vermont Hunter Education Courses Are Offered Now

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE Press Release

If you or someone you know would like to go hunting this fall but have never taken a hunter education course, this is the time to act. Vermont's volunteer hunter education instructors are now holding a limited number of courses throughout the state.

A person must pass the basic [hunter education course](#) before they can purchase their first hunting license.

"Most of these courses are held in August and September," said Vermont Fish and Wildlife's Hunter Education Coordinator Nicole Meier. "All of our instructors are volunteers. They teach because they are passionate about hunting and want to ensure that Vermont's safe hunting legacy continues. We credit Vermont's strong safety record with our volunteer instructors."

"Volunteer instructors are the backbone of the Vermont Hunter Education Program. They are vital to Vermont's

strong record of safe hunting. Hands-on and in-person learning from an experienced instructor are the best ways to become familiar with the skills associated with safe hunting."

"Courses are available in basic hunter education, bowhunter education, trapper education, and combination hunter-bowhunter education. We expect more classes to be posted throughout August and September, so check our website frequently."



"Beginning on September 1, you must be 18 years old to take the online hunter or bowhunter education courses."

The courses will be listed as they become available on Vermont Fish and Wildlife's website www.vtfishandwildlife.com. On the Home page, click on Hunt and then Hunter Education and [Find the Right Class for You](#). To register for a course, go to this link: <https://www.register-ed.com/programs/vermont>

A Vermont hunter education card entitles you to hunt in all 50 states, as well as some international locations.

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, experience level, sex, or gender identity. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities are available on request at no cost to the student. Please include a description of the accommodation you will need and include your contact information. Requests should be made as early as possible. Please send an e-mail to: Nicole.Meier@vermont.gov 802-828-1193 (voice), 1-800-253-0191 (TTY).



Vermont hunter education courses are being held in August and September.

VTF&W photo

TANGLED UP IN BLUES

By Ken Jones

A short distance from rout 128 down Eastern Avenue on to main Street in Gloucester Massachusetts the oldest seaport in the United States sits the Hurricane 2. The flagship for Cape Anne Whale Watch. Nestled down and just far enough away from the hustle and bustle of main street traffic. The harbor seems a million miles away with its peaceful serenity. Small boats buzz around, larger commercial boats sit tied up between trips to Stellwagen bank and other bountiful areas off Cape Anne.

Gloucester has become the vacation destination for my wife and I and over the last ten to twelve years we've been on close to fifty whale watches with Cape Anne Whale Watch. I could give the harbor tour as we head out each time. I've heard it that many times. Captain Johnny is masterful at the wheel and gets you to the whales fastest but has a very delicate touch when you come in contact with these enormous critters.

The whales make a yearly trek up here in April from the warm crystal-clear waters of the Dominican Republic, and other areas of the Caribbean. They leave here in late October to go down to the warmer waters for breeding and calving or giving birth. The warmer waters are more inviting to the new venerable young calves. But the crystal waters lack the food needed for the females and males to survive year-round. Especially for the mothers who will nurse their calves for at least the first year of their lives. But like any long journey, the time spent up here in the Gulf of Maine doesn't come without risks.

As you may have guessed Gloucester being the oldest seaport in the country there is a lot of commercial fishing and of course lobstering going on. And, with gill nets and lobster traps in the water entanglements sometimes happen.

There have been some 3600 whales documented in the Gulf of Maine population since the late 1970s when the "save the whales" movement began. The whales are given names not usually gender specific or people names in general although we did meet Othello this summer. Whales are identified by markings on the underside of their tails or flukes as scientists have discovered that these markings are as individual as your thumb print. Making identifying certain individuals possible. We know of and have seen two mothers with calves this summer that have each brought several calves up in their lifetimes. It's believed humpback whales live between 60 and 80 years. Our favorite moms are known as Pinball and Valley. Pinball has a very distinct round dot in the white on the bottom of her fluke that resembles a Pinball. Hence her name. Valley has a unique little section on the right side of her fluke almost like a little Valley missing. I have also noticed she has almost no dorsal fin on her back.



