

Tim Carroll

From: Wildlife, Mass (FWE) [mass.wildlife@state.ma.us]
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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! www.mass.gov/masswildlife

Media Inquiries: Call (617) 626-1129

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AUTUMN OUTDOOR SAFETY TIPS

Fall is a great time to be outdoors enjoying the dazzling colors, crisp air and wildlife activity. Whether your passion is hiking, hunting, fishing, birding, or just taking in the scenery, a few common sense safety reminders will add to your enjoyment during a day in the field.

- **Know your limits.** Don't take off on a long hike, hunt, or bike ride if you're not physically ready. Tell someone where you're going and when you expect to return.
- **Watch the weather.** New England weather is notorious for quick changes. Be ready with an extra layer of clothing, warm hat, and gloves.
- **Expect the unexpected.** No one expects problems while spending a day outdoors, but having a small pack with a few first aid items, matches, water, extra food, pocket knife, map, compass, whistle, cell phone, and flashlight can help prevent small problems from becoming big ones.
- **Be Safe, Be Seen, Wear Blaze Orange!** Whether you're a hunter, hiker or dog walker in rural areas, it's a good idea to wear a cap or vest of highly visible blaze orange clothing while enjoying the great outdoors.

- **Respect the water.** Canoeists and kayakers are required to wear life jackets from September 15 to May 15, but all water enthusiasts, especially anglers who wade our larger rivers, would be wise to wear floatation devices especially now that water and air temperatures are cool.
- **Respect other outdoor users.** Mountain biking, horseback riding, wildlife watching, hunting, and hiking are not mutually exclusive activities. Know the [hunting seasons](#) and who is likely to be sharing the woods and waters with you. Keep dogs under control and respect other outdoor users' right to enjoy our wild open spaces.
- **Finally, licensed sportsmen and women-remember the basics of hunter safety.** Treat every firearm as if it were loaded, keeping the muzzle pointed in a safe direction at all times. Accurately identify your target and know what lies beyond it.

Outdoor activities are among the safest recreational pursuits available. By using common sense, they'll stay that way.

FALL TROUT STOCKING

Autumn anglers will be pleased to learn that fall trout stocking is now underway. 64,500 rainbow trout have been allocated among the five wildlife management districts across the state. The rainbow trout slated for stocking average a whopping 14 inches long and weigh one pound. "This is the best production of fall trout I have seen in my time with the Division," said Dr. Ken Simmons, Chief of Hatcheries. "The hatchery staff should be proud of the fish they have produced." The fish are grown at MassWildlife hatcheries in Belchertown, Montague, Sandwich, and Sunderland. Trout stocking began the week of September 23 and is expected to be completed the week of October 7. A [list of trout stocked waters](#) is posted on the agency website (www.mass.gov/masswildlife). Water bodies stocked in the fall are underlined. Anglers are advised to contact the [District Office](#) in their area to confirm local stocking schedules: Northeast (Ayer): (978) 772-2145; Southeast (Bourne): (508) 759-3406; Central (W. Boylston): (508) 835-3607; Connecticut Valley (Belchertown): (413) 323-7632; Western (Dalton): (413) 684-1646.

MASSACHUSETTS TAKES LEADING ROLE WITH GRANT TO CONSERVE RARE SNAKES

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) and the University of Massachusetts-Amherst will be leading a collaborative effort to assess the cause and conservation significance of a new fungal skin disease found in several eastern and midwestern states that is affecting rare snakes such as the Timber Rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*) and Massasauga (*Sistrurus catenatus*). A working group of nine state fish and wildlife agencies, two universities, the USGS National Wildlife Health Lab, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and three nonprofit organizations including the Roger Williams Park Zoo was awarded a \$500,000 grant through a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Competitive State Wildlife Grant Program. The working group will develop conservation strategies for species potentially impacted by the disease, conduct regional snake species assessment, and implement other conservation actions including evaluation of treatments, captive rearing, monitoring, and habitat improvement. For more information, contact Dr. Tom French, DFW Assistant Director for the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. (508) 389-6355.

