

Big Game Hunting

Hunting Hours

Big game hunting hours are 1/2-hour before sunrise to 1/2-hour after sunset (see page 80). Sunday hunting is allowed in all areas of New York State. Before hunting on State lands, confirm regulations for the area.

Fluorescent Orange and Fluorescent Pink Clothing Requirements

Any person hunting deer or bear with a firearm or a person who is accompanying someone hunting deer or bear with a firearm shall wear:

1. a minimum total of 250 square inches of solid fluorescent orange or fluorescent pink material worn above the waist and visible from all directions; or
2. a minimum total of 250 square inches of patterned fluorescent orange or fluorescent pink consisting of no less than 50% fluorescent orange or fluorescent pink worn above the waist and visible from all directions; or
3. a hat or cap with no less than 50% of the exterior consisting of solid fluorescent orange or fluorescent pink material and visible from all directions.

Legally Antlered Deer

A legally antlered deer must have at least one antler that is 3" or longer. Antlerless deer are those without antlers (does and fawns) and deer with antlers less than 3" long. Special regulations apply in the Antler Restriction areas. See page 26 for details.

Defining "Early" and "Late" Seasons for Deer and Bear

The term "early" muzzleloader or bowhunting season means before the regular season for that particular zone. "Late" means after the regular season for that zone.

Feeding and Baiting Prohibited

Intentional feeding or baiting of deer or bear is prohibited at all times of year. This includes use of mineral blocks or powders. Exempt activities include agricultural plantings, wildlife food plots, and cutting of trees or brush to provide winter forage.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Import Restrictions

Hunters are prohibited from returning to New York State with whole carcasses or intact heads of deer, elk, moose, or caribou that they harvest anywhere outside of New York State. Only the deboned meat, cleaned skull cap, antlers with no flesh adhering, raw or processed cape or hide, cleaned teeth or lower jaw, and finished taxidermy products of CWD-susceptible animals may be brought into New York State.

Manner of Taking

Big game may be taken with centerfire rifles, shotguns, handguns, muzzleloading firearms, bows, and crossbows during appropriate seasons and in designated areas (see maps, pages 26 and 27). You may use decoys, calls, and attractant scents to hunt big game.

It is unlawful to:

- Take big game while the deer or bear is in water.
- Possess a firearm of any description when bowhunting or accompanying a person bowhunting during an archery-only season.
- Possess a firearm other than a muzzleloading firearm when hunting deer or bear or when accompanying a person hunting deer or bear during a muzzleloading season.
- Make, set, or use salt licks or other attractants, whether block, liquid, or powder that contain any amount of salt, upon lands inhabited by deer or bear at any time of year.

In addition to the general hunting regulations for manner of take listed on page 16, it is unlawful to hunt big game with:

- Dogs (except as authorized by leashed tracking dog license) or aircraft of any kind, including drones.
- The aid of a pre-established bait pile.
- A firearm or bow aided by any artificial light or a laser that projects a beam toward the target (use of illuminated reticle scopes, laser rangefinders, red dot scopes, or illuminated sight pins is allowed, provided no light is projected toward the target).
- An autoloading firearm with a capacity of more than 6 shells (one which requires that the trigger be pulled separately for each shot), except an autoloading pistol with a barrel length of less than 8 inches.
- A firearm using rimfire ammunition.
- A shotgun of less than 20 gauge or any shotgun loaded with shells other than those carrying a single projectile (rifling in the barrel or choke is allowed).
- A bow with a draw weight less than 35 lbs.



Portia G. with her successful harvest while hunting with her family members Kendall and Scott G.

- Arrows with barbed broadheads; arrowheads less than 7/8 inches at the widest point or with less than 2 sharp cutting edges.
- Double-barreled muzzleloaders or percussion cap revolvers during the special muzzleloading seasons.
- An air gun or air bow.

Deer Management Focus Area

See dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/deer-bear/deer-management-focus-areas for information on the Deer Management Focus Area in Tompkins County. Expanded antlerless bag limits and a January antlerless season in this area provide additional opportunities for hunters and help to reduce deer-related conflicts.

Long Island Opportunities

All hunting on State-managed land requires a DEC permit. The archery deer season runs from October through January. There is a January firearms season during which shotguns and muzzleloading firearms can be used. Firearms users must obtain a landowner's endorsement to hunt during this season, and may also need a town permit. For more information on Long Island hunting opportunities, visit dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/places/long-island.

Prohibited Sale of Deer or Bear Meat

It is unlawful to sell deer or bear meat. Other than meat, the parts (e.g., hides, skulls, claws, antlers, and taxidermy mounts or rugs) from legally taken and reported deer and bear may be sold. Bear gallbladders and bile shall not be possessed or sold unless a valid bear tag (original or copy) is attached.

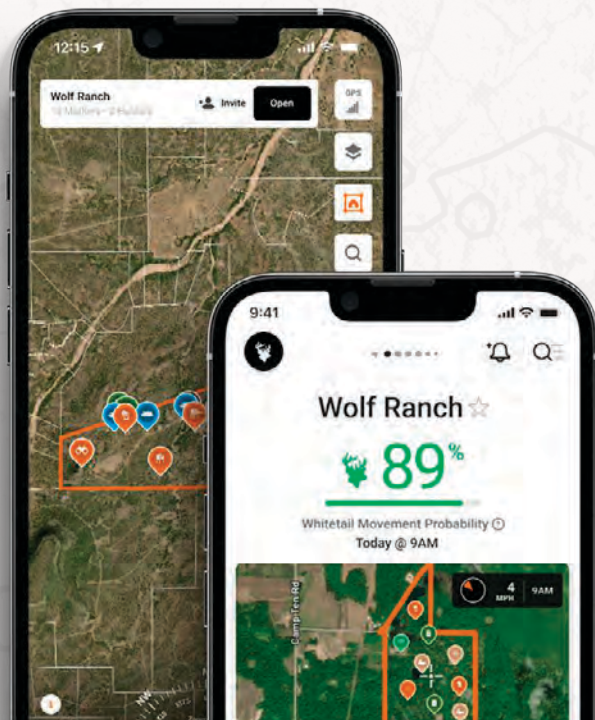
Continued on page 22



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John Dudley
@nockontv



Big Game Hunting

Continued from page 20

Meat Unfit for Consumption

If a deer, bear, or turkey is found to be unfit for human consumption, a special permit may be issued that allows the hunter to take another deer, bear, or turkey, provided the season is still open. The entire animal, including the antlers, must be forfeited to get a permit. A permit will not be issued if the meat is unfit due to hunter neglect. Call a regional DEC Wildlife office or Law Enforcement office listed on page 6.

Tagging, Reporting, and Transporting

Deer and bear are in legal possession only when tagged with the completed carcass tag, valid for that season. See page 28 for clear tag descriptions.

Hunters who take a deer in remote areas may wish to bone it out and pack out the meat. This is lawful, but you must retain the carcass tag with the boned-out meat.

Tagging and Reporting

After harvesting a deer or bear:

1. Ensure that you select the proper tag for the harvested deer or bear.

2. **Immediately** fill in all information and sign the carcass tag with ink that won't erase.
3. Write the date of kill on the reporting portion of your hunting license. This will help you when reporting a harvest.
4. Place the tag in a weatherproof case or bag. (See page 14).
5. **Attach the tag** to the carcass upon arrival at your camp, home, or vehicle. You do not need to attach the tag while it is being dragged or physically carried from the place of kill to a camp or point where transportation is available.
6. **Report your harvest** online, by phone, or mobile app within 7 days as required by law. See page 15 for details.

