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MassWildlife News July 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

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JULY 16 DEER PERMIT DEADLINE WITH NEW APPLICATION PROCESS

A final reminder from MassWildlife to deer hunters that July 16, 2012 is the deadline to apply for an antlerless deer permit. Hunters are reminded that these permits are required for anyone who wants to hunt antlerless deer and that the antlerless deer permit application process has changed. There is no longer a public permit drawing based on the last digit of the hunting/sporting license number and MassWildlife will no longer mail postal notifications or remittance postcards to deer hunters. 2012 Antlerless deer permit allocations are posted on the MassWildlife website at: www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/recreation/licensing/permits/adp_allocations.htm. As in the past, hunters may apply for one permit in one Wildlife Management Zone.

NEW THIS YEAR--All applications may only be submitted electronically on the new MassFishHunt system (www.mass.gov/massfishhunt), either on a home computer or at a license vendor location. Secondly, hunters must take two actions in order to obtain a permit. Instructions are below.

1) Apply for an antlerless deer permit by July 16. If you are not sure if your antlerless deer permit application has been submitted, you can either check your hunting license in the Item Purchased section where you will see a line item that reads: "Antlerless Deer Permit Application- zone xx" if you have already applied OR you can log on to the MassFishHunt website and check your customer inventory. If you have not yet applied, you can submit your application for an antlerless deer permit either through your home computer or at a local license vendor. There is no fee to apply for an antlerless deer permit.

- **Applying from a home computer or from your local library** -- Go to the MassFishHunt website at www.mass.gov/massfishhunt and enter your Customer ID number. A page with your personal information will appear. Click on the blue "Enter Sales" button at the bottom right of your screen. Click on "Hunting Permits and Stamps" in the menu at the left side of your screen. Click on "Antlerless Deer permit application" and then select a zone. Click the blue "check out" button on this screen and then click check out again on the next screen. Even though the application has no cost associated with it you must proceed all the way through checkout for the application to be submitted. Note that if you have already applied for an antlerless deer permit you will not see that deer permit option listed.
- **Applying at a license vendor or MassWildlife Office** -- Tell the clerk that you need to apply for an antlerless deer permit. They will need either your customer identification number or your birth date to look up your information. Be sure to tell them the zone that you wish to apply for and double check that it is correct. No changes to the application can be made after the July 16th deadline has passed.

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Buy Licenses / Permits
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Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
1 Rabbit Hill Road
Westborough, MA 01581
(508) 389-6300
Mass.Wildlife@state.ma.us

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2) **Return to MassFishHunt to participate in the new Instant Award process.** Beginning August 1, 2012 and continuing through the end of the calendar year, permit applicants must return to the MassFishHunt website from a home computer, any authorized license agent location, or any MassWildlife Office to see if they were awarded an antlerless deer permit in the zone for which they applied. Details on this process will be posted on the agency website some time after July 16 and will also be sent out on the MassWildlife News email list when finalized.

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THE EAGLETS ARE FLYING

In late June, Department of Fish and Game (DFG) Commissioner Mary Griffin and MassWildlife biologists were joined by wildlife rehabilitators and helpful citizens to release two 12-week-old bald eaglets on private property in Tyngsborough. The birds had fallen from an unstable nest on the property in early May and were placed in the care of rehabilitators who cared for the state-listed birds and helped to develop their flying skills.

The story of these young birds began in early May when someone saw an eagle chick fall from its nest and contacted Dr. Kaplan, a veterinary cardiologist from Tyngsborough. He and his wife Brenda, recognized that the bird was injured, picked up the bird for transport, and provided fluids for the bird. MassWildlife's Tom French, Assistant Director of the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, made arrangements to pick up the chick and bring it to Tufts Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine's Wildlife Clinic in Grafton for examination and care. Veterinarians determined that the young bird suffered pelvic fractures from its fall.

The following day, a second chick was seen falling from the same nest, though it did not suffer injuries. Again Dr. Kaplan was contacted, as was David Taylor of Newbury, a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, who picked up this chick and cared for it. When the first bird healed, it was placed with its sibling in Taylor's care. Within a few weeks, the birds needed more space to practice their flying skills. The Tufts Wildlife Clinic generously made its flight cage available for the birds. Eaglets normally fledge - fly from the nest - at about 11-12 weeks of age. For identification purposes, the eaglets released were also outfitted with a federal silver band on the right leg and an easy-to-read burnt orange band on the left leg, a band color unique to Massachusetts eaglets. A day after the release, MassWildlife received an encouraging report that an immature eaglet was seen in Tyngsborough flying with an adult eagle on the Merrimack River.

"This release is a wonderful opportunity to thank the various people and entities who worked together to help these magnificent birds as they enter a new phase in their development," said Commissioner Griffin. She thanked the couple who first responded to the plight of the young birds - Dr. Paul Kaplan and Brenda Eunson as well as wildlife rehabilitator David Taylor and Dr. Maureen Murray and the rest of the staff at the Tufts Wildlife Clinic.

