



2017 VERMONT DEER SEASONS



SUPPORT SCIENCE-BASED DEER MANAGEMENT

Important Information Hunters play a critical role in the management of deer in Vermont. They provide the mechanism for controlling deer numbers, and they provide critical biological information from the animals they harvest. Successful deer management depends on cooperation from hunters.

Some ways hunters can contribute valuable information include:

- *Completing the annual rifle season hunter effort survey, should they receive one.* These surveys are mailed to 10,000 licensed hunters each year, and provide information on hunting effort and sighting rates of deer and other wildlife that are used to estimate population size.
- *Reporting their deer at a biological reporting station during youth season or the opening weekend of rifle season.* Department biologists are present at select reporting stations during these weekends to collect important information on the health and physical condition of the deer herd. This information is more reliable if more deer can be examined.
- *Submitting a tooth from their rifle season buck.* We are asking all successful rifle season hunters to provide a tooth from their buck when they report it. The deer's age can be determined from the tooth, and that age information is being used for a detailed evaluation of the antler point restriction and to help manage Vermont's deer herd.

URINE LURES BANNED

Important Information Lures containing any cervid urine or other bodily fluid are illegal to use in Vermont. Chronic wasting disease, or CWD, can be spread by deer urine. CWD is 100% fatal and is currently found in 24 states and 2 Canadian

provinces. There is currently no way to test live animals for CWD, and deer can contract and spread the disease for up to a year before they show any symptoms. The first case of CWD in Pennsylvania was in a captive deer facility that was selling urine lures.

Synthetic lures and food-scented lures pose no threat to the herd and are still permitted for use by hunters in Vermont.

ANTLERLESS PERMITS NO LONGER MAILED

Important Information Muzzleloader antlerless permits will no longer be mailed to successful applicants. Permit winners will be able to print their permit, which will appear on their license, from the Fish & Wildlife website after the lottery. Alternatively, hunters can write their permit number on one of the orange big game tags.

2017 DEER SEASONS

| BOW & ARROW | |
|------------------------|---|
| October 7-Nov. 3, 2017 | Two deer, only one of which may be a legal buck. |
| December 2-10, 2017 | |
| YOUTH DEER WEEKEND | |
| November 4-5, 2017 | One deer of either sex, no antler restriction |
| NOVEMBER RIFLE | |
| November 11-26, 2017 | One legal buck this season |
| MUZZLELOADER | |
| December 2-10, 2017 | One legal buck unless you have an antlerless permit |
| | Available through lottery |

LICENSE INFORMATION

A digital version of your license carried with you is also acceptable, except for children ages 15 and under who must still carry a paper license signed by their parent.

If you intend to hunt, fish, or trap in 2017, you must update your lifetime, permanent disability, or

permanent license regardless of whether or not you used your tags. This is a new statutory requirement, and it has been put in place to allow the department to collect accurate harvest and licensing information for these license holders.

This updated license will include current year tags. You may update your license at no cost on-line at our website. If you are unable to go on-line, you may go to any authorized license agent or Fish & Wildlife Office and request to have your license updated.

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| Purchase a License Online | Update a Permanent License |
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DEFINITIONS OF TERMS FOR DEER SEASONS

LEGAL BUCK: A white-tailed deer with at least one antler having two or more points.

POINT: An antler projection of at least one inch measured from base to tip. A broken main beam shall count as a point, regardless of length.

ANTLERLESS DEER: Those deer without antlers or with no antler longer than three (3) inches.

BOW & ARROW SEASON (October 7-November 3, 2017 and December 2-10, 2017)

LICENSES: Any person wishing to hunt deer with a bow and arrow during archery deer season must have an archery license/tag. A hunting or combination hunting and fishing license is required in addition to an archery license, except for nonresident archery-only deer license.

LIMIT: No more than two deer may be taken during the archery season only one of which may be a legal buck, not to exceed the annual limit. One legal buck may be taken during the two-part October and December archery season anywhere in the state. The October and December archery seasons are considered one season, and hunters may take only one legal buck during the entire season. All WMUs are open to the taking of antlerless deer during archery season.

Deer must be taken by bow (long bow, recurve bow or compound bow) and arrows or with crossbow by a person 50 years of age or older, or by crossbow by

a person with a disability permit. The arrowhead must be at least 7/8 of an inch in width with two or more cutting edges.

It is illegal to carry a rifle, shotgun, or muzzleloader while archery hunting deer in the bow and arrow season. A hunter may possess a pistol or revolver while archery hunting. The pistol or revolver MAY NOT be used to take game or dispatch the deer.

