



## Energy and Environmental Affairs

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### MassWildlife News February 2012 Edition

#### MassWildlife News Release

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MassWildlife News is published 1-2 times/month. If you are interested in receiving the MW News electronically, send an e-mail to the following address: [Join-MassWildlife.news@listserv.state.ma.us](mailto:Join-MassWildlife.news@listserv.state.ma.us)

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Released January 31, 2012

#### **KEEP AN EYE ON THE ICE!**

A recent tragedy in Dudley where one person drowned after falling through the ice on a snowmobile serves as a somber reminder that the condition of ice on the Bay State's waterbodies are currently unpredictable and treacherous. The Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (DFW) urges outdoor enthusiasts to play it safe and check ice carefully before venturing onto ice-covered waters. A clear layer of 4-inch ice is a good, safe thickness for foot traffic. An [ice strength table](#), [ice safety tips for outdoor enthusiasts](#) and a [link to an ice safety video](#) from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources be found on the DFW website.

How can you tell if ice is safe? There are no guarantees -- always consider ice to be potentially dangerous. Assess ice safety by using an ice chisel to chop a hole in the ice to determine its thickness and condition. Make sure you continue to do this as you go further out on to the ice, because the thickness of the ice will not be uniform all over the pond or lake. Be aware that ice tends to be thinner on lakes and ponds where there are spring holes, inlets or outlets. Don't venture on to ice bound rivers or streams because the currents make ice thickness unpredictable.

What if you fall through the ice? As with any emergency, don't panic! Briefly call for help. It doesn't take long for the cold water to start slowing your physical and mental functions, so you must act quickly. Air will remain trapped in your clothes for a short time, aiding your buoyancy. Kick your legs while grasping for firm ice. Try to pull your body up using ice pins or picks that should be hanging around your neck. Once your torso is on firm ice, roll towards thicker ice. This will better distribute your weight. Remember that ice you have previously walked on should be the safest. After you reach safe ice don't waste precious time, you need to warm up quickly to prevent hypothermia. Go to the nearest fishing shanty, warm car, or house. Don't drive home in wet clothes!

If a companion falls through the ice remember the phrase "Reach-Throw-Go." If you are unable to reach your friend, throw him or her a rope, jumper cables, tree branch, or other object. If this does not work, go for help before you also become a victim. Pet owners should keep pets on a leash. If a pet falls through the ice do not attempt to rescue the pet, go for help. Well-meaning pet owners can too easily become victims themselves when trying to save their pets.

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**MassFishHunt**  
Check Your Game

Division of Fisheries & Wildlife  
1 Rabbit Hill Road  
Westborough, MA 01581  
(508) 389-6300  
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### **NEW ANTLERLESS DEER PERMIT PROCEDURES**

The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) is announcing details on the new 2012 procedures for applying and obtaining Antlerless Deer Permits. Information flyers are now available from DFW District Offices, the Westborough Field Headquarters and have been posted on the agency website.

As in the past, deer hunters must apply for an antlerless deer permit either when they purchase their license or at any time prior to this year's permit application deadline July 16, 2012. Applications can only be made through the electronic MassFishHunt system through the Internet, an authorized licensing agent location, or any MassWildlife Office. There is no longer any application form to mail to the Division.

A new second step in this process, called the Instant Award phase, requires that ALL antlerless deer permit applicants return to the MassFishHunt website beginning August 1, 2012 to try to win an antlerless deer permit in the zone for which they previously applied. Hunters may access MassFishHunt via the Internet, any authorized license agent location, or any MassWildlife Office. Upon returning to the MassFishHunt site, the applicant or licensing agent will select the zone for which the hunter previously applied, and the system will instantly notify the applicant if he/she has won an antlerless deer permit. If the permit is won, the hunter can pay the \$5.00 permit fee immediately and print the permit, or leave the winning permit in the shopping cart where it will remain until payment is made or until the permit expires. As in the past all permits expire on December 31st.

Permit issuance through the new Instant Award system will be completely random but still based on a percent chance of winning. As in the past, winning percentages will be determined by the number of permits available for each Wildlife Management Zone (WMZ) divided by the number of applications for each zone. The Instant Award system is not a first-come/first-served system, meaning that hunters will have the same odds of winning a permit in their selected zones whether they return on August 1st or December 31st. Only hunters who applied during the Application Period will be able to try for an antlerless deer permit during the Instant Award Phase. Applicants will have ONE attempt to try to obtain an antlerless deer permit during the Instant Award Phase. Hunters are reminded that DFW will no longer conduct a permit drawing, the permit process will no longer involve hunting/sporting license numbers and DFW will no longer mail antlerless deer permit notifications to permit applicants.

Any surplus antlerless deer permits will be available in October for any zone in which DFW has more permits available than hunters that apply. These surplus antlerless deer permits will continue to be issued on a first-come/first-served basis. Surplus antlerless deer permits will be available online and over the counter through authorized license agent locations, and DFW Offices.

