

New York HUNTING & TRAPPING

2023–2024 Official Guide to Laws & Regulations

Volume 17, Issue No. 1, September 2023



See Inside

Highlights of Changes – Page 4

Season Summary – Pages 39-42



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Remember to Report Your Game Harvest

HuntFishNY Mobile App • 1.866.426.3778 • www.dec.ny.gov

Most regulations are in effect September 1, 2023 through August 31, 2024

Message from the Governor

New York's hunting and trapping traditions date back hundreds of years. While times have changed, these activities are an important link to our past for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers that bring thousands of visitors to our state each year to experience these traditions.

While wildlife management has changed over the centuries, hunters and trappers have long been integral to conservation of not only the game species they pursue, but the entire spectrum of wildlife diversity and the habitats on which they depend. However, today's challenges are different from those experienced by past hunters and trappers. Climate change, invasive species, and pollution threaten the natural resources we all cherish.

To meet these challenges to our shared environment and our communities, New York is making unprecedented investments in clean air, water, and land. The overwhelming support by New Yorkers resulted in passage of the historic Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act, which will provide generational investments in habitat conservation, species restoration, and further protection of the environment.

The role of hunters as conservationists is not new, but it is as important as ever. I know hunters will continue to be valuable partners with New York State as we implement the Bond Act and many other science driven wildlife management and conservation strategies in the years ahead.

This 2023-24 hunting and trapping guide reflects DEC's sustained efforts to promote and practice sound wildlife management and provide hunters with the information they need to enjoy the upcoming seasons. In addition, DEC wildlife staff and Environmental Conservation Police Officers are always available to answer any questions and clarify requirements before hunters and trappers head out.

Whether the upcoming seasons mean time afield with family and friends, visiting a wild place, harvesting sustainable and wholesome food, or all of the above, take pride in the contributions you and other hunters and trappers make toward conservation while you enjoy New York's outdoors.

Governor Kathy Hochul

Photo by Britta Wareham

Contents

2023–2024 Highlights of Changes	4
DEC Regional Offices/Important Phone Numbers	6

General Hunting Information

Licensing Information	10–13
Special Licenses for Hunters with Disabilities	12
How to Fill Out Your Carcass Tag and Report Your Harvest	13
Hunting Regulations and Hunter Education	14–15
The 4 Rules of Firearm Safety	32
Opportunities for Young Hunters	36–37

Hunting Area Information

Private Lands/State Lands/Other Areas to Hunt	16–17
Public Campgrounds and Licensed Guides	17

Big Game Hunting

General Big Game Regulations	18–21
Tagging, Reporting, and Transporting	18–20
Muzzleloading and Bowhunting	20
Crossbow Hunting Qualifications	23
Big Game Boundary Descriptions and Legal Implements	24
Deer Hunting Season Dates	25
How and When to Use Your Deer Carcass Tags	26
Deer Management Permits	28–29
Hunters: Want Older Bucks in New York?	34
Determining Future Big Game Season Dates	35
Bear Hunting	38

Small Game Hunting

General Small Game Regulations	44–45
Reptiles and Amphibians	44
Possession and Release of Game Birds	44–45
Falconry Seasons	45
Use of Hunting Dogs	45
Small Game Season Dates and Bag Limits	46–47

Turkey Hunting

General Turkey Regulations	48–50
Turkey Season Dates and Bag Limits	49

Migratory Game Bird Hunting

General Migratory Game Bird Regulations	51–52
Snow Goose Conservation Order	51
Migratory Game Bird Season Dates and Bag Limits	53–54
Waterfowl Hunting Zone Descriptions	55–56

Furbearer Hunting

General Furbearer Hunting Regulations	57–58
Furbearer Season Dates and Bag Limits	57
Hunting Furbearers at Night	58

Furbearer Trapping

License Information, Definitions and Trapping Methods	59–60
Body-Gripping Traps and Trigger Specifications	61–62
Furbearer Trapping Season Dates and Bag Limits	63

Environmental Conservation Officers

Q&A	66
Photo Gallery	67
Contact Information	68–69

Maps and Other Info

Regional Maps	70–77
Sunrise/Sunset Table	80



New York State

Kathy C. Hochul, Governor

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Basil Seggos, Commissioner
Katherine Petronis, Deputy Commissioner for Natural Resources
Jackie Lendrum, Director, Division of Fish and Wildlife
James Farquhar, Chief, Bureau of Wildlife
Jeremy Hurst, Section Head, Game Management
Katherine Jones, Guide Editor

How to contact us:

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Game Management Section
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4754
Website: www.dec.ny.gov

Division of Fish and Wildlife's Mission:

The mission of DEC's Division of Fish and Wildlife is to serve the interests of current and future generations of New Yorkers by using our collective skills, in partnership with the public, to describe, understand, manage, and perpetuate a healthy and diverse assemblage of fish, wildlife, and ecosystems.

This guide is a summary that is intended for convenience only. For complete references, consult the New York State Environmental Conservation Law and Volume 6 of the Codes, Rules and Regulations of New York State. These are available at:

www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/regulations.html

www.assembly.state.ny.us/leg/ (Environmental Conservation Law)

The advertisements contained herein offset the cost of this guide, are provided for informational purposes only, and do not constitute an endorsement by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.



J.F. Griffin Publishing, LLC is proud to print the official *New York Hunting & Trapping Regulations* summary on post-consumer recycled paper.



New York State DEC
Your source
for hunting
and trapping
information!

- Season dates, regulations, and places to hunt can be found on our website.
- Stay informed with email updates; there are more than 135 topics to choose from.



Connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.



Features



9



56



66

- 4 Highlights of Changes for 2023–2024
- 8 Game Harvest Reporting
- 9 A Primer on Hunting with Dogs
- 22 Deer Recovery by Bill Conners
- 23 Crossbow Hunting Information
- 28 Hunter Education: Next Step Courses
- 32 Non-Lead Ammunition Rebate Program: Hunters for Eagle Conservation in New York
- 33 Tree Stand Safety—Hunt Safe, Hunt Smart
- 34 Hunters: Want Older Bucks in New York?
- 39–42 Pull-Out of 2023–24 Hunting and Trapping Seasons Summary
- 43 The Partnership Between Hunter and Hound by John Jarzynski
- 45 Use of Hunting Dogs
- 56 Choosing Duck Season Dates
- 64 Game Recipe: BEAVER-CUE provided by Elevated Wild
- 66 Focus on Law Enforcement

ON THE COVER:

(Left to right) Top right: Jaida M. with dog Sidney; Jarod R. with dog Cooper. Middle row 1: Kelly M. with a Chocolate Lab; Mark C. with dogs Haz and Xo. Middle row 2: Mark C. and Johnathan D. with dog Roxy; McKenna D. with an Irish Setter and a Lab; Ryan M. with dog George; Jackson K. with dog Oakley. Bottom row 3: Susan J. with a Brittany; Selma A. with a Weimaraner; Melissa F. with two Wirehaired Pointing Griffons.



Subscribe now to **CONSERVATIONIST** and save!

- Your guide to New York hunting, wildlife, outdoors, and more.
- Order your FREE issue now! Seven issues for **only \$12**.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

www.TheConservationist.org or call 800-678-6399 and mention code 89HATG

Or mail this coupon to: **Conservationist, PO BOX 1500, LATHAM, NY 12210**

If you are not satisfied, return the bill marked “cancel” and you will owe nothing.

Highlights of Changes for 2023–2024

Increased Mallard and Canada Goose Opportunities

- The mallard bag limit increased to no more than 4 mallards per day, of which 2 may be hens.
- Canada goose season length and bag limits increased to 45 days with a bag limit of 3 per day in the West Central, East Central, Northeast, Lake Champlain, and Hudson Valley Zones.

For more information on waterfowl seasons go to www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/28888.html.

Modernized Turkey Hunting Regulations

- Due to advances in shot shell technology, the minimum shot size allowed for turkey hunting (fall and spring) has been reduced from no smaller than #8 to no smaller than #9 shot.
- May 2023 marked the first regulated spring turkey hunting season in Suffolk County (Wildlife Management Unit 1C). The new hunting opportunity will continue in May 2024.

Hunter Education: Next Step Courses

The DEC's Hunter Education Program (HEP) is now offering *Next Step* courses for those who have already completed a hunter education, bowhunter education, or trapper education certification course and want more education and hands-on experience. All *Next Step* courses are free, but registration is required. Please read more about this program on page 28.

Use of Semi-Automatic Rifles for Hunting and Firearm Possession, Storage, and Transport

In 2022, New York State adopted new requirements for the purchase and transfer of ownership of semi-automatic rifles and the purchase, possession, storage, and transport of firearms and ammunition in New York. At press time, additional legislation is pending that may affect these requirements. See www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/hunting.html and gunsafety.ny.gov for more information and guidance about how these laws affect hunters and hunting-related activities.

Non-lead Ammunition Rebate Program

The DEC is partnering with researchers to implement a multiyear study to determine the reduction in eagle deaths resulting from use of non-lead ammunition for deer hunting. Researchers are offering a rebate of up to \$60 for purchase of certified non-lead ammunition. For more information about this program, please refer to page 32.

Reminder: Recent Deer and Bear Hunting Opportunities and Requirements Continue

- 12- and 13-year-old hunters can hunt deer (not bear) with a firearm or crossbow under the supervision of a licensed adult hunter in counties that have passed a local law to participate. Check the DEC website for an updated list of participating counties.
- Holiday Deer Hunt is an extension of the late bow and muzzleloading season for deer in the Southern Zone from December 26 through January 1.
- Daily hunting hours for deer and bear are 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset.
- Hunters must wear a fluorescent orange/pink hat or vest when hunting deer or bear with a firearm. See page 18 for details.
- An antlerless-only deer season will occur from Sept. 9–17, 2023, with firearms, crossbows, and vertical bows allowed in WMUs 3M, 3R, 8A, 8F, 8G, 8J, 8N, 9A, and 9F, and vertical bows in WMUs 1C, 3S, 4J, and 8C. Hunters may only use DMPs and DMAP tags during this early antlerless season.

PURCHASE A \$5 HABITAT & ACCESS STAMP TODAY!



This year's Habitat & Access Stamp features the popular opossum! All funds from stamp purchases are used for projects aimed at conserving fish and wildlife habitat and increasing access to public and private lands for outdoor recreational activities.

To make your donation today, go to www.dec.ny.gov/permits/47452.html, visit your local license issuing agent or call 1-866-933-2257.



Williamstown, MA | Birmingham, AL

About This Guide

This high-quality guide is offered to you by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation through its unique partnership with J.F. Griffin Publishing, LLC.

The revenue generated through ad sales significantly lowers production costs and generates savings. These savings translate into additional funds for other important agency programs.

If you have any feedback or are interested in advertising, please contact us at 413.884.1001 or at www.JFGriffin.com

Graphic Design:

Jon Gulley, Dane Fay, Evelyn Haddad, and Chris Sobolowski

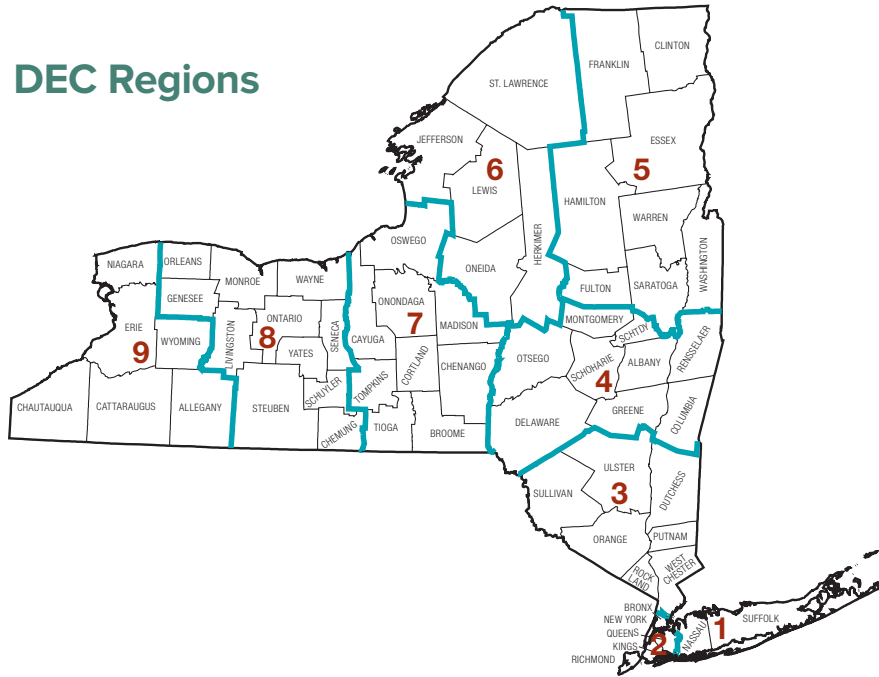


This guide is also available online at

eRegulations.com

Important Numbers

DEC Regions



Explore. Learn. Grow.



www.dec.ny.gov
 Search 'Becoming an Outdoors Woman'
 518-402-8963

Hands-on workshops where adult women can learn outdoor skills like how to fish, hunt, shoot, kayak, or backpack in a supportive atmosphere with patient, enthusiastic instructors.