Both of these great moms have felt the fear and danger of entanglements. Valley's ordeal was a few days long as she became entangled off the coast of Boston. The center for coastal studies based in Provincetown Massachusetts has put together an entanglement response team that attempts to free entangled whales. Established in 1984 they have saved over 200 whales from entanglements. In 2021 Valley had become entangled but severe weather kept the team away. Fortunately, she was able to



surface and breath but was basically anchored and unable to feed. The team did get to her and free her and this year in 2023 we saw Valley and her 2023 calf!!!

Pinball showed up this year after speculation from her size in 2022 showed she may have been pregnant was true and we have Pinball's 2023 calf!!! In between our visits watching on social media we found out that Pinball had become entangled this year!! Fortunately, the disentanglement team reached her quickly and within 24 hours she was freed and just this week was spotted nursing her new calf. Although wearing some new scars from the gear, she seems to have recovered fully and has resumed her mom duties.

I spoke with Cape Anne Whale Watch naturalist Tina McMahon about the coexistence of the fishing industry and the Gulf of Maine whales on our last trip and she has a great attitude towards the fisherman and has a great understanding of their need to make a livelihood and provide for their families and many other families.

Improvements in gear especially the lobster gear has reduced the number of incidents but it's slow going. Tina says the new gear is expensive and thinks the government should help out with buyback programs to help the fishermen transition to safer gear.

We also spoke about the large amount of whales washing up along the New Jersey shoreline where incidentally

there has been a lot of seismic testing and blasting going on in attempts to install wind turbines off shore and bury cables in the ocean floor to supply "green" energy.

If you've watched the news, you may have heard of the over 60 whales that have washed up dead along the areas where this seismic testing has been going on.

It's strange how Pinball's entanglement made bigger headlines than 60 dead whales off the coast of New Jersey. Maybe that's because NOAA a government agency you're probably more familiar with getting your weather from actually controls a permitting section of the government that issues what are called incidental taking permits that allow the killing of so many even endangered species in the name of science or other human advancement. I have attached some screen shots directly from the NOAA



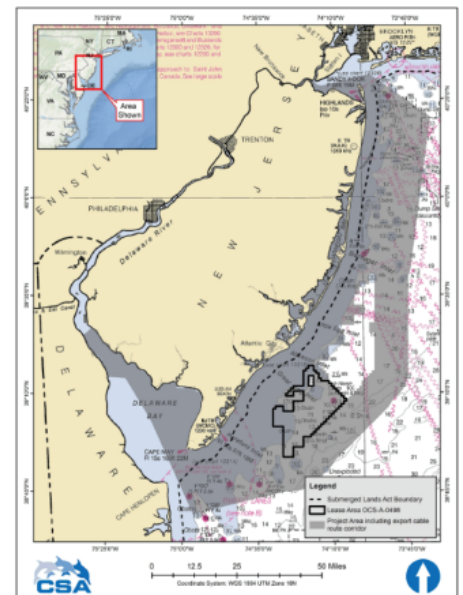
Menu

PROTECTED RESOURCES
REGULATIONS AND ACTIONS

Incidental Take Authorization: Ocean Wind, LLC Marine Site Characterization Surveys off of New Jersey

Notice | New England/Mid-Atlantic

Continental Shelf Lease Area
OCS-A 0498 and potential
export cable routes to landfall
locations in New Jersey.



website. There have been many of these permits issued to a company called Ocean Winds LLC.

