



# ***MassWildlife News***

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

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## ***CELEBRATING THE YEAR OF THE SNAKE***

According to the Asian calendar, 2013 is the Year of the Snake and the recent warm weather has resulted in snake sightings and inquiries pouring into MassWildlife offices. Conservation groups across the country are taking the opportunity to celebrate the Year of the Snake with events and information about these interesting and misunderstood creatures. Given the great beauty and diversity of these animals, their unsung and important ecological roles as mid-level predators and prey in the food web, and their declining populations over large areas of their range, the time is opportune to celebrate and learn about these fascinating reptiles. To do its part, the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife is joining PARC (Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation) in providing information about snakes and educating the public about these long-feared and needlessly-persecuted animals. The growing enjoyment of snake viewing is helpful to conservation, as citizen scientists can greatly aid the DFW in locating and recording rare and declining populations of snakes.

As part of the effort to recognize snakes as interesting animals well worth conserving, the Division has re-printed its "Field Guide to the Reptiles of Massachusetts" that will allow anyone to identify snakes native to the Commonwealth. Originally published in 2009 as a stand-alone, 48-page issue of *Massachusetts Wildlife* magazine, it includes voluminous notes about each species appearance, behavior, range, and conservation status. While the Guide includes complete information about all our native reptiles, it has been critically acclaimed for its outstanding full color identification photos (including many pattern variations) of all the 14 species of snakes found in Massachusetts. It can be ordered for just \$3.00 by sending a check payable to "Commonwealth of Mass./DFW" to: Reptile Guide, MassWildlife Field Headquarters, 100 Hartwell Street, West Boylston, MA 01583. The 2013 Guide to Hunting, Fishing and Trapping also contains a 2-page "Sportsmen's Guide to Bay State Snakes" with images and brief descriptions of the 14 snakes found in Massachusetts. Guides are available where ever sporting licenses are sold and at MassWildlife offices.

Snakes are common in most rural and suburban habitats in Massachusetts, and hence are commonly encountered by people. The enlightened take these encounters as opportunities to enjoy the experience, and many wildlifers now keep lifetime lists of species (and actively seek out new ones) much as birders pursue viewing opportunities for feathered species. To many people, however, snakes remain a source of fear. The majority of our snakes are virtually or completely harmless, and fearing them is no more logical than fearing chipmunks, robins, or pigeons. While there are populations of two venomous species (Timber Rattlesnake and Northern Copperhead) in

Massachusetts that can be potentially dangerous, both of these are endangered species with small populations and extremely restricted ranges, and hence are rarely encountered even by mountain hikers or active snake hunters. Furthermore, *like all snakes*, these snakes will always attempt to avoid people. Overcome the fear through education, learn to identify our snakes, and it becomes a simple matter to respect, enjoy, and even admire them.

What you can do to learn about and celebrate snakes:

- Find fact sheets about [state-listed snakes](#) and information about [Massachusetts snakes of undetermined status](#) on the agency website at [www.mass.gov.masswildlife](http://www.mass.gov.masswildlife).
- Get up close and personal with snakes! If your nature center or organization is offering a snake program for the public or has snakes on permanent display, MassWildlife will list your snake programs and exhibits on our [Calendar of Events](#). Send an email with the relevant information to [mass.wildlife@state.ma.us](mailto:mass.wildlife@state.ma.us).
- Report rare snake observations through the Division's [electronic rare species reporting system](#).
- Visit the PARC Northeastern regional website (at [www.northeastparc.org](http://www.northeastparc.org)) Year of the Snake information and a flyer on northeastern venomous snakes and their look-alikes.

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### ***ANTLERLESS DEER PERMIT DEADLINE REMINDER***

The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) reminds deer hunters that the deadline for applying for an antlerless deer permit is July 16, 2013. This permit is required for any deer hunter who wishes to hunt antlerless deer. There is no fee to apply, a \$5 fee is charged if you are selected for a permit during the Instant Award period. DFW reminds applicants that with the *MassFishHunt* electronic system there is no public permit drawing and the Division will not mail information to deer hunters. If you are not sure you submitted an antlerless deer permit application, you can either check your hunting license in the *Item Purchased* section where you will see a line item that reads: "Antlerless Deer Permit Application- /Zone xx" if you have already applied OR you can log on to the *MassFishHunt* website at [www.mass.gov/massfishhunt](http://www.mass.gov/massfishhunt) and check your customer inventory. If you have not yet applied, you can submit your application for an antlerless deer permit either through a computer or at a license vendor.

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### ***SARGENT AWARD PRESENTED TO MIKE MOSS OF SUTTON***

On Friday, June 21, 2013 the Massachusetts Fisheries and Wildlife Board awarded Mike Moss, President of the Massachusetts Sportsmen's Council and lifelong resident of Sutton, the Governor Francis W. Sargent Conservation Award for his contributions to the sporting community and conservation of the Commonwealth's natural resources. Moss is the 10th recipient of the award, which was established in 2000 by the Fisheries and Wildlife Board. The Sargent Award is named after the former governor and noted conservationist who directed the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) in 1963 and 1964. Moss received the award, a hand-carved wooden loon decoy created by Geoff Walker of Hank Walker Decoys of Newbury, at a ceremony held at the Worcester Surf Casting Club in Bourne.