SURPLUS ANTLERLESS DEER PERMIT SALES REMINDER

The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife reminds deer hunters about the following changes to the sale of Surplus Antlerless Deer Permits for 2013:

Staggered Sales Dates -- Sale of Surplus Antlerless Deer Permits by Wildlife Management Zone will be staggered over the following days beginning in early October.

- **Zone 11** permits go on sale on Tuesday, October 1st at 8AM, with a limit of 1 per day until sold out.

- **Zone 10** permits go on sale on Wednesday, October 2nd at 8AM, with a limit of 1 per day until sold out.
- **Zone 13 and 14** permits go on sale on Thursday, October 3rd at 8AM, with a limit of 4 per zone per day until sold out.

Once on sale, permits will remain available until sold out in each Wildlife Management Zone. Hunters may purchase surplus antlerless deer permits through the internet at www.mass.gov/massfishhunt, by visiting a license vendor location, or by visiting a DFW office. Hunters planning to purchase a surplus antlerless deer permit through a license vendor are reminded to check the hours of operation prior to the start of permit sales. Not all vendor locations will be open at 8AM.

CHECK YOUR GAME ONLINE THIS FALL

New this fall, hunters and trappers have two options for checking in deer, turkey, bear, and most furbearers. As in the past, animals may be brought to a game [check station](#), or hunters and trappers can use the online *MassFishHunt* system to report or check their game via computer. There are two exceptions to this process:

1. During the shotgun hunting season for deer, all deer must be checked in at a [deer check station](#) in order for DFW biologists to collect biological data.
2. All bobcat and otter must be checked in at a [furbearer check station](#) . These furbearers cannot be reported on *MassFishHunt*.

Step-by-step instructions on the actual reporting process for various game species will be available online prior to their hunting seasons. Meanwhile summaries of tagging and reporting requirements for certain game animals and furbearers are below.

Tagging and online reporting for bear, deer, and turkeys:

- Attach the paper tag from permit or license for bear, deer, or turkey to the carcass immediately upon harvesting the animal.
- Log in to the *MassFishHunt* system (www.mass.gov/massfishhunt) to report the harvest of bear, deer, or turkey online within 48 hours of harvest. NOTE: Hunters must complete this checking/reporting process BEFORE processing game for consumption, or taxidermy.
- After answering the online game checking questions, the system will assign a confirmation number for each individual animal reported. This number must be written on the tag attached to the carcass.
- The confirmation number written on the tag is the official seal issued by MassWildlife and takes the place of the traditional metal seals used at check stations.
- The tag must remain attached to the animal until the game is skinned, butchered, or otherwise prepared for food purposes; or for mounting by a taxidermist.
- Confirmation numbers are non-transferable to other animals. Confirmation numbers cannot be used for any other game animals except the one for which it was issued.
- Any deer harvested in Wildlife Management Zones 13 or 14 (Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and Elizabeth Islands) must be sealed with either an official metal seal from a check station, or a confirmation number written on a tag affixed to the deer, before it can be transported off-island.

- Deer hunters are reminded that during the shotgun season for deer, all deer must be checked in at a deer check station.

Reporting furbearers online:

- Log in to the *MassFishHunt* system (www.mass.gov/massfishhunt) to report the harvest of beaver, coyote, fisher, fox, and mink online within 4 working days of the end of the season. Remember that bobcat and otters cannot be reported online, and must be checked at a [furbearer check station](#) for an official plastic seal.
- After answering the online game checking questions, the system will assign an online confirmation number for each animal checked or reported.
- The confirmation number written on the tag is the official seal issued by MassWildlife. It must be written on a tag of your own making and attached to the animal and/or its pelt.
- Confirmation numbers must remain affixed to all pelts/carcasses, with the specific confirmation number issued for each particular pelt or carcass, until the carcass is prepared for mounting by a taxidermist, or the pelt is sold or tanned.
- Confirmation numbers are non-transferable to other animals.