After you have used your last deer tag, you may help others hunt deer. You must have your hunting license with you, and you may not shoot or attempt to shoot a deer.

Transporting

Deer and bear may be transported either inside or outside the vehicle.

- A deer carcass with head and deer carcass tag attached may be transported with the taker in attendance.
- If someone other than the taker is transporting the deer or bear, the taker must attach an additional tag to the carcass and include the

names and addresses of both the taker and the transporter. The tag may be handwritten in ink or typed on any paper.

- All portions of deer or bear meat being transported by the taker shall be individually tagged and the tags shall include the name, address, big game DOC #, the date that the portions were cut, and the signature of the taker. Packaged or boxed portions of venison need only one tag and must be labeled "venison" on the outside of the box. If someone other than the taker is transporting the portions, an additional tag signed by the taker with the names and addresses of the consignee and taker are required for each portion.
- Non-resident hunters: if your home state prohibits the importation of whole deer carcasses from New York State, you will need to follow the previous guidelines for transportation of individual or packaged portions of deer meat while in New York State.
- A deer carcass minus the head may be transported as described previously, but evidence of the sex of the deer must be intact. The deer carcass tag must be affixed to the carcass, and a tag supplied by the taker must also be attached showing the name and address of the taxidermist where the head was sent.
- Heads of male deer may be transported to a taxidermist only if a tag supplied by the taker is attached bearing the taker's signature, address, big game DOC #, number of points

Hunters can help end hunger in New York State

Each year, DEC partners with Feeding New York State to provide food for those in need. Through a cooperative relationship involving hunters, deer processors, the NYS Dept. of Health, and non-profit organizations like Feeding NYS, and regional food banks, nearly 40 tons of venison are made available each year to families across the state.



There are many ways a hunter can help feed those less fortunate. You can donate all or part of your deer at a cooperating processor, support your regional food bank monetarily, or you can make a cash donation to support venison donation programs when you purchase your hunting license.

Learn more about these programs by visiting dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/deer-bear/venison-donation



on each antler, and the name and address of the taxidermist.

- The head of a doe with antlers that are 3 inches or more can be removed for mounting. Follow the same procedure that you would use for mounting a buck (see previous).

Muzzleloader Hunting

Muzzleloading firearms may be used during the muzzleloader and regular seasons, and during the January firearms season on Long Island.

- Hunters must possess a current muzzleloader privilege to participate during the muzzleloader seasons.
- The muzzleloader privilege is not needed for hunters to use a muzzleloading firearm during regular firearms seasons or January firearms season on Long Island.
- Muzzleloaders may not be used in WMUs 3S, 4J, 8C, and may only be used in 1C during the January firearms season.
- Bow/Muzz either-sex or antlerless-only tags may not be used during the regular seasons, except in WMUs 1C and 3S.
- Hunters participating in the muzzleloader season shall not have in their possession, or be accompanied by a person who has in their possession, a bow or firearm other than a legal muzzleloading firearm or crossbow.

Bowhunting

Bowhunting opportunities include both the bowhunting and regular seasons:

- Hunters must possess a current bowhunting or junior bowhunting privilege to participate during the bowhunting seasons.
- The bowhunting privilege is not required to hunt with a bow during regular seasons, but hunters must possess proof of eligibility (either a valid bowhunter education certificate or prior bowhunting license).
- Bow/Muzz either-sex or antlerless-only tags may not be used during the regular seasons except by junior bowhunters or in WMUs 1C and 3S.
- In WMUs 4J and 8C, only bows may be used to take deer during the regular and bowhunting seasons.
- Suffolk (WMU 1C) and Westchester (WMU 3S) counties have separate regular seasons restricted to bows for taking deer.

Crossbow Use

Crossbow opportunities include portions of bow seasons in addition to muzzleloader and regular seasons:





- Crossbows may be used to take deer during muzzleloader seasons and a portion of the early bow seasons (see maps on page 27) by hunters with a valid hunting or junior hunting (ages 12–15 only) license and a current muzzleloader privilege. Junior hunters (ages 14–15) may also take bear with crossbows during these seasons (see map on page 38).
- Crossbows may be used to take deer during the regular season by hunters with a valid

hunting or junior hunting (ages 12–15) license and to take bear during the early bear and regular seasons by hunters with a valid hunting or junior hunting (ages 14–15 only) license.

- See page 25 for the required Crossbow Certificate of Qualification. The New York State Legislature does not allow all crossbows to be used to hunt big game in New York State. See page 14 for the definition of a legal crossbow.

Barbed Broadheads

Barbed broadheads are illegal for hunting big game. A barbed broadhead is one in which the angle formed between the trailing or rear edge of any blade and the shaft is less than 90 degrees. A notch at the base of the blade extending no more than 2 millimeters from the shaft shall not be considered a barb. Broadheads with mechanical blades are legal if the blades DO NOT form a barb or hook when the arrow is pulled from the flesh of a deer or bear.

Broadheads for Big Game		
Type	Legal	Illegal
Fixed Blade		
Mechanical Blade (shown in position of being withdrawn from an animal)	 Blades pivot forward (no longer barbed)	 Blades do not pivot (remain barbed)

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Hunting for Food

Humans were built to hunt for food. From prehistoric times, humans have lived with, and both hunted, and were hunted by other animals.



By Moria and Keith Tidball

Our traditions, the very social fabric of who we are as a species, have been informed by our hunting heritage. Archaeological findings show brain size of early humans increased with the adaptation of tools, social skills, and cooking meat over fire. For 99% of human history, hunting and angling have played an important and significant role in the social and emotional lives of people. For many families hunting has remained a strong family tradition passed down from generation to generation. Though techniques and methods have changed, the essence of our hunting traditions continues, providing not only food for the table but stories and histories for those gathered around the table. As we become a more urban society, many people have not (yet) learned how to hunt or fish for food.

Thankfully, there are mentor programs to relearn this connection to nature and our food, such as NYS DEC's Becoming an Outdoors Woman Program, 4-H Shooting Sports, hiring a NYS Licensed Guide, and DEC's special hunting opportunities for youth and veterans. If you can, mentor a new hunter and continue our long hunting heritage and tradition. Show and teach a new hunter, young or older, how to successfully harvest an animal and how to safely process the meat.

Not only is wild game meat a way to connect with our hunting heritage and traditions, wild game meat is also an excellent source of lean, healthy protein. Because wild game meat is lean, it requires specific cooking techniques to ensure the meat is tender and flavorful, such as brining, marinating, braising, and not overcooking steaks. Too often, people say that wild-caught meat tastes "gamey" or is "tough", yet with proper preparation, this is not the case. We can look back to hunting and wild game cooking traditions to find ways to both overcome leanness about wild game and to actually prepare gourmet meals. To help accomplish this, we formed a partnership between Cornell University's Department of Natural Resources and Environment and Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) county associations in the Finger Lakes region. Consistent with the motto of "putting knowledge to work", we created CCE's Wild Harvest Table program as an educational resource to help people prepare wild game and fish meat that the whole family can enjoy eating as part of a healthy, delicious meal. It celebrates the culinary bounty that wild game and fish represent across New York State. The Wild Harvest Table initiative is not just another source of wild game recipes; the program provides useful and difficult to get nutritional information about game meat and wild game recipes. We create the Nutrition Facts label that is displayed on other foods for all the Wild Harvest Table recipes to indicate

the healthfulness of the meal. This is a result of our unique partnership between Cornell University as the Land Grant University of NYS, other Land Grant Universities, and the US Dept. of Agriculture.