Important Numbers					
Region	Offices	Wildlife	Law Enforcement	Hunter Ed	Forest Rangers
1	Stony Brook University 50 Circle Rd. Stony Brook, NY 11790-3409	(631) 444-0310	(631) 444-0250	(631) 444-0255	(631) 444-0291
2	1 Hunters Pt. Plaza 47-40 21st St. Long Island City, NY 11101-5407	(718) 482-4922	(718) 482-4885	(631) 444-0255	(631) 444-0291
3	21 South Putt Corners Rd. New Paltz, NY 12561	(845) 256-3098	(845) 256-3013	(845) 256-3063	(845) 256-3026
4	1130 North Westcott Rd. Schenectady, NY 12306-2014	(518) 357-2355	(518) 357-2047	(518) 357-2355	(518) 357-2161
	65561 State Hwy 10, Suite 1 Stamford, NY 12167-9503	(607) 652-7367	—	—	
5	1115 Route 86, PO Box 296 Ray Brook, NY 12977-0296	(518) 897-1291	(518) 897-1326	—	(518) 897-1303
	232 Golf Course Rd. Warrensburg, NY 12885	(518) 623-1240	—	(518) 623-1240	
6	317 Washington St. Watertown, NY 13601-3787	(315) 785-2263	(315) 785-2231	(315) 785-2533	(315) 785-2263
	225 North Main St. Herkimer NY 13350	(315) 866-6330	—	—	
	190 Outer Main St, Suite 103 Potsdam, NY 13676	(315) 265-3090	—	—	
	17893 Game Farm Rd. Dexter, NY 13634	(315) 639-6122	—	—	
7	615 Erie Blvd. West Syracuse, NY 13204-2400	—	(315) 426-7431	—	(607) 753-3095 x.223
	1285 Fisher Ave. Cortland, NY 13045	(607) 753-3095 ext. 247	—	(607) 753-3095 ext. 242 or 247	
8	6274 E. Avon-Lima Rd. Avon, NY 14414-9519	(585) 226-5380	(585) 226-6706	(585) 226-5463	(607) 622-8287
	7291 Coon Rd. Bath, NY 14810-9728	(607) 776-2165	—	—	
9	700 Delaware Ave, Buffalo, NY 14209	(716) 851-7010	(716) 851-7050	—	(716) 372-0645
	182 East Union St., Suite 3 Allegany, NY 14706	(716) 372-0645	—	(716) 372-0645	

Other Important Numbers

DEC Automated Licensing System	1-866-933-2257 M-F 8AM-5PM, Sat 9AM-5PM
Lifetime License Information	(518) 402-8843
NYC Watershed Hunting Permits	1-800-575-5263
Hunter Ed	1-888-HUNT ED2 (1-888-486-8332)
Deer Management Hotline	1-866-472-4332
Report Game Take via DECALS	1-866-GAME-RPT (1-866-426-3778)
Reporting Banded Waterfowl	www.reportband.gov 1-866-933-2257
Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program (HIP)	decals.licensing.east. kalkomey.com/
Information on NY SAFE Act	1-855-LAW-GUNS (1-855-529-4867)
Forest Rangers	1-833-NYS-RANGERS (1-833-697-7264)
Law Enforcement (ECOs)	1-844-DEC-ECOS (1-844-332-3267)

Message from the Commissioner

New York is reaping the benefits of our shared efforts to ensure a safe hunting experience for all. The past two years have been the safest for New York hunters, and the 2022 hunting season tied 2021 for the lowest number of hunting-related shooting incidents since record keeping began.

I am proud of the progress of New York's hunter education instructors and the hunting community to make hunting safer than ever. Although even with this success, every incident is still too many, so please remain vigilant and continue to adhere to the hunting safety tenets: point your muzzle in a safe direction, treat every firearm as if it is loaded, keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot, be sure of your target and beyond, and always wear hunter orange or pink.

Even though New York hunters have an excellent safety record, elevated hunting incidents, most often involving tree stands, are a growing concern. There is something you can do to prevent severe injuries if you fall from a tree stand or elevated platform — wear and properly use a fall-arrest system and stay connected from the time you leave the ground until you get back down to earth. Remember, a safety harness alone does not protect you if it isn't attached to the tree the entire time you are off the ground.

To hunt safely, be sure your fall-arrest system includes:

1. A vest style full-body harness with shoulder, chest, and leg straps;
2. A strap that attaches to the tree when in the stand;
3. A tether strap that attaches the harness to the tree strap;
4. A "lifeline" to keep you safe while climbing and descending; and
5. A suspension relief strap to be used in the event of a fall.

If you hunt from a tree stand, wear a fall-arrest system, and encourage your friends and family who hunt from tree stands to do the same.

Be safe. Be seen. And good luck this season.

Basil Seggos

Commissioner, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation



Game Harvest Reporting

Hunters are required to report the harvest of deer, bear, and turkey within 7 days of take. You may report your harvest using one of these methods:

- **Online:** www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8316.html
- **By phone:** 1-866-GAME-RPT (1-866-426-3778).
- **Game Harvest Mobile App** (see below for details).

DID YOU KNOW?

You may be fined up to \$250 for failing to report your deer, bear, or turkey take.

Take it • Tag it • Report it

Harvest reporting is the **LAW** and necessary for wildlife management!

Report your Game Harvests via Mobile App!

DEC's mobile app, *HuntFishNY* provides hunters with an e-license and game harvest reporting tool. Hunters now have a quick, user-friendly way to:

- gain instant, mobile access to an electronic version of sporting licenses and privileges;
- report the harvest of deer, bear, and turkey on a smartphone immediately while afield, even when out of cellular range;
- view current and past harvest reports
- view PDFs of season maps and sunrise/sunset table
- access an electronic version of regulations guides

The *HuntFishNY* App can be downloaded from the **Apple App store** or **Google Play store**.

NOTE: You will need a DEC Automated Licensing System (DECALS) user name and password in order to access your license documents through the app. If you have not yet created an online user name and password, visit www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6101.html today. Questions? Call our sporting license hotline at 1-866-472-4332.



Camp with us!

NEW YORK STATE Department of Environmental Conservation

at one of the 52 DEC Campgrounds in the Adirondack & Catkill Forest Preserve of New York State

newyorkstateparks.reserveamerica.com

REPORT YOUR HARVEST
1-866-426-3778
HuntFishNY Mobile App
www.dec.ny.gov

TAKE IT
TAG IT
REPORT IT

RECEIVE INFORMATION ABOUT
**HUNTING AND TRAPPING
IN NEW YORK STATE**

Subscribe to DEC Deliveries to receive bi-weekly newsletters from DEC about wildlife biology, management, research, regulations, hunting and trapping.

Subscribe now at www.dec.ny.gov

A Primer on Hunting with Dogs

The New York State Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) allows hunting with dogs throughout the state. Hunting dogs improve your chances of finding and recovering game, but the true advantage of having a hunting dog is having a companion in the field. The bond between hunter and dog is a friendship unlike any other — one that teaches patience, devotion, and allows for serenity in the outdoors. People who hunt with dogs are guided by several important rules and considerations:

- Get permission of all landowners in the area you plan to hunt before heading afield.
- A hunter may not go on posted property, even to retrieve a dog, without landowner permission.
- It is not lawful for a hunter to knowingly release a dog on posted lands.
- In general, dogs are not allowed to run “at large” on lands occupied by deer, but as long as a dog is being used to hunt small game species (this includes game birds as well as raccoons, foxes, bobcats, and coyotes) during an open season under the control of a licensed hunter, it is not considered at-large.
- Some forms of hunting with dogs involve traveling long distances. In these cases, the dogs do not need to be within sight of the hunter, but hunters should avoid releasing the dogs in areas where they may run onto private land on which you do not have permission. Hunters may use radio tracking devices to help them follow their dog.

Hunters should remember that every time you go afield, you are an ambassador of the hunting community:

- Respect our natural resources and be considerate of both the hunting and non-hunting public by obeying all hunting laws and regulations.
- Respect private property owners. Some species, like coyotes, foxes, and raccoons, can travel large distances when being pursued. Get permission from all landowners in any area where your dogs may travel.
- Be a good steward of the resource — information you provide through surveys and harvest reporting is essential for sound game management.



Merganzer, Josh S.'s hunting companion sporting a hunter orange hat to remind others to hunt safe this season

General License Information

Purchasing a License

Hunting, trapping, and fishing licenses can be purchased at over 1,200 agent locations throughout New York State, over the phone via the DEC call center at 1-866-933-2257/M–F, 8AM–5PM, Sat. 9AM–5PM (extended hours Aug 1–Nov 30, M–F 7AM–7PM, Sat 9AM–5PM), and online through DEC’s Automated Licensing System (DECALS) at www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6101.html.

You can also locate a license issuing vendor from the DECALS website. All major credit cards are accepted online and over the phone.

Mandatory Hunter Education

A hunter education course is required for persons who cannot provide proof that they have ever possessed a hunting license. You must be at least 11 years of age to take this class. The general course is an in-person or online course offered by DEC and is a minimum of seven hours in length. Once the course is complete, the individual must have the DEC hunter education certificate added to their DEC licensing profile. This can be done anywhere licenses are sold or by calling 1-866-933-2257. DEC honors hunter education certificates and sporting licenses from all other states and countries that meet IHEA-USA requirements.

Mandatory Bowhunter Education

Hunters wishing to bowhunt for big game must present either:

1. Proof that they successfully completed an approved bowhunter education course (in-person or online). (Note: Approved courses are International Bowhunter Education Program courses or an equivalent course. If in doubt, call toll free — 1-888-HUNT-ED2); OR
2. Proof that they previously held a New York State bowhunting license or stamp issued in 1980 or later; if proof is from prior to 1980, they must take an additional 7-hour minimum bowhunter education course.

Mandatory Crossbow Requirement

Hunters wishing to use a crossbow must complete qualifications in the safe use of hunting with a crossbow and responsible crossbow hunting practices. See page 23 for details.

Residency

To qualify for an annual resident license, a person must live in New York State for more than 30 days immediately preceding the date of application. To qualify for a Lifetime License, a person must live in New York State for at least one year immediately preceding the date of purchase. Land ownership in New York does not make you a resident. Residency is that place where a

Continued on page 12

Licenses, Privileges, and Permits

Type	Age or Special Qualifier	Price
Hunting (Ages 16+) Privileges: Hunt small game species with gun, bow, or crossbow (see page 23). Hunt deer or bear with gun, muzzleloader, bow (with proof of bow education or a bow privilege), or crossbow (see page 23) during the regular season, or hunt with shotgun or muzzleloader during the January firearms season (permit required — see page 18) in Suffolk County (WMU 1C). You may hunt frogs with a valid hunting or fishing license. Qualifications: Hunter Education Certificate OR previous hunting license. Certificates to possess firearms do not qualify. Note: Those less than 18 years of age who are hunting big game for the first time as a holder of a hunting license must be accompanied for the entire season by a parent or legal guardian, or a person 18 years of age or older designated in writing (see permission form on page 37) with at least one year’s experience hunting bear or deer. Accompanist must have a current hunting license and meet all requirements as specified on page 37.	16–69 (NYS Resident)	\$22
	70+ (NYS Resident)	\$5
	Military Disabled ¹	\$5
	Patriot ²	FREE
	Indigenous Peoples ³	FREE
	16+ (Non-Resident)	\$100
Junior Hunting (Ages 12–15)	12–15 (NYS Resident)	\$5
	12–15 (Non-Resident)	\$5
Privileges:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ages 12–13: Hunt small game species with gun or bow and deer with gun or crossbow during appropriate seasons when accompanied* by a parent, legal guardian, or person 21 years of age or older with written permission from parent or guardian (see permission form on page 37). Check DEC’s website (www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/46245.html) for a list of counties where 12- and 13-year-olds can hunt deer with a gun or crossbow and page 37 for details.) • Ages 14–15: Hunt small game with gun, bow, or crossbow (see page 23) when accompanied* by a parent, legal guardian or person 18 years of age or older with written permission from parent/guardian. Hunt deer or bear with a gun, bow (with proof of bow education or a bow privilege), or crossbow (see page 23) during the regular season, or hunt with shotgun or muzzleloader during the January firearms season (permit required — see page 18) in Suffolk County, when accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or youth mentor 21 years of age or older designated in writing (see permission form on page 37). 		
* Accompanist must have a current hunting license and meet all requirements as specified on page 37.		
Qualifications: Hunter Education Certificate OR previous hunting license (certificates to possess firearms do not qualify). Must be accompanied by parent/legal guardian to purchase. First-time applicants must show proof of age (birth certificate or passport). Junior hunters do not need a Federal Duck Stamp, but are required to register in the NYS Harvest Information Program (www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6405.html) to hunt migratory game birds.		
Bowhunting Privilege (Ages 16+) Privileges: Hunt deer and bear with a bow during bowhunting seasons. Qualifications: Current year NYS hunting license, PLUS acceptable Bowhunter Education Certificate, OR NYS Bowhunting Stamp issued in 1980 or later, OR NYS Junior Bowhunting License issued 1980 or later. Note: To hunt deer or bear with a bow during the regular season, hunter must possess both a valid hunting license and either a current bowhunting privilege or a valid Bowhunter Education Certificate. This includes Westchester and Suffolk counties.	16–69 (NYS Resident)	\$15
	70+ (NYS Resident)	FREE
	Military Disabled ¹	FREE
	Patriot ²	\$15
	Indigenous Peoples ³	FREE
	16+ (Non-Resident)	\$30
Junior Bowhunting (Ages 12–15)	12–15 (NYS Resident)	\$4
	12–15 (Non-Resident)	\$4
Privileges:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ages 12–13: Hunt deer and bear with a bow during the bowhunting season or the regular season, or bear during the early bear season when accompanied* by a parent, legal guardian, or youth mentor 21 years or older and designated in writing (see permission form on page 37). Youth hunter will receive a deer of either sex carcass tag for use in the regular season, instead of a regular season buck tag. • Ages 14–15: Hunt deer and bear with a bow during the bowhunting season and the regular season when accompanied* by a parent, legal guardian or youth mentor 18 years of age or older designated in writing (see permission form on page 37). 		
* Accompanist must have a current hunting license and meet all requirements as specified on page 37.		
Qualifications: Current year NYS hunting license, PLUS acceptable Bowhunter Education OR previous Junior Bowhunting License. Must be accompanied by parent/legal guardian to purchase.		
Muzzleloader Privilege (Ages 12+) Privileges: Hunt deer (ages 12+) and bear (ages 14+) with a muzzleloading firearm during muzzleloading season, and the January special firearms season in Suffolk County (WMU 1C; ages 14+). Hunt deer (ages 12+) and bear (ages 14+) with a crossbow (see page 23). Qualifications: Current year NYS hunting license.	12–69 (NYS Resident)	\$15
	70+ (NYS Resident)	FREE
	Military Disabled ¹	FREE
	Patriot ²	\$15
	Indigenous Peoples ³	FREE
	12+ (Non-Resident)	\$30

