



MassWildlife News

Commonwealth of Massachusetts – Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
Wayne F. MacCallum, Director

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Media Inquiries: **Call (617) 626-1129**
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[**SUMMERTIME... AND THE TURTLES ARE CROSSING**](#)
[**REPORT FISH KILLS**](#)
[**SIGN UP FOR FAMILY CAMPING OR WOMEN IN THE OUTDOORS WORKSHOPS**](#)
[**JULY 16 - ANTLERLESS DEER PERMIT DEADLINE**](#)
[**SPRING TURKEY SEASON PRELIMINARY FIGURES**](#)
[**WEBSITE TIP OF THE MONTH—CHANGE YOUR LINKS TO MASSWILDLIFE!**](#)
[**STATE AND FEDERAL STAFF HONORED FOR BAITFISH CRIME INVESTIGATION**](#)
[**UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS**](#)

SUMMERTIME... AND THE TURTLES ARE CROSSING

Summer is when normally aquatic female snapping, painted, spotted, red-bellied, Blanding's, and other turtles leave the safety of their water world and venture overland in search of nesting sites. To help these ancient creatures survive now and into the future, consider the following turtle conservation tips:

- **If It's Safe, Help Turtles Cross the Road** - Be sure to assist a turtle only when it is safe to stop - pull over to the shoulder (if you are driving), and move the turtle across the road. Always move the turtle in the direction was headed, even if that direction is away from water. It knows better than you where it wants to go!
- **Please Don't Take a Wild Turtle Home or Move it Elsewhere** - Keep wild turtles wild! In Massachusetts, it is illegal to possess most native turtles as pets. It takes many years for turtles to mature and lay eggs. Removing or moving turtles to some other location can be a problem for the survival of the remaining local turtle population.
- **Help MassWildlife Locate Popular Turtle Road Crossings** - [Linking Landscapes for Massachusetts Wildlife](#) offers opportunities for citizens to report online reporting turtle (and other wildlife) road mortality through a Google Maps interface.
- **Identify and Report Rare Turtles** - If you see a state-listed turtle: take a photo, visit the Natural Heritage area of DFW's website www.mass.gov/nhesp and use the electronic [Vernal Pool and Rare Species information system](#). Fill out the form and electronically submit your report.
- **Learn About Turtles and Share Your Knowledge** - You can hone your turtle identification skills with DFW's [A Field Guide to Reptiles of Massachusetts](#) by making a \$3.00 check out to "Comm. of MA-DFW" and sending it to: Field Guide to Reptiles, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, 100

Hartwell Street, West Boylston MA 01583. Free full color posters on both Adult and Hatchling turtles are available at [MassWildlife district offices](#).

For more information about turtles visit MassWildlife's [Turtles of Massachusetts web page](#).

REPORT FISH KILLS

With the warm weather here, lakes and ponds are warming up and fish kills may be discovered in some bodies of water. The sight of dead and dying fish along the shores of a favorite lake, pond, or river can be distressing and can trigger concerns about pollution. Fish do act as the "canary in the coal mine," so it's natural to think a fish kill is an indicator of a problem with human caused pollution. However, the vast majority of summer fish kills reported are natural events.

Natural fish kills are generally the result of low oxygen levels, fish diseases, or spawning stress. Depletion of dissolved oxygen is one of the most common causes of natural fish kills. As pond temperature increases, water holds less oxygen. During hot summer weather, oxygen levels in shallow, weedy ponds can further decline as plants consume oxygen at night. This results in low, early morning oxygen levels that can become critical if levels fall below the requirement of fish survival. In addition to reduced oxygen levels, late spring and early summer is when many warm water fish such as sunfish, bluegill, pumpkinseed, and largemouth bass begin to spawn. At this time, large numbers of these species crowd into the shallow waters along the shore vying for the best spawning sites. These densely crowded areas become susceptible to disease outbreaks, especially as water temperatures increase. The result is an unavoidable natural fish kill, usually consisting of one or two species of fish.