For more recipes and nutrition information for wild game and fish, check out www.wildharvesttable.com.

Hunters' Venison Pie

Ingredients:

- 1 pound ground deer meat
- 1 small onion or large shallot, diced
- 1 large carrot, diced
- ½ cup peas (frozen or fresh)
- 1-pint stewed tomatoes or 14.5 ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1 tsp. dried thyme or Italian seasoning
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 to 3 cups of favorite mashed potatoes*

Preparation

Preheat oven to 350°F.

In a 2qt. braising pan or Dutch oven, brown the venison meat (you can add 1 Tbsp of olive oil if the meat is sticking to pan) over medium high heat. Pour the browned meat into a strainer over the sink to drain off any liquid or fat. Add a dash of olive oil to the empty pan and add the onion, carrot, and peas, return to heat, and cook stirring occasionally until the veggies are lightly cooked, about 3-5 minutes. Stir the browned venison back in with the onion, carrot, and peas, and add a dash of salt, pepper, and thyme or Italian seasoning. Cook for another minute. Remove the pan from the stove top. Even out the mixture to make a base layer and pour the tomatoes over the meat mixture. Add a layer of seasoned mashed potatoes on top of the tomatoes. Place the pan in the oven, uncovered, and cook for about 1/2 an hour until the potatoes are slightly browned on top. Remove from oven and let it rest for about 5 minutes before scooping out servings. Serves about 4.

* For my mashed potatoes, I used 3 white potatoes boiled until soft, 2-3 Tbsp of butter, ¼ cup light cream or whole milk, salt & pepper to taste and mashed it all together, which made about 3 cups.



Nutrition Facts

~4 servings per container	
Serving size	
Amount per serving	
Calories	420
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 10g	13%
Saturated Fat 6g	30%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 110mg	37%
Sodium 640mg	28%
Total Carbohydrate 40g	15%
Dietary Fiber 7g	25%
Total Sugars 10g	
Includes 3g Added Sugars	6%
Protein 40g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 84mg	6%
Iron 7mg	40%
Potassium 1447mg	30%

*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Crossbow Hunting Qualifications and Safety Information

A crossbow must have compound or recurve limbs with minimum width of 17 inches (outer tip of limbs excluding wheels and cams, uncocked); a minimum overall length from butt of stock to the front of the limbs of 24 inches; and be able to launch a minimum 14 inch arrow/bolt, not including the legal arrowhead. It must have a draw weight of 100–200 pounds.

Crossbows may be used by any person age 12 or older to hunt deer and any person age 14 or older to hunt bear, unprotected wildlife, and **most** small game species. Crossbows may not be used to take carp or any other fish.

Hunters who plan to hunt with a crossbow must have in their possession while afield either their completed Hunter Education Certificate of Qualification card dated on or after April 1, 2014 or the completed Crossbow Certificate of Qualification located below.

Crossbow safety information

- Before shooting your crossbow, read and thoroughly understand your crossbow owner's manual.
- Make sure your fingers are well away (below rail) from the path of the bow string and cables.
- Never dry-fire a crossbow (cock and fire without an arrow placed on the rail).
- Make sure the crossbow limbs are free of obstructions before shooting.
- Never carry a cocked crossbow with an arrow in it while walking.
- If hunting from a tree stand, always cock (but do not load) the crossbow on the ground before climbing into the stand.
- Once seated and secured in the tree stand, pull up your unloaded crossbow with a haul line.
- Do not place an arrow on the crossbow until you are safely secured in your stand.

- Never use a cocking device to uncock a crossbow.
- To uncock a crossbow, shoot an arrow tipped with a field point into the soft ground or a target.
- Always identify your target and the area beyond it before shooting.
- To prevent wounding game, practice often and do not take shots at game that are beyond your effective range, generally less than 30–40 yards, similar to a modern compound bow.
- To better understand how an arrow functions and the skill required for hunting with an arrow, DEC recommends all crossbow hunters take a bowhunter education course.

DEC Crossbow Hunting Qualifications:

dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/regulations/crossbow

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Crossbow Certificate of Qualification

I certify that I have read and understand the safety recommendations, license requirements, and legal specifications for crossbow use in New York.

Print Name

Signature

DEC ID# (this is your back-tag number)

Date

Fill in, cut out, and carry afield with your hunting license while hunting with a crossbow.

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Big Game Boundary Descriptions/Legal Implements

Complete descriptions of all wildlife management units are available on DEC's website at dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/regulations/wildlife-management-units.

Northern-Southern Zone Line

A line commencing at a point at the north shore of the Salmon River and its junction with Lake Ontario and extending easterly along the north shore of that river to the Village of Pulaski, thence southerly along Route 11 to its intersection with Route 49 in the Village of Central Square, thence easterly along Route 49 to its junction with Route 365 in the City of Rome, thence easterly along Route 365 to its junction with Route 28 in the Village of Trenton, thence easterly along Route 28 to its junction with Route 29 in the Village of Middleville, thence easterly along Route 29 to its junction with Route 4, thence northerly along Route 4 to its junction with Route 22, thence northerly and westerly along Route 22 to the eastern shore of South Bay on Lake Champlain in the Village of Whitehall, thence northerly along the eastern shore of South Bay to the New York-Vermont boundary.

Closed Areas

The following closed areas are specific portions of the state where the taking of deer and bear is prohibited by the Environmental Conservation Law. This section does not include areas covered by town laws, local ordinances, or posting by landowners.

Broome County

City of Binghamton

Erie County

Area around Buffalo: bounded by Tonawanda Creek from East Branch Niagara River to Rt. 78 to Greiner Rd. to Rt. 268 to Rt. 5 to Ransom Rd. to Rt. 33 to Rt. 78 to Rt. 20 to Rt. 20A to Lake Erie.

Herkimer County

Area along Big Moose Lake: bounded by Judson Rd. from Herkimer-Hamilton County line to Higby Rd. to Big Moose Rd. to Martin Rd. and along it to its eastern end and then to the lake shore and back (starting westerly) along the shore to Herkimer-Hamilton County line and along it to Judson Rd.

Herkimer and Hamilton Counties

Area bounded by Rt. 28 from Old Forge to Inlet and by South Shore Rd. from Inlet to Old Forge.

Nassau County

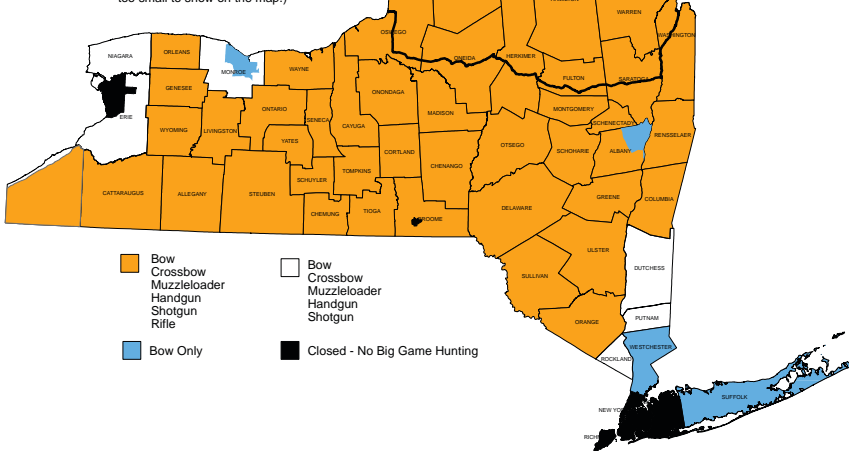
All of Nassau County.