Licenses, Privileges, and Permits

Type	Age or Special Qualifier	Price
Deer Management Permit Application (Ages 12+) Privileges: Application for up to two antlerless deer tags issued through a random computer selection process. Tags are valid for hunting antlerless deer only (both antlers less than 3" long) in a specified Wildlife Management Unit (WMU). See DMP information on pages 28–29. Application deadline is October 1 annually. Qualifications: Must hold a current year NYS hunting license to apply and pay a non-refundable \$10 application fee. Fee is waived for hunters 12–15 years of age and holders of Lifetime (Sportsman) Licenses purchased prior to October 1, 2009.	12–15 (NYS Resident)	FREE
	16+ (NYS Resident)	\$10
	Military Disabled ¹	\$10
	Patriot ²	\$10
	Indigenous Peoples ³	\$10
	12–15 (Non-Resident)	FREE
	16+ (Non-Resident)	\$10
Turkey Permit (Ages 12+) Privileges: Hunt turkey during fall and spring turkey seasons (see page 45). To hunt turkey, all hunters must possess a turkey permit. There are no exceptions. Qualifications: Current year NYS hunting license. Turkey tags are included with a Lifetime License.	12+ (NYS Resident)	\$10
	Military Disabled ¹	\$10
	Patriot ²	\$10
	Indigenous Peoples ³	\$10
	12+ (Non-Resident)	\$20
Trapping Privileges: Set traps for species during their appropriate seasons (see page 59 for detailed information). Qualifications: Trapper Education Certificate or previous trapping license. See page 37 for additional information on the mentoring program for trappers under 12 years of age.	12–15 (NYS Resident)	\$5
	16–69 (NYS Resident)	\$20
	70+ (NYS Resident)	\$5
	Military Disabled ¹	\$5
	Patriot ²	FREE
	Indigenous Peoples ³	FREE
	12–15 (Non-Resident)	\$5
	16+ (Non-Resident)	\$275

Lifetime Sporting Licenses

The following Lifetime Licenses are available to New York State residents only and may be purchased at all license-issuing outlets throughout New York State. Applicants must prove NYS residency for one year prior to application (see **Residency information** on page 10). For additional information and clarification on Lifetime License sales, contact our License Sales Unit, NYSDEC, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4790, call 518-402-8843, or visit www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6099.html. Lifetime License Holders should expect to receive their annual carcass tags in the mail no later than Sept. 1 annually. License Issuing Agents will replace licenses and tags free of charge between Sept. 1 and Nov. 1. After Nov. 1, there will be a replacement charge up to \$15. If you have a lifetime license card, you will only have to replace carcass tags at a fee of \$10.

Lifetime License (Sportsman) (combined hunting and fishing licenses, includes turkey permits):

For a person age 0–4	\$380
For a person age 5–11	\$535
For a person age 12–69	\$765
For a person age 70 or older	\$65

Other Lifetime Licenses/Privileges

Hunting License	\$535
Fishing License (age 0–69)	\$460
Fishing License (age 70 and older)	\$65
Trapping License	\$395
Bowhunting	\$235
Muzzleloading	\$235

¹ **Military Disabled:** Must be a NYS resident and provide a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs showing a 40% or greater service-connected disability. Once the disability is confirmed and entered, it will stay in your customer profile. **Note:** The first purchase of either a hunting, fishing, or trapping license within a calendar year will cost \$5. Subsequent purchases of these license types within the same calendar year will be free for qualifying customers.

² **Patriot:** Free hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses are available to NYS residents who have the appropriate hunting or trapping education and are active members of the NYS National Guard, US Reserve Forces, or certain members of the US Armed Forces. For more detailed information, visit our website or call 518-402-8843.

³ **Indigenous Peoples:** Recognizing the sovereignty of Indigenous Nations and their governments, tribal members do not need a hunting, fishing, or trapping license from DEC when engaged in these activities on Nation territory. Members of the Shinnecock and Unkechaug Nations, and members of the Haudenosaunee Nations enrolled on reservations wholly or partially in New York State may hunt, fish, and trap off of tribal lands using their tribal identification card or by obtaining a free hunting, fishing, and trapping license from DEC. Licenses can be obtained from participating tribal and nation councils or DEC headquarters in Albany 518-402-8843.

Deer Hunting Privileges and Tags

Resident and non-resident hunter licenses

- **Hunting or Junior Hunting (ages 12–15):** Hunters ages 12 and older will receive a Regular Season Deer Tag and hunters ages 14 and older will receive a Regular Season Deer Tag and Regular Season Bear Tag.
- **Muzzleloading privilege:** You will receive a Bow/Mz Season Either Sex Tag.
- **Junior bowhunting or bowhunting privilege:** You will receive a Bow/Mz Season Either Sex Tag. Junior bowhunters ages 12–13 will

receive an Either Sex Tag and a Bear Tag. Junior bowhunters ages 14–15 will receive an Either Sex Tag. Junior bowhunters may use the Either Sex Deer Tag during the regular season, with bowhunting equipment.

Residents and non-residents must purchase a hunting license to be eligible for bowhunting and muzzleloading privileges. **If you purchase both bowhunting and muzzleloading privileges, you will receive one Bow/Mz Either Sex Deer Tag and one Bow/Mz Antlerless Deer Tag.** Both tags may be used in either season, with the appropriate implement.

Lifetime Licenses and Tags for Young Hunters

Young hunters who hold a lifetime hunting privilege and wish to receive their tags must first take the appropriate hunter safety training course and have it entered in their DECALS profile. **To have the course added, please call the DEC call center at 1-866-933-2257 (M–F, 8AM–5PM).** Young hunters should take the appropriate training course well in advance of the season to allow adequate time for their tags to be mailed. Tags cannot be obtained from a license-issuing agent.

When purchasing a lifetime license for a child, the purchaser must bring proof of the child's age (e.g., birth certificate or passport) and a copy of the parent's proof of residency.

Remember to Report Your Game Harvest

Visit www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8316.html for details. **It's the law!**

See page 13.

General License Information

Residency continued from page 10

person maintains a fixed, permanent and principal home (regardless of where temporarily located), such as where a person is registered to vote. If under 18, the residence of parents or legal guardian shall be deemed such person's residence. For a complete list of valid residency proof documents please see www.dec.ny.gov/permits/95452.html#Res.

Active members of the U.S. Armed Forces stationed in New York and full-time college students in residence in the state during the school year (proof required) qualify for annual resident licenses.

Minimum Hunting Age

Minors under the age of 12 may not obtain a hunting license or hunt wildlife.

License Year

Licenses and permits are valid from September 1 through August 31.

License Responsibilities

- A license or tag is not transferable and may be used only by the person to whom it was issued (except for Deer Management Permits (DMPs)—see pages 28–29).
- It is illegal to possess another person's license while hunting.
- A license to hunt, trap, or fish does not give the holder any right to go on private property without permission of the landowner.
- You can legally purchase and possess only one hunting license per year.
- Your license must be carried on your person when hunting or trapping.
- It is illegal to refuse to show your license on demand to a law enforcement officer or the owner, lessee, or person in control of the lands (or their designees) while on their property.
- Make sure that your license has all the correct information. Carefully check it immediately after receipt. If you discover an error, have it corrected as soon as possible.



Annie A. with wirehaired pointing griffon, showing off her successful hunt.

Stamps / Donations		
Type	Age or Special Qualifier	Price
Habitat & Access Stamp Donations are used to create or improve fish and wildlife habitat and improve access to those resources for recreational or educational activities.	Any	\$5
Venison Donation Help feed the hungry by supporting NY's venison donation program.	Any	\$1 or more
Federal Duck Stamp Available at most post offices and some sporting goods stores.	16+	\$25
Privileges: Hunt migratory waterfowl. It is not needed for gallinules, coot, crows, rails, woodcock, or snipe. All migratory game bird hunters, including junior hunters, must register with the Harvest Information Program by calling toll free 1-866-933-2257 or www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6405.html . Qualifications: Validated by holder's signature on the face of the stamp. Hunter must also possess a current-year NYS hunting license.		

- Do NOT heat laminate your license. High temperatures will destroy the license and tags and turn them black. If destroyed, there is a fee for replacement.
- Sign the back of your license/privilege panel.

Back Tags

Must be visibly displayed on the middle of your back while hunting, except in the Northern Zone and Catskill Park.

Hunting License Exceptions

All residents must have a valid hunting license in their possession except:

- Resident owners primarily engaged in farming, lessees, and members of their immediate families do not need a hunting license when hunting small game on farmlands they are occupying and cultivating.
- Native Americans living on a reservation do not need a hunting license while hunting on reservation lands.

Free Licenses/ Patriot Licenses

Free hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses are available to members of the Shinnecock and Unkechaug Nations and members of the Six Nations residing on reservations in the state. They must be obtained from some Nations councils or by calling DEC headquarters in Albany 518-402-8843.

Free hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses are also available to NYS residents who have the appropriate hunter education and are active service members of the NYS Guard, US Reserve Forces or certain members of the US Armed Forces. For more detailed information, visit our website or call 518-402-8843.

Lost Licenses

A lost current-year license may be replaced at any license-issuing outlet at a cost of \$5 for a license panel. Big game carcass tag sets or turkey carcass tag sets may be replaced at a cost of

\$10. There is no charge to replace a lost backtag.

Special Licenses for Hunters with Disabilities

Non-ambulatory hunter permit

This permit allows qualified hunters to shoot a firearm from a motorized vehicle (including an off-road vehicle) that has the motor turned off and that is completely off the highway right-of-way.

To qualify for a Non-Ambulatory Hunter Permit, a person must be physically unable to move about except with the use of a mechanized aid such as a wheelchair.

Modified longbow authorization

This authorization allows qualified people to hunt big or small game with a legal bow that is equipped with a device to hold it in a drawn and cocked position. It does not allow for the use of a crossbow.

To qualify for a Modified Longbow Authorization, a person must be permanently physically unable to draw and hold a legal bow.

Modified crossbow permit

This permit allows qualified people to hunt big or small game during bowhunting season with a crossbow that has been specifically modified with a device that only allows it to be discharged (fired) by means of a breath tube. This permit does not allow the use of an unmodified crossbow in place of a bow for the entire bow season.

To qualify for a Modified Crossbow Permit, a person must be permanently physically unable to hold or draw a legal bow or to fire a legal bow that has been modified to hold and release the string.

If a person can pull the trigger on a gun, he or she will not qualify for a Modified Crossbow Permit.

For more information on these permits, write the NYS DEC Special Licenses Unit, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4752, email speciallicenses@dec.ny.gov or call 518-402-8985. The application process takes time; write or call well before you intend to hunt.