The hypocrisy of our government never ceases to amaze me. They cast a bad light on our fishing industry that has bent over backwards to do whatever it takes to keep these unfortunate meetings of man and animals to a minimum and offers them little help. Yet gives permits to an industry to destroy these animals in the name of progress. It doesn't sound progressive to this writer to destroy something we've spent decades bringing back from the brink of extinction to do something proven to be extremely harmful to animals we've sworn to protect!! The cleanliness of this planet is vital to its existence. We've all seen the mechanical problems with wind turbines. How much pollution will spill into the ocean if just one of these turbines fails. How many species will be affected????

the different behaviors we've seen. Frolicking calves breaching, bubble feeding and the calves mimicking mom. Learning how to bubble feed for when they come back next year and hopefully for some, when they bring new calves in the years to come. The Gulf of Maine whale population is stable but fragile. The cold green waters up here provide the phito plankton and small fish needed to sustain these enormous critters throughout their yearly trek south where they will not feed for half the year but for how long??? Dredging of Stellwagen bank and wind turbine work off New Jersey may be threatening a movement started some 50 years ago to save the whales.

So get out on the water. My trips to the ocean every summer make me realize, if I wasn't born in the wonderful green mountains, I definitely would've been OK being raised by the water.





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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 36 moose on Vermont highways during 2022 and 41 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:

1. Always be aware of the danger -- moose cross the road randomly, as well as at their regular crossings.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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:

1. Rt.105 from Island Pond to Bloomfield.
2. Rt.114 from East Burke to Canaan.
3. Rt.2 from Lunenburg to East St. Johnsbury.
4. Interstate 91 at Sheffield Heights.
5. Interstate 89 from Bolton to Montpelier.
6. Rt. 12 from Worcester to Elmore.
7. 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.



VT Fish & Wildlife cautions drivers that moose are more likely to be crossing roadways at this time of year, especially after dark or early in the morning.

VTF&W photo by Benjamin Young

Trap Talk

By Randy Barrows

What a summer it has been. I am starting to think I live in a rain forest. Day after day of heavy rain followed by scorching heat followed up by more rain. Last week little rain and cool temps , and as I write this its 89 out with high humidity. UGGGGGGGGGG!!

If you are not a nuisance trapper now is the time to become one. The planet is overrun with critters. My phone rings off the hook daily with issues with beavers, woodchucks, skunks, coon, possum, they are plentiful. I have raised chickens for 60 years and never had a problem with critters!! Until this year. The coons finally had their way. I have one hen left, just one. She is in a pet sized kennel and being used as bait safe and sound. We are getting a coon per night thanks to a well-placed 220 conibear in the chute to the coop. Hope they enjoyed their last suppers the rotten bastards.

The cool nights start trappers to thinking about the upcoming season. One night around 55 and the phone gets busy. It gets real hectic around here this time of year. Luckily its all about supplies now. Later on its supplies and furs and it gets real busy. I spend many hours showing folks what sets work the best. Some in the trapping world are tight lipped about hows and wheres and I remember starting out years ago struggling to learn. I openly share what I have learned and enjoy hearing the stories from the trapline.

I had a longtime friend call me last week to tell me he was trying to catch a coon at his camp. I explained to him how to do the task and away he

went. A couple of days later he called back and wanted to know how to get a skunk out without getting sprayed. I offered the usual ways to handle this task and ended it with "have the wife do it and you will not get sprayed!" My nephew does lawn care for him, and he said John is still laughing about my advice to him. I never said I give good advice, but I give freely.

This fall try to bring a youth out with you on the line. Our numbers are dwindling because of our age group and we need to fill the ranks. Eight years ago I brought my nephew with me. One trip and he was hooked. Right to this day he can not wait for trapping season and runs a successful nuisance line every year. Being old and grey I appreciate having a youth out with me. When something was forgotten in the truck he will run to get it where it would take me a hour. Setting 330 conibears is a sinch for him where I struggle. I can go down a steep bank in a flash, getting back up is a issue. It is just nice to have a ear

along with you making memories that are never forgotten.