A crossbow may be used by anyone 50 years of age or older to take a deer during archery deer season. Anyone 49 years of age or younger may hunt with a crossbow, provided they possess a crossbow disability permit. The crossbow disability permit is issued to a person so physically impaired that he or she cannot operate a standard bow and allows that person to hunt with a crossbow. A permit applicant must produce a licensed physician's certificate certifying that the disability requires the use of a crossbow. Obtain an application from Fish & Wildlife before visiting your doctor. Applicant must also appear before a state game warden to obtain a crossbow license. Be sure to make an appointment ahead of time.

Unless it is uncocked, it is illegal to possess or transport a crossbow in or on a motor vehicle, motor boat, airplane, snowmobile, or other motor-propelled craft or any vehicle drawn by a motor-propelled vehicle.

[Crossbow Application \(49 years and younger\)](#)

CROSSBOW SAFETY

- Keep the string waxed and lubricate the rail periodically.
- Make sure your fingers are well away (below rail) from the path of the string and cables.
- Never dry-fire a crossbow.
- Make sure the limbs are free of obstructions before firing; be particularly careful if you are hunting from a ground blind.
- Never use a cocking device to uncock unless you have a model that is specifically designed to do so. Most are not.

- To uncock, shoot a specially-designed unloading point or a field tip into soft ground; or shoot a field tip into a target.
- Practice often and avoid shots at game that are beyond your effective range, generally less than 40 yards.

TREE STANDS AND CROSSBOWS

- Always cock the crossbow without a bolt on the ground before climbing into the stand.
- Once seated and secured, pull up your unloaded crossbow with a haul line.
- Do not place a bolt on the crossbow until you are safely secured in your stand.

DEFINITIONS

RECOVERY OF BOW & ARROW DEER AFTER HOURS: Department policy allows a hunter who has wounded a deer with an arrow to look for the deer after the close of legal shooting time under the following conditions:

- The hunter must request permission from the state game warden. Call the nearest state police office, giving exact location and circumstances.
- The hunter may not take a firearm, bow and arrow, or crossbow on the search, only a knife to dress the deer.

YOUTH DEER WEEKEND (November 4-5, 2017)

Vermont's youth hunting weekend is on the Saturday and Sunday prior to the opening of the regular November rifle deer season.

A resident or nonresident youth, **15 years of age or younger on the weekend of the hunt**, who has successfully completed a hunter safety course may obtain a free youth deer hunting tag to hunt during this season. The youth must also purchase a Vermont hunting license at a license agent by either showing proof of satisfactorily completing the hunter safety course or proof of having held a valid hunting license previously. The youth hunter's parent or guardian must sign the hunting license application in the presence of the license agent.

When hunting, the youth hunter must be accompanied by an unarmed adult over 18 years of age who holds a valid Vermont hunting license. The adult may accompany no more than two youth hunters at any given time. The adult must have **direct control and supervision**, including the ability to see and communicate with the youth hunter without the aid of artificial devices such as radios or binoculars.

LANDOWNER PERMISSION IS REQUIRED BY LAW in order to hunt on private land with a youth deer tag during youth deer weekend. All relevant game laws and regulations apply during the **Youth Deer Hunting Weekend**, including the prohibition on baiting and road hunting.

A Vermont youth deer hunting tag is valid for one deer on youth deer hunting weekend in accordance with the rules of the Fish & Wildlife Board announced annually.

LIMIT: The youth hunter may take one deer of either sex on youth deer weekend, and the antler restriction that applies in other deer seasons does not apply during youth deer weekend.

The amount of fine will be doubled for a violation on Youth Deer Hunting Weekend, and the fine shall be assessed against the licensed adult who has the youth hunter in his or her charge.

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| Courtesy Permission Card | More information on Youth Hunting |
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TIPS FOR MENTORS ON YOUTH DEER WEEKEND

A first deer hunt can mark the beginning of a lifelong passion for the outdoors and a commitment to wildlife conservation.

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department offers these tips to mentors:

- **Hunt Safe.** No matter the age of the participant, hunting is one of the safest outdoor activities. Youth hunters are some of the safest hunters when accompanied by an alert mentor.