Meat processors and taxidermists are also advised that they can only take into possession bear, beaver, coyote, deer, fisher, fox, mink, or wild turkey with either an official DFW metal or plastic seal affixed to the carcass or pelt or with a tag noting the assigned *MassFishHunt* confirmation number affixed to the carcass or furbearer pelt. It is illegal to accept any of the above game animals without a Division official seal or confirmation number written on an attached tag. Bobcat and otters may not be accepted into possession unless tagged with an official plastic seal.

BUCKLEY HONORED FOR INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Jack Buckley, Deputy Director of Administration and Personnel for the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, was recently honored by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) with the 2013 Ernest Seton Thompson Award for his work with the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna) Technical Working Group. The CITES Technical Working Group was presented with AFWA's award for leadership in scientific wildlife management for their efforts on behalf of AFWA in international forums to protect states' wildlife management interests. The other Technical Working Group members honored were Buddy Baker, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries; Bob Broscheid, Arizona Game and Fish Department; and Carolyn Caldwell from the Ohio Division of Wildlife.

The CITES is an international agreement between governments to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. The CITES Technical Working Group (Working Group) was established in 1994 and is composed of a representative from each region of the country. The Working Group has both advanced conservation where international trade threatens North American wildlife and retained the authority of state agencies that might otherwise be omitted in deliberations of an international body with little understanding of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. The accomplishments of the CITES Technical Working Group are numerous and remarkable. The Working Group represented states' interests in the convention and trade in crocodilians, amphibians and reptiles, native turtles, sturgeon, paddlefish, polar bears, and furbearers such as bobcats. Most recently, the Working Group represented the states' interests at the 16th Convention of the Parties in Bangkok, Thailand. Throughout the meeting, the Working Group provided technical information and engaged with country delegates and non-governmental organizations to enhance global understanding of the role of state fish and wildlife agencies and scientific wildlife management.

UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS & HEARING

October 10 – The [Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Advisory Committee](#) will meet at the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Field Headquarters, 100 Hartwell Street in West Boylston on Thursday, June 13, 2013 from 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM. The building is handicapped accessible. Call (508) 389-6360 for further information and directions.

October 18 -- A Public Hearing will be held Friday, October 18, 2013, at 10:00 A.M., at the Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, 100 Hartwell St, Suite 230, West Boylston, Massachusetts, to establish rules and regulations relative to the 2013-2014 migratory game bird seasons and method of take. This hearing will serve to finalize the emergency regulations set in August for migratory game birds.

October 29 – Fisheries and Wildlife Board Meeting, Belchertown – The [Fisheries & Wildlife Board](#) will meet on Tuesday, October 29, 2013 at 1:00PM at the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Connecticut Valley District Office, 341 East Street, Belchertown. Call (508) 389-6300 for more information.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS—Visit [the MassWildlife Calendar and Events page](#) for more listings.

October 3 – Wildlife Habitat Site Walk, Hardwick – Join Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Ecologists and Foresters from 5PM – 6:15 PM to walk the Patrill Hollow section of the Division's Muddy Brook Wildlife Management Area in Hardwick. Learn how MassWildlife will restore open sandplain and pitch pine/scrub oak habitats on over 100 acres of land. Attendees may encounter some of the wildlife benefiting from these activities. Landowners interested in managing their own properties for wildlife are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to find out more about wildlife habitat management. Dress for the weather; the event will be occurring rain or shine. Consider bringing binoculars, camera, and wearing sturdy boots. For cooler weather, dress warmly! Meeting location is at the DFW parking area located on Patrill Hollow Road in Hardwick.

October 4 – 11 – MassWildlife at the Topsfield Fair, Topsfield – Stop by the Sportsmen's and Wildlife Building at the Topsfield Fair and pick up information on the common wildlife you'll see in your community, ask staff your wildlife, fishing or hunting questions, sign up to receive the MassWildlife Newsletter or for a subscription to Massachusetts Wildlife magazine! More on the Topsfield Fair at <http://www.topsfieldfair.org/>.