Logan was just here taking a coon out of a rap. He recalled that he took the safeties off the trap when setting it , a little dig to me. Six years ago while doing fisher sets I made what I thought was the best set ever. I was positive I would have that egg eater the next morning. Fresh snow approaching the set told me there was a fisher on the prowl. The tracks went right to the set, up the leaning pole set and yup you guessed it, I never took the safeties off. Logan reminds me off this yearly. WE tried to catch this fisher every year and finally two years ago Logan caught him. Oh well!

During covid I was tasked with being a teacher , sort of, for my granddaughter Shaley. The day would start with the academic B.S., lunch and then outdoor time. Part of the outdoor time was checking the trapline. Day after day she was right there with me with her 1000 question non stop "WHY". One bitter cold day we bundled up and headed out. We



Leave Boulders and Logs in Rivers to Increase Flood Resilience and Help Fish Populations Impacted by the July Flood

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE Press Release

checked many sets with no luck. At the last fox set I completed baiting it and she calmly replied: “I like the way you did that, you will have one there tomorrow morning!!! I thought to myself that that would be cool if I did.

The next morning I was doing fur early and a customer stopped in for a few items. Upon leaving he came back in the shop and asked if I knew I had a fox in a trap in the back forty. I was in total shock. I ran to the house and told Shaley. She was dressed in a flash and soon we were doing photo shoots. After the dispatch we brought the beautiful red to the shop and pelted it. A memory she will never forget, nor will I.

Since that day she has spent many hours in the fur shed and on the line with me. For her age she is acutely aware of everything outdoors. While sitting in my deer shack she lip squeaked a fisher from 70 yards away to within 20 feet of us. She knows what a drumming partridge sounds like. And she certainly out fishes me every time we go to Marshfield Pond. She sits perfectly still while waiting for deer to come, just a treat to be with outside. I asked her how many of her school friends do what she does and her answer was “NONE”

Now is the time to get your gear ready. In two short months we can lay steel again. Do not worry about the money aspect of it all. When was the last time you made money deer hunting????

Have a great fall and enjoy everything Mother Nature has to offer, WITH A KID!!!

After the recent July floods, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is asking recovery efforts to prioritize river resilience and help impacted fish populations when possible.

“The first priority in flood recovery is human safety,” said Aquatic Habitat Biologist Will Eldridge. “During Tropical Storm Irene, we learned that retaining and recovering river habitat that buffers against future floods and helps impacted fish populations rebound lines up with that human safety priority.”

Rivers with features like fallen trees, large boulders, and winding channels provide better fish habitat and are more resilient to floods. These features reduce flood impacts for landowners and downstream communities by slowing flood waters. They also provide fish with shelter and places to forage that can be the difference between successful recovery and lasting impacts for fish populations.

“After Irene some recovery efforts removed trees and boulders from rivers and ended up making rivers more vulnerable to floods and slowing fish population recovery,” said Eldridge. “We are asking Vermonters to leave downed trees and boulders in rivers and streams whenever doing so does not create a risk for people, roads, or infrastructure. These features will help fish populations recover and help our rivers weather future floods.”

Impacts to Vermont’s fish populations and river habitats from the July flood will take time to assess. But based on data from Tropical Storm Irene, the department says that trout populations in some rivers may be significantly reduced by this year’s flood.

“Trout populations can drop by around 50% after extreme events like we saw this month, and can take two or three years to recover,” said Eldridge. “How badly trout in a given river are impacted and how well they recover has a lot to do with habitat.”

Landowners, businesses, and towns planning recovery work in rivers and streams are required to follow protocols from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. For more information on flood recovery resources, visit <https://ANR.Vermont.gov/Flood>.



Trout populations can drop significantly in extreme floods like the one Vermont weathered in July. A wild brook trout sampled from a Vermont stream following the July 2023 flood is pictured here.

VTF&W Photo

Living with Wildlife: Bats in Your House?

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE Press Release

Bats are everywhere! It may feel that way to some of Vermont's human residents. Summer is when some species of bats gather in colonies, to raise their young in human-made structures such as houses, barns, office buildings, and bat houses but fall is the safe time to get them out.