- “ **Hunt Smart.** Scouting and range practice are necessary and exciting ingredients to any successful hunt. Wearing hunter orange also ensures safety in the field.
- “ **Model Behavior.** Safe and responsible hunters are mentored by safe and responsible hunters.
- “ **Go Often.** Encourage youth to hunt more than the youth weekends. Lifelong hunting participation is directly related to the amount of time spent hunting while young, especially when these experiences occur in a family/mentor setting.
- “ **Respect the Intent.** The youth weekend hunt is for the youth, not you. Legally, you must leave your firearm at home, and landowner permission is required.
- “ **Have Fun!** Being with family and friends and generally having a good time is more important to youth hunters than bagging game. Remember this and provide young hunters with positive reinforcement.

MENTORED HUNTING LICENSE

A mentored hunting license is available to a resident or nonresident who has not successfully completed a hunter safety course and has not held a hunting license in Vermont or any other state or province, so it may not be used on Youth Deer Weekend.

A person issued a mentored hunting license may hunt when:

- “ Accompanied by an adult 21 years of age or older who holds a valid Vermont hunting license. “Accompanied” means that the mentored hunter is in the direct control and supervision of the fully licensed adult hunter and is within 15 feet of the fully licensed adult hunter.
- “ A parent or legal guardian has also signed the license if the applicant is 15 years old or younger.

The fully licensed adult hunter may take only one person hunting.

A person holding a mentored hunting license is subject to the bag limit of the fully licensed adult

accompanying hunter. Game taken by a mentored hunter goes towards the bag limit of the accompanying licensed hunter.

After tagging and reporting game, a person who holds a mentored hunting license may transport game he or she has taken without being accompanied by the licensed adult hunter.

There are limitations on a person who holds a mentored hunting license:

- “ A person who holds a mentored hunting license is not eligible to participate in youth turkey, deer, or waterfowl hunting weekends.
- “ A mentored hunting license is available for only two separate calendar years.

[Mentor License Information/Application](#)

NOVEMBER RIFLE SEASON (November 11-26, 2017)

LIMIT: One legal buck with at least one antler having two or more points may be taken anywhere in the state. A person shall not take more than three white-tailed deer in a year, only two of which may be legal bucks.



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| 2016 Deer Harvest Report | Past Deer Harvest Reports |
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MUZZLELOADER DEER SEASON (December 2-10, 2017)

LICENSES: Muzzleloader license and hunting license required.

LIMIT: One legal buck with at least one antler having two or more points may be taken anywhere in the state. In addition, with an antlerless permit issued by the department, a person may take an antlerless deer within the authorized WMU. No more than two deer may be taken total, and a second deer may only be taken by hunters possessing an antlerless muzzleloader deer permit.

DEFINITION OF MUZZLELOADING FIREARM:

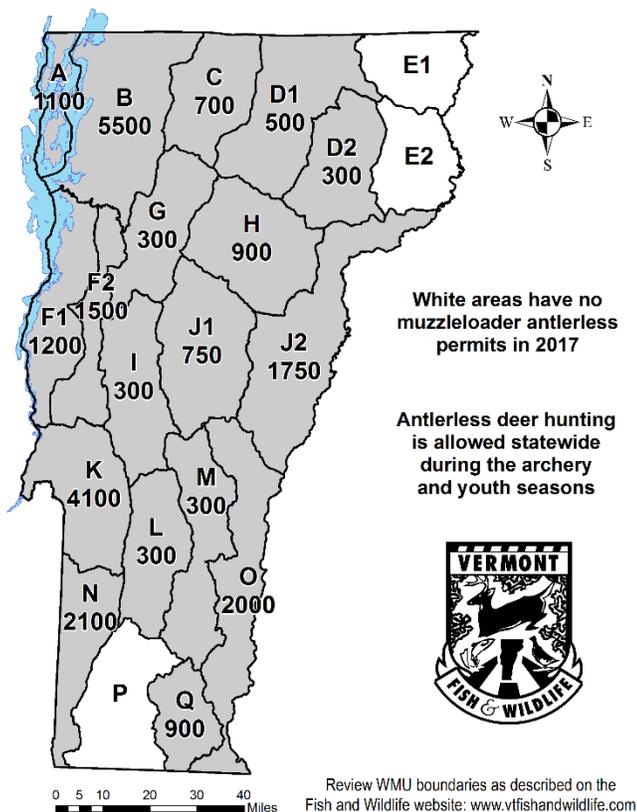
A single-shot, single-barrel rifle or smoothbore firearm with a minimum barrel length of 20 inches, designed to be fired from the shoulder or a single-shot pistol with a minimum barrel length of 10 inches. Both rifle and pistol must be incapable of being loaded from the breach without the use of tools, and must have a minimum bore diameter of 0.43 inches and an ignition system of traditional or modern flintlock, caplock, matchlock, in-line or wheellock style.