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### **JUNIOR DUCK STAMP CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF CONNECTING CHILDREN WITH NATURE**

Teachers, parents, scout leaders, and other educators looking to connect their students with nature through science and art should consider submitting a waterfowl art entry to the Massachusetts Junior Duck Stamp (JDS) Program. The entry deadline is March 15, 2012. Modelled on the adult waterfowl stamp competitions, the Junior Duck Stamp Program was launched by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), to increase young people's awareness of the importance of preserving wetland habitats, waterfowl conservation and wildlife observation. In late winter, the USFWS plans to launch a new curriculum to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the JDS. Entries are judged in four categories representing grades K - 3, grades 4 - 6, grades 7 - 9 and grades 10 - 12. All entrants are recognized for their efforts, with the top 25 in each grade category receiving additional recognition. The overall state winner represents Massachusetts at the National Competition. Official entry information is posted at the US Fish & Wildlife Service website at [www.fws.gov/juniorduck](http://www.fws.gov/juniorduck). "The Junior Duck Stamp Program is a great way to introduce conservation through the arts," says Pam Landry, MassWildlife Education Coordinator. "Not only is it fun to create a drawing or painting, it's interesting for participants to learn about the species being drawn so it can be depicted in its natural habitat." For more details contact Pam Landry at ([pam.landry@state.ma.us](mailto:pam.landry@state.ma.us)) or (508) 389-6310.

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### **EAGLE COUNT RESULTS**

Despite a morning of fog and rain followed by high winds, sightings of 45 individual bald eagles were reported from Pittsfield to Plymouth on Friday, January 13, 2012, as part of a one-day survey effort by state wildlife biologists,

volunteers and other eagle enthusiasts. This event is part of an annual national bald eagle survey conducted over a 2-week period from January 4 - January 19, 2012. Poor weather conditions, which resulted in the cancellation of a planned helicopter survey of the Quabbin Reservoir and Connecticut River, were a major factor in a low number of eagles spotted. Eagles also dispersed across the state due to the lack of ice on many ponds and lakes, making it more difficult for spotters to find birds.

"Though sightings were low on this particular day, thanks to our restoration program begun in 1982, bald eagles are doing very well in Massachusetts," said Dr. Tom French, Assistant Director for Natural Heritage and Endangered Species. At that time, MassWildlife and its partners brought young eagles from Canada and Michigan and raised them in cages overlooking the Quabbin Reservoir. Some of the eaglets remained and began to nest in the Quabbin, later spreading to the Connecticut River and eventually across the state where 35 breeding territories are now established. French noted that in September of 2011, the Fisheries and Wildlife Board voted to downlist the Bald Eagle from Endangered to Threatened on the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act list. The downlisting will not be official until published in the Code of Massachusetts Regulations.

In the Northeast District, 3 eagles were spotted on the Merrimack River and 1 in Saugus. In the Southeast District, spotters in the Lakeville/Middleborough area reported 3 eagles on Pocksha Pond and 3 eagles were seen at North Wattupa Ponds in Fall River. Four eagles were seen in Pembroke and 6 birds were reported on waterbodies in Plymouth. In the Central District area, 3 eagles were reported at Wachusett Reservoir, 3 on Webster Lake, 1 in North Uxbridge, 2 in Northbridge and 2 on Quaboag Pond in Brookfield. In the Connecticut Valley District, 6 eagles were spotted from the Enfield Lookout at Quabbin Reservoir, 1 reported on the Westfield River, 2 eagles seen on the Chicopee River and 1 eagle was seen on Lake Rohunta in Orange. In the Western District 1 eagle was seen in Sheffield, and 1 was seen in Blandford.

French expressed thanks to citizen eagle spotters. "Citizens play an increasingly important role in our survey efforts. This year, we received 90 emailed reports from people who saw eagles during the 2-week survey period. Last year 61 people emailed us reports."

The annual Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey is a nationwide event coordinated by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The nationwide total of bald eagles counted during this annual event ranges from 13,000 to 16,000 birds.

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#### **ENTER THE GET OUTDOORS MOBILE APP CONTEST!**

The tech-savvy public is invited to enter the "Get Outdoors Massachusetts Mobile App Contest". Environmental agencies are seeking assistance in developing technologies that feature Massachusetts' outdoor recreation and natural resources. The goal of the competition is to create an application in which people use a smart phone to locate state wildlife management areas, state parks and forests, state boat ramps, farm tours, and other state outdoor recreation venues. Deadline for submitting an entry is March 30.

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#### **MARCH TO CONSERVATION CONFERENCES**

Several annual conservation conferences taking place in March are valuable for conservation commissioners, educators, youth group leaders, bird enthusiasts, and other conservationists. MassWildlife staff will be participating at most of these meetings. Registration is now open for these meetings.