“Summer is the time of year when the greatest number of unwanted bat-human interactions are reported,” according to Vermont Fish and Wildlife’s Small Mammals Biologist Alyssa Bennett, who works on the conservation and recovery of Vermont’s threatened and endangered bat species.

“Bats can end up in your living space for many reasons, including young bats that are weak, disoriented or lost while coming and going from the roost, bats moving within a structure to find warmer or cooler roosting space as temperatures fluctuate, and bats being displaced from their roosts due to building repairs and renovations.”

Although this happens every year, it can come as quite a shock to those who wake up to a bat flying in their bedroom or suddenly uncover a dozen bats roosting behind a rotting trim board being removed on the outside of a home. But don't fear, because there are answers to your burning bat questions at www.vtfishandwildlife.com using the search term “bats.”

Living with wildlife means considering the health and wellbeing of both the public and these fragile wildlife species. Although rarely detected in the general bat population, rabies is a deadly disease and should be taken very seriously. If you are concerned that you have been in direct contact with a bat, have found a bat in a bedroom while sleeping or in a room with an unattended child, a pet, a person with a cognitive disability, or an intoxicated person, please call the Rabies Hotline at 800-4RABIES (1-800-472-2437). If the hotline staff and or your health care providers determine there is no concern for rabies exposure, the bat can safely be released outside.

[Instructions](#) for safely capturing, containing and releasing

a bat found inside can be found on Vermont Fish and Wildlife’s website, including an [instructional video](#).

“Living with wildlife doesn't mean that we have to share our homes with bats in order to protect them,” says Bennett. “Our main concerns are avoiding human contact by safeguarding the living space, evicting bats from structures safely, and providing alternative habitat for displaced bats.”

Bat colonies are starting to disperse now that young bats can fly. Fall is a good time of year to think about safely evicting bats from structures where they are not wanted by following the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department’s Best Management Practices. These practices are available on Fish and Wildlife’s website or by calling 802-353-4818 or emailing Alyssa.Bennett@vermont.gov, where you can also obtain a list of [professionals who perform safe evictions](#).

Large colonies of bats living in structures can also be reported on the department’s website to help find rare colonies of endangered little brown bats, which are eligible for free bat houses.



Bat colonies are starting to disperse now that young bats can fly. Fall is a good time of year to think about safely evicting bats from structures where they are not wanted by following the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department’s recommendations.

VT F&W photo

Enjoy Dead Creek Wildlife Day on Oct. 7

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE Press Release



Many of the activities at this year's Oct. 7 Dead Creek Wildlife Day are tailored to children.

VTF&W photo

If you enjoy wildlife be sure to make plans to attend the 21st annual [Dead Creek Wildlife Day](#) in Addison, Vermont on Saturday, October 7.

Activities at Dead Creek Wildlife Day are especially for people who enjoy hunting, fishing, birdwatching, or learning about Vermont's diverse wildlife and ecosystems. The event will be held at the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department's Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA) on Route 17, west of Route 22A.

Early risers can begin the day with a bird banding demonstration at 7:00 a.m. Two large tents at Dead Creek WMA headquarters will open at 9:30 a.m. featuring wildlife-related

exhibits and activities such as decoy carving, building bluebird boxes and nature crafts.

The Dead Creek Visitor Center will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. featuring displays about conservation and wildlife management in Vermont. Enjoy a walk along the interpretive trail and observe pollinators feeding on native wildflowers.

Live critters will include a selection of snakes, turtles, raptors, and more that visitors can see up close and learn about their ecology. New this year will be wild game cooking over a campfire, a deer processing demonstration, trained leashed tracking dogs, as well as talks on

transportation and wildlife ecology, and snakes and lizards of Vermont.

Retriever dogs will be working in the area ponds, pointing dogs will be nearby, and all the favorite nature walks will be happening. All events are free, and a free shuttle bus will provide regular access to nearby field events throughout the day.