In addition to the Fisheries and Wildlife Board members who selected Moss for the award, Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Mary Griffin, DFW Director Wayne MacCallum, state officials and representatives from the sporting community were also in attendance.

"Mike Moss has been a tireless advocate for sportsmen and women in Massachusetts," said Fisheries and Wildlife Board Chairman George Darey. "He is one of the most actively involved sportsmen in clubs and sporting organizations I've known and his service to clubs is a model for sportsmen and women. He fought to keep sporting license fees from being diverted to the general fund and has supported key support to legislation that will help the Division protect endangered wildlife and plants."

An avid hunter and fisherman in New England and Canada, Moss has been a passionate and involved member in sportsmen's organizations since he was a teenager. Moss is currently the President of the Massachusetts

Sportsmen's Council, a post he has held for the past 18 years. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Beach Buggy Association and is also President of the Worcester Fish & Game Club. Moss has been a member, delegate or officer in numerous sporting clubs and organizations including the Singletary Rod and Gun Club, Webster Fish and Game Club, Worcester County League of Sportsmen, Worcester Surf Casting Club, Canal Sportsmen's Club and the Massachusetts Bowhunters Association.

"For many years, Mike Moss has been a staunch protector of sportsmen's interests," said Director Wayne MacCallum. "Through the Sportsmen's Council, Mike has actively engaged with legislators and state and federal agencies on proposed sporting laws or actions to ensure the continuation of hunting, fishing and trapping traditions in Massachusetts. He has helped find funds to acquire land open to hunting, fishing and trapping and has honored the contributions of other sportsmen and –women by creating the Massachusetts Sportsmen's Council's highest award in memory of Worcester sportsman and outdoor writer and mentor Raymond Gibbons. "

"Though his roots are in central Massachusetts, Mike has been a very involved and active advocate on marine fisheries issues" said Commissioner Griffin. "Mike advocated for a portion of the new saltwater permit fee to be dedicated for new access or improved access to the ocean. He serves on the Marine Recreational Fisheries Development Panel, a group of private citizens that meets several times a year to advise the Division of Marine Fisheries on the expenditure of saltwater permit fees and has served on the Striped Bass Advisory Committees since its inception. I congratulate him for being honored with the Francis W. Sargent Conservation Award."

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### ***FOR MAGAZINE SUBSCRIBERS, A GUIDE TO FROGS, TOADS, AND SALAMANDERS***

The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife is pleased to announce that the long-awaited "Field Guide to the Amphibians of Massachusetts" special issue of *Massachusetts Wildlife* magazine will be arriving in mailboxes soon! Designed to complement the special "Field Guide to the Reptiles" issue released in 2009, it features outstanding color photos (many by award-winning wildlife photographer Bill Byrne) and detailed descriptions of the appearance, behavior, range, and conservation status of all 11 of our native salamanders and 10 species of frogs and toads. A wonderful reference for all ages, it will allow anyone to look for and identify every one of these often-colorful, moist-skinned, small insectivores that fill our spring and summer nights with distinctive calls, or that live secretively and silently in forest burrows, leaf litter, backyards, and in many wetlands. In addition to providing specific identification information, there are also sections on amphibian conservation, great moments in amphibian observation, amphibians then and now, a list of informational books and websites, and what you can do to help conserve these beautiful and vulnerable native creatures.

Subscribe to *Massachusetts Wildlife* now to get the special "Field Guide to the Amphibians of Massachusetts" issue! To get your Field Guide to the Amphibians issue, simply order a subscription to *Massachusetts Wildlife* magazine by calling 508-389-6300 any weekday, or sending a check payable to "Massachusetts Wildlife Magazine" to: DFW Magazine, 251 Causeway Street, Boston MA 02114. Sorry but we can't accept credit cards. A 2-year subscription is just \$10.00 (\$6.00 for 1 year) and you not only get this special field guide issue, but will also continue receiving the quarterly "best little wildlife magazine in North America" for the duration of your subscription. Don't delay, the last special Field Guide to the Reptiles magazine issue in 2009 sold out and was unavailable until re-printed this past month. Consider donating a subscription to your local school, public library, or as a gift to friends or family members with an interest in the great outdoors!

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### ***NEW HUNTERS, SIGN UP NOW FOR COURSES***

New hunters of all ages are reminded that it is never too early to think about taking a Basic Hunter Education Course. "Many people don't think about enrolling in a course until September," says Susan Langlois, DFW Hunter Education Administrator. "Unfortunately, most courses have either begun or are fully enrolled and the opportunity

to hunt during the fall may disappear." Langlois points out that courses are scheduled through much of the calendar year, including the summer, but most are offered in the spring and early fall.

