



## Energy and Environmental Affairs

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### MassWildlife Monthly March 2015

#### MassWildlife Monthly: March 2015

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#### Don't Feed Wintering Wildlife- Keep Wildlife Wild (Watch a Video)

Each winter, MassWildlife receives inquiries from the public regarding whether or not to feed wildlife. While people have good intentions, supplemental feeding of wildlife typically does more harm than good. Most wildlife seasonally change their behavior to adapt to cold temperatures and scarce food supplies. Supplemental feeding can alter that behavior and have detrimental, sometimes fatal, effects. Wildlife in Massachusetts have adapted over thousands of years to cope with harsh winter weather, including deep snow, cold temperatures, and high winds.

Supplemental feed sites congregate wildlife into unnaturally high densities, which can:

- Attract predators and increase risk of death by wild predators or domestic pets;
- Spread diseases among wildlife or cause other health issues (e.g. Rumen acidosis in deer, Aflatoxicosis in turkeys);
- Cause aggression and competition over food, wasting vital energy reserves and potentially leading to injury or death;
- Reduce fat reserves, as wild animals use energy traveling to and from the feeding site;
- Cause wildlife to cross roads more frequently, therefore increasing vehicle collisions;
- Negatively impact vegetation and habitat in areas where feeding congregates animals.

Providing wildlife with food at **any time of year** teaches them to rely on humans for food, which puts them at a disadvantage for survival and can lead to human/wildlife conflicts. Once habituated behavior is established, it can be very difficult or impossible to change.

**What can you do?** The best way to help wildlife make it through the winter is to step back and allow the animals' instincts to take over. To help wildlife near your home, focus on improving the wildlife habitat on or near your property, by including natural food and cover (e.g., some conifer cover and regenerating forest or brushy habitat). It is also important that wildlife populations are in balance with what the habitat can support.

**Bird feeding:** MassWildlife biologists advise against feeding wildlife. While backyard bird feeding during winter months is generally acceptable, we recommend using native plants and water to attract birds to your yard. Fallen bird seed can unintentionally attract many types of wildlife, including bears, turkeys, small mammals like squirrels and mice, and predators like foxes, fishers, and coyotes that feed on small mammals. If you notice unwanted wildlife in your backyard, bring in your bird feeders immediately.

For tips on avoiding conflicts with wildlife, such as bears, coyotes, and turkeys, [visit our Living with Wildlife Fact Sheets](#).

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#### Trout Hatcheries Fend Off Snow and Ice

The fish grown at MassWildlife hatcheries require constant flowing water to stay alive. With all the recent snowfall and cold, there have been some challenges to keep water flowing at each of our five hatcheries. Our incredibly dedicated hatchery staff have been hard at work, sometimes working around the clock, plowing and shoveling snow to maintain



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access to the fish and water supplies, removing snow and ice from raceways and water intake screens, unthawing frozen water lines and making sure the emergency back-up generators do their job during power failures. So far their efforts have paid off and the fish have been just fine. We anticipate making the spring trout allocations within a few weeks and anglers can expect a healthy crop of fine trout this spring.

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### **American Black Duck Winter Banding (Watch a Video)**

MassWildlife biologists have been working long and hard this winter banding American Black Ducks as part of an ongoing effort to monitor the population. In its sixth year, Black Duck banding is being conducted throughout the Atlantic Flyway and certain areas of the Mississippi Flyway. This year has been particularly challenging in New England due to the extreme cold and deep snow. However, the cold weather has made the ducks more likely to respond to bait trapping, and over 1,000 ducks have been banded in the Southeast District at sites in the Plymouth/Duxbury area, Cape Cod, and Westport. An additional 100 ducks were banded at sites in Salisbury, Cape Ann, and Quincy. Some ducks are in poor condition due to extensive coastal icing which froze over the mussel beds they rely on for food, and the heavy snow cover in the salt marshes they also utilize.