New York City

All of the City.

Legal Implements for the Early Bear Season and Regular Deer & Bear Seasons

This map shows where various hunting implements may be used in the state. Boundary descriptions and closed areas are found below. (Some closed areas are too small to show on the map.)



* At press time, legislation was pending that would allow use of rifles for big game hunting in portions of Niagara County. Check DEC's website for updates.

Antler Restriction Program

A mandatory antler point restriction exists in WMUs 3A, 3C, 3H, 3J, 3K, 4G, 4O, 4P, 4R, 4S, and 4W in southeastern New York (see deer hunting season maps). This program will continue as DEC encourages hunters elsewhere to practice voluntary restraint. Over time, as more and more hunters in the broader region opt to pass on young bucks voluntarily, it may be appropriate to lift the restrictions.

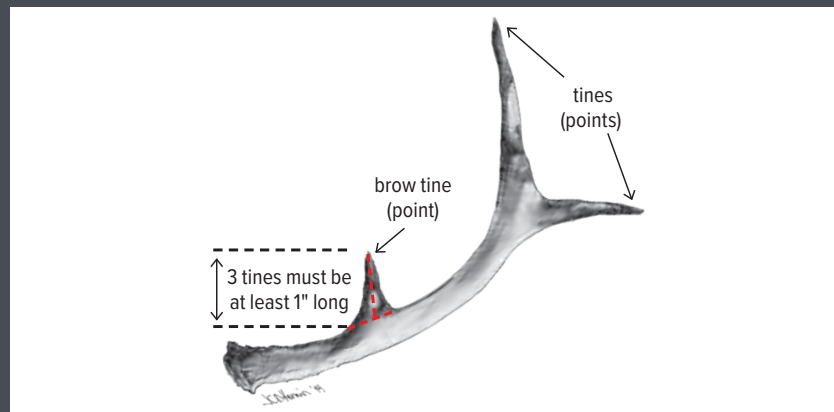
Antler Identification

Antler Point Restriction

- At least 1 antler with 3 or more points that are at least 1" long
- Applies to all public and private land and all seasons
- Hunters aged 12–16 are exempt and may take any buck with antlers 3 or longer

Antlerless Deer

- Adult does, doe fawns, buck fawns (button bucks), adult bucks without antlers, or with antlers less than 3" long
- May be tagged with your DMP or Bow/Muzzleloading antlerless or either sex tags.

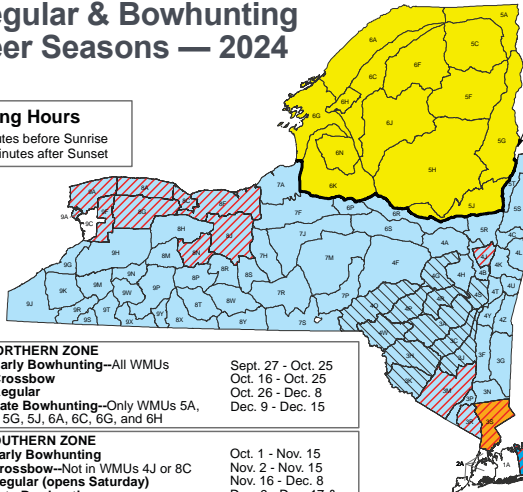


Deer Hunting

Regular & Bowhunting Deer Seasons — 2024

Hunting Hours

30 minutes before Sunrise
to 30 minutes after Sunset



NORTHERN ZONE
Early Bowhunting—All WMUs Sept. 27 - Oct. 25
Crossbow Oct. 16 - Oct. 25
Regular Oct. 26 - Dec. 8
Late Bowhunting—Only WMUs 5A, 5G, 5J, 6A, 6C, 6G, and 6H Dec. 9 - Dec. 15

SOUTHERN ZONE
Early Bowhunting Oct. 1 - Nov. 15
Crossbow—Not in WMUs 4J or 8C Nov. 2 - Nov. 15
Regular (opens Saturday) Nov. 16 - Dec. 8
Late Bowhunting Dec. 9 - Dec. 17 & Dec. 26 - Jan. 1

WESTCHESTER COUNTY (3S)
Regular—Bowhunting Only Oct. 1 - Dec. 31

SUFFOLK COUNTY (1C)
Regular—Bowhunting Only Oct. 1, 2024 - Jan. 31, 2025
Special Firearms—(Permit Req.) Jan. 5 - Jan. 31, 2025

Antler Point Restrictions
During all seasons, antlered bucks must have at least one antler with 3 or more points that are at least 1 inch long. Young hunters (ages 12-16) are exempt.

No Deer Hunting

Northern - Southern
Zone Line

Youth Firearms Season

Season Dates
Oct. 12 - 14, 2024

Area Open
Northern and Southern Zone,
except bowhunting-only WMUs

Eligible Hunters
Youths aged 14-15 years (all open areas)
Youths aged 12-13 years (select counties,
see www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/46245.html)

Bag Limit
One deer (antlered or antlerless)

Tags
Regular (either-sex), DMP and
DMP (antlerless only);
Bow/Muzz tags are not valid

Early Antlerless Season Sept. 14 - 22

Tags: DMP and DMAP
Vertical Bow-Only: 1C, 3S, 4J, 8C
Firearms, Bow, & Crossbow: 3M, 3R, 8A, 8F, 8G, 8J, 8N, 9A, and 9F

Crossbows

May be used to hunt deer during the Northern and
Southern Zone Regular Seasons.

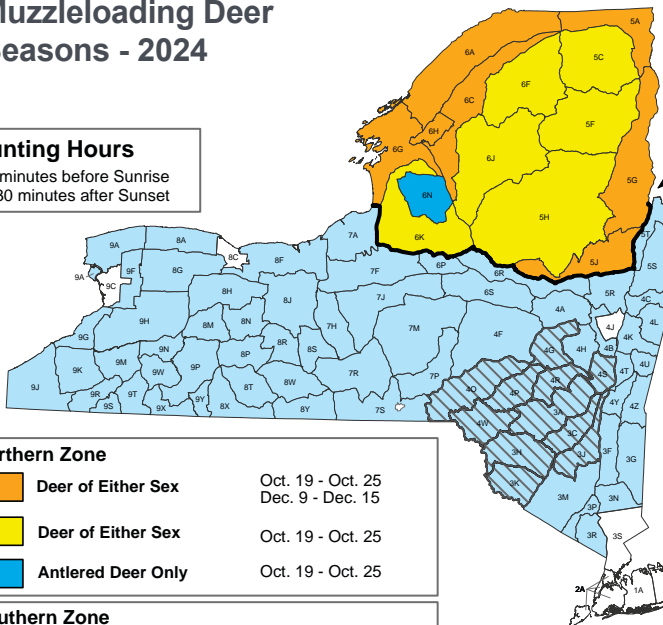
May not be used to hunt deer:
- during the Youth Firearms Season; or
- anytime in WMUs 1C (Suffolk County), 3S
(Westchester County), 4J or 8C.

