



MassWildlife News

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

Phone: (508) 389-6300, Fax: (508) 389-7890, Email: Mass.Wildlife@state.ma.us

Visit our Website at www.mass.gov/MassWildlife or Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/MassWildlife

Media Inquiries: Call (617) 626-1129
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2015 LICENSES GO ON SALE DECEMBER 1

2015 hunting, sporting, fishing, and trapping licenses will be available for purchase starting Monday, December 1st at all license vendor locations, MassWildlife District offices, the Westborough Field Headquarters, and on the internet through the [MassFishHunt](#) system. Anyone 15 or older needs a license in order to fish in freshwater or to hunt. During December, it is possible to purchase either a 2014 or a 2015 license; therefore, license buyers should use care when selecting the year when making a purchase. Minors 15-17 years of age may not purchase hunting or sporting licenses online and must have certain documentation in their possession when making a license purchase at a MassWildlife District office or other license vendor location. Freshwater fishing licenses for minors ages 15-17 are free and can be obtained online. [Learn more about license purchasing requirements.](#)

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LAKE TROUT SAMPLING

This fall, MassWildlife will be sampling the waters of the Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs in an ongoing effort to monitor Lake Trout populations. Each year, with the help of DCR and a few hardy volunteers, MassWildlife collects Lake Trout from the Quabbin Reservoir to examine population characteristics. This year MassWildlife will be conducting a similar effort on the Wachusett Reservoir. To capture Lake Trout, field crews set nets on the spawning grounds starting around sunset and check them about every 20 minutes. Captured fish are removed from the nets, placed in livewells, and length, weight, and sex are recorded. In addition, a small tag is inserted into the fish that can be used to identify the individual if caught at a later date. If that same fish is collected next year, biologists will know exactly

how much growth occurred in a one-year time period. Lake trout are very slow-growing fish and traditional methods of determining age, (i.e. reading the rings on scales) do not work well.

Lake Trout typically spawn in late October and November when the surface water temperatures drop to or below 50°F. The spawning grounds are typically shallow, rocky waters on windy shores of the Reservoirs; spawning occurs mostly after dusk. Night sampling on big waters can be cold and icy in November, but the information it provides biologists is well worth the effort. Sampling efforts like this are just one way that MassWildlife monitors the health of the fish resources of the Commonwealth.

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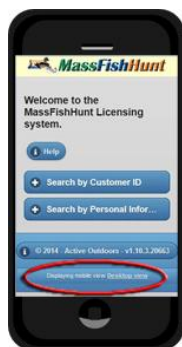
MASSWILDLIFE & NSSF URGE YOU TO HUNT S.A.F.E. AND PREVENT FIREARM ACCIDENTS

Responsible hunting is a time-honored tradition that plays an important part in managing wildlife in the Commonwealth. Responsible hunting means respecting game animals, hunting ethically, and hunting safely. Because this is a time of year when a lot of firearms are in use and in transport, MassWildlife and the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) reminds hunters that they can take steps to prevent firearm accidents in the field, at the range, at home, and everywhere in between. That means remembering that “The Hunt Isn’t Over Until You Are S.A.F.E.”

S.A.F.E. stands for **S**ecure your firearms when not in use; be **A**ware of those around you who should not have access to firearms; **F**ocus on your responsibility as a firearm owner; and **E**ducate yourself and others about safe firearm handling and storage.

Safe and secure storage of firearms is the best way to prevent firearm accidents. To complement MassWildlife’s hunter education program and provide additional resources on proper firearm storage and safety, NSSF has made several resources available on the [project childsafe website](#). Together we want to help everyone hunt responsibly, return home safely, and store unloaded firearms securely.

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HUNTERS HAVE OPTIONS FOR HARVEST REPORTING

Successful hunters may report (“check”) their harvest online using the [MassFishHunt](#) system or by going to a traditional checkstation. Visit the MassWildlife website for detailed instructions and locations: [game check information](#), [checkstation map](#).

When reporting a harvest online, it is easiest to use a desktop computer. However, if you choose to use a mobile device for reporting, please consider the following: mobile device users should click *Desktop View* at the bottom of the screen (see photo). If *Desktop view* is not selected, you cannot access the *Report a Harvest* feature.

SHOTGUN DEER SEASON: All deer harvested during shotgun season **MUST** be checked at a traditional checkstation. Online checking will **NOT** be available during this time (December 1 – 13, 2014). Reporting deer at checkstations during these two weeks allows biologists to collect valuable data needed for deer management. [Click here to find a checkstation](#).