To be sure there isn't a pollution problem, it's always best to report fish kills. When a fish kill report comes in, a MassWildlife fisheries biologist determines if the kill is due to pollution or is a natural event. Generally, pollution impacts all kinds of aquatic life; therefore the most important piece of evidence for the biologists is the number and variety of fish associated with the fish kill. Fish kills in which only one or two species are involved are almost always a natural event. When it is likely a fish kill is due to pollution, MassWildlife notifies the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). DEP takes the lead on a formal investigation which includes analysis of water and fish samples to determine the source of pollution. DFW provides DEP with technical assistance by identifying the kinds and numbers of fish involved.

To report a fish kill Monday - Friday between 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM, contact Richard Hartley at (508) 389-6330. After normal business hours or on holidays and weekends, call the Fish Kill Phone at (508) 450-5869 or contact the Environmental Police Radio Room at 1(800) 632-8075.

SIGN UP FOR FAMILY CAMPING OR WOMEN IN THE OUTDOORS WORKSHOPS

Some exciting and fun opportunities for families and women to try outdoor skills are scheduled for this summer. MassWildlife's Becoming an Outdoorswoman Program is working cooperatively with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Central Massachusetts Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation on several summer outdoor skills workshops.

Becoming an Outdoor Family Camping Weekends are scheduled for July and August. The first Family Camping Workshop will be held on **July 26 and 27 at Myles Standish State Forest in Carver**, the other will be held on **August 2-3 at Harold Parker State Forest in Andover**. They are family-friendly events

designed specifically for families new to camping that want to give it a try. They are wonderful opportunities to spend time together in the great outdoors on a fun-filled overnight camping experience. Activities include setting up campsites, building and putting out campfires, cooking on open fires, archery, and fishing for beginners. Traditional evening campfire, story teller and live animal programs are also planned. [Registration materials](#) are now available for both events or call (617) 626-4962.

A great opportunity for females 13 years and older is sponsored by the Central Mass. Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF). **The event will be held on Saturday, July 19 with an optional overnight campout** at the Auburn Sportsmen's Club. This exciting event is packed with many outdoor related activities including archery, self-defense, beekeeping, game processing, shooting sports safety, fly fishing, canoeing/kayaking, and orienteering. Visit the vehicle maintenance demonstration station and check out the alpacas.. Registration fee includes instruction in four skill sessions, light breakfast, snacks, a hearty lunch, and a membership to the NWTF. Participants who camp overnight will be treated to a campfire and meals! Registration materials and further event details are posted on the [Central Mass. NWTF web site](#). Contact Kelly Dalbec, WITO Coordinator, at mkdalbec@gmail.com or call her at (978) 870-4830.

JULY 16 - ANTLERLESS DEER PERMIT DEADLINE

The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) reminds deer hunters that the deadline for applying for an antlerless deer permit is July 16, 2014. This permit is required for any deer hunter who wishes to hunt antlerless deer. There is no fee to apply. A \$5 fee is charged if you are selected for a permit during the Instant Award period. If you are not sure you submitted an antlerless deer permit application, 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](#) at www.mass.gov/massfishhunt and check your customer inventory. If you have not yet applied, you can submit your application for an antlerless deer permit either online through a computer or at a [license vendor location](#).

SPRING TURKEY SEASON PRELIMINARY FIGURES

With some information still to be tabulated from physical check stations, MassWildlife Turkey Project Leader David Scarpitti reports that preliminary harvest figures indicate approximately 2,550 wild turkeys were taken by licensed hunters during the 2014 spring turkey season; slightly less than recent averages. Many factors likely contributed to the slight decline in turkey harvest in 2014. First, cold, rainy weather during the 2013 hatch (early June) resulted in sub-par poult production. Second, the longer, colder conditions of the past winter probably affected the timing and extent of spring turkey breeding movements. Finally, cold and rainy weather during the first week of the turkey hunting season when most hunters go afield may have influenced turkey hunter effort as well as turkey activity.