Legislation adopted in 2021 allows 12- and 13-year-olds to hunt deer with a firearm or crossbow under supervision of an adult hunter in upstate counties that choose to participate. For a list of counties that have opted in go to dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/deer-bear/junior-big-game.

Muzzleloading Deer Seasons - 2024

Hunting Hours

30 minutes before Sunrise
to 30 minutes after Sunset



Northern - Southern
Zone Line

Northern Zone

Deer of Either Sex Oct. 19 - Oct. 25
Dec. 9 - Dec. 15

Deer of Either Sex Oct. 19 - Oct. 25

Antlered Deer Only Oct. 19 - Oct. 25

Southern Zone

Deer of Either Sex Dec. 9 - Dec. 17
Dec. 26 - Jan. 1

Antler Point Restrictions

During all seasons, antlered bucks must have at least one antler with 3 or more points that are at least 1 inch long. Young hunters (ages 12-16) are exempt.

No Muzzleloading Season

Crossbows

May be used to hunt deer during the Northern and Southern Zone Muzzleloader Seasons.
May not be used to hunt deer anytime in WMUs 1C (Suffolk County), 3S (Westchester County), 4J or 8C.

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Buying Starts in Sept. thru Nov.
Bear parts can be shipped USPS
Call for shipping instructions & questions
All legal paperwork must include:
Hunter's name, address
and tag # before purchase.

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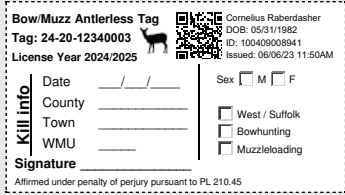
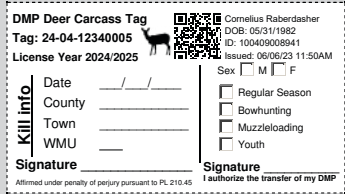
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See you soon!

Deer Tag Descriptions

For all season dates, see page 27. See page 12 for privilege information.

Tag Name	Tag Can Be Used In	Tag Is Valid For
Regular Season Deer Tag Only you may hunt with this tag. This tag cannot be transferred to another hunter.	Regular Season <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Zone Southern Zone Westchester County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular (bowhunting only) Suffolk County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular (bowhunting only) Special Firearms (special permit, see page 20) Late Season Bowhunting (privilege required) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Zone Southern Zone Late Season Muzzleloading (privilege required) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Zone (check open areas and dates on map on page 27) Southern Zone Youth Deer Season	Antlered Deer Only Except: May be used for antlered or antlerless deer as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Westchester County (WMU 3S) In Suffolk County (WMU 1C) In areas restricted to bowhunting only (WMUs 4J and 8C) In late seasons (with bowhunting or muzzleloading privilege) By Junior Hunters during the Youth Deer Hunt IF you have a non-ambulatory permit. 
Bow/Mz Season Either Sex Tag Only you may hunt with this tag. This tag cannot be transferred to another hunter.	Bowhunting Season including dates when crossbows can be used (privilege required) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Zone Southern Zone Muzzleloading Season (privilege required) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Zone (check open areas and dates on map on page 27) Southern Zone Westchester County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular (bowhunting only) Suffolk County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular (bowhunting only) Special Firearms (special permit; see page 20) Not valid during the Northern or Southern Zone Regular Seasons or Youth Hunt except as specified in right-hand column.	Antlered or Antlerless Deer Bowhunting or Muzzleloading seasons only (including the regular season in Westchester County and the regular and special firearms seasons in Suffolk County), corresponding to the privileges purchased. Junior Bowhunters will receive this tag, which will be valid in the special bowhunting seasons and during the regular season, with bowhunting equipment only. Except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be used for antlered deer only during muzzleloading seasons in certain Northern Zone WMUs (see map page 27). 
Bow/Mz Season Antlerless Tag Only you may hunt with this tag. This tag cannot be transferred to another hunter.	Bowhunting Season including dates when crossbows can be used (privilege required) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Zone Southern Zone Muzzleloading Season (privilege required) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Zone (check open areas and dates on map, page 27) Southern Zone Westchester County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular (bowhunting only) Suffolk County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular (bowhunting only) Special Firearms (special permit; see page 20) Not valid during the Northern or Southern Zone Regular Seasons or Youth Hunt except as specified in right-hand column.	Antlerless Deer Only Bowhunting or Muzzleloading seasons only (including the regular season in Westchester County and the regular and special firearms seasons in Suffolk County), corresponding to the privileges purchased. Except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May not be used during muzzleloading seasons in certain Northern Zone WMUs that are Antlered Deer Only areas (see map page 27). May be used by junior Bowhunters during the Bowhunting and Regular Seasons. 
Deer Management Permit Deer Tag This is the only tag that can be transferred to another hunter (see page 31 for how to transfer a DMP carcass tag).	Any Open Deer Season	Antlerless Deer Only Valid only for the WMU specified and printed on the DMP Deer Tag (Deer Management Permit). See page 29. 

For information on which tags may be used when hunting with a crossbow, see page 23.

Report Moose Sightings

Moose are protected in New York State and cannot be hunted. DEC and its research partners are working to understand the status of the moose population. You can help us by reporting moose sightings at dec.ny.gov/nature/animals/fish/plants/moose.



Photo by Clyde Comstock



Mason W. showing off his successful hunt with his father Jeremy W.

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Deer Hunting

Deer Management Permits (DMPs)

Hunters possessing a DMP may take one antlerless deer per permit in addition to any deer that may be taken with a regular hunting license or bowhunting and muzzleloading privileges.

- DMPs may not be used for legally antlered deer (at least one antler 3" or longer).
- DMPs may be used in any open season only in the WMU they are issued for.
- Hunters may transfer or receive up to 2 DMPs from other hunters (see page 31).

Applying for a DMP

- **DMP Application Deadline: Close of business on Oct. 1, 2024**
- You may apply for DMPs at all license-issuing outlets, by phone, or online beginning on Aug. 1, 2024.
- DMPs are available to all hunters age 12 years or older who purchase or possess a regular hunting license (12 years old for Junior Bowhunting license holders).
- There is a \$10 nonrefundable application fee for all applicants. The fee is waived for holders of Lifetime Licenses purchased prior to Oct. 12, 2009, and Junior Hunters and Junior Bowhunters.
- **Know your Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) before you apply.** If you are unsure of your unit, see the WMU maps on pages 70–77 of this guide or visit dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/regulations/wildlife-management-units for written boundary descriptions. You may also call the DMP Hotline for additional information at 1-866-472-4332.
- You may apply for up to two DMPs. Both must be applied for at the same time. Application can be for DMPs in the same WMU or different WMUs.