How To Properly Fill Out Your Carcass Tag and Report Your Harvest

Doc# 23-03-12345678 2023-24

Reg Season Deer Tag
Pete Moss 08/02/1989
 ID: 999999999999 Issued 08/14/2023 12:26 PM

Fill out both sides immediately upon harvest

Kill Info
 Date 11-27-23
 County Greene
 Town Cairo
 WMU 4H

Sex M F
 Antler Pts L 3 R 3

Reg Season
 Bowhunting
 Muzzleloading
 Youth



It's as Easy as 1 - 2 - 3!

- 1 Fill in the date, location, biological, and season information on the front of your tag.
- 2 Mark or cut out month and day of kill AND sign the back of your tag.
- 3 Report your harvest! See details below.

Use pen or permanent marker.

Mark or Cut Out month & day of kill

HuntFishNY
 Check out DEC's mobile app!
NY Fishing, Hunting & Wildlife
 Download FREE from the
 Apple App Store or Google Play!
 Now includes an electronic license & game
 harvest reporting feature!

For more information on the app & game harvest reporting, visit:
www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8316.html
 Report by phone: 866-426-3778

EnCon Officer 247 Dispatch - call 844-332-3267

All Licensees: I hereby affirm under penalty of perjury that information provided on this form is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. False statements are punishable as a Class A misdemeanor pursuant to Section 210.45 of the Penal Law.

Signature Jane Doe Hole

Parents of Junior Licensees must sign and provide supervision.
 Parent's Signature _____

It is against the law to improperly or incompletely fill out your carcass tag.

Hole for attaching to your game

Remember: Take It • Tag It • Report It

3 Reporting Your Game Harvest

- Deer, Bear, and Turkey harvests must be reported within 7 days of take.
- You can report your harvest by phone, online, or through our HuntFishNY mobile app (see page 8 for details).
- Reporting online and through the mobile app is simple, fast, and convenient!
- Visit www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8316.html.



Remember to save the bear's skull so DEC can collect a tooth to age the bear.

Information You Will Need When Reporting

CUSTOMER ID #

12 DIGIT DOC #

Doc# 23-03-12345678 2023-24

Reg Season Deer Tag
Pete Moss 08/02/1989
 ID: 999999999999 Issued 08/14/2023 12:26 PM

Fill out both sides immediately upon harvest

Kill Info
 Date 11-27-23
 County Greene
 Town Cairo
 WMU 4H

Sex M F
 Antler Pts L 3 R 3

Reg Season
 Bowhunting
 Muzzleloading
 Youth

Jane Doe
 ID# 314114431020 Valid 09/01/2023
 08/31/2024

You must call to report your deer, turkey or bear within 7 days of take.
 To report Call Toll-free : 1-866-426-3778(GAMERPT) or visit www.dec.ny.gov

Date of Kill Reported

DMP Deer Tag-4H 23-04-12345 8

Reg Season Deer 23-03-87654321 11-27-23

Bear Tag 23-02-12345689

CORRECT TAG TYPE

- For Spring Turkey:
 - » Spur length (none, less than 1/2", 1/2" or longer)
 - » Beard length (less than 3", 3" or greater but less than 7 1/2", or 7 1/2" or longer.
 - » Estimated weight
- For Fall Turkey:
 - » Remember to save a leg. We will request it to determine age and sex.

If you SEE something, SAY something

Report Poachers and Polluters

Call an Environmental Conservation Officer at
1-844-DEC-ECOS



General Hunting Regulations

The following are general hunting regulations. Specific regulations for various game species are in the Small Game, Big Game, and Trapping sections of this booklet.

Definitions

Air gun—a firearm that uses spring or compressed air (not gunpowder) to propel a single projectile that is .17 caliber or larger and produces a muzzle velocity of at least 600 feet per second. You may use a smooth or rifled bore.

Bow—includes long (stick), compound, or recurve bow.

Crossbow—consists of a bow, a string, and either compound or recurve limbs with a minimum width of 17 inches (tip of limbs, uncocked), mounted on a stock. The stock shall have a trigger with a working safety that holds the string and limbs under tension until released. It shall have a minimum overall length from the butt of the stock to the front of the limbs of 24 inches and be able to launch a minimum 14-inch arrow/bolt, not including the legal arrowhead. It shall have a draw weight of 100 to 200 pounds. Optical sights are allowed on crossbows.

Firearm—all guns, including handguns, rifles, shotguns, muzzleloaders, BB, and pellet guns.

Handgun—is any pistol or revolver intended to be aimed and fired with one hand and having a barrel length not exceeding 16 inches. Possession of handguns in New York State requires a NYS Pistol Permit. New York does not recognize permits issued by other states.

Muzzleloading firearm—is a firearm loaded through the muzzle, shooting a single projectile and having a minimum bore of .44 inch. Scopes or fiber-optic sights may be used at any time. You must possess a New York State Pistol Permit to hunt with a muzzleloading pistol.

Rifle—is a firearm with a barrel length of 16 inches or more with rifling in the barrel that uses metallic cartridges.

Shotgun—is a firearm with a barrel length of 18 inches or more that uses shells that are non-metallic except for the base.

Motor vehicle—means every vehicle or device operated by any power other than muscle power including but not limited to automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, tractors, trailers, motorboats, snowmobiles, and all-terrain vehicles, whether operated on or off public highways.

Public highway—means any road maintained by a state, county, or town. A private road is one maintained by a person or corporation.

To hunt—means to pursue, shoot, kill, or capture (other than trap) wildlife and includes all lesser acts that disturb or worry wildlife, whether or not they result in taking. Hunting also includes all acts to assist another person in taking wildlife.

Be Safe — Be Seen

- Assume every gun to be loaded.
- Control the muzzle, point in a safe direction.
- Keep finger off the trigger until firing.
- Be sure of your target and beyond.
- Wear hunter orange or pink.

To take—means to pursue, shoot, hunt, kill, capture, trap, snare, or net wildlife and game—and all lesser acts that disturb or worry wildlife—or to place or use any net or other device commonly used to take wildlife.

To trap—means to take, kill, or capture wildlife with traps, deadfalls, and other devices commonly used to take wildlife, including the shooting or killing of lawfully trapped animals. It also includes all related activities such as placing, setting, staking, or checking traps, or assisting another person with these activities.

Manner of Taking

It is illegal to take or hunt wildlife:

- While in or on a motor vehicle (except by special permit—see page 12)
- With the aid of a vehicle's lights
- On or from any public road
- With any firearm equipped with a silencer
- With any firearm which continues to fire as long as the trigger is held back (an automatic firearm)
- With any semi-automatic firearm with a capacity to hold more than 6 rounds, except:
 1. Firearms using .22 or .17 caliber rimfire ammunition, or
 2. Firearms altered to reduce their capacity to no more than 6 shells at one time in the magazine and chamber combined, or
 3. Autoloading pistols with a barrel length of less than 8 inches
- With a spear
- With a bow equipped with any mechanical device which is attached to the bow (other than the bowstring) for drawing, holding, or releasing the bowstring except for a person with a physical disability in possession of a Modified Longbow Authorization (compound bows are legal)
- With a spear gun or modified crossbow except for a person with a physical disability in possession of a Modified Crossbow Permit
- With an arrow with an explosive head or shaft
- With any device designed or intended to deliver drugs to an animal

Baiting—It is illegal to hunt with the aid of bait or over any baited area when hunting big game, upland game birds, turkey, or waterfowl.

Fish—Crossbows may not be used to take carp or any other fish.

Spotlighting

You may use lights to observe wildlife under the following conditions:

- You are not within 500 feet of a home or farm building, unless you have permission from the

owner or lessee (when looking for deer or bear)

- While in or on a motor vehicle and operating a light and no person has a firearm, bow, or crossbow, or if:
 - » the implement is taken down, or
 - » the implement is securely fastened in a case, or
 - » the implement is locked in the trunk of the vehicle, or
 - » the implement is a handgun

For information on hunting furbearers at night, see page 58.

Possession of Firearms and Crossbows

During the open season for deer, it is illegal to:

- Possess shotgun shells loaded with slug or ball, unless holding a valid license (including carcass tags) or permit to take deer or bear, or
- Possess a rifle larger than a .22-caliber rimfire in areas where rifles are banned for taking deer. A rifle larger than .22-caliber rimfire means a rifle chambered for a rimfire cartridge greater than .22-caliber or any centerfire rifle. Centerfire rifles less than .22-caliber and muzzleloading rifles are legal.

In Westchester County and on Long Island, it is illegal to use any rifle for hunting or to carry one afield. In Suffolk, Nassau, and Westchester counties, it is illegal to use a crossbow to hunt wildlife.

In the Northern Zone, it is illegal to carry a rifle larger than .22 rimfire or a shotgun loaded with slug, ball, or buckshot afield if accompanied by a dog, except when coyote hunting.

Possession of handguns in New York requires a NYS Pistol Permit. New York does not recognize permits issued by other states.

New York State recently adopted legislation governing the purchase or transfer of ownership of semi-automatic rifles. Go to www.dec.ny.gov or <https://safeact.ny.gov/resources-hunters> for more information.

Transportation of Firearms

A person may not transport or possess a shotgun, rifle or crossbow in or on a motor vehicle unless the firearm is unloaded in both chamber and magazine or the crossbow is taken down or unloaded (bolt removed and crossbow uncocked).

A muzzleloader is considered unloaded when the cap is off the nipple, the primer is removed, the primer powder is removed from the flintlock pan, or the battery is removed from an electric-fired muzzleloader.

A crossbow is considered unloaded when the arrow/bolt is removed and the crossbow is uncocked. While legally hunting migratory game birds, a loaded firearm may be possessed in a motorboat not under power or in a motorboat under power only while retrieving dead/crippled birds.

Whenever a gun is in a vehicle and an adult is not present, the gun must be locked in a plastic or metal, hard-sided case or safe and be hidden from view. See www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/hunting.html for more details about gun transportation.

Discharge of Firearms, Crossbows, and Bows

It is illegal to discharge a firearm, crossbow, or bow:

- So that the load or arrow/bolt passes over any part of a public highway
- Within 500 feet for a firearm, 250 feet for a crossbow, or 150 feet for a bow of any school, playground, or an occupied factory or church
- Within 500 feet for a firearm, 250 feet for a crossbow, or 150 feet for a bow of a dwelling, farm building, or structure in occupation or use unless you own it, lease it, are an immediate member of the family, an employee, or have the owner's consent

You may hunt waterfowl over water within 500 feet of a dwelling or public structure as long as

Hunter Education
Hunter Education Program Requirements All first-time hunters, bowhunters, and trappers must pass one or more courses before they can purchase a license. Traditionally, hunter, bowhunter, and trapper education have been in-person courses taught by trained volunteer instructors certified by DEC. In 2020, DEC began offering an online hunter education course and an online bowhunter education course. Be sure to check the DEC website about the availability of both in-person and online courses.
In-Person Hunter Education Program Courses In-person courses have a field day where new hunters and trappers can get hands-on experience. All in-person courses are free of charge, but space may be limited. As hunting and trapping seasons approach, classes fill quickly. SIGN UP EARLY! All in-person hunter, bowhunter, and trapper education courses require the completion of homework prior to attending the course. Proof of completed homework must be brought to the course. Homework may take several hours to complete, so start it well in advance. Visit www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/92267.html for more information on materials, including a list of courses and course registration.
Online Hunter Education Program Courses All the requirements to earn a New York State hunter education certificate or a New York State bowhunter education certificate can be met by completing DEC's online courses and passing the exams. Upon passing, you will receive your certificate so you can purchase a hunting license or a bowhunter education certificate that enables you to purchase a bowhunting privilege. An online trapper education course may be available in 2023. There is a fee and you must be a New York State resident to take the online courses. They can be accessed at www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/92267.html .

neither are within 500 feet in the direction you are shooting.

Protected and Unprotected Wildlife

In New York State, nearly all species of wildlife are protected. Most species, including endangered species, songbirds, hawks, and owls are fully protected and may not be taken. The few unprotected species include porcupine,

red squirrel, woodchuck, chipmunk, English sparrow, starling, rock pigeon, and monk parakeet. Unprotected species may be taken at any time without limit. However, a hunting license is required to hunt unprotected wildlife with a bow, crossbow, or firearm.

Game species may be taken only during their open seasons and as summarized in this guide. Persons taking wildlife on licensed shooting preserves must comply with regulations governing those shooting preserves.

Access to Hunting Areas

Places to Hunt in New York

DECinfo Locator is an interactive map that includes DEC lands with public hunting access and other outdoor recreation information. Go to www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/109457.html.

For additional information about places to hunt in New York, go to www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7844.html.

Private Lands

Always ASK the landowner for permission to hunt and trap on private land. If it were your land, how would you want a visitor to act?

- Be courteous — ASK permission well in advance.
- ASK what is permitted. What species can be hunted? Are tree stands allowed?
- ASK if friends can join you.
- Exercise safety—always!
- Thank the landowner.

