



MASSWILDLIFE

Massachusetts Division
of Fisheries & Wildlife
Hunter Education
Program Newsletter

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MASSACHUSETTS HUNTER EDUCATION PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

IN THE KNOW

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May 2025

THE NEXT FEW MONTHS

As this fiscal year comes to a close, we are trying hard to offer more training opportunities for new and existing instructors. We will focus on adding more folks to our volunteer corps and will routinely offer “new volunteer instructor” workshops—about 3-5 each year. Also, since different teaching teams are asking for different options, we are offering the opportunity to include existing volunteers / Team Leaders who were rebuilding or restabing their teams at these events so training could be experienced as a group. Please let us know if you have any interest in this offer.

We are also starting to train existing instructors in other disciplines. A Bowhunter Ed workshop is scheduled for May 31, 2025 and we invited existing program volunteers who had expressed an interest in becoming a Bowhunter Education Instructor to attend. There are two prerequisites for in-

structors who wish to teach Bowhunter Education. All should successfully graduate from the course, and all should be trained to teach the course. While we relaxed these conditions during the pandemic, we are ready to get back on track to ensure all members in our teaching teams are well prepared to offer these courses. This event at Westboro FHQ on May 31st will cover both conditions.

Additional changes in personnel are ongoing. Steve Foster started his well-deserved retirement, and Cynthia Pratt was promoted to administrative Supervisor. Both of these positions will be filled soon in the coming months. In the meantime, the three remaining staff in the program are doing our best to keep up with your needs and the needs of our students. Please be patient. We will keep you posted as changes develop.

THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGING

Two Hunter Education Program staff have moved onto bigger and better things. First

Cynthia Pratt, our Administrative office specialist who handled everything from student enrollments to website edits and responded to emails & phone calls was promoted to Procurement and Contracting Supervisor for the agency. She deserves every bit of this well earned opportunity and we wish her well in her new position.



Second, Steve Foster, our logistics master and pheasant expert, also moved on after 41 years with the DFW, by starting his richly deserved retirement. Steve remained essential throughout the years and his biggest assets were his reliability, outstanding work ethic and pride in his work. We congratulate Steve and wish him happy travels. Both of these positions will be filled in the coming months. Stay tuned.

IN THE KNOW

REMEMBERING ED BARRETT



The MassWildlife Hunter Ed program received word from the Worthington Rod & Gun teaching team and from Mark Tisa, MDFW Director of the passing of Edward Barrett, Jr., a fellow hunter education instructor and member of the Worthington Rod & Gun teaching team. Ed was an avid outdoorsman, and his family and friends are honoring Ed's memory by encouraging family and friends to donate funds to the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's (MassWildlife) Wildlands Fund in his memory.

Director Tisa noted that monies donated to MassWildlife's Wildlands Fund are restricted by state and federal statutes to be used solely for the conservation of fisheries and wildlife habitat lands and cannot be diverted for any other purpose. Tisa said, "we are honored that his family, friends, and community chose to remember Ed with gifts to MassWildlife contributing to our work to protect and conserve wildlife habitat across Massachusetts."

We were asked by his club and teaching team members to remember Ed and his family's generosity. Ed offered ten years of service to the Hunter Education program and everyone that knew him will be left with fond memories and funny stories to share, keeping his legacy alive. Ed is remembered for his lasting impression on everyone he met and his family's kindness.

FALCON NEST WATCH

Peregrine falcons often nest on manmade structures such as bridges and tall buildings—some even have cameras that let you peek inside their nests to witness falcons during breeding season. Chicks typically hatch in early May and remain in the nest until mid-June. Follow this link to falcon cameras in Massachusetts and get an up close look at these remarkable and birds. Visit:

www.mass.gov/info-details/view-peregrine-falcon-cameras



MAKING TIME TO MEET AND GREET

Hello Volunteers! During my first year with the program, I spent time visiting and introducing myself to teaching teams, meeting new instructors and assisting where needed. I will continue this year especially when course offerings are at their peak. I hope to visit several more instructor teams during scheduled courses. I will communicate with team

leaders when I plan to visit, with the hope that you will find ways for me to contribute and support the class. And several teams have simply invited me which is appreciated and has been a great way to get to know you.

As mentioned, Steve Foster has retired, and while we await his replacement, I have been tasked to be your main contact to ensure you receive the course materials and teaching aids you need to offer courses. We ask that you return these materials shortly after your class and if you notice that equipment is damaged or not working properly, let me know immediately so that I can make sure the equipment is fixed and ready for the next team that will use it. While I make my way around to your courses and trainings, please feel free to reach out to me at any time by email: Jeffrey.Osgood@mass.gov, or try my office at 508-389-7825. I look forward to seeing you in 2025!