- **Disabled veterans** with a service-connected disability rated at 40% or greater (who are residents of New York State) will receive preference on DMPs. Annually, you must bring a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs, dated in the current year, with your case number and your disability percentage. If you are claiming permanent disabled status, the letter must clearly state that the 40% or more service-related disability is permanent.
- **Landowners: It is illegal for more than one person per 50-plus-acre tax map ID to apply as a landowner.** If you own 50 or more contiguous acres of land within the WMU you will be hunting in, you will receive preference on DMP selection. Annually, you must bring your tax map identification number and SWIS code (found on your tax bill) with you when you apply. Be sure to tell the license-issuing agent prior to applying that you are a landowner. Lessees do not qualify as landowners.
 - » **Corporate ownership: It is illegal for more than one person to apply as a corporate landowner no matter how many 50-acre parcels are owned.** The corporation must submit an original letter or certified copy of a resolution, dated in the current year, designating one individual and must include the tax map ID and SWIS code information.
 - » **Group ownership: It is illegal for more than one person per 50-plus-acre tax map ID to apply as a landowner,** regardless of how many co-owners. Additional 50-plus-acre parcels in the same WMU require separate tax IDs.
- **Preference points:**
 - » Preference points increase your chances of selection, but do not guarantee DMP selection.

Chances of DMP Selection

Your chances of selection for first and second DMPs by WMU are available online at dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/deer-bear/deer-management-permits, posted at all license issuing outlets or by calling our Deer Management Permit (DMP) hotline at 1 866 472 4332. Chances of DMP selection remain the same throughout the entire DMP application period.

- » Preference points are won and lost on first permit selection only.
- » If you receive a DMP in your first choice WMU, all available preference points will be used.
- » If you do not receive a DMP in your first choice WMU, you will receive a preference point for the following year.
- » Any preference points contained in your file are automatically applied to your first-choice WMU selection, even if preference points are not required for that unit.
- » If you do not receive your first choice, the points are applied to your second choice, but will remain in your file for the following year, regardless of your second-choice selection results.
- » Qualifying landowners and disabled veterans will receive their first choice DMP in all open WMUs.
- » Preference Points are not WMU specific. If you earned a preference point by being denied in one WMU, you can use that preference point in a subsequent year when applying for a DMP in a different WMU.

Hunter Education: Next Step Courses

The DEC's Hunter Education Program (HEP) is now offering Next Step courses for people who have already completed a hunter education, bowhunter education, or trapper education certification course and want more education and hands on experience.

- Taught by HEP staff and certified HEP instructors.
- 4 Hour courses focus on safety, techniques and hands on experience in:
 - » rifle, shotgun, crossbow, archery, fur handling, land trapping, and water trapping.

All Next Step courses are FREE

- Registration with your certificate number is required.
- Minimum age is 12 years old.
- No certification is offered in these courses.

For more information and to register, visit <http://on.ny.gov/learntohunt> or scan the QR code.



BOW instructor Al Martel with student



DMP Selection Order

During the instant issuance, an applicant's chances of selection are determined by an applicant's category. The categories, in priority order, are as follows:

1. Landowners (50 or more acres of land within a WMU) and Disabled Veterans (40% or more service-related disability). All applicants in this category will receive their first-choice DMP.
2. NYS Residents and Non-residents with 3 Preference Points
3. NYS Residents with 1–2 Preference Points
4. NYS Residents without Preference Points
5. Non-residents with 1–2 Preference Points
6. Non-residents without Preference Points

Additional DMP Opportunities

Bonus DMPs: If you fill a DMP in bowhunting-only WMUs 1C, 3S, 4J and 8C, you can apply for a bonus DMP for another antlerless deer. Bonus DMPs may only be obtained from regional wildlife staff at predetermined locations. For complete information, visit our website or call a DEC Regional Wildlife Office as follows:

WMU 1C.....1-631-444-0310
WMU 3S.....1-845-256-3098
WMU 4J.....1-518-357-2355
WMU 8C.....1-585-226-5380

Leftover DMPs: If there are still DMPs remaining after the initial DMP instant-issuance period closes on Oct. 1 and the back-end correction selections have occurred, the remaining DMPs may be available on a first-come, first-served basis, beginning on or around Nov. 1. These DMPs are only available in person at license-issuing agents. Leftover DMPs will not be available by phone or online. WMUs with DMPs available will be announced on our website (dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/deer-bear/deer-management-permits#Leftover). If you already applied for a DMP during the initial application period, there is no additional application fee. If you are applying for the first time this hunting season, you will have to pay a \$10 application fee. Fee is waived for Resident and Non-resident Junior Hunters and Junior Bowhunters, and for Lifetime License holders who purchased prior to Oct. 1, 2009. You will be allowed up to two DMPs during the first-come, first-served application period in addition to any you may have received during the initial application period.

Deer Management Assistance Program

The Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) enables wildlife biologists to help landowners and resource managers implement site-specific deer management on their lands. In doing so, DEC issues a special permit for use only during the open deer hunting seasons and a determined number of antlerless deer tags to landowners or resource managers whose property is in need of site-specific deer management efforts. Hunters are expected to report their harvest. For more information on the program, refer to dec.ny.gov/nature/animals-fish-plants/white-tailed-deer/overabundance/management-assistance-program.

How to Transfer a DMP Deer Carcass Tag

Hunter Jane Doe wants to transfer her DMP tag to hunter Pete Moss.

Step 1. Jane Doe signs the bottom of her DMP tag.

Step 2. Jane Doe gives the DMP tag to Pete Moss.



Step 3. Pete Moss records the Tag# of the DMP tag on the DMP Consignment portion of his hunting license.

Step 4. If Pete Moss takes an antlerless deer with the transferred DMP, he is required to report the deer by calling the automated reporting system (1-866-426-3778) or by reporting online at dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/report-your-harvest using the transferred DMP DOC# and his own date of birth.

- Hunters are allowed to receive only two transferred DMPs per year.
- DMPs can be transferred from the receiving hunter back to the original hunter or to another. The other hunter must record the DOC# on his/her reporting panel, as in Step 3 above, to complete the transfer.

Remember: Hunting licenses are not transferable. Only DMP carcass tags can be used by another hunter. A hunter must be in physical possession of a DMP when taking antlerless deer pursuant to a DMP. It cannot be shared by a group afield.

Note: To report a deer taken on a transferred DMP, the hunter who took the deer must call the automated reporting system (1-866-426-3778) or report online at dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/report-your-harvest using the transferred DMP carcass tag DOC# and their own date of birth, along with other required information (see page 15).

DMP Deer Carcass Tag				Cornelius Raberdasher DOB: 05/31/1982 ID: 100409008941 Issued: 06/06/23 11:50AM	
Tag: 24-04-12340005				Sex <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	
License Year 2024/2025				<input type="checkbox"/> Regular Season <input type="checkbox"/> Bowhunting <input type="checkbox"/> Muzzleloading <input type="checkbox"/> Youth	
Kill info	Date	____/____/____			
	County	_____			
	Town	_____			
	WMU	4H			
Signature _____		Signature <u>Jane Doe</u> I authorize the transfer of my DMP			

Attained under penalty of perjury pursuant to PL 210.45

DMP carcass tag of hunter Jane Doe

DMP CONSIGNMENT		
<small>*DMP #s received from other hunters (limit 2 tags/yr)</small>		
Tag Number	Date of Kill	Reported?
24-04-12340005	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>

DMP Consignment portion for hunter Pete Moss

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Deer Hunting

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For more information:

Call 1-866-4-USA-WS or
Your state wildlife agency



DMAP on State Lands

DEC has enrolled several state lands in DMAP. Tag availability is limited and hunters must apply to participate. See dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/deer-bear-deer-management-assistance-program-hunting for information.