October 5 & 7—Youth Waterfowl Hunting Dates -- These dates are set aside annually for young waterfowl hunters ages 12-15. Youths may hunt for ducks, coots, merganser and geese. All youths must be accompanied by a licensed adult hunter with a valid MA waterfowl stamp. No federal stamp required. One firearm is allowed. The adult may not hunt and may carry the firearm only when it is unloaded and cased. No license or stamps are needed for youths 12-14 years of age. Hunting license and valid Massachusetts waterfowl stamp needed for youths age 15. No federal stamp is required of the 15-year old. All other [migratory game bird hunting](#) regulations apply.

October 10 – Wildlife Habitat Site Walk, Southwick – Join Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Ecologists and Foresters from 5:00PM – 6:15 PM to walk the Division's Southwick Wildlife Management Area in Southwick. This land contains extensive abandoned tobacco farmlands which have the potential to support rare birds such as Grasshopper Sparrows and Upland Sandpipers. Learn how MassWildlife will establish native warm-season grassland across more than 100 acres at this site. Landowners interested in managing their own properties for wildlife are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to find out more about wildlife habitat management. Dress for the weather; the event will be occurring rain or shine. Consider bringing binoculars, camera, and wearing sturdy boots. For cooler weather, dress warmly! Meeting location is at the DFW parking area located on South Longyard Road in Southwick.

October 16 – Climate Change and Birds, Hingham – As part of a Hingham Church Climate Change lecture series “Witness to Change”, Andrew Vitz, DFW State Ornithologist, will be giving a public presentation “Bird responses to climate change in the Northeast: What we have seen and what we can expect”. The talk will take place at the New North Church, 1 Lincoln Street, Hingham at 7:00PM. Refreshments will be served. For more information, contact John Bewick at (781) 740-1117.

October 19 – Deer Hunting Seminar for Outdoorswomen and Men, Shirley – The Massachusetts Becoming an Outdoorswoman Program invites both adult women and men (18 and over) who are new to deer hunting to attend this seminar to learn about deer behavior, what to wear, what gear to bring on a deer hunt, deer management, sighting in your firearm and other useful tips. This is Part 1 of a 2-part workshop. Part 2 is a guided Deer Hunt for adult women on the Devens Training Area to be held on December 7. Men and women may sign up for Part 1 (Seminar) and women may sign up for Part 1 and Part 2 (Hunt). No previous hunting experience is required for the October seminar. Registration priority will be given to new hunters and first time participants. First-time women hunters who want to participate in the Hunt (Part 2) MUST take the seminar segment (Part 1) and need a valid 2013 hunting license and MA gun license, a shotgun and deer slugs for ammunition. Registration materials will be posted here sometime during the week of September 30.

October 19 – Growing Up WILD Workshop for Pre-School Educators, Lenox – Pre-school educators are invited to this fun, practical hands-on 6-hour workshop that focuses on early childhood education. The Guide is correlated to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Standards and the Head Start Domains. Workshop participants will receive a copy of the Growing Up WILD guide and a certificate of completion. [Project WILD](#) is sponsored by DFW and the Massachusetts Wildlife Federation. Pre-registration is required, fee is \$30. Registration deadline is October 9. To register contact Gayle Tardif-Raser at MassAudubon's Pleasant Valley Sanctuary gtraser@massaudubon.org or call (413) 637-0320 or register online at www.mass.audubon.org/pleasantvalley (click on Program Catalog).

Make a wild investment in Massachusetts by buying a license or making a donation to the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Fund or Wildlands Fund!

Sign up for MassWildlife News, a monthly e-newsletter that provides and update wildlife related events, recreation, laws and seasonal safety tips. send an e-mail to the following address: Join-MassWildlife.news@listserv.state.ma.us

Visit the Great Outdoors Blog at: <http://environment.blog.state.ma.us/>

www.mass.gov/masswildlife

MassWildlife serves your community from the following Offices:

Western District, Dalton 413/684-1646

Connecticut Valley District, Belchertown 413/323-7632

Central District, W. Boylston 508/835-3607

Northeast District, Ayer 978/772-2145

Southeast District, Buzzards Bay 508/759-3406

West Boylston Field Headquarters, 100 Hartwell St, Suite 230 508/389-6300 **(NOTE NEW HQ LOCATION!)**

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