



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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PLANNING AHEAD 2026

We are in the process of creating a schedule of training workshops for all basic hunter education volunteer instructors that need to participate in a workshop to stay current. The goal of these workshops is to introduce best teaching practices to engage students and prepare them for the hunter education final exam, and help all instructors feel more comfortable with the curriculum. We hope to offer these workshops in different parts of the state, including our field headquarters in Westborough.

Does your club want to host a hunter education volunteer instructor workshop? Reach out to Jeff Osgood to coordinate.

We want to hear from you:

What topics do you want us to cover during a workshop? What lessons would be helpful to unpack? What ideas do you have to improve a lesson or a skills activity? While all lessons must meet IHEA standards, there are always ways to improve student engagement and competency.

NEW DEER HUNTING REGULATIONS FOR 2025



- The Youth Deer Permit can be used during any open deer season.
 - Deer decoys can be used for hunting during the archery-only season.
 - Daily antlerless bag limit has been removed. (Season limits are still in effect.)
 - Planted food plots and standing crops are legal to use for hunting.
 - Deboning requirements have been expanded to all states outside of New England to help prevent the spread of CWD.
- For license year 2026, there is a new winter primitive firearms deer season for the month of January on Martha's Vineyard and Elizabeth Island (WMZ 13) and Nantucket (WMZ 14).
 - Under previous laws, a tag was required for possession of any deer parts, including antlers. The new regulation allows anyone to collect and possess naturally shed antlers without needing any permit, tag, or license.

IN THE KNOW

PLANNING AHEAD, (CONTINUED)...

Want to help plan and participate in our workshops?

Contact us to propose an idea for a workshop session. These workshops are designed around our volunteer instructors and should be relevant to your needs.

Bow Hunter Instructor Workshops

Many of you have reached out about becoming a bow hunter instructor, or have a team or club member who is interested. With enough interest, we will plan to schedule a bow hunter instructor workshop. If you have team member who is a good candidate to be a team leader, please visit the Hunter Education Volunteer Resources website and fill out the recommendation form at www.mass.gov/resources-for-volunteer-instructors.

Coming Soon...

Jack is working hard to make the course equipment request form more user-friendly and streamlined. The goal is to make sure team leaders get what they need to teach the course without additional items that are

no longer relevant to the curriculum.

We ask all teaching teams to please collaborate, discuss 2026 course schedules, and consider submitting course information early for this year. We have received information from a few teams who have scheduled courses for winter and early spring. We will post and advertise courses 6 to 8 weeks prior to an event like we are accustomed. Our full list of courses and more information about the blended format can be found at www.mass.gov/huntsafe.

You can complete and submit the “conduct a course” form electronically at www.mass.gov/forms/conduct-a-hunter-education-course or you can simply call the office (508.389.7820) and we will submit the request for you. Office hours are Monday-Friday 8:00am-4:00pm.

We thank everyone for their support and for continuing to push us forward by offering more and more courses. Happy Fall Hunting, Good Luck!

Jeffrey Osgood

MHEP WELCOMES CELA DORR

We are thrilled to welcome Cela Dorr as the Outreach and Education Program Coordinator. Cela will work out of the hunter education office, as well as support the main desk.

Cela Dorr is a former municipal government administrator and elementary school principal and special education teacher. Hailing from a multiethnic and multiracial family with neurodiverse individuals, she believes outdoor education has entry points for people of all walks of life, ages and abilities. She is proud to join such a revered agency as MassWildlife is and looks forward to learning from her colleagues everyday. As she continues to learn her new role, we ask that you “bear” with her!



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

MASSWILDLIFE

1 Rabbit Hill Road | Westborough, MA 01581 | mass.gov/masswildlife

MJCC AND A CALL TO NEW VOLUNTEERS!

In early August, MassWildlife staff and Hunter Education volunteers taught Basic Hunter Education and Bow Hunter Education at the 2025 Massachusetts Junior Conservation Camp. This year we graduated 66 new hunter education students, and 9 new bow hunter students. Camp numbers were low, but the students were great, and our volunteers were able to teach to smaller groups. Eight volunteer instructors attended camp for the first time to teach Hunter Education and Bow Hunter Education. Volunteers that taught this year include Mike Lee, Arleen Stevens, Nate Joslin, John Organ, Ernie Foster, Dale Chayes, Gary Kaser, Peter Bonneau, Nick St. George, Steve O'Brien and Jack Senecal. It's a great thing to watch when volunteers from different clubs and with different experience levels get to team up and learn from each other! My favorite part about camp is teaching young people and the camaraderie that comes along with spending time with our amazing volunteers.