Properties include:

- Bully Hill State Forest, WMU 9P
- Doodletown Wildlife Management Area, WMU 4Z

Eurasian Boar

Eurasian boars are a destructive invasive species that damage habitat and crops, and threaten native wildlife and domestic livestock. DEC and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have worked hard to eradicate these animals from the state's landscape. We are now working to prevent their reintroduction into New York State.

- It is illegal to possess, sell, distribute, trade, or transport Eurasian boars or their hybrids.
- It is illegal to import, breed, or release Eurasian boars or their hybrids.
- It is illegal to hunt, trap, or take free ranging Eurasian boar or their hybrids.

Although DEC's eradication efforts have been very successful to date, we must remain vigilant. Anyone who sees a Eurasian boar should report it to DEC as soon as possible by emailing wildlife@dec.ny.gov or calling 518 402 8883.

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Ann Wilcox-Swanson, Instructor



Qualifications

- At least 18 years of age
- Good communication skills
- Hunting experience preferred
- Good moral character

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Non-lead Ammunition Rebate Program— Going Statewide:

Hunters For Eagle Conservation in New York

Lead bullets used for hunting often fragment, leaving small particles behind in a gut pile that can sicken or cause death to eagles and other scavengers that feed on them. Last Fall, DEC partnered with the NY Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Cornell, United States Geological Survey, and Conservation Science Global to implement the first year of a multi-year program to determine if we can improve eagle survival by increasing the use of non-lead ammunition. As part of this program, Conservation Science Global provides rebates to hunters to offset the cost of non-lead ammunition. This year, we would like to increase hunter participation to better inform the program's effect on NYS's eagle population.

For the upcoming 2024/2025 big game season, DEC is expanding the opportunity to participate in the program. Voluntary participation will not be limited to specific wildlife management units (WMU), instead **YOU ARE ELIGIBLE IF YOU INTEND TO GUN HUNT FOR DEER ANYWHERE IN NEW YORK**. This year, all gun or muzzleloader deer tag holders are eligible, as well. See below for information on how to participate.

Researchers will offer a rebate of up to \$60 for purchase of certified non-lead ammunition and for participation in pre- and post-hunt surveys. Certified non-lead ammunition has less than 1% lead content and a list of manufacturers and resources to help locate non-lead ammunition can be found at <https://huntersforeagleconservation.org/new-york/>. Rebates will be issued when hunters complete a post hunt survey at the conclusion of their deer season.

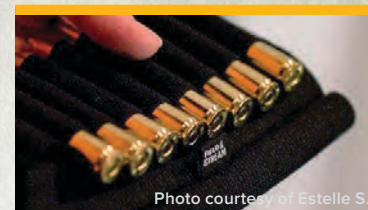


Photo courtesy of Estelle S.



Photo courtesy of Estelle S.

To Learn More and Sign Up!

This is a voluntary program for deer hunters throughout NYS. Hunters must participate in pre- and post-hunting season surveys and submit appropriate documentation of purchase of certified non-lead ammunition to qualify. To learn more and sign-up, go to <https://huntersforeagleconservation.org/new-york/>. For more information on DEC efforts to minimize risks from lead ammunition, please visit dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/deer-bear/non-lead-ammunition. Questions? wildlife@dec.ny.gov (subject: non-lead ammo study).

4 Rules of Firearm Safety

1. Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction at all times!

2. Treat every firearm as though it is loaded!



3. Be sure of your target and what is in front of and beyond it!

4. Keep your finger off the trigger and outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot!



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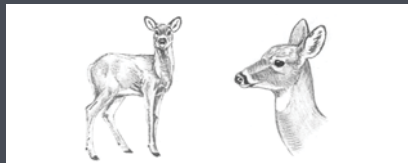
Rte 1 Kittery, ME / 888-587-6246 / Open Mon-Sat

Doe or Fawn?

During the fall, it can often be difficult to distinguish adult does and fawn deer, particularly if seen alone. In recent years, about 20% of the total antlerless deer harvest has been fawns (5-7 months old), with nearly even proportions of doe fawns and buck fawns. Though fawns provide excellent table fare, some hunters prefer to target adult deer. Taking female deer contributes to management objectives, and passing buck fawns may allow some of them to be available later as antlered bucks. By learning the differences between antlerless deer, hunters can make more informed harvest choices.

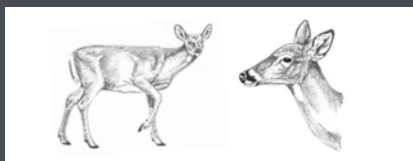
Hunting Tips

- Button bucks often travel alone, but adult does rarely do. Wait until several antlerless deer are present before making a harvest decision.
- It is easier to identify sex and age when animals are standing still or moving slowly.
- Harvest antlerless deer early in the season when differences between fawns and adult does are most noticeable.



Fawn

- Body about as long as tall (square)
- Short neck and compact nose/head
- Eyes look large for head
- Doe fawns have a more rounded head shape between their ears
- Buck fawns' heads appear flattened and may have visible antler nubs or buttons



Adult Doe

- Body longer than tall (rectangle)
- Long neck and elongated nose

Tree Stand Safety—Hunt Safe, Hunt Smart

- Read the manufacturer's instructions. Replace worn/missing parts.
- Use a full body harness with a foot strap to relieve harness leg pressure.
- Use a "lifeline" or safety rope that is secured at base of the tree or stand and to the tree just above your head when sitting in the stand. Stay connected to a lifeline from the time you leave the ground to the time you get back down.
- Attach the tether from your full body harness to the lifeline using a carabiner and prusik knot, which easily slides up and down the lifeline.
- Once secured in your stand, use a haul line to raise/lower unloaded implements and quiver. Do not tie the haul line around the trigger or trigger guard. Haul unloaded guns, bows, and cocked (but unloaded) crossbows pointed down.
- Carry emergency equipment (knife, phone, flashlight, whistle) in your pockets at all times, not in your pack.
- Tell someone where you will be hunting and when you will return.

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X-Bolt 2 Hunter

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Photo by Gary K.

In addition to the Tree Stand Safety steps above, it's important to know the health and species of the tree you choose to support your stand. In New York State there are a handful of tree species that are currently being impacted by non-native pests and pathogens that should be avoided. The most common trees that are either dead or are in the process of dying are: Ash species (*Fraxinus spp.*), Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*), American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), Eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), and American elm (*Ulmus americana*).

HUNTERS: Want Older Bucks in New York?

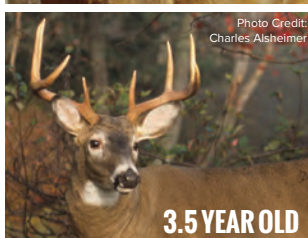
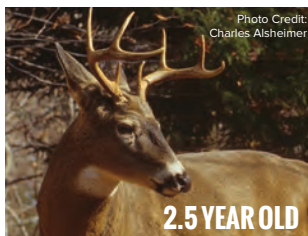
It's Your Choice

You can increase the availability of older bucks by choosing to pass up shots at young bucks.

- Older bucks create more rubs and scrapes, vocalize more, and yield more meat – all things that create unforgettable hunting experiences.

You can boost deer condition and body and antler size by balancing the deer population with the habitat:

- Take a doe if permits are available in your area.
- Create young forest to enhance natural forage and cover for deer.