“We want to welcome visitors to the 21st year of the popular Dead Creek Wildlife Day,” said Amy Alfieri, manager of the Dead Creek WMA. “We try to bring in new activities and presentations every year and I am excited for what is on the schedule this year. I only ever see smiles on people's faces as they learn about fish and wildlife in a beautiful setting. Visitors love to see the live animals and working dogs, and the kids love to build their own bluebird box to take home. It's a great event for everyone.”

The festival is hosted by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, Vermont

Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, Delta Waterfowl, and Otter Creek Audubon Society.

For [more information](#) and a [schedule of events](#) visit Vermont Fish and Wildlife's website (www.vtfishandwildlife.com) and check under Watch Wildlife.

Hunters Reminded of Rules on Importing Deer, Elk

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE Press Release

Hunters traveling outside Vermont to hunt deer or elk need to keep in mind that a regulation designed to protect Vermont's wild deer from chronic wasting disease remains in effect, according to a reminder from the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a fatal disease of the brain and nervous system in deer and elk. Abnormal prion proteins produce lesions in the brain that cause disorientation and emaciation in conjunction with other abnormal behaviors. This highly contagious disease is always fatal to deer. For the latest information on CWD, check these websites: www.vtfishandwildlife.com and www.cwd-info.org.

The potential exists for CWD prion proteins to be introduced to the environment through the bodily fluids of CWD-positive deer, elk or moose and then persist in the environment for extended periods of time.

Vermont rules on importing and possession of deer or elk from areas with chronic wasting disease (CWD) and captive hunt areas or farms:

It is illegal to import or possess deer or elk, or parts of deer or elk, from states and Canadian provinces that have had chronic wasting disease, or from captive hunt or farm facilities with the following exceptions:



Meat that is cut up, packaged and labeled with hunting license information and not mixed with other deer or elk during processing;

- Meat that is boneless;
- Hides or capes with no part of the head attached;
- Clean skull-cap with antlers attached;
- Antlers with no other meat or tissue attached;
- Finished taxidermy heads;
- Upper canine teeth with no tissue attached.

Vermont's CWD importation regulations currently apply to hunters bringing in deer or elk carcasses from the following states and provinces that have detected CWD in either captive or wild animals:

Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Alberta, Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan.

“CWD is a very persistent disease that can resurface after years of absence,” said Nick Fortin, Vermont's deer biologist. “Vermont's CWD regulation is designed to help prevent CWD from infecting Vermont's deer and the drastic population reduction measures that would be required if it appears here.”

“Hunters bringing deer or elk from any of the CWD-listed states or provinces into or through Vermont simply have to get them processed according to the regulation before doing so.”

A fine of up to \$1,000 and loss of hunting and fishing licenses for one year are applicable for each deer or elk imported illegally.

Vermont Fish and Wildlife is also reminding hunters that using any type of natural deer urine-based or deer body fluid attractant scents is prohibited in the state because of the CWD threat.



Peregrine Falcon Nesting Season Complete

Cliffs Clear to Hike and Climb Again

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE Press Release

Hikers and rock climbers can return to Vermont cliffs now that peregrine falcon nesting season has ended. The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department has confirmed that all the young falcons have learned to fly and should not be disturbed by human presence on the cliffs.

“The young peregrines have fledged, and nesting data suggest many of Vermont’s falcons had a successful year,” said Vermont Fish and Wildlife’s nongame bird biologist Jillian Kilborn. “The falcon’s nesting success is due to a combination of factors, including good weather early in the nesting season and cooperation from hikers and rock climbers who observe a respectful distance from nesting falcons during this critical period. Peregrine nesting success would not be possible without more than 50 volunteers who monitor the nest sites statewide from March to the end of July.”

According to Audubon biologist Margaret Fowle, who coordinates the monitoring effort on behalf of the Fish and Wildlife Department, biologists and volunteers monitored peregrine pairs that occupied at least 50 Vermont cliffs in early spring and summer.