Commissioner Griffin took the opportunity to note a recent change in the status of bald eagles in Massachusetts, "Thanks to vigorous restoration efforts of state, federal, and private sector partners, it's my pleasure to report that this year the bald eagle's population status was changed from Endangered to Threatened on the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act list."

As of 2011, there were 35 occupied bald eagle territories including the Quabbin Reservoir, Connecticut and Merrimack Rivers, and areas in Plymouth, Bristol, Berkshire and Worcester Counties. MassWildlife bands eagle chicks each spring for identification purposes. Twenty-two pairs of adult eagles successfully raised 37 chicks in 2011. Results of MassWildlife's 2012 eagle chick banding are still being compiled, but the number of nesting pairs across the state continues to grow.

Bald eagle restoration efforts in Massachusetts have been funded by several sources, including hunting and fishing license fees (Inland Fish & Game Fund), the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Fund, as well as support from National Grid, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Involvement of the Tufts Wildlife Clinic has resulted in the release of numerous injured eagles that might otherwise have died.

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FAMILY CAMPING REGISTRATION OPENS

Families who would like to try out camping this summer are encouraged to sign up for the Becoming an Outdoors Family Camping Weekend to be held on August 4-5, 2012 at the Otter River State Forest in Templeton. This is a partnership program between the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Department of Conservation and Recreation and North Face. No prior outdoor experience is necessary; this weekend is especially designed for families new to camping. The focus will be on learning basic camping and recreation skills such as outdoor cooking, fishing, archery, and hiking to help you and your family to enjoy the outdoors. Some camping equipment is provided by REI, Inc. Registration deadline is July 27 and some scholarship assistance is available. Registration materials or call (508) 389-6329.

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CITIZEN SCIENTISTS--MASSWILDLIFE NEEDS YOUR HELP ON BATS, TURKEYS, AND RABBITS

Bats -- Because Massachusetts and other northeastern states have lost thousands of bats due to White-Nose Syndrome, a fungal infection, MassWildlife is continuing its annual appeal for bat colony reports from property owners who may have a summer colony of 10 or more bats. Please provide the location (street address), type of structure where the bats reside, number of bats in the colony, and your contact information by calling (508) 389-6360 or emailing mass.wildlife@state.ma.us.

Turkeys -- You can help MassWildlife count turkey broods (families) between now and the end of August. Fill out a brood survey form indicating the number hens, number of poults, their size compared to the adult hens and the town where you saw the flock. Mail that information to Turkey Brood Survey, DFW Field Headquarters, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581.

Rabbits -- MassWildlife is still in need of rabbit carcass samples for the New England cottontail survey effort especially from locations in central and western Massachusetts. The location where the carcass was collected is the single most important piece of data used to assess the cottontails' distribution. Please make every effort to record as specific a location as possible. A marked topographic map, Google map, or GPS coordinates are ideal, but any detailed information will greatly aid biologists. Carcasses in any condition can be donated to facilitate the survey effort. Road-killed carcasses or cottontail heads should be placed in a plastic bag and frozen until they can be dropped off at a MassWildlife District Office, MassWildlife Hatchery, or MassWildlife's Field Headquarters in Westborough. Facility locations.

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2011 DEER HARVEST TOTALS

Deer Project Leader David Stainbrook reports a total of 11,154 white-tailed deer harvested by licensed hunters during the combined 2011 seasons. By season, the total breaks down to 8 deer taken during the special deer season for paraplegic sportsmen; 3,765 taken in the archery season; 5,349 taken during the shotgun season; 1,959 taken during the primitive arms season; and 73 (corrected figure as of 7/11/12) deer harvested during the Quabbin Reservation hunt. Deer populations are managed according to deer density goals established to maintain healthy deer populations in balance with the environment. Goals are set at levels that balance deer hunting and viewing opportunities with levels which minimize impacts on property damage, public health issues, and safety. Deer densities throughout the western and central parts of the state and some areas in the east with lands accessible to hunters are at or near deer management goals. High deer populations are still found in suburban areas in eastern Massachusetts where hunter access is limited, but recent trends in towns opening lands to archery hunting have shown promise for reducing deer numbers in these areas.

2011 Deer Harvest Tables -- A breakdown of the deer taken in 2011 by zone, seasons and other categories.

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NEW HUNTERS! SIGN UP NOW FOR COURSES

New hunters of all ages are reminded that it is never too early to think about taking a Basic Hunter Education Course. "Many people don't think about enrolling in a course until September," says Susan Langlois, DFW Hunter Education Administrator. "Unfortunately, most courses have either begun or are fully enrolled and the opportunity to hunt during the fall may disappear." Langlois points out that courses are scheduled through much of the calendar year, including the summer, but most are offered in the spring and early fall.