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Big Game Season Dates

Future Big Game Season Dates			
Northern Zone			
Bear	Adirondacks (WMUs 5A, 5C, 5F, 5G, 5H, 5J, 6C, 6F, 6H, and 6J)	Regular	First Saturday after the second Monday in September through the Sunday immediately following the first Saturday in December.
	Western Periphery (WMUs 6A, 6G, 6K, 6N)	Early Bowhunting	First Saturday after the second Monday in September through the Friday immediately preceding the regular season (crossbows can be used during the last 10 days of this season).
		Early Muzzleloading	7 consecutive days beginning on the first Saturday after Columbus/ Indigenous Peoples' Day.
		Regular	Second Saturday after Columbus/ Indigenous Peoples' Day through the Sunday immediately following the first Saturday in December.
Deer		Early Bowhunting	Sept. 27 through the Friday immediately preceding the regular season (crossbows can be used during the last 10 days of this season).
		Early Muzzleloading	7 consecutive days beginning on the first Saturday after Columbus/ Indigenous Peoples' Day.
		Regular	44 consecutive days beginning on the second Saturday after Columbus/ Indigenous Peoples' Day.
		Late Bow and Muzzleloading (some WMUs)	7 consecutive days immediately following the regular season.
Southern Zone			
Bear		Early Firearms (some WMUs)	16 consecutive days beginning the first Saturday after Labor Day.
		Early Bowhunting	Oct. 1 through the Friday immediately preceding the regular season (crossbows can be used during the last 14 days of this season).
		Regular	23 consecutive days beginning the third Saturday in November.
		Late Bow and Muzzleloading	9 consecutive days immediately following the regular season.
Deer		Early Firearms (some WMUs)	9 consecutive days beginning the second Saturday of September.
		Early Bowhunting	Oct. 1 through the Friday immediately preceding the regular season (crossbows can be used during the last 14 days of this season).
		Regular	23 consecutive days beginning the third Saturday in November.
		Late Bow and Muzzleloading	9 consecutive days immediately following the regular season and Dec. 26 through Jan. 1.
Northern & Southern Zone			
Deer & Bear	Youth (ages 12–15)	3 consecutive days beginning on the Saturday of Columbus/ Indigenous Peoples' Day Weekend.	
Westchester County			
Deer & Bear	Regular (bowhunting only)	Oct. 1 through Dec. 31.	
Suffolk County			
Deer	Regular (bowhunting only)	Oct. 1 through Dec. 31.	
	Special Firearms Season	First Sunday in January through Jan 31.	

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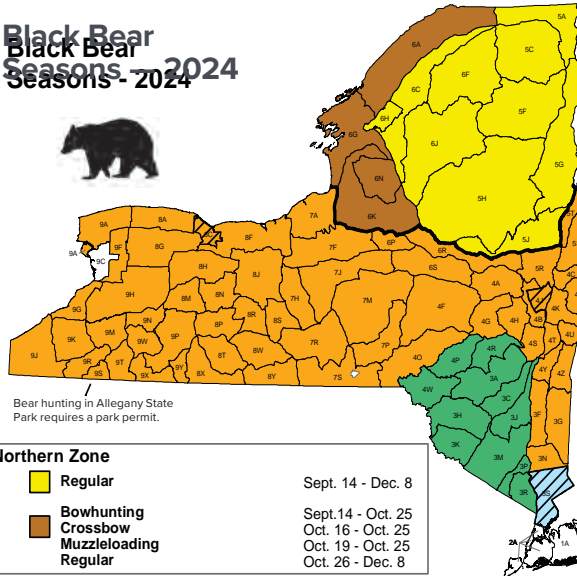


Bear Hunting



"I'm proud to pass hunting onto the next generation the same way that my grandfathers did for me," said Monte B. after a successful hunt with his sons Griffin and Ace in Chautauqua County.

Black Bear Seasons - 2024



Hunting Hours

30 minutes before Sunrise to 30 minutes after Sunset

Northern - Southern Zone Line

Youth Firearms Season

Season Dates
Oct. 12 - 14, 2024

Area Open
Northern and Southern Zone, except bowhunting only WMUs

Eligible Hunters
Youth 14-15 years of age

Northern Zone

Regular	Sept. 14 - Dec. 8
Bowhunting	Sept. 14 - Oct. 25
Crossbow	Oct. 16 - Oct. 25
Muzzleloading	Oct. 19 - Oct. 25
Regular	Oct. 26 - Dec. 8

Southern Zone

Early Firearms	Sept. 7 - Sept. 22
Early Bowhunting	Oct. 1 - Nov. 15
Crossbow--Not in WMUs 4J or 8C	Nov. 2 - Nov. 15
Regular	Nov. 16 - Dec. 8
Late Bowhunting	Dec. 9 - Dec. 17
Late Muzzleloading	Dec. 9 - Dec. 17
Westchester County (3S) Regular--Bowhunting Only	Oct. 1 - Dec. 31

Bowhunting Only WMUs

No Bear Hunting

Crossbows

- May be used to hunt bear during the early bear seasons, muzzleloader seasons, and the regular firearms seasons.
- May not be used to hunt bear anytime in WMUs 3S (Westchester County), 4J or 8C.

*See map on page 26 for information on legal implements during the early and regular bear seasons.

Bear Hunting

- Resident and non-resident hunters will receive a bear carcass tag with their hunting license and may take one bear per year.
- In the Southern Zone, hunters may not shoot a cub or a bear that should be known to be a cub, shoot any bear from a group of bears, or shoot or take a bear from its den.
- Hunters may use and carry up to 1.5 fluid ounces of a liquid scent or lure, though such scent or lure may not be placed in a manner that it may be consumed as bait.
- Hunting bear with the aid of bait or dogs is prohibited.

Attention Hunters and Taxidermists

Bear gallbladders and bile shall not be possessed or sold unless a valid bear tag (original or copy of bear carcass tag) is attached. New York State law requires taxidermists to keep records of all bear gallbladders and bile received or sold.

To find a deer and bear processor or taxidermist in NYS please view PDF list on website:



New York State Bear Management Cooperator Program

The Bureau of Wildlife is requesting the assistance of successful black bear hunters in New York State.

Hunters who harvest a bear in New York State are required to report their harvest through the DECALS telephone system at 1-866-426-3778 (1-866-GAMERPT), the mobile app, or the new online Harvest Reporting System at www.dec.ny.gov. Successful bear hunters are also asked to submit a premolar tooth or part of the lower jaw of the bear for DEC to determine the bear's age and to record the dressed weight of the bear (see dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/hunting/report-your-harvest/black-bear-tooth-collection for more information). Successful bear hunters will be sent a tooth collection packet with premolar removal and submission instructions. Hunters may be contacted by a DEC wildlife biologist to examine your bear and extract a premolar tooth for aging.

Report your bear and return a bear tooth to receive a commemorative 2024 NYS Black Bear Cooperator Patch. Samples will be aged in the summer of 2025. Cooperating hunters will receive patches and letters indicating the age of their bear in early fall 2025.



Become BearWise

In 2022, DEC became a cooperating partner of BearWise®, a multistate campaign focused on educating people on how to live responsibly with black bears. The campaign provides sound information and smart solutions that help homeowners, businesses, and communities coexist with black bears. Visit <https://bearwise.org/> to learn the BearWise basics, bear safety tips, and to download educational resources. Become NYS BearWise to help keep New York State's black bears healthy and safe.

