



Press Release

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation has issued the following press release:

Regular Firearms Season for Deer and Bear Hunting in The Southern Zone Begins November 15

The 2014 regular deer and bear hunting seasons open at sunrise on Saturday, November 15, in New York's Southern Zone, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Joe Martens announced today. These big game seasons close at sunset on Sunday, December 7.

"Hunting is an important part of New York's outdoor heritage and a vital tool in managing our state's wildlife resources," said Commissioner Martens. "I wish all hunters a safe and successful season."

The Southern Zone Regular Season is New York's most popular hunting season, with participation from about 85 percent of New York's 550,000 licensed hunters. Harvest during this season accounts for nearly 60 percent of the total statewide deer harvest and 30-60 percent of the statewide bear harvest. With the October 1 start to the bow season in the Southern Zone and a special Youth Firearms Deer Hunt over Columbus Day Weekend, many big game hunters have already enjoyed fruitful hunts.

Following the regular deer and bear seasons in the Southern Zone, late bowhunting and muzzleloading seasons will open at sunrise on December 8 and close at sunset on December 16. Hunters taking part in these special seasons must possess either bowhunting or muzzleloading privileges.

In the Northern Zone, the regular deer and bear hunting season opened October 25 and will close at sunset on December 7. This zone generally includes the Adirondacks, Tug Hill Plateau, Eastern Lake Ontario Plain and the Champlain and St. Lawrence Valleys. A late archery and muzzleloading season for deer will be open in portions of the Northern Zone from December 8 to December 14.

Hunters should be aware of several important programs and recent changes when they go afield for the 2014 regular hunting season:

- **Rifles authorized for Livingston and Albany counties:** New legislation allows the use of rifles for big game hunting in Livingston County and most of Albany County. Visit DEC's website for "[Rifle, Shotgun, and Bow Areas](#)" and other areas where rifles can be used.
- **Crossbows:** Crossbows may be used during the regular deer seasons in all parts of New York, except Westchester and Suffolk counties, and parts of Albany and Monroe counties. See pages 8 and 9 of the [Official Hunting & Trapping Laws and Regulations Guide](#) to review all requirements associated with the use of [crossbows](#) or visit the DEC website
- **Help Protect New York Deer from Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD):** To keep potentially infectious material out of New York, hunters are prohibited from bringing whole deer carcasses and some carcass parts into New York from any state or province with CWD, now including Pennsylvania and Ohio. Find the details for [CWD Regulations](#) for Hunters and read more about how to prevent the spread of CWD on the DEC website.
- **Deer Management Focus Area in Tompkins County:** This program will continue to assist communities in the Ithaca area with the burden of overabundant deer populations. Visit DEC's

website for "[Deer Management Focus Areas](#)" and for information and registration.

- **Reducing Harvest of Young Bucks:** Mandatory antler restrictions (bucks must have at least 3 points on one side) are in effect in WMUs 3A, 3C, 3H, 3J, 3K, 4G, 4O, 4P, 4R, 4S, and 4W during all seasons for all hunters 17 years and older. Many hunters in other areas are voluntarily choosing not to take young, small-antlered bucks, thereby allowing most of these bucks to live another year, get a bit bigger and grow slightly larger antlers. Through the personal choice of thousands of hunters, we've seen a shift in the annual buck harvest to include an increasing number and percentage of older bucks. For more information see "[Voluntary Antler Restrictions](#)" on DEC's website.
- **Junior Hunters:** Junior Hunters (14 and 15 years old) can hunt deer and bear with a firearm when appropriately accompanied by an experienced adult. See the "[Junior Hunter Mentoring](#)" webpage for program requirements and to download the Mentored Youth Hunter Permission Form.
- **Harvest Reporting:** All successful hunters are required to report their harvest of deer and bear within seven days. Failure to report harvested deer or bear is a violation of NYS Environmental Conservation Law. Hunters may report via DEC's online [game harvest reporting](#) system or by calling the toll-free automated reporting system at 1-866-GAME-RPT (1-866-426-3778).
- **Black Bear Tooth Collection:** Successful bear hunters are asked to submit a tooth of their bear so DEC can age the bear and monitor bear population dynamics. See [Bear Tooth Collection](#) on DEC's website for instructions.
- **Venison Donation:** Hunters are encouraged to participate in the Venison Donation program (website can be found in the right hand column of this page). By obtaining permits and donating one's deer, hunters help accomplish the needed deer management and can feed less fortunate families.

Although safety-conscious hunters have significantly reduced the number of firearms-related injuries, studies show that individuals wearing hunter orange clothing are seven times less likely to be injured than hunters who do not wear the bright fluorescent color. Hunters are encouraged to review [hunting safety tips](#) and pay careful attention to basic firearm safety rules that can prevent hunting-related shooting incidents including:

- Point your gun in a safe direction.
- Treat every gun as if it were loaded.
- Be sure of your target and beyond.
- Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
- Remember to wear Hunter Orange.

For specific descriptions of regulations and open areas, hunters should refer to the [2014-2015 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Guide](#) available on DEC's website. Hunters are urged to review all regulations and safety tips contained in the guide.

In support of the NY Open for Fishing and Hunting Initiative, this year's budget includes \$6 million in NY Works funding to support creating 50 new land and water access projects to connect hunters, anglers, bird watchers and others who enjoy the outdoors to more than 380,000 acres of existing state and easement lands that have not reached their full potential. These 50 new access projects include building new boat launches, installing new hunting blinds and building new trails and parking areas. In addition, the 2014-15 budget includes \$4 million to repair the state's fish hatcheries; and renews and allows expanded use of crossbows for hunting in New York State.