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WELCOME NEW PROGRAM INSTRUCTORS



L-R Back Row: Dale Brown, Mark Soja, Bill Devine, Chris Todd, Steve Rock and Team Leader Peter Bonneau—Swift River
L-R Front row: Paul Beaulier, Zach Martins, Mike McHugh, George Vadnais, John Nolan and Team Leader Nick St. George—Swift River

Program Staff conducted another New Volunteer Instructor Introductory Workshop in January 2025 at the MassWildlife Field Headquarters in Westborough and we took the opportunity to include existing volunteers / Team Leaders who were rebuilding or restabbling their teams so training could be experienced as a group. Four team leaders and team leaders in training joined us .

Participants learn about program information and policies, curriculum requirements and how to use the instructor manual which includes a review of the lesson plan format. During these workshops we cover all aspects of the program to ensure every new instructor will have the knowledge and skills to be able to participate at a Basic Hunter Education Course straightaway.

This training fully prepares the new volunteer instructors to join an existing team and to immediately help teach a course – no “apprenticeship” time is necessary.

Eleven new instructors joined our program as a result, and they are ready to help. Several are already connected to teaching teams . Others are looking to help were needed. Please join us in welcoming the following new volunteer instructors:

- Paul Beaulier Jr. from Amesbury
- Dale Brown from Sunderland
- William Devine from Oakham—Mahar team
- Dave Doherty Jr. from East Falmouth
- Zach Martins from Southbridge—Hamilton R&G team
- Michael McHugh from Norton
- John Nolan from Hardwick—Swift River team
- Steve Rock from Belchertown—Swift River team
- Mark Soja from Palmer—Swift River team
- Chris Todd from Springfield—Swift River team
- George Vadnais from Palmer—Swift River team

FREE FISHING DAYS

Mark your calendars for this year’s Free Freshwater Fishing Weekend on **June 7 and 8!** No license is required to fish any public lake, pond, reservoir, stream, or river in Massachusetts from 12 a.m. Saturday, June 7 until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, June 8.

- All other regulations, including catch limits, apply during Free Fishing Weekend. Before heading out on the water, make sure you know the rules. Review fishing regulations.



IN THE KNOW

MASSWILDLIFE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY 2025

May 2025 - A family fishing trip is a fun way to get everyone together for an outdoor adventure. Join MassWildlife at a **Family Fishing Event**. Visit: www.Mass.gov/Learn-To-Fish or scan the code to learn more



May 17: Veterans Family Fishing Festival, Marlborough – Veterans and their families are invited to this family friendly fishing event at the Marlboro Fish and Game Club from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. No pre-registration is required; contact Jim Lagacy at (508) 389-6309 or jim.lagacy@mass.gov for more information.

May 29: Coexisting with Black Bears in Central Massachusetts, Virtual – Join this webinar to learn about black bear biology, population management, and how communities in central Massachusetts can take effective steps to coexist with black bears. The program will begin at 7 p.m. and will be presented by MassWildlife's Black Bear and Furbearer Biologist, Dave Wattles. Registration is required; Email meghan.crawford@mass.gov for more information.

May 29: Canopy 2025 – Innovations in Practice Forum, Amherst – Join this in-person forum from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. to explore the many values of our forest land, as well as the stewardship that strengthens, supports, and sustains them. Our forests are powerhouses that boost our economy, conserve wildlife, and fight climate change across the Commonwealth. Connect with forest landowners, forest industry leaders, and policy makers while engaging in a day of activities. This event will be hosted at UMass Amherst of the Campus Center. Registration required.

JUNE 2025

June 2025—MassWildlife is hosting a series of spring walks at locations across the Commonwealth. From whip-poor-will calls to bumbling bees, come learn about wildlife and the natural communities that support them. Scan the code to register. Descriptions are listed here.



June 7: Spring Migratory Bird Walk, Cheshire – With open shrublands, grasslands, forests, and wetlands, Stafford Hill WMA is a great place to see a diversity of migratory birds. Join MassWildlife experts for a 1-mile guided walk to learn about birds and the habitats they need for courtship, nesting, and raising their young. The walk will take place from 8 – 10 a.m. (weather permitting). Birders of all experience levels are welcome. Registration is required.

June 7: Evening Whip-poor-will Walk, Hardwick – Muddy Brook WMA is home to one of the largest inland congregations of whip-poor-will in the state. Join experts from MassWildlife and East Quabbin Land Trust from 7 – 9 p.m. to experience the iconic whip-poor-will song on this 1.5-mile moonlit walk (weather permitting). Birders of all experience levels are welcome. Registration is required.

June 14: Birds, Bees, and Wildflowers Walk, East Falmouth – Get fired up and ready to grow! Join MassWildlife for a 1.5-mile guided walk through the Frances Crane WMA and learn about the many fire-adapted birds, native pollinators, wildlife, and wildflowers that make their home in this amazing grassland. The walk will take place from 9 – 11 a.m. (weather permitting). Birders of all experience levels are welcome. Registration is required.



The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program . . .
Partnering to fund conservation and connect people with nature.

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