“We greatly appreciate the time and effort volunteers put into monitoring the population this year, and we thank landowners and recreationists for their cooperation in protecting nesting peregrines from human disturbance,” said Fowle.

Vermont Fish and Wildlife and Audubon Vermont partner to monitor and protect peregrine nesting sites in Vermont. Peregrine falcons were removed from the state’s Threatened and Endangered Species List in 2005. Ongoing cooperation from recreationists and continued monitoring efforts by Vermont Fish and Wildlife and Audubon Vermont will help ensure the peregrine’s remarkable recovery in future years.

Vermont cliffs monitored by biologists and volunteers for nesting peregrine pairs this spring and summer are open for recreationists.

VTF&W photo by C.P.: Merrill

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Success in an Unfamiliar Place

By Brad Roy



“Wait, no apple pies?” I mumbled to the gentleman standing behind the fryolator at McDonalds sometime around 5 am. My brain felt foggier than the highway was on this late August morning near the Coastline of New Hampshire, and the coffee was still some time away from hitting its peak effects. “I can make one but it’s gonna be about twelve minutes” he hollered back from his position in the kitchen. “Nah, that’s fine, I guess I can live without it” I begrudgingly but politely spoke back. With McGriddles and tall cups of coffee in hand, we loaded back up into a friend’s pickup to make our way to the bait shop; sans apple pie but sweet with anticipation.

My journey to this point started a few weeks prior while on a bachelor party trip to Hampton Beach. Having woke up unreasonably early thanks to a biological alarm clock I seemed to have developed after having my first child 10 months prior, I grabbed a coffee at an oceanside shop that was inundated with sun-kissed bar crawlers just a

few hours prior, and set about walking along the coastline and marinas to look at boats and kill some time until the rest of my group woke up. I discovered a nearby tackle shop with two welcoming, warm faces inside who were happy to chat at-length about fishing, hunting, and all things outdoors. They informed me that folks had been catching stripers from kayaks in the mouth of the river nearby, undoubtedly lighting a fire in me to figure out how to get back to the coast and learn to target this so far elusive species.

I hashed out a plan to head back down for a day trip with kayaks, but schedules changed and my original armada was unable to make it on the day planned. Knowing some friends lived just a half hour or so away from the coast, I reached out and we began to hash out the process of prepping for an expedition to the salty coast. Skylar was able to secure an 18-foot john boat for our adventure, which seemed more appropriate than kayaks for our first trip to sea. I believe to experience the lure of the ocean is a universal human experience, however to a freshwater fisherman, the tantalizing idea of what lurks beneath the briny surface brings with it an almost unbearable draw. Up until this point, my saltwater fishing experience had been limited to chartered trips and a bit of shore casting in Maine. The idea of heading “Out to Sea,” even if we would remain within the breakwater of the harbor, was only almost as tantalizing as the thought of getting hooked into my first ever striped bass.

Fast forward a few days to a comfortably warm and humid late-august morning on the shore of the Merrimack; We arrived at the river’s edge just a few nautical miles from where she spills to the sea. The two of us slid the 18-foot aluminum V Hull into the water around 6 am, eager to catch the last 3 hours of an incoming tide. The morning light has just begun to display a picturesque pink sky filtering through stratified and puffy clouds. With a surprisingly quick start of an old 15 horse Johnson on the transom, we were officially cast off for our first solo saltwater adventure. As we steamed away from the boat launch, rods were at the ready and a bag with six live eels wiggled and writhed alongside the roast beef sandwiches and drinks in the cooler. We set a course toward the

upward into our small boat. The exhilaration of catching that fish couldn't be dampened by the fact it was larger than the current slot limit allows for harvest, so after a few pictures, it was released to swim away freely. Now it was on to the next fish.