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RAFTING FOR LOONS

For years, MassWildlife has monitored loons nesting in the state. Observations during the summer of 2014 documented 39 loon pairs on 16 lakes and ponds. Out of the 23 chicks that hatched, 18 survived to fledgling. These fledglings will migrate to the coast to live in the ocean for the next few years, then will return to their natal areas and try to establish territories of their own.

Common Loons, listed as a Species of Special Concern under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, returned to nest in Massachusetts in 1975 after being absent as a breeding bird for almost a century. From 1975 to 1983 loon pair activity was only observed on the Quabbin Reservoir. In 1984, loon activity was also observed on the Wachusett Reservoir. By 1986, loon nesting activity began to spread to other water bodies in the state.

In addition to monitoring loon activity, MassWildlife has partnered with other agencies and organizations to improve nesting sites for loons. Common Loons cannot walk well and only come on land in spring to breed and build nests within a few feet of the shoreline. The fluctuating water levels of reservoirs can be a problem for loons. If water levels rise, nests and eggs flood and will not hatch. If water levels drop more than 6 to 12 inches, nests are abandoned because loons cannot walk to the nest. To reduce nest losses on reservoirs, rafts are constructed using cedar logs and foam with vegetation placed on top to resemble a small island. The raft is floated and anchored in loon territory. Because the raft floats, it protects the nest and eggs from being flooded or stranded. This past summer, loon rafts were deployed at the Wachusett and Quabbin Reservoirs and where loon pairs have been reported and on reservoirs operated by the Fitchburg and Pittsfield water departments.

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UPCOMING MEETINGS

November 13 – Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Meeting, Westborough – The meeting takes place from 1:30- 4:30 P.M. at the DFW Field Headquarters, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA. [Click here for directions.](#)

November 15 – Fisheries and Wildlife Board Meeting, Westborough – The meeting will be held on at 10:00 A.M. at the DFW Field Headquarters, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA. [Click here for directions.](#) Immediately following the Board meeting, at approximately 11:30 A.M., the DFW's Sport Fishing Awards ceremony will be held at the same location.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 6 – The Return of Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons to Massachusetts, Northfield Mountain –Andrew Vitz, DFW State Ornithologist, will talk about the history of Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons at the [Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center](#) from 7:00 - 8:30 P.M. This free program will include information on historical abundance, extirpation, reintroduction, and current status in the Commonwealth. This program is co-sponsored with the Athol Bird and Nature Club. Please call 1-800-859-2960 to pre-register. Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center (99 Millers Falls Road, Northfield) is located on Route 63, two miles north of Route 2 in Northfield, Massachusetts. The building is handicapped accessible.

November 6 – Black Bears in Massachusetts, Westford – Patricia Huckery, MassWildlife Northeast District Supervisor, will give a presentation about black bears and will answer questions from the public. The talk is located at the Police Station Training Room, 53 Main Street in Westford at 7:00 P.M. If you have a question and are not able to attend, please email animalcontrol@westfordma.gov. This event is free and open to the public.

November 7 – Moose of Massachusetts, Easthampton – Learn about Massachusetts' largest land mammal! Once considered rare, moose are now found in many parts of western Massachusetts. Ralph Taylor, MassWildlife Connecticut Valley District Supervisor, will review moose natural history, ecology, and talk about how best to prevent moose conflicts. The program takes place at Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, 127 Combs Road in Easthampton from 7:00-8:30 P.M. (\$5 for MassAudubon members, \$7 for nonmembers).

November 12 – Living with Black Bears in Massachusetts, Athol – Ralph Taylor, MassWildlife Connecticut Valley District Supervisor, will speak to the [Athol Bird and Nature Club](#) at Liberty Hall, 584 Main Street in Athol. Learn about the black bear's current status, habitat, behavior, human/ bear conflicts, and tips to co-exist with black bears. This program is FREE and open to all at 7:00 P.M.

A pre-program catered dinner will begin at 6:00 P.M. The cost is \$10.00, to reserve a place contact Cindy Hartwell at (978) 544-5283 or Cindyhartwell56@gmail.com. A tin-can auction will also take place. Bring an item for the auction tables – this is a fun way to support the Athol Bird and Nature Club and raise money for the Millers River Environmental Center.

November 18 – The Return of Bald Eagles to Massachusetts – Andrew Vitz, State Ornithologist, will give a presentation for Sudbury Valley Trustees at 18 Wolbach Road in Sudbury. (Free for members, \$10 for non-members). [Register here](#). This presentation will run from 7:00- 8:30 PM.

November 22 – Black Bears of Massachusetts, Pittsfield – Ralph Taylor, MassWildlife Connecticut Valley District Supervisor, will discuss the natural history, status, behavioral changes of bears, as well as human/bear conflicts, current research, and tips on co-existing with black bears. This talk will be held at the Berkshire Science Museum in Pittsfield at 11:00 A.M.

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