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### **Massachusetts Wildlife Magazine Bobcat Article Stuns Readers**

Wildlife enthusiasts unfamiliar with the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's magazine *Massachusetts Wildlife* are invited to check out the most recent issue featuring an engaging article and impressive gallery of images on bobcats entitled, "The Hunter's Cat". Readers can subscribe to the state's only wildlife magazine, a quarterly publication filled with articles and photos on the environment, conservation, fishing, hunting, natural history and the outdoors in Massachusetts. A two-year subscription (8 issues) is only \$10 and makes a great gift for wildlife and outdoor-oriented people. [Click here for subscription information.](#)

Positive subscriber feedback on the bobcat article and photographs has been extraordinary with many people asking "What does it take to capture those amazing images of bobcats and other wildlife?" MassWildlife photographer Bill Byrne spent three years capturing and compiling images of several cat families plus some individual cats from five towns in Massachusetts and one Connecticut location. Bobcat sighting reports and other information from both MassWildlife staff and other colleagues lent valuable assistance in determining where a bobcat would most likely be found and Byrne's own technical expertise in camera and lighting setup and extensive wildlife tracking experience were also key. He spent countless hours scouting locations, setting up and checking remote camera traps, and sitting silently in blinds in all kinds of weather. The spectacular images perfectly illustrate editor Peter Mirick's engaging fictional account of a year in the life of adult female bobcat derived from his conversations with wildlife biologists, trappers, and trackers and extensive review of the scientific literature.

One subscriber's enthusiastic review said, "Both the photography and writing is absolutely incredibly beautiful and informative...This is absolutely the best wildlife article I have read in my 68+ years on Earth...I could not put it down until I had read every word and and savored every photograph."

*Massachusetts Wildlife* magazine provides information on wildlife and fisheries management, endangered species restoration programs, critical habitat protection and the outstanding people who are working to conserve our outdoor resources. Anyone with an interest in wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation will thoroughly enjoy this publication.

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### **Invest in Endangered Species Conservation this Year**

MassWildlife reminds and encourages Massachusetts taxpayers to invest in endangered wildlife and plant conservation this tax season by donating to the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Fund on their state tax returns (Line 32a). All donations go into the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Fund, a critical funding source for the annual budget of MassWildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. About 20,000 tax-filers support the Program each year. If you have made a contribution in the past, thank you for supporting the Program and its conservation efforts!

Contributions can also be made directly by sending a check payable to the "Commonwealth of MA: NHESP" to: MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Fund, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581

Some of the success stories behind the work of the NHESP include the recovery of bald eagles and peregrine falcons. In 1989, there were four pairs of eagles living in the state and the first wild eagle chicks hatched. Currently, there are at least 40 pairs of eagles with over 480 chicks leaving the nests since 1989. In that same time period, there were two pairs of peregrine falcons, which increased to 31 pairs.

While Massachusetts has made considerable progress, more than 425 plants and animals are recognized as rare in the Commonwealth. "The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program is the first line of defense for the Massachusetts' most vulnerable plants and animals," said DFG Commissioner George Peterson. "I strongly encourage taxpayers to support the fund as it will help us protect these valuable and endangered resources."

[Visit our website to read more about contributing to rare species conservation this year.](#)

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### **Register for the Young Adult Turkey Hunt Program**

Young adults ages 12-17 who have completed Hunter Education are invited to participate in the Young Adult Turkey Hunt.

- Learn how to safely handle and shoot a shotgun for turkey hunting.
- Participate in a workshop that allows you to learn and practice turkey hunting skills and techniques.
- Hunt wild turkey under the guidance of a safe, experienced adult hunter serving as a mentor on a special day set aside for young adults.

The YATH Program is comprised of two parts: the pre-hunt turkey seminar, hosted by sportsmen's clubs across the state, and the mentored hunt scheduled on April 25, 2015. To participate or volunteer, contact Astrid Huseby at [astrid.huseby@state.ma.us](mailto:astrid.huseby@state.ma.us) or (508) 389-6305.