**March 3-Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions Conference, Worcester** - The 2012 MACC Annual Environmental Conference will be held at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester. DFW staff will be making presentations about "Managing White-Tailed Deer Populations in Massachusetts" and "Defusing Landowner/Conservation Conflicts: Protecting Habitat for Endangered Species and Other Wildlife with Conservation Design". Registration information is at [www.maccweb.org/edu\\_aec.html](http://www.maccweb.org/edu_aec.html) or call MACC at (617) 489-3930.

**March 3-MassAudubon Birders Meeting, Waltham** - The 20th Annual Birders Meeting will be held at Bentley University, Waltham. Novice and experienced bird enthusiasts will enjoy the varied offerings at this conference. Registration information is at: [www.massaudubon.org](http://www.massaudubon.org) or call (781) 259-2136.

**March 14-Massachusetts Environmental Education Conference, Worcester** - The 2012 Massachusetts Environmental Education Society (MEES) will be holding its annual conference at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester. This year's theme is "Refresh: New Tools and Techniques for Today's Educators." This conference is useful for educators in both formal and non-formal educational settings. More details at [www.massmees.org](http://www.massmees.org).

**March 24 - Massachusetts Land Trust Conference, Worcester** - The 22nd Annual Mass Land Conservation Conference will take place at the Worcester Technical High School. DFW staff will participate in roundtable session titled "Deer Populations on Land Trust Lands". Registration is limited. Details on the conference and registration can be found at [www.massconservation.org](http://www.massconservation.org).

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#### UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS

**February 9-- Natural Heritage Advisory Committee Meeting, Westborough** -- The next meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2012, 1:30 - 4:30 pm at the DFW Field Headquarters, 1 Rabbit Hill Road (off North Drive), in Westborough.

**February 14-- Fisheries and Wildlife Board Meeting, Westborough** -- The Fisheries and Wildlife Board will hold its March meeting on Tuesday, February 14, 2012 at 1PM at the DFW Field Headquarters, 1 Rabbit Hill Road (off North Drive), in Westborough.

Both meetings are open to the public and the building is handicapped accessible.

#### CALENDAR OF EVENTS -

**February 3 - Rare Plants and Natural Communities in the Housatonic Valley, Cambridge** -- The New England Botanical Club is hosting a presentation by Dr. Patricia Swain, DFW Natural Community Ecologist. Her talk, "Unusual Natural Communities and Rare Plants for the Housatonic Watershed in Massachusetts" will be held at Harvard University's Haller Lecture Hall (Room 102), Geological Museum 24 Oxford St, Cambridge. This program is open to the public and begins at 6:45pm.

**February 10-12 - MassWildlife at the Eastern Fishing and Outdoor Expo, Worcester** - This year, the Expo is held at the DCU Centre from Friday through Sunday. Visit with MassWildlife staff, purchase a license, find out what programs and materials are available at the agency booths. More on the Show at: [www.sportshows.com/worcester/index.html](http://www.sportshows.com/worcester/index.html).

**February 11 - Aquatic WILD Workshop for Educators, Lynn** -- Educators of students/youth in grades k-12 are invited to a useful, hands-on and fun Aquatic Project WILD workshop at Girls, Inc., in Lynn. Workshop participants will receive copies of each guide, access to the lending materials, and a certificate of completion. Pre-registration is required. Project WILD is sponsored by DFW and the Mass. Wildlife Federation. To register, contact Sarah Gillig at (781) 581-7370 x373 or email her at [s.gillig@neu.edu](mailto:s.gillig@neu.edu). Registration deadline is February 2, 2012.

**February 23-26 - MassWildlife at the Springfield Sportsmens Show, W. Springfield** -- This show is held at the Big E in several buildings from Thursday through Sunday. Visit with volunteer instructors and DFW staff at the agency display located in the Better Living Center near the big fish tank. More details on the show at: [www.osegsportsmens.com](http://www.osegsportsmens.com).

**February 23 - Kids Ice Fishing Event, Hopkinton** -- MassWildlife and the Woodville Rod & Gun Club's Pikers will be co-hosting this ice fishing festival on Lake Whitehall in Hopkinton from 11 AM - 2:30 PM off the state boat ramp on Rte. 135. Learn how to fish the "hard water". Dress for the weather--warm boots are a must! Pre-registration is required by February 23. Call (508) 435-4148 or email [Lawrenceofwoodville@gmail.com](mailto:Lawrenceofwoodville@gmail.com).

**February 28 - Insects in Trout Streams, Foxborough** - Dr. Ken Simmons, DFW Chief of Hatcheries, will talk about the various aquatic insects found in coldwater fish habitats. Hosted by the Crossroads Anglers Fly Fishing Club and the program will take place at 7:30 pm at the South Foxborough Community Center located at 382 South Street. Directions are found on the club's home page at [www.crossroadsanglers.com](http://www.crossroadsanglers.com).

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