Many landowners use "ASK permission" stickers on their signs, which show the landowners' willingness to allow access to their lands. Stickers are available for free from your local Regional Wildlife Office (see page 6) or from DEC Central Office, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4754. For more information on hunting on private lands, visit our website: www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7844.html#Hunting.

Remember: Damaging bark or cutting trees, branches, or plants is illegal without permission of the landowner.

ASK Permission

"ASK Permission" stickers, a brochure explaining the program, Landowner Permission forms, and information about fish and wildlife conservation are available for free from DEC Regional Wildlife Offices or by writing:

NYSDEC, 625 Broadway,
Albany, NY 12233-4754

OR ONLINE
at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7844.html>



Rights of way that cross private property, such as for power lines and railroads, are not public land. Trespassing on these areas without permission from the landowner is illegal.

FWMA Cooperative Areas

Through cooperative agreements under New York's Fish and Wildlife Management Act (FWMA), Cooperative Hunting Areas provide access and management services to privately owned lands in order to increase public hunting opportunities. When using these areas, remember that you are a guest on private property. Littering and other abuses will only result in closure of many excellent hunting areas.

A word about liability

Whether or not the land is posted, New York State General Obligations Law protects landowners from liability for non-paying recreationists engaged in hunting, trapping, and fishing on their property. Because of this protection, recreational liability lawsuits against rural landowners are uncommon. This protection does not apply in cases of willful or malicious failure to guard or warn against dangers.

State Recreation Lands

For information on hunting and trapping opportunities and rules governing the use of state land, contact the regional office for the county where you would like to hunt or trap (see page 6). Wildlife staff can provide information on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and Cooperative Hunting Areas. DEC Forestry staff and Forest Rangers can provide details on State Forest lands and Forest Preserve lands. In some instances, written permission or permits are required to use state lands. These are available from DEC regional offices during normal business hours. For more information on State Recreation Lands, visit: www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/82098.html.

Motorized access to state lands

DEC has designated routes on state forests, wildlife management areas, forest preserve lands and conservation easement lands for motor vehicle use by people with a qualifying mobility disability. For a list of these opportunities, along with information on how to obtain a motorized access permit, please visit the DEC website at: www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/2574.html.

Wildlife Management Areas

The Division of Fish and Wildlife manages about 187,000 acres of wildlife management areas (WMAs). These areas are located throughout the state and contain a variety of different types of habitat and wildlife. They are managed primarily for wildlife and wildlife-related public use.

WMAs have specific use regulations in addition to the general use regulations for state land. Hunting, trapping, and fishing are permitted, except as specifically restricted by posted notice.

On wildlife management areas, it is unlawful to:

- Target shoot unless posted as an allowed activity
- Camp without written permission
- Travel off-road by use of motorcycles, motor scooters, mopeds, trail bikes, snowmobiles, or any other motorized vehicle, except as specifically allowed by a permit or posted notice
- Remove, cut, or willfully damage or destroy living vegetation of any kind
- Construct or place a permanent structure, blind, stand, or platform (including placement of nails or other hardware into trees)
- Leave any personal property when exiting the area; tree stands labeled with name and address or DEC ID number may be left overnight, but must be removed at the end of the hunting season
- Enter property posted with "No Trespassing" signs, except with written permission from DEC

For more information on WMAs, go to: www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7768.html.

Lands and Forests

The Division of Lands and Forests manages nearly 5 million acres of land, located in almost every county of the state. From the remote locations of the Adirondack and Catskill mountains to the rolling hills of the western part of the state and the forested areas on Long Island, a wide range of hunting and trapping opportunities await the outdoor recreationist.

Forest Preserve Lands

Hunting and trapping are permitted in the Adirondack and Catskill forest preserves. State-owned lands located within these preserves are designated Forever Wild. All state land rules and camping requirements apply to the preserves, as well as additional rules specific to certain areas. Contact the regional DEC office (see page 6) of



**Search & Rescue, Wildfire
Report DEC State Land
Violations or Complaints
833-NYS-RANGERS (833-697-7264)**



IF YOU NEED IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE, DIAL 911

the county where you would like to hunt or trap for more information. For further information on Forest Preserve lands, please visit the DEC website at: www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4960.html.

Conservation Easement Lands

Conservation easements are tracts of privately owned property on which New York State has acquired certain public recreation rights. These rights are outlined in the easement document as well as in a recreation management plan jointly developed by DEC and the landowner. Public hunting and trapping are allowed on many conservation easements, but due to the individual nature of each property, members of the public wishing to hunt or trap on a given easement are strongly encouraged to contact a local DEC office (see page 6) in the county where the property is located. The office can provide details on how to properly access the property and the hunting and trapping regulations unique to the easement. For further information on DEC held conservation easements, please visit the DEC website at www.dec.ny.gov/lands/41156.html.

State Forest Lands

Outside the Adirondacks and Catskills, State Forest lands are the most common type of state lands. Many recreational activities can be pursued on these lands, including hunting and trapping.

In some instances, permits are required to camp overnight on undeveloped State Forest lands. Unless specifically prohibited, groups of less than 10 people may camp on State Forest lands (other than developed campgrounds and wildlife management areas) for three consecutive nights without a permit. To camp for four consecutive nights or more, a permit must be obtained. Groups of 10 or more people need a permit to camp on such lands for one night. Further information may be obtained from DEC regional offices for the county you want to camp in (see page 6). For further information on State Forest Lands, please visit the DEC website at: www.dec.ny.gov/lands/40672.html.

Remember, it is unlawful to:

- Cut or injure trees (including construction of permanent tree stands, construction of natural blinds, clearing of shooting lanes around portable stands, placement of nails or other hardware into trees, or use of live trees as targets while sighting-in firearms).
- Store personal property. Tree stands or hunting blinds that do not injure a tree, and are properly marked or tagged with the owner's name and address or valid hunting license number, may be placed during the appropriate hunting season, but must be removed at the end of the season.
- Erect, use, or maintain a building or structure.
- Deposit or leave any litter or rubbish.

- Operate a motor vehicle, off maintained roads, except where specifically allowed.
- Operate an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) other than designated by posting or by permit.
- Camp without a permit when a permit is required.
- Possess a rifle, shotgun, or firearm in or upon buildings or grounds used for educational purposes (see Penal Law Section 265.01-a).

State Parks

Many State Parks offer waterfowl, small game, and big game hunting. For more information, contact the appropriate DEC regional office (see page 6) or visit the State Parks hunting website (www.parks.ny.gov/recreation/hunting). Call each State Park to find out specific hunting and access regulations. For a listing of State Parks that allow deer hunting, visit the DEC website at www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/88898.html.

Other Areas to Hunt

- **Finger Lakes National Forest (federal):** Located east of Seneca Lake in Schuyler and Seneca counties, small and big game hunting opportunities are available. Special hunting permits are not required.
- **Fort Drum Military Base (federal):** Wildlife Management Unit 6H, located in Jefferson and Lewis counties includes over half of the 107,000-acre U.S. Army military installation, which is open to the public for hunting and trapping. See the Fort Drum Fish and Wildlife Management Program website for more information at fortdrum.isportsman.net or call 315-772-9303.
- **Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge (federal):** Located at the north end of Cayuga Lake in Seneca county, this site offers small game and waterfowl hunting opportunities. This area is also open for deer hunting on a controlled basis during both the bowhunting and regular seasons. Permits are required. When deer management permit use is allowed, WMU 8J permits are valid. For current information on seasons, permits, maps, and regulations visit Montezuma's website at www.fws.gov/refuge/montezuma/visit-us/activities/hunting.
- **Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge (federal):** Located in Genesee and Orleans counties in western New York, this site offers small game and waterfowl hunting opportunities. This area is also open for deer hunting during both the bowhunting and regular seasons. For further information visit www.fws.gov/refuge/iroquois/visit-us/activities/hunting.
- **Long Island:** For a brochure on areas to hunt and for access permits, write to:
 - » Hunting Opportunities, NYS DEC
SUNY Stony Brook
50 Circle Rd.
Stony Brook, NY 11790-3404

- **New York City Watershed Lands:** The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) allows trapping, as well as deer, bear, turkey, and small game hunting on specially designated city water supply lands. Hunters and trappers must possess the appropriate, valid New York State sporting license and a valid access permit to hunt or trap on designated hunting and trapping areas on city water supply lands. For more information, including maps, go to www1.nyc.gov/site/dep/recreation/hunting-trapping.page.

DEC Campgrounds

DEC operates 52 public campgrounds in the Adirondack and Catskill parks. Hunting is not permitted within these campgrounds, although some campgrounds allow camping during big game season. Unloaded firearms are allowed on public campgrounds only during the spring and fall hunting seasons. A valid hunting license is needed. Firearms cannot be discharged in the campground or day-use facilities at any time. For more information on DEC's campgrounds, visit www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7825.html.

Campgrounds outside the forest preserves are operated by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (see State Parks).

For all campgrounds, reservations can be made by calling 1-800-456-CAMP or online at newyorkstateparks.reserveamerica.com.

Licensed Guides

For information on licensed professional guides in New York, contact NYS DEC, 625 Broadway, NY 12233-4752, call 518-402-8985, or visit the DEC website at www.dec.ny.gov/permits/30969.html.

Use of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and off-road vehicles (ORVs) is restricted on most state land.

Indigenous Nation Territories

Some Indigenous Nations have made provisions for limited public hunting, trapping, and fishing access, while others do not permit non-citizens to hunt, trap, or fish on their land. Check with the respective Nation's office to determine the requirements for hunting, trapping, and fishing within the territory boundaries. A special permit may be required.

To speak with a Forest Ranger regarding specific state lands and regulations, including backcountry camping permits, visit <http://on.ny.gov/NYSForestRangerRoster> for a listing of Forest Rangers by county.



Big Game Hunting

Hunting Hours

Big game hunting hours are 1/2-hour before sunrise to 1/2-hour after sunset (see page 80). Sunday hunting is allowed in all areas of New York. Before hunting on state lands, confirm regulations for the area.

Fluorescent Orange and Fluorescent Pink Clothing Requirements

Any person hunting deer or bear with a firearm or a person who is accompanying someone hunting deer or bear with a firearm shall wear:

1. a minimum total of 250 square inches of solid fluorescent orange or fluorescent pink material worn above the waist and visible from all directions; or
2. a minimum total of 250 square inches of patterned fluorescent orange or fluorescent pink consisting of no less than 50% fluorescent orange or fluorescent pink worn above the waist and visible from all directions; or
3. a hat or cap with no less than 50% of the exterior consisting of solid fluorescent orange or fluorescent pink material and visible from all directions.

Legally Antlered Deer

A legally antlered deer must have at least one antler that is 3" or longer. Antlerless deer are those without antlers (does and fawns) and deer with antlers less than 3" long. Special regulations apply in the Antler Restriction areas. See page 24 for details.

Defining "Early" and "Late" Seasons for Deer and Bear

When you see the term "early" muzzleloader or bowhunting season, it means before the regular season for that particular zone. "Late" means after the regular season for that zone.

Feeding and Baiting Prohibited

Intentional feeding or baiting of deer or bear is prohibited at all times of year. This includes use of mineral blocks or powders. Exempt activities include agricultural plantings, wildlife food plots, and cutting of trees or brush to provide winter forage.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Import Restrictions

Hunters are prohibited from returning to New York with whole carcasses or intact heads of deer, elk, moose, or caribou that they harvest

anywhere outside of New York. Only the deboned meat, cleaned skull cap, antlers with no flesh adhering, raw or processed cape or hide, cleaned teeth or lower jaw, and finished taxidermy products of CWD-susceptible animals may be brought into New York.

Manner of Taking

Big game may be taken with centerfire rifles, shotguns, handguns, muzzleloading firearms, bows, and crossbows during appropriate seasons and in designated areas (see maps, pages 24 and 25). You may use decoys, calls, and attractant scents to hunt big game.

It is unlawful to:

- Take big game while the deer or bear is in water.
- Possess a firearm of any description when bowhunting or accompanying a person bowhunting during an archery-only season.
- Possess a firearm other than a muzzleloading firearm when hunting deer or bear or when accompanying a person hunting deer or bear during a muzzleloading season.
- Make, set, or use salt licks or other attractants, whether block, liquid, or powder that contains any amount of salt, upon lands inhabited by deer or bear at any time of year.

In addition to the general hunting regulations for manner of take listed on page 14, it is unlawful to hunt big game with:

- Dogs or aircraft of any kind, including drones.
- The aid of a pre-established bait pile.
- A firearm or bow aided by any artificial light or a laser that projects a beam toward the target (use of illuminated reticle scopes, red dot scopes, or illuminated sight pins is allowed, provided no light is projected toward the target).
- An autoloading firearm with a capacity of more than 6 shells (one which requires that the trigger be pulled separately for each shot), except an autoloading pistol with a barrel length of less than 8 inches.
- A firearm using rimfire ammunition.
- A shotgun of less than 20 gauge or any shotgun loaded with shells other than those carrying a single projectile (rifling in the barrel or choke is allowed).
- A bow with a draw weight less than 35 lbs.
- Arrows with barbed broadheads; arrowheads less than 7/8 inches at the widest point or with less than 2 sharp cutting edges.
- Double-barreled muzzleloaders or percussion cap revolvers during the special muzzleloading seasons.
- An air gun or air bow.