[Click here to learn more and find a participating club...](#)

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### **Upcoming Events and Meetings**

**March 1 – 31: Quack, Quack, MA Junior Duck Stamp Traveling Exhibit, Worcester** – Bring your family to see top youth entries in the 2014 [Massachusetts Junior Duck Stamp Contest](#) (JDS) at the Notre Dame Academy, Flagg Gallery in Worcester. The Duck Stamp contest is modeled after the federal duck stamp competition. Youth of all ages are encouraged to learn about waterfowl and the importance of wetlands through this conservation contest. Winning artwork for 2014 can also be seen [on the DFW website](#). The Massachusetts Junior Duck Stamp Contest is sponsored by DFW, the Massachusetts Wildlife Federation, the Massachusetts Ducks Unlimited Chapter, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. For further information on the JDS exhibit contact: Mary Zywar at (508) 757-6200 x 253.

**March 7: Basic Freshwater Fly Tying Course, Worcester** – This course will be held at the Lower Forty Fly Shop at 134 Madison St, Worcester, MA 01610 in cooperation with the Charlton Conservation Department from 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. *This is a beginner's fly tying course with the focus on simple trout fishing patterns. Todd Girard will be the lead instructor, and all materials and equipment will be provided. \*Open to the public - limited to 6 people - minimum age is 12 - PRE-REGISTRATION IS MANDATORY. Contact Jim Bender at 508-752-4004.*

**March 7: MassWildlife at 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Birders Meeting, Waltham** – Bird club members and other bird enthusiasts are invited to attend this conference sponsored by MassAudubon at Bentley College in Waltham. The conference theme is "Managing for Birds: Balancing the Needs of Wildlife and People". Presentations will focus on habitat management for certain birds in need of special conservation efforts in order to reverse dwindling habitat and bird populations in Massachusetts. MassWildlife Restoration Ecologist Tim Simmons will talk about MassWildlife's Biodiversity Initiative, Drew Vitz, State Ornithologist will staff a MassWildlife exhibit to inform and invite birders to get involved in several citizen science projects. [Click here for registration information, program presentations and a list of exhibitors](#). Early Bird registration deadline is February 28.

**March 10 & 12: Basic Freshwater Fly Tying Course, Westborough** – This course will take place at the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Field Headquarters, Westborough (1 Rabbit Hill Rd), from 7:00 – 9:00 P.M. *This is a free, two session course for beginning fly tyers only – weather permitting participation is strongly encouraged for both sessions. All tools and tying materials provided. \*Open to the public – Minimum age is 12 - PRE-REGISTRATION IS MANDATORY – contact Jim Lagacy at 508-389-6309, or [jim.lagacy@state.ma.us](mailto:jim.lagacy@state.ma.us) pre-register.*

**March 11: Massachusetts Environmental Education Society Conference, Worcester** – Join MEES for their 2015 Annual Conference at the College of Holy Cross Hogan Campus Center. This year's conference will explore Environmental Education principles for all ages, spaces, and places. Join fellow environmental educators and advocates in exploring ways to reach the very young, get those in urban environments outdoors, and deepen our experiences outdoors. For the program brochure, including a full list of workshops, [click here](#).  To register, [click here](#).

**March 11-15: Boston Flower and Garden Show** – Stop by MassWildlife's display at the Boston Flower and Garden Show to ask our staff questions and pick up information on wildlife and outdoor recreation in MA. The Boston Flower and Garden Show will take place at the Seaport World Trade Center. [For more information about the Boston Flower and Garden Show and ticket information, click here.](#)

**March 12: Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Meeting, Westborough** – The meeting will take place at the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Field Headquarters Office located at 1 Rabbit Hill Road in Westborough

from 1:30- 4:30 P.M. in the Southwest Meeting Room, Room #103. Please note: If you have a disability or medical condition and would like to request special accommodations, please contact Susan Sacco at 508-389-6342.