First-time license buyers in Massachusetts are required to show proof that they have taken a basic hunter education course in order to purchase a hunting or sporting license. Basic courses are available across the state from January through October and the course calendar is periodically updated. Or you can provide your name and contact information on an electronic form and you will be notified when a course is scheduled in your area.

Basic hunter education courses average 15 hours in length and are taught by volunteer instructors. Courses are offered in several formats including some that are scheduled over several (5-6) weekday evenings, some that are conducted during one intensive weekend and others that are a combination of weeknights and weekend days. Students must attend all scheduled sessions as part of the requirement for passing the course. All instruction and class materials are free.

Students who successfully pass the course receive a Certificate of Completion that is accepted for purchasing a Massachusetts hunting or sporting license and for Massachusetts residents 15 years old and over to apply for a firearms license with their local police departments. The certificates are also accepted for the purchase of a hunting or sporting license in all U.S. states, Canada, and Mexico. Lost your certificate from years past? You may obtain a Duplicate Certificate from the Hunter Education Program by filling out a form or by contacting the office directly at (978) 772-0693.

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UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS

July 12 - The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Advisory Committee will meet at the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Field Headquarters located off North Drive in Westborough on Thursday, July 12, 2012 from 1:30- 4:30 pm. The building is handicapped accessible. Directions to the Field Headquarters or call (508) 389-6360.

July 24 - Fisheries and Wildlife Board Meeting, Pelham - The Fisheries & Wildlife Board will meet on Tuesday, July 24, 2012 at 1:00 pm at the Pelham Town Hall located at 376 Amherst Road, Pelham at the junction with Route 202. The building is handicapped accessible. Map to meeting location is posted at www.colonialmeetinghouses.com/map_mh_pelham.shtml. Directions from the Mass. Turnpike (east or westbound): Take the Pike to the Ludlow Exit (7). Then follow Route 21 north to the intersection with US Route 202. Follow Route 202 north through the center of Belchertown, through the intersection with Route 9 (traffic lights) and continue north on Route 202 to the flashing yellow light in Pelham. Turn left at the light and the Town Hall is on the immediate right.

Both meetings are open to the public and the venues are handicapped accessible. .

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 7 - Woodlot Informational Tour, Ashburnham -- The Department of Conservation and Recreation in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) will lead an informational tour of a woodlot at the Timberlost Farm on 327 Ashby Road (Route 101) in Ashburnham from 9 am - noon. The tour will take participants through an 88-acre forest thinning project to address the damage that the 2008 ice storm caused and include visit to a young forest habitat clearing created in an area that was most damaged by the storm. Joelle Vautour, DCR Outreach Service Forester will present information about NRCS programs and Marianne Piché, NRCS Partner Biologist for MassWildlife will present on the wildlife habitat values of this project. Other professional foresters will be present to answer questions. Interested landowners are invited to learn how to apply financial assistance through the Natural Resources Conservation Service to implement forest and wildlife habitat conservation practices. Directions: From the center of Ashburnham (Rte 12), head north on Route 101 (Ashby Road) towards Ashby. From the center, the farm is approximately 3.0 miles on the left, look for a large sign, "Timberlost Farm". This tour will involve walking up a steep hill, with the reward of excellent views of the surrounding area. Bring a hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, and wear sturdy shoes or boots. This event will be held rain or shine. For more information, contact Joelle Vautour at (978) 368-0126 x 120.

July 14 - Forestry Informational Tour, Orange - The Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust is hosting a forestry tour for anyone interested in conservation management options on their own property. Consulting forester Mary Wigmore will lead participants through the Foy property located on Tully Road in Orange from 9 am - noon. MassWildlife Partner Biologist for

MassWildlife will present information about funding opportunities from the Natural Resources Conservation Service for wildlife habitat management on private lands. Bring a hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, and wear sturdy shoes or boots. This event will be held rain or shine. Please RSVP Meghan Cornwall at (978) 248-2055 x 14 or email steward_amicorps@mountgrace.org. Directions: From Athol take Route 32 North past Tully Lake and turn left onto Royalston Road/Tully Road. Go just over 1 mile past Tully Pond (on your left). Turn right onto Tully Road, follow for about 1 mile. Signs for parking are on the right, near the intersection with Creamery Hill Road.

July 18 -- Snakes, Bugs, and Dragonflies, Oh My! Phillipston -- Families interested in learning about snakes, bugs and dragonflies are invited to come to Sugar Hollow Farm at 10AM where MassWildlife's Peter Mirick and Dave Small from DCR will talk about these creatures and even offer an opportunity to touch a live snake! Registration is \$5/person with a \$20 cap for families. Veterans and servicemen and -women's children are free with proof-of-service. Sugar Hollow Farm is located on 425 Queen Lake Road in Phillipston (Rte 101). Call (978) 652-5186.

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