Online game check, now in its second year of operation, continued to be a popular and convenient means of reporting turkey harvest, with approximately 60% of hunters choosing to check their game online, a 10% increase over last year's online reporting. The fall turkey season begins October 20 through November 1, 2014 throughout the state except for Nantucket. More turkey hunting information and regulations are posted on the [Wild Turkey Hunting page](#).

Count turkeys for MassWildlife! Turkey hunters and other wildlife enthusiasts are reminded that they can contribute to turkey monitoring efforts by counting turkey broods (families) this summer. From June – August, reports of flocks containing hens with their young (poults) from interested citizen scientists are encouraged. A [turkey brood survey form](#) to fill out and submit is posted on the MassWildlife website.

WEBSITE TIP OF THE MONTH—CHANGE YOUR LINKS TO MASSWILDLIFE!

Webmasters for clubs, conservation groups, municipalities, and other state and federal agencies are encouraged to check any links or bookmarks to the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and its sister agencies. Over a year ago, a complete website change created an entirely new set of web links to our web pages. Many groups and organizations have not made the needed link changes and web users are receiving a Page Not Found error message. Use the URLs listed on the following agencies' home pages:

Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Home page -- <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/>

Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program – DO NOT USE www.nhesp.org -- You must use <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/>.

Division of Marine Fisheries -- <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dmf/>

Division of Ecological Restoration -- <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/der/>

Department of Fish & Game -- <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/>

STATE AND FEDERAL STAFF HONORED FOR BAITFISH CRIME INVESTIGATION

Dr. Ken Simmons, Chief of Hatcheries for the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, and Thomas Ricardi, Jr., Special Agent for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, were recently honored with an Investigative Achievement Award by the United States Attorney's Office and the Department of Justice (DOJ). Cases receiving this award are selective and limited to those who have substantially and significantly contributed to the mission of the US Attorney's Office and the DOJ. The award recognizes very high levels of commitment and professionalism within a prosecution team.

For over four years, Simmons and Ricardi worked on a federal case along with the Massachusetts Environmental Police, and the New York Department of Environmental Conservation involving Michael and Paul Zombik, owners and operators of Michael's Wholesale Bait. The crimes involved the transportation of tens of thousands of pounds of live fish valued in millions of dollars across state lines without required health certifications and permits. In addition, the Zombiks imported protected Eastern silvery minnows into Massachusetts from Vermont in violation of the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. Simmons and Ricardi's efforts included review of thousands of pages of business records and interviews with witnesses from as far away as Wisconsin. The Zombiks' crimes created a significant risk of infestation and disease potentially harmful to fish, wildlife, and the inland waters of Massachusetts. The Zombiks pled guilty to federal felony criminal violations of the federal Lacey Act. In March 2014, Paul Zombik was sentenced to one year and one day in prison, two years of supervised release, and was ordered to pay a \$50,000 fine to the Lacey Act Reward Fund. Michael Zombik was sentenced to six months in prison, two years of supervised release and fined \$50,000 to the Lacey Act Reward Fund. Both men are prohibited from dealing in live fish during their post-prison terms of supervised release. More

details about the case are covered in the #2 issue of Massachusetts Wildlife magazine coming to subscribers' mailboxes in early July.

UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS

July 10 -- Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Meeting, West Boylston - The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee will be meeting on Thursday, July 10, 2014, at the DFW Field Headquarters Office located at 100 Hartwell Street, Suite 230, West Boylston from 1:30- 4:30 P.M. in Conference Room A. [Directions](#) or call (508) 389-6360.

July 22 -- Fisheries and Wildlife Board Meeting, Greenfield -- The July meeting of the Fisheries and Wildlife Board will be held on Tuesday, July 22, 2014, at Noon. at the Greenfield Community College, downtown Greenfield campus, 270 Main Street, Greenfield, Massachusetts. [Directions](#)

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A confirmation message will follow with a short survey (30 seconds) asking about your wildlife-related interests and affiliations. Following confirmation, MassWildlife News will appear in your email about 1-2 times/month.

Thanks for your interest in fish, wildlife, conservation and recreation!

[Back to top](#)