Deer Management Focus Area

See www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/82382.html for information on the Deer Management Focus Area in Tompkins County. Expanded antlerless bag limits and a January antlerless season in this area provide additional opportunities for hunters and help to reduce deer-related conflicts.

Long Island Opportunities

All hunting on state-managed land requires a DEC permit. The archery deer season runs from October through January. There is a January firearms season during which shotguns and muzzleloading firearms can be used. Firearms users must obtain a landowner's endorsement to hunt during this season, and may also need a town permit. For more information on Long Island hunting opportunities visit www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8373.html.

Prohibited Sale of Deer or Bear Meat

It is unlawful to sell deer or bear meat. Other than meat, the parts (e.g., hides, skulls, claws, antlers, and taxidermy mounts or rugs) from legally taken and reported deer and bear may be sold. Bear gallbladders and bile shall not be possessed or sold unless a valid bear tag (original or copy) is attached.

Meat Unfit for Consumption

If a deer, bear, or turkey is found to be unfit for human consumption, a special permit may be issued that allows the hunter to take another deer, bear, or turkey, provided the season is still open. The entire animal, including the antlers, must be forfeited to get a permit. A permit will not be issued if the meat is unfit due to hunter neglect. Call a Regional Wildlife office or Law Enforcement office listed on page 6.

Tagging, Reporting, and Transporting

Deer and bear are in legal possession only when tagged with the appropriate carcass tag, valid for that season, implement, and sex of animal. See page 26 for clear tag descriptions.

Hunters who take a deer in remote areas may wish to bone it out and pack out the meat. This is lawful, but you must retain the carcass tag with the boned out meat.

Tagging and Reporting

After killing a deer or bear:

1. Ensure that you select the proper tag for the harvested deer or bear.
2. **Immediately** fill in all information and sign the carcass tag with ink that won't erase.
3. **Immediately** cut or mark the month and date of kill on the tag reverse.
4. Write the date of kill on the report panel. This will help you when reporting a harvest.
5. **Attach the tag** to the carcass upon arrival at your camp, home, or vehicle. You do not need to attach the tag while it is being

Continued on page 18

Big Game Hunting

Continued from page 20

dragged or physically carried from the place of kill to a camp or point where transportation is available.

6. **Report your harvest** online, by phone, or mobile app within 7 days as required by law. See page 8 for details.

After you have used your last deer tag, you may help others hunt deer. You must have your hunting license with you, and you may not shoot or attempt to shoot a deer.

Broadheads for Big Game		
Type	Legal	Illegal
Fixed Blade		
Mechanical Blade (shown in position of being withdrawn from an animal)	 Blades pivot forward (no longer barbed)	 Blades do not pivot (remain barbed)

Transporting

Deer and bear may be transported either inside or outside the vehicle.

- A deer carcass with head and deer carcass tag attached may be transported with the taker in attendance.
- If someone other than the taker is transporting the deer or bear, the taker must attach an additional tag to the carcass and include the names and addresses of both the taker and the transporter. The tag may be handwritten in ink or typed on any paper.
- All portions of deer or bear meat being transported by the taker shall be individually tagged and the tags shall include the name, address, big game DOC #, the date that the portions were cut, and the signature of the taker. Packaged or boxed portions of venison need only one tag and must be labeled "venison" on the outside of the box. If someone other than the taker is transporting the portions, an additional tag signed by the taker with the names and addresses of the consignee and taker are required for each portion.
- Non-resident hunters: if your home state prohibits the importation of whole deer carcasses from New York, you will need to follow the above guidelines for transportation of individual or packaged portions of deer meat while in New York State.

- A deer carcass minus the head may be transported as above, but evidence of the sex of the deer must be intact. The deer carcass tag must be affixed to the carcass, and a tag supplied by the taker must also be attached showing the name and address of the taxidermist where the head was sent.
- Heads of male deer may be transported to a taxidermist only if a tag supplied by the taker is attached bearing the taker's signature, address, big game DOC #, number of points on each antler, and the name and address of the taxidermist.
- The head of a doe with antlers that are 3 inches or more can be removed for mounting. Follow the same procedure that you would use for mounting a buck (see above).

Muzzleloader Hunting

Muzzleloading firearms may be used during the muzzleloader and regular seasons, and during the January Firearms season on Long Island.

- Hunters must possess a current muzzleloader privilege to participate during the muzzleloader seasons.
- The muzzleloader privilege is not needed for hunters to use a muzzleloading firearm during regular seasons.

Hunters can help end hunger in New York State

Each year, DEC partners with Feeding New York State and the Venison Donation Coalition to provide food for those in need. Through a cooperative relationship involving hunters, deer processors, the NYS Dept. of Health, and non-profit organizations like Feeding NYS, the Venison Donation Coalition, and regional food banks, nearly 40 tons of venison are made available each year to families across the state.



There are many ways a hunter can help feed those less fortunate. You can donate all or part of your deer at a cooperating processor, support your regional food bank monetarily, or you can make a cash donation to support venison donation programs when you purchase your hunting license.

Learn more about these programs by visiting www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8351



- Muzzleloaders may not be used in WMUs 3S, 4J, 8C, and may only be used in 1C during the Special Firearms season in January.
- Bow/Muzz either-sex or antlerless-only tags may not be used during the regular seasons, except in WMUs 1C and 3S.
- Hunters participating in the muzzleloader season shall not have in their possession, or be accompanied by a person who has in their possession, a bow or firearm other than a legal muzzleloading firearm or crossbow.

Bowhunting

Bowhunting opportunities include both the bowhunting and regular seasons:

- Hunters must possess a current bowhunting or junior bowhunting privilege to participate during the bowhunting seasons.
- The bowhunting privilege is not required to hunt with a bow during regular seasons, but hunters must possess proof of eligibility (either a valid bowhunter education certificate or prior bowhunting license).
- Bow/Muzz either-sex or antlerless-only tags may not be used during the regular seasons except by junior bowhunters or in WMUs 1C and 3S.
- In WMUs 4J and 8C, only bows may be used to take deer during the regular and bowhunting seasons.
- Suffolk (WMU 1C) and Westchester (WMU 3S) counties have separate regular seasons restricted to bows for taking deer.

Crossbow Use

Crossbow opportunities include portions of bow seasons in addition to muzzleloader and regular seasons:

- Crossbows may be used to take deer during muzzleloader seasons and a portion of the early bow seasons (see maps on page 25) by hunters with a valid hunting or junior hunting (ages 12–15 only) license and a current muzzleloader privilege. Junior hunters (ages 14–15) may also take bear with crossbows during these seasons (see map on page 38).
- Crossbows may be used to take deer during the regular season by hunters with a valid hunting or junior hunting (ages 12–15) license and to take bear during the early bear and regular seasons by hunters with a valid hunting or junior hunting (ages 14–15 only) license.
- See page 23 for the required Crossbow Certificate of Qualification. The New York State Legislature does not allow all crossbows to be used to hunt big game in New York. See page 14 for the definition of a legal crossbow.

Barbed Broadheads

Barbed broadheads are illegal for hunting big game. A barbed broadhead is one in which the angle formed between the trailing or rear edge of any blade and the shaft is less than 90 degrees. A notch at the base of the blade extending no more than two millimeters from the shaft shall not be considered a barb. Broadheads with mechanical blades are legal if the blades DO NOT form a barb or hook when the arrow is pulled from the flesh of a deer or bear. (See graphic on page 20.)



Photo courtesy of Ella R.

Michael J. got his first deer in 2022 in Greene County.

Deer Recovery

By Bill Connors

Perched 15 feet off the ground, you saw that a buck you had been watching since late summer worked his way down a trail that brought him directly under your treestand. You did everything you could to maintain your composure, but in your excitement the perfect shot you took a few seconds later wasn't so perfect after all. The deer bounded over the hill after your broadhead passed through the animal well behind the ribcage.

When you finally started tracking the deer, what started as a good blood trail, thinned to a drop here and there, before disappearing altogether. Eventually you concluded that your best hope of recovery was to call for help from Deer Search, Inc., a dedicated group of volunteers that help hunters locate what otherwise might have been a lost animal.

In 1986 the New York State Legislature authorized the Department of Environmental Conservation to license handlers to use leashed tracking dogs to assist hunters with the recovery of big game animals. Since then, Deer Search, Inc. volunteers and their dogs have helped recover thousands of harvested deer and bear across New York.

Jared Brueggeman, a member of Deer Search, Inc. from Delaware County, was exposed to the world of tracking dogs while helping his uncle track a deer when Jared was 17 or 18 years old. Watching the dog work and being a part of the recovery effort left him with a lasting impression that stayed with him through college. After graduating with a degree in wildlife science, his experience became the catalyst for his membership in the tracking organization.

Though Brueggeman's interest had its roots in working with the dogs, he said, "I came to realize that each time a wounded or dead deer is recovered it fulfills our responsibility as conservationists and allows that animal to be used and enjoyed by the hunter and their family."

Having volunteers ready to help with recovery does not absolve hunters of the need to carefully consider any shot they are about to take. Hunters must be proficient with the bow or gun they are about to use and must ask themselves if the animal is within range, is the field of view unobstructed, and just as important, is the deer or bear positioned

correctly for a lethal shot through vital organs? You can't let your excitement get in the way of good sense and ethical judgement.

Even if the deer does take off, a well-placed shot is going to make the dog's job that much easier. "Sometimes we're just the waterboy. The dog controls the track. The hunter will tell you the deer went out 50 yards, made a hard left and I lost it in thick cover. You put the dog on the track, and it takes you in an entirely different direction" said Marc Niad, another Deer Search member from Westchester County.



Jared Brueggeman and his dog Winnie with a black bear recovered for hunter Tim Boyd in Albany County.



Tracker Marc Niad with his dog Annie and a deer recovered in Westchester County.

Crossbow Hunting Qualifications and Safety Information

A crossbow must have compound or recurve limbs with minimum width of 17 inches (outer tip of limbs excluding wheels and cams, uncocked); a minimum overall length from butt of stock to the front of the limbs of 24 inches; and be able to launch a minimum 14 inch arrow/bolt, not including the legal arrowhead. It must have a draw weight of 100 to 200 pounds.

Crossbows may be used by any person age 12 or older to hunt deer and any person age 14 or older to hunt bear, unprotected wildlife, and **most** small game species. Crossbows may not be used to take carp or any other fish.

Hunters who plan to hunt with a crossbow must have in their possession while afield either their completed Hunter Education Certificate of Qualification card dated on or after April 1, 2014 or the completed Crossbow Certificate of Qualification located below.

Crossbow safety information

- Before shooting your crossbow, read and thoroughly understand your crossbow owner's manual.
- Make sure your fingers are well away (below rail) from the path of the bow string and cables.
- Never dry-fire a crossbow (cock and fire without an arrow placed on the rail).
- Make sure the crossbow limbs are free of obstructions before shooting.
- Never carry a cocked crossbow with an arrow in it while walking.
- If hunting from a tree stand, always cock (but do not load) the crossbow on the ground before climbing into the stand.
- Once seated and secured in the tree stand, pull up your unloaded crossbow with a haul line.
- Do not place an arrow on the crossbow until you are safely secured in your stand.

- Never use a cocking device to uncock a crossbow.
- To uncock a crossbow, shoot an arrow tipped with a field point into the soft ground or a target.
- Always identify your target and the area beyond it before shooting.
- To prevent wounding game, practice often and do not take shots at game that are beyond your effective range, generally less than 30–40 yards, similar to a modern compound bow.
- To better understand how an arrow functions and the skill required for hunting with an arrow, DEC recommends all crossbow hunters take a bowhunter education course.

DEC Crossbow Hunting Qualifications:

www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/68802.html

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation	
Crossbow Certificate of Qualification	
I certify that I have read and understand the safety recommendations, license requirements, and legal specifications for crossbow use in New York.	

Print Name	_____
Signature	_____
DEC ID# (this is your back-tag number)	Date

Fill in, cut out, and carry afield with your hunting license while hunting with a crossbow.