Thanks to those who joined us at camp. You will get information about next year's camp in a future newsletter and through email.



Massachusetts Junior Conservation Camp is a great place to practice teaching, especially if you are a new volunteer. Because we see multiple groups a day, instructors often teach a lesson up to three times in the same day. With the lesson plan in hand and at a more relaxed pace, instructors can take their time to ensure that lesson objectives are clearly explained and student activities are followed as designed. By the third time around, instructors feel more confident and lesson delivery is natural!

CALLING NEW VOLUNTEERS:

Do you have members of your club or hunting and fishing buddies that would make great volunteers? Recently, we've seen several clubs bolster their hunter education teaching teams by adding new volunteers. When visiting these teams and watching them teach, teams with 6-8 teaching members are able to team teach and switch roles.

I have heard from several instructors that they are in need of new instructors to join their teaching teams. We're hoping to offer additional new instructor training opportunities. If you have club members that are interested in becoming volunteer Hunter Education instructors, please send me their contact information. Additionally, they can scan the QR code under this article to go directly to the online sign up link.



LOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES?

MassWildlife doesn't just teach Basic Hunter Education. We have Angler Education courses, fly tying and ice fishing classes, and Learn to Hunt Programs that are geared towards those new hunter education graduates looking for additional, more species specific hunting tactics and instruction. Additionally, we offer Archery 101, Mentored Hunts, Bow Hunter Education, Trapper Education, Muzzleloading, and Map, Compass and Survival. Those interested in additional volunteer opportunities should contact Jeff Osgood by email: Jeffrey.Osgood@mass.gov

MASSWILDLIFE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER 2025

September was filled with family fishing clinics. As hunting season approaches, be on the lookout for species-specific hunting classes and our remaining open water fishing clinics. Details below!

October 1: Family Fishing Clinic, Shrewsbury – Join MassWildlife for a free, family friendly, learn to fish clinic at Jordan Pond from 5–6:30 p.m. Bring your fishing equipment or borrow ours; limited equipment and bait will be provided. Open to the public.

October 2: Family Fishing Clinic, Andover – Join MassWildlife for a free, family friendly, learn to fish clinic at Pumps Pond from 4:30–6:30 p.m. Bring your fishing equipment or borrow ours; limited equipment and bait will be provided. Open to the public.

October 2: Fall Turkey Hunting, Virtual – Join members of the NWTF and staff from MassWildlife for a one hour virtual panel discussion focused on fall turkey hunting. Topics will include laws and regulations, fall turkey hunting tactics and strategies, and fall turkey calling. The class will be taught through Zoom from 6–7 p.m. Registration is required.

October 7: Conservation Focused Deer Management in Massachusetts Presentation, Wareham – Rising white-tailed deer abundance in southeastern Massachusetts coupled with declining hunter participation has led to negative impacts on ecosystems, agricultural damage, vehicle collisions, and risks of tick-borne illness. Dr. Martin Feehan, MassWildlife Deer and Moose Biologist, will discuss the challenges we face with deer management, strategies for addressing these challenges, and how property owners and organizations can be a part of the solution. This free presentation will start at 6 p.m. at Wareham Free Library.

October 8: Waterfowl Hunting 101, Virtual – Join MassWildlife staff and partners to learn all about wa-

terfowl hunting. Topics include basic waterfowl biology and identification, laws and regulations, gear and equipment, and hunting strategies/techniques for beginner waterfowl hunters. The class will be taught through Zoom from 6–8 p.m. Registration is required

October 22: Fisheries and Wildlife Board Meeting, Westborough and Online – The October monthly business meeting of the Fisheries and Wildlife Board will be held at 3:00 p.m. at the MassWildlife Field Headquarters, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough. Interested persons can attend the meeting either in person or via a Zoom video webinar. Use the link below for more details.

October 22: Coexisting with Black Bears Presentation, Sturbridge – Join this in-person presentation with MassWildlife's Community Engagement Biologist, Meghan Crawford, to learn about black bear biology and how communities can take effective steps to coexist with bears. This free event is hosted by Opacum Land Trust, 6–7:00 p.m., at the Rapsallion Pub. Registration is required.

Some events require pre-registration. For more details, or to register for an event, please visit:
www.mass.gov/dfw/calendar