First-time license buyers in Massachusetts are required to show proof that they have taken a basic hunter education course in order to purchase a hunting or sporting license. Basic Hunter Education courses are available across the state from January through October and the [course calendar](#) is periodically updated. Or you can fill out a [course notification form](#) and you will be notified by email when a course is scheduled in your area.

Basic hunter education courses average 15 hours in length and are taught by volunteer instructors. Courses are offered in several formats including some that are scheduled over several (5-6) weekday evenings, some that are conducted during one intensive weekend and others that are a combination of weeknights and weekend days. Students must attend all scheduled sessions as part of the requirement for passing the course. All instruction and class materials are free.

Students who successfully pass the course receive a Certificate of Completion that is accepted for purchasing a Massachusetts hunting or sporting license and for Massachusetts residents 15 years old and over to apply for a firearms license with their local police departments. The certificates are also accepted for the purchase of a hunting or sporting license in all U.S. states, Canada, and Mexico. Lost your certificate from years past? You may obtain a Duplicate Certificate from the Hunter Education Program by [filling out a form](#) or by contacting the Hunter Education office directly at (978) 772-0693.

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#### ***UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS***

**July 11 – Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Advisory Committee Meeting, West Boylston** – 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, July 11, 2013 from 1:30pm - 4:30pm. The building is handicapped accessible. Call (508) 389-6360 for further information and [directions](#).

**July 31 – Fisheries and Wildlife Board Meeting, Western District** – The Fisheries & Wildlife Board will meet on Wednesday, July 31, 2013 at 1:00pm at a location to be determined in the Western District. When the exact location is finalized, it will be posted in the [Fisheries and Wildlife Board Meetings page](#) of the DFW website. Call (508) 389-6300 for further information.

Both meetings are open to the public.

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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**—Visit the [Calendar and Events page](#) at [www.mass.gov/masswildlife](http://www.mass.gov/masswildlife) for more listings.

**July 4 – Lake Quannapowitt Family Fishing Derby, Wakefield** – MassWildlife's Angler Education Program is participating in this event in association with the Wakefield Independence Day Celebration at Lake Quannapowitt in Wakefield, 7:00am – 11:00am. This is an excellent opportunity to try your hand at fishing. If you have fishing equipment, bring it along. Contact Gene Ellison at [gene@cfninvestments.com](mailto:gene@cfninvestments.com) for more details.

**July 13 – Angler Education Display & Casting Program, Brewster** – This will be part of the Brewster Conservation Day held at Drummer Boy Park, 10:00am - 2:00pm. For more information, contact Ryan Birch at (508) 896-4546.

**July 13 – All About Deer & Moose, South Egremont** – The Mt. Washington Cultural Council is sponsoring a talk by Dave Stainbrook, MassWildlife Deer and Moose Biologist. Learn about the biology, population and management of the two members of the deer family found in Massachusetts. The program will begin at 7:00pm at the Town Hall in South Egremont on 118 East Street.

**July 17 – “Ladies Night Out” Fishing Clinic, Billerica** – MassWildlife’s [Angler Education Program](#) volunteers are teaming up with the Billerica Parks and Recreation Department for this evening event for women at Nuttings Lake in Billerica, 6:00 – 8:00pm. To sign up, contact Donna Hansen at (978) 671-0921 or [dhansen@town.billerica.ma.us](mailto:dhansen@town.billerica.ma.us)

**July 20 – Wildlife on the Connecticut River, Northfield** – Bring your binoculars and interest in wildlife on board the Quinnetukut Riverboat for this special cruise offered by the Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center. Ralph Taylor, Mass Wildlife’s Connecticut Valley District Manager, will be on board to answer questions and share an update on the status of bald eagles and other species of interest. How is the river important as a migratory corridor for waterfowl and fish? What kinds of fish inhabit this stretch of the river? What is happening to wildlife populations both in the river and along its shores? Learn about the success of the Bald Eagle Restoration Project. Mr. Taylor will also give an update on populations of Connecticut Valley residents such as black bear, deer and moose. Bring your questions and sign up for this special cruise along a scenic six mile stretch of the Connecticut, as we explore the French King Gorge, the "narrows" and Barton Cove. 11:00am – 2:00pm. To get a riverboat ticket, call Northfield Mountain at 1-800-859-2960.

**July 27 – Houghton's Pond Cool Summer Fun Family Fishing Festival, Canton** – At the Blue Hills Reservation on the banks of Houghton's Pond, from 10am – 3pm, cast a line, learn about fish in our waters, safety, ethics, and fishing equipment. If you have fishing equipment, bring it along. A limited quantity of fishing equipment and bait will be available. MassWildlife’s [Angler Education Program](#) is participating in this festival in cooperation with the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Contact Jim Lagacy at (508) 389-6309 or [jim.lagacy@state.ma.us](mailto:jim.lagacy@state.ma.us) for more details.

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