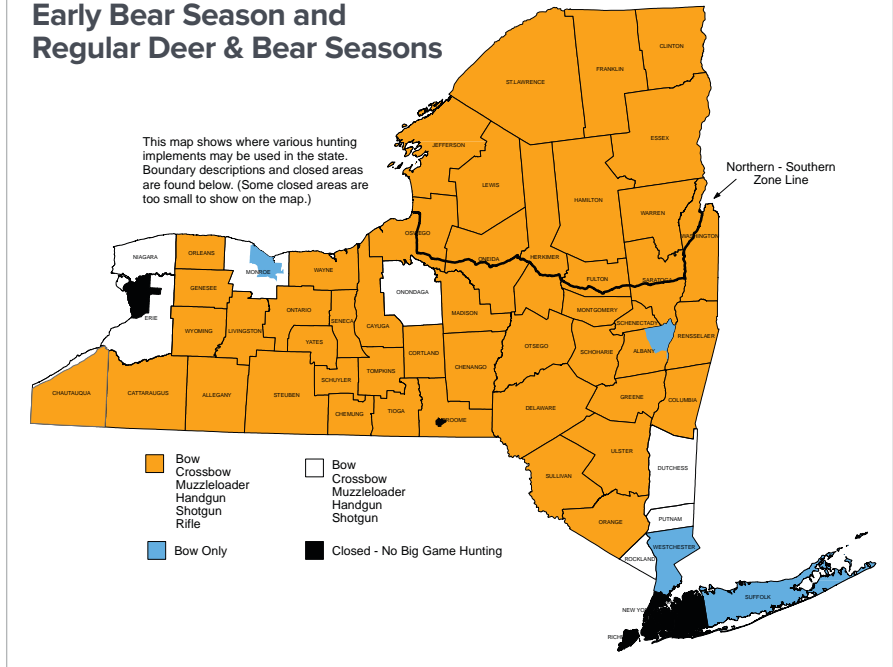
Big Game Boundary Descriptions/Legal Implements

Complete descriptions of all wildlife management units are available on DEC's website at www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8302.html.

Northern-Southern Zone Line

A line commencing at a point at the north shore of the Salmon River and its junction with Lake Ontario and extending easterly along the north shore of that river to the Village of Pulaski, thence southerly along Route 11 to its intersection with Route 49 in the Village of Central Square, thence easterly along Route 49 to its junction with Route 365 in the City of Rome, thence easterly along Route 365 to its junction with Route 28 in the Village of Trenton, thence easterly along Route 28 to its junction with Route 29 in the Village of Middleville, thence easterly along Route 29 to its junction with Route 4, thence northerly along Route 4 to its junction with Route 22, thence northerly and westerly along Route 22 to the eastern shore of South Bay on Lake Champlain in the Village of Whitehall, thence northerly along the eastern shore of South Bay to the New York-Vermont boundary.

Legal Implements for the Early Bear Season and Regular Deer & Bear Seasons



Closed Areas

The following closed areas are specific portions of the state where the taking of deer and bear is prohibited by the Environmental Conservation Law. This section does not include areas covered by town laws, local ordinances, or posting by landowners.

Broome County

City of Binghamton

Erie County

Area around Buffalo: bounded by Tonawanda Creek from East Branch Niagara River to Rt. 78 to Greiner Rd. to Rt. 268 to Rt. 5 to Ransom Rd. to Rt. 33 to Rt. 78 to Rt. 20 to Rt. 20A to Lake Erie.

Herkimer County

Area along Big Moose Lake: bounded by Judson Rd. from Herkimer-Hamilton County line to Higby Rd. to Big Moose Rd. to Martin Rd. and along it to its eastern end and then to the lake shore and back (starting westerly) along the shore to Herkimer-Hamilton County line and along it to Judson Rd.

Herkimer and Hamilton Counties

Area bounded by Rt. 28 from Old Forge to Inlet and by South Shore Rd. from Inlet to Old Forge.

Nassau County

All of Nassau County.

New York City

All of the City.

Antler Restriction Program

A mandatory antler point restriction exists in WMUs 3A, 3C, 3H, 3J, 3K, 4G, 4O, 4P, 4R, 4S, and 4W in southeastern New York (see deer hunting season maps). This program will continue as DEC encourages hunters elsewhere to practice voluntary restraint. Over time, as more and more hunters in the broader region opt to pass on young bucks voluntarily, it may be appropriate to lift the restrictions.

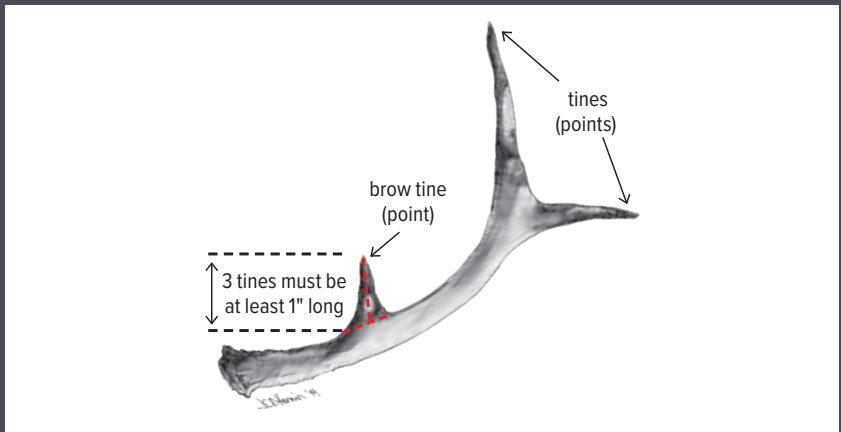
Antler Identification

Antler Point Restriction

- At least 1 antler with 3 or more points that are at least 1" long
- Applies to all public and private land and all seasons
- Hunters aged 12–16 are exempt and may take any buck with antlers 3" or longer

Antlerless Deer

- Adult does, doe fawns, buck fawns (button bucks), adult bucks without antlers, or with antlers less than 3" long
- May be tagged with your DMP or Bow/Muzzleloading antlerless or either-sex tags.

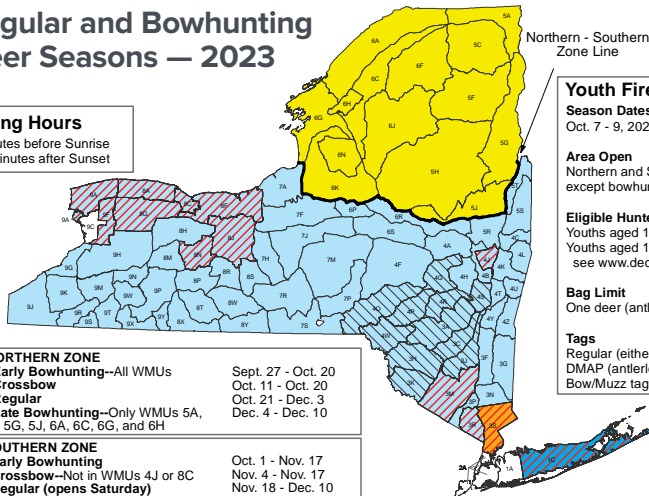


Deer Hunting

Regular and Bowhunting Deer Seasons — 2023

Hunting Hours

30 minutes before Sunrise to 30 minutes after Sunset



Youth Firearms Season

Season Dates
Oct. 7 - 9, 2023

Area Open
Northern and Southern Zone, except bowhunting-only WMUs

Eligible Hunters
Youths aged 14-15 years (all open areas)
Youths aged 12-13 years (select counties, see www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/46245.html)

Bag Limit
One deer (antlered or antlerless)

Tags
Regular (either-sex), DMP and DMAP (antlerless only);
Bow/Muzz tags are not valid

NORTHERN ZONE	
Early Bowhunting--All WMUs	Sept. 27 - Oct. 20
Crossbow	Oct. 11 - Oct. 20
Regular	Oct. 21 - Dec. 3
Late Bowhunting--Only WMUs 5A, 5G, 5J, 6A, 6C, 6G, and 6H	Dec. 4 - Dec. 10
SOUTHERN ZONE	
Early Bowhunting	Oct. 1 - Nov. 17
Crossbow--Not in WMUs 4J or 8C	Nov. 4 - Nov. 17
Regular (opens Saturday)	Nov. 18 - Dec. 10
Late Bowhunting	Dec. 11 - Dec. 19 & Dec. 26 - Jan. 1
WESTCHESTER COUNTY (3S)	
Regular--Bowhunting Only	Oct. 1 - Dec. 31
SUFFOLK COUNTY (1C)	
Regular--Bowhunting Only	Oct. 1, 2023 - Jan. 31, 2024
Special Firearms--(Permit Req.)	Jan. 7 - Jan. 31, 2024
Antler Point Restrictions	
During all seasons, antlered bucks must have at least one antler with 3 or more points that are at least 1 inch long. Young hunters (ages 12-16) are exempt.	
No Deer Hunting	

Early Antlerless Season	Sept. 9 - 17
Tags: DMP and DMAP	
Vertical Bow-Only: 1C, 3S, 4J, 8C	
Firearms, Bow, & Crossbow: 3M, 3R, 8A, 8F, 8G, 8J, 8N, 9A, and 9F	

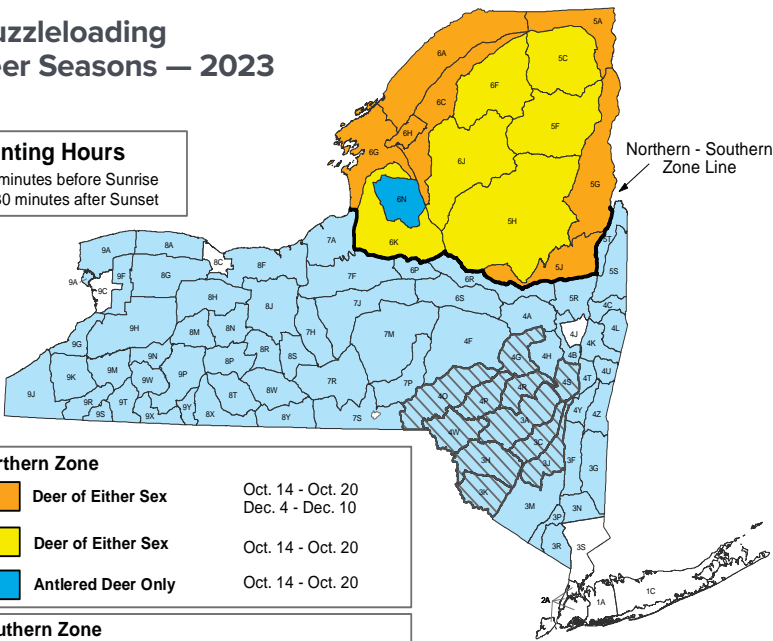
Crossbows
May be used to hunt deer during the Northern and Southern Zone Regular Seasons.
May not be used to hunt deer:
- during the Youth Firearms Season; or
- anytime in WMUs 1C (Suffolk County), 3S (Westchester County), 4J or 8C.

Legislation adopted in 2021 allows 12- and 13-year-olds to hunt deer with a firearm or crossbow under supervision of an adult hunter in upstate counties that choose to participate. For a list of counties that have opted in go to www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/46245.html.

Muzzleloading Deer Seasons — 2023

Hunting Hours

30 minutes before Sunrise to 30 minutes after Sunset



Northern Zone	
Deer of Either Sex	Oct. 14 - Oct. 20 Dec. 4 - Dec. 10
Deer of Either Sex	Oct. 14 - Oct. 20
Antlered Deer Only	Oct. 14 - Oct. 20

Southern Zone	
Deer of Either Sex	Dec. 11 - Dec. 19 Dec. 26 - Jan. 1

Antler Point Restrictions
During all seasons, antlered bucks must have at least one antler with 3 or more points that are at least 1 inch long. Young hunters (ages 12-16) are exempt.



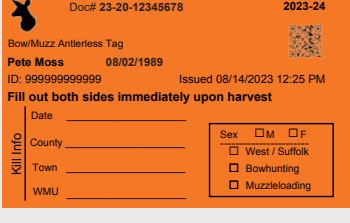
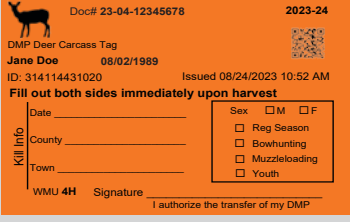
No Muzzleloading Season

Crossbows
May be used to hunt deer during the Northern and Southern Zone Muzzleloader Seasons.
May not be used to hunt deer anytime in WMUs 1C (Suffolk County), 3S (Westchester County), 4J or 8C.

Deer Hunting

Deer Tag Descriptions

For all season dates, see page 25. See page 11 for privilege information.