DEFINITION OF AMMUNITION FOR MUZZLELOADERS: Black powder or other suitable non-smokeless propellant, and a single-ball or bullet.

DEFINITION OF LOADED MUZZLELOADER: The muzzleloading firearm shall be considered loaded when it has been charged with powder and projectile and is primed or capped.

SPECIAL PROVISIONS: A person who purchases a muzzleloader deer license shall not carry, while deer hunting during the muzzleloader deer season, any firearms other than one single-barreled muzzleloading firearm.

2017 Muzzleloader Antlerless Deer Permit Allocation



NATURAL DEER FLUID LURES BANNED

Chronic wasting disease, or CWD, spreads quickly within deer herds, particularly among adult bucks, and causes infected individuals to lose body weight and eventually die. It is 100% fatal to white-tailed deer and is currently found in 24 states and two Canadian provinces.

Why ban urine lures? CWD is spread by deer urine and other bodily fluids. After infected fluid is deposited in soil, it can remain infectious for decades. Because of this, Vermont recently joined Arizona, Virginia, Ontario, and parts of Pennsylvania in banning the use of natural deer urine lures by hunters.

Synthetic lures and food-scented lures pose no threat to the herd and are still permitted for use by hunters in Vermont.

Deer are able to contract CWD and spread the disease for up to a year before they demonstrate any symptoms of the disease. Deer can only be tested for CWD after they die. Therefore, facilities may be producing and selling deer urine lures from deer herds that show no symptoms of the disease but are actually infected with CWD. This happened in Pennsylvania – the first case of CWD was recorded in a captive deer facility that claimed to be “CWD-free” and was selling deer urine lures online.

Destroy existing urine lures. It is not possible to track and recall bottles of lure that have been sold from an infected facility, so hunters would unknowingly continue to use urine that likely contains CWD prions and risk spreading the disease. Even if most captive deer herds are actually “CWD-free,” urine lures from different sources are commonly mixed so all it would take is one infected herd to create a problem.

Once CWD is established in wild deer herds, no state has been able to control it despite considerable effort and expense. In most cases, states try to slow the spread of the disease through a dramatic depopulation of the local deer herd.

What can you do? The Fish & Wildlife Board and the Fish & Wildlife Department felt that implementing strong preventative measures was the only tool available to combat this disease. You can help

Vermont's deer herd and follow the law by using synthetic lure alternatives.

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| Chronic Wasting Disease | Q&A on Chronic Wasting Disease |
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ANNUAL LIMIT

A person shall not take more than three deer in a calendar year, only two of which may be "legal bucks." A hunter may take no more than one legal buck per season (youth, archery, rifle, muzzle-loader). Although archery season is divided into an early and late portion, it is considered a single season.

HUNTING HOURS

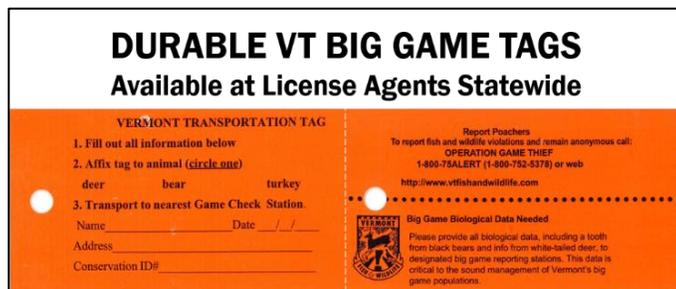
Hunting hours are one half hour before sunrise to one half hour after sunset.

TAGGING DEER

Deer must be tagged immediately when taken. The tag shall be placed on the carcass open to view and remain there until the carcass is cut up for consumption.

OPTIONAL VERMONT BIG GAME TAG

Optional Vermont Big Game Tags are available from license agents as durable alternatives to the paper tags on licenses. Optional tags may be used to tag deer, bear, or turkeys. Record your CONSERVATION ID number (top left corner of your license) on the Optional Big Game Tag. A qualifying landowner may use the tag by writing "landowner" in the same space. The existing paper tag that comes with a license may also be used.



REPORTING DEER

A person taking deer shall within 48 hours report the taking and exhibit the carcass to the nearest game warden, official Fish & Wildlife Department Reporting Station, or to a person designated by the commissioner to receive the reports. No deer carcass shall be transported out of state without first being