We employed the same tactic over and over, trolling up and down this small section of creek for some time, until suddenly the rod in Skylar's hands lurched rearward with the violent aggression of a mature fish's pull. The drag was once again screaming, and we watched as a much bigger fish rose from the depths to the surface some distance away. Pure elation ensued at seeing the size and stature of this saltwater behemoth, and with the fight of his life taking place in front of my eyes, I grabbed the net and positioned and readied myself to get the monster on board. Minutes later, the fish slid headfirst into the net, its tail sticking up and out the other side. We had landed another!

Being well above the slot limit at 43 inches, pictures were



taken, high fives exchanged, and even an uncharacteristic “Whoop!” emanated from my mouth without much conscious thought. With pounding hearts and a feeling of pure ecstasy, Skylar cautiously revived the striper with a firm grip of its tail until it slinked away into the dark water yet again. Based on Striped Bass Length: Age and Weight tables, this fish was estimated to be around thirty-five pounds and 10 years old!

With the outgoing tide rapidly turning our 8-foot-deep water into less than 2, we were forced to retreat out of our honey hole. After trolling for some time, and me facing a three-hour drive home, it was finally time to call it a day. The little Johnson outboard pushed the boat slowly up the Merrimack—swollen by recent flooding and heavy rains—on an outgoing tide. Both of us remarked at our surprise with the force and velocity of the water barreling its way toward the sea. Our small craft performed flawlessly and we made it back to the ramp unscathed and overjoyed with the day's events.

The wealth of fishing opportunities in New England is truly astonishing, and although a few extra precautions and preparations must be taken, it is possible for inland folks like me to make it out to the saltwater with minimal gear. Discovering new and exciting places to spend time on the water is one of the greatest joys I find as a fisherman, and this adventure did not disappoint. The joy of simply catching fish can only be improved by the joy of learning a new area, technique, or approach, and being successful to boot. Immersing ourselves into the unfamiliar tests our merit as outdoorspeople and maintains our healthy respect for all that we do not know and all that we still have to learn. While success is always sweet, finding it within unfamiliar circumstances produces a sense of pride unmatched by success within the familiar, as you know that you achieved success through your own merit.

As I drove homeward that day, my mind still racing with excitement from what had unfolded and my chest swollen with the pride of victory, I happily spent the long drive reflecting at how accomplished and fulfilled I was. The day had gone perfectly and with a huge degree of success, and the only thing I missed out on was an apple pie for breakfast.

Hunters Urged to Wear Orange

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE Press Release

Vermont Fish and Wildlife is reminding hunters to wear fluorescent hunter orange.

“Hunting is one of the safest outdoor activities, thanks to advances in education as well as science,” said Vermont Hunter Education Program Coordinator Nicole Meier. “Our volunteer hunter education instructors stress that wearing orange during hunting season is important, and studies prove that wearing fluorescent hunter orange keeps hunters visible to other people in the woods, but it keeps them relatively invisible to deer.”

“Every year we should strive to be the safest we can be by wearing at least a hunter orange hat and vest,” added Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Christopher Herrick. “Deer are most active during dawn and dusk hours when visibility is low. You can improve your chances of being seen by other hunters by wearing hunter orange, which can be seen even in low-light situations.”

“While it isn’t recommended to wear orange during

waterfowl and turkey seasons, we certainly still recommend hunter orange when you are going to and from your blind, treestand or calling spot,” said Meier.

While some hunters might be concerned that deer are scared by hunter orange, in fact deer have been shown to be unaffected by the color. A deer’s vision is based on movement, patterns and color variations. Unlike humans, deer do not have multiple color receptors in their eyes. They can see color, but their spectrum is limited. This means deer must rely heavily on their ability to detect movement over the ability to interpret color variations and patterns.

Hunting in Vermont continues to be a safe recreational pursuit and hunters can help keep it that way by choosing to wear hunter orange. This video shows how much more visible hunters are when wearing orange: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kjSI79ss9I>

Hunt smart. Hunt safe. Wear orange.



Vermont Fish & Wildlife urges wearing a fluorescent “hunter orange” hat and vest while hunting. VTF&W photo

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