Tag Name	Tag Can Be Used In	Tag Is Valid For
<p>Regular Season Deer Tag Only you may hunt with this tag. No transferring tag to another hunter.</p>	<p>Regular Season</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Zone Southern Zone <p>Westchester County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular (bowhunting only) <p>Suffolk County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular (bowhunting only) Special Firearms (special permit, see page 18) <p>Late Season Bowhunting (privilege required)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Zone Southern Zone <p>Late Season Muzzleloading (privilege required)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Zone (check open areas and dates on map on page 25) Southern Zone <p>Youth Deer Season</p>	<p>Antlered Deer Only</p> <p>Except: May be used for Antlered or Antlerless Deer as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Westchester County (WMU 3S) In Suffolk County (WMU 1C) In areas restricted to bowhunting only (WMUs 4J and 8C) In late seasons (with bowhunting or muzzleloading privilege) By Junior Hunters during the Youth Deer Hunt IF you have a non-ambulatory permit. 
<p>Bow/Mz Season Either Sex Tag Only you may hunt with this tag. No transferring tag to another hunter.</p>	<p>Bowhunting Season (privilege required)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Zone Southern Zone <p>Muzzleloading Season (privilege required)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Zone (check open areas and dates on map on page 25) Southern Zone <p>Westchester County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular (bowhunting only) <p>Suffolk County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular (bowhunting only) Special Firearms (special permit; see page 18) <p>Not valid during the Northern or Southern Zone Regular Seasons or Youth Hunt except as specified in right-hand column.</p>	<p>Antlered or Antlerless Deer</p> <p>Bowhunting or Muzzleloading seasons only (including the regular season in Westchester County and the regular and special firearms seasons in Suffolk County), corresponding to the privileges purchased.</p> <p>Junior Bowhunters will receive this tag, which will be valid in the special bowhunting seasons and during the regular season, with bowhunting equipment only.</p> <p>Except:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be used for antlered deer only during muzzleloading seasons in certain Northern Zone WMUs (see map page 25). 
<p>Bow/Mz Season Antlerless Tag Only you may hunt with this tag. No transferring tag to another hunter.</p>	<p>Bowhunting Season (privilege required)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Zone Southern Zone <p>Muzzleloading Season (privilege required)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Zone (check open areas and dates on map, page 25) Southern Zone <p>Westchester County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular (bowhunting only) <p>Suffolk County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular (bowhunting only) Special Firearms (special permit; see page 18) <p>Not valid during the Northern or Southern Zone Regular Seasons or Youth Hunt except as specified in right-hand column.</p>	<p>Antlerless Deer Only</p> <p>Bowhunting or Muzzleloading seasons only (including the regular season in Westchester County and the regular and special firearms seasons in Suffolk County), corresponding to the privileges purchased.</p> <p>Except:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May not be used during muzzleloading seasons in certain Northern Zone WMUs that are Antlered Deer Only areas (see map page 25). May be used by junior Bowhunters during the Bowhunting and Regular Seasons. 
<p>Deer Management Permit Deer Tag</p>	<p>Any Open Deer Season</p>	<p>Antlerless Deer Only</p> <p>Valid only for the WMU specified and printed on the DMP Deer Tag (Deer Management Permit). See page 29.</p> <p>This is the only tag that can be transferred to another hunter (see page 29 for How to Transfer a DMP Deer Carcass Tag).</p> 

For information on which tags may be used when hunting with a crossbow, see page 21.

Report Your Moose Sightings

Moose are protected in New York and cannot be hunted. DEC and its research partners are working to understand the status of the moose population. You can help us by reporting moose sightings at www.dec.ny.gov/animals/6964.html.



Photo by Steve Spudie



Dave K. with his favorite hunting companion, Merica. Merica is 12 years old and has lived in six different states with Dave. "She's getting a bit up in years, but she still goes nuts when she sees a shotgun."

Deer Management Permits (DMPs)

Hunters possessing a DMP may take one antlerless deer per permit in addition to any deer that may be taken with a regular hunting license or bowhunting and muzzleloading privileges.

- DMPs may not be used for legally antlered deer (at least one antler 3" or longer).
- DMPs may be used in any open season only in the WMU they are issued for.
- Hunters may transfer or receive up to 2 DMPs from other hunters (see page 29).

Applying for a DMP

- **DMP Application Deadline: Close of business on October 1, 2023**
- You may apply for DMPs at all license-issuing outlets, by phone, or online beginning on August 1, 2023.
- DMPs are available to all hunters age 14 years or older who purchase or possess a regular hunting license (12 years old for Junior Bowhunting license holders).
- There is a \$10 nonrefundable application fee for all applicants. The fee is waived for holders of Lifetime Licenses purchased prior to 10/1/2009, and Junior Hunters and Junior Bowhunters.
- **Know your Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) before you apply.** If you are unsure of your unit, see the WMU maps on pages 70–77 of this guide or visit www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8302.html for written boundary descriptions. You may also call the DMP Hotline for additional information at 1-866-472-4332.
- You may apply for up to two DMPs. Both must be applied for at the same time. Application can be for DMPs in the same WMU or different WMUs.

- **Disabled veterans** with a service-connected disability rated at 40% or greater (who are residents of New York) will receive preference on DMPs. Annually, you must bring a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs, dated in the current year, with your case number and your disability percentage. If you are claiming permanent disabled status, the letter must clearly state that the 40% or more service-related disability is permanent.
- **Landowners: It is illegal for more than one person per 50-plus-acre tax map ID to apply as a landowner.** If you own 50 or more contiguous acres of land within the WMU you will be hunting in, you will receive preference on DMP selection. Annually, you must bring your tax map identification number and SWIS code (found on your tax bill) with you when you apply. Be sure to tell the license-issuing agent prior to applying that you are a landowner. Lessees do not qualify as landowners.
- **Corporate ownership: It is illegal for more than one person to apply as a corporate landowner no matter how many 50-acre parcels are owned.** The corporation must submit an original letter or certified copy of a resolution, dated in the current year, designating one individual and must include the tax map ID and SWIS code information.
- **Group ownership: It is illegal for more than one person per 50-plus-acre tax map ID to apply as a landowner,** regardless of how many co-owners. Additional 50-plus-acre parcels in the same WMU require separate tax IDs.
- **Preference points:**
 - » Preference points increase your chances of selection, but do not guarantee DMP selection.

Chances of DMP Selection

Your chances of selection for first and second DMPs by Wildlife Management Unit are available online at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/30409.html>, posted at all License Issuing Outlets or by calling our Deer Management Permit hotline at 1-866-472-4332. Chances of DMP selection remain the same throughout the entire DMP application period.

- » Preference points are won and lost on first permit selection only.
- » If you receive a DMP in your first choice WMU, all available preference points will be used.
- » If you do not receive a DMP in your first choice WMU, you will receive a preference point for the following year.
- » Any preference points contained in your file are automatically applied to your first-choice WMU selection, even if preference points are not required for that unit.
- » If you do not receive your first choice, the points are applied to your second choice, but will remain in your file for the following year, regardless of your second-choice selection results.
- » Qualifying landowners and disabled veterans will receive their first choice DMP in all open WMUs.
- » Preference Points are not WMU specific. That is, if you earned a preference point by being denied in one WMU, you can use that preference point in a subsequent year when applying for a DMP in a different WMU.

Hunter Education: Next Step Courses

The DEC's Hunter Education Program (HEP) is now offering Next Step courses for people who have already completed a hunter education, bowhunter education, or trapper education certification course and want more education and hands-on experience.

- Taught by HEP staff and certified HEP instructors.
- 4-Hour courses focus on safety, techniques and hands-on experience in:
 - » rifle, shotgun, crossbow, archery, fur handling, land trapping, and water trapping.

All Next Step Courses are FREE

- Registration with your certificate number is required.
- Minimum age is 12 years old.
- No certification is offered in these courses.

For more information and to register, visit www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/92267.html or scan the QR code.



BOW instructor Jeff Peil with student



DMP selection order

During the instant issuance, an applicant's chances of selection are determined by an applicant's category. The categories, in priority order, are as follows:

1. Landowners (50 or more acres of land within a WMU) and Disabled Veterans (40% or more service-related disability). All applicants in this category will receive their first-choice DMP.
2. NYS Residents and Non-residents with 3 Preference Points
3. NYS Residents with 1–2 Preference Points
4. NYS Residents without Preference Points
5. Non-residents with 1–2 Preference Points
6. Non-residents without Preference Points

Additional DMP opportunities

Bonus DMPs: If you fill a DMP in bowhunting-only WMUs 1C, 3S, 4J and 8C, you can apply for a bonus permit for another antlerless deer. Bonus permits may only be obtained from regional wildlife staff at predetermined locations. For complete information, visit our website or call a DEC Regional Wildlife Office as follows:

- WMU 1C.....1-631-444-0310
- WMU 3S.....1-845-256-3098
- WMU 4J.....1-518-357-2154
- WMU 8C.....1-585-226-5380

Leftover DMPs: If there are still permits remaining after the initial DMP instant-issuance period closes on October 1 and the back-end correction selections have occurred, the remaining DMPs may be available on a first-come-first-served basis, beginning on or around November 1. These DMPs are only available in person at license-issuing agents. Leftover DMPs will not be available by phone or online. The Wildlife Management Units with permits available will be announced by news release and on our website (www.dec.ny.gov). If you already applied for a DMP during the initial application period, there is no additional application fee. If you are applying for the first time this hunting season, you will have to pay a \$10 application fee. Fee is waived for Resident and Non-resident Junior Hunters and Junior Bowhunters, and for Lifetime License holders who purchased prior to October 1, 2009. You will be allowed up to two DMPs during the first-come-first-served application period in addition to any you may have received during the initial application period.

Deer Management Assistance Program

The Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) enables wildlife biologists to help landowners and resource managers implement site-specific deer management on their lands. In doing so, DEC issues a special permit for use only during the open deer hunting seasons and a determined number of antlerless deer tags to landowners or resource managers whose property is in need of site-specific deer management efforts. Hunters are expected to report their harvest. For more information on the program, refer to www.dec.ny.gov/animals/33973.html.

How to Transfer a DMP Deer Carcass Tag

Hunter Jane Doe wants to transfer her DMP tag to hunter Pete Moss.

Step 1. Jane Doe signs the bottom of her DMP tag.

Step 2. Jane Doe gives the DMP tag to Pete Moss.

Step 3. Pete Moss records the DOC# of the DMP tag on his reporting panel, completing the transfer.

Step 4. If Pete Moss takes an antlerless deer with the transferred DMP, he is required to report the deer by calling the automated reporting system (1-866-426-3778) or by reporting online at www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8316.html using the transferred DMP DOC# and his own date of birth.

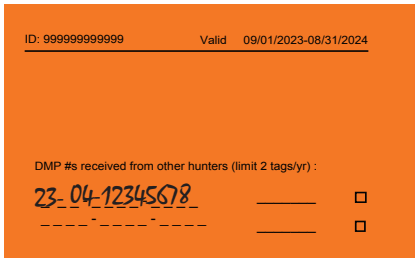
- Hunters are allowed to receive only two transferred DMPs per year.
- DMPs can be transferred from the receiving hunter back to the original hunter or to another. The other hunter must record the DOC# on his/her reporting panel, as in Step 3 above, to complete the transfer.

Remember: Hunting licenses are not transferable. Only DMP carcass tags can be used by another hunter. A hunter must be in physical possession of a DMP when taking antlerless deer pursuant to a DMP. It cannot be shared by a group afield.

Note: To report a deer taken on a transferred DMP, the hunter who took the deer must call the automated reporting system (1-866-426-3778) or report online at www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8316.html using the transferred DMP carcass tag DOC# and their own date of birth, along with other required information (see page 13).



DMP carcass tag of hunter Jane Doe



Reporting panel of hunter Pete Moss

Put Down Some Roots!

With Trees and Shrubs from DEC's Nursery

Dozens of varieties of NY-grown seedlings are available for affordable prices during our annual sale, open January through mid-May.



Colonel William F. Fox Memorial
Saratoga Tree Nursery
(518) 581-1439
www.dec.ny.gov/animals/9395.html



Feral Swine Cause Damage!



Manage the Damage
Stop Feral Swine

Feral Swine damage agriculture, natural resources, property, people, and cultural sites.



For more information:

Call 1-866-4-USDA-WS or
Your state wildlife agency



DMAP on State Lands

DEC has enrolled several state lands in DMAP. Tag availability is limited and hunters must apply to participate. See www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/121387.html for information. Properties include:

- Bully Hill State Forest, WMU 9P
- Doodletown Wildlife Management Area, WMU 4Z

Eurasian Boar

Eurasian boars are a destructive invasive species that damage habitat and crops, and threaten native wildlife and domestic livestock. DEC and USDA have worked hard to eradicate these animals from the state's landscape. We are now working to prevent their reintroduction into New York.

- It is illegal to possess, sell, distribute, trade, or transport Eurasian boars or their hybrids.
- It is illegal to import, breed, or release Eurasian boars or their hybrids.
- It is illegal to hunt, trap, or take free-ranging Eurasian boar or their hybrids.

Although DEC's eradication efforts have been very successful to date, we must remain vigilant. Anyone who sees a Eurasian boar should report it to DEC as soon as possible by emailing wildlife@dec.ny.gov or calling 518-402-8883.

Become a Hunter Education Program Instructor

Safety. Responsibility. Ethics.



"I volunteer my time to the Hunter Education Program because I get more out of it than I give. Those few hours give me a greater appreciation for all things conservation. The smiles of a child that can now go afield with purpose, men and women who will get to put fresh game on their tables, and a new group of people with a greater understanding of the wildlife and nature around them."

Ann Wilcox-Swanson, Instructor



Qualifications

- At least 18 years of age
- Good communication skills
- Hunting experience preferred
- Good moral character

APPLY TODAY! 1-888-HUNTED2 <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7860.html>