**March 14: Growing Up WILD Professional Development Workshop, Cambridge** – Pre-school educators are invited to this fun, hands-on, 6-hour workshop that focuses on early childhood education. The Growing Up WILD Activity Guide builds on a children's sense of wonder about nature and invites them to explore wildlife and the world around them. Maynard Ecology Center, Cambridge. [Click here for more information about this workshop.](#) Please contact Jean Rogers at [jrogers@cambridgema.gov](mailto:jrogers@cambridgema.gov) or (617) 349-4793 for registration details. Registration deadline is February 26, 2015.

**March 16: Suburban Deer Management in Eastern MA, Andover** – MassWildlife Deer and Moose Project Leader David Stainbrook will give a talk at the annual meeting of [Foster's Pond Corporation](#) at 7:00 P.M. at the Memorial Hall Library, 2 North Main Street in Andover. The event is free and open to the public. Metered parking is available behind the library, limited on-street parking is also available. Follow signs for FPC event.

**March 16: Angler Education Program Display at the Western MA Fly Fishermen's Spring Expo, Ludlow** – In cooperation with the Ludlow Elks, 6:00 - 9:00 P.M. \*Open to the public – Contact Bill Rose at 508-389-6309.

**March 18: Fisheries and Wildlife Board Meeting, Westborough** – The March meeting of the Fisheries and Wildlife Board will be held on Wednesday, March 18, 2015, at 11:00 A.M., at the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Field Headquarters, Richard Cronin Building, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, off North Drive, Westborough, Massachusetts. Please note: If you have a disability or medical condition and would like to request special accommodations, please contact Susan Sacco at 508-389-6342.

**March 21: Growing Up WILD Professional Development Workshop, Norwell** – Pre-school educators are invited to this fun, hands-on, 6-hour workshop that focuses on early childhood education. The Growing Up WILD Activity Guide builds on a children's sense of wonder about nature and invites them to explore wildlife and the world around them. South Shore Natural Science Center, Norwell. [Click here for more information about this workshop.](#) Please contact Diane Thureson at [dthureson@ssymca.org](mailto:dthureson@ssymca.org) or (781) 659-2559 x 216 for registration details. Registration deadline is March 7, 2015.

**March 21: Central Mass Lyme Conference, Worcester** – Join the Central Mass Lyme Foundation as they host their first Lyme disease conference at Quinsigamond Community College Harrington Learning Center. This event will explore the complexities of Lyme and other tick-borne diseases and include presentations by experts in primary care, research, testing, psychology, and legislation. MassWildlife Deer Biologist David Stainbrook will be making a presentation entitled "Complexities of Managing White-tailed Deer in Suburban Massachusetts." Early bird tickets (before Feb. 1) are \$5, in advance tickets are \$7, and tickets at the door are \$10. [Click here](#) for more information on the conference.

**March 21: Mass Land Conservation Conference, Worcester** – Join the MA Land Trust Coalition for the 25<sup>th</sup> MA Land Conservation Conference, *Gaining Ground: Conserving our Common Wealth*. This annual, day-long training and networking event provides an opportunity to participate in workshops and discussions that focus on fostering healthy communities in MA through land conservation. For more information and to register, [click here](#).

**March 28, 2015 – Growing Up WILD Professional Development Workshop, Springfield** – Pre-school educators are invited to this fun, hands-on, 6-hour workshop that focuses on early childhood education. The Growing Up WILD Activity Guide builds on a children's sense of wonder about nature and invites them to explore wildlife and the world around them. Springfield Science Museum. [Click here for more information about this workshop.](#) Please contact Pam Hess at [phess@outdoors.org](mailto:phess@outdoors.org) for registration details. Registration deadline is March 14, 2015.

[For a full list of events, visit our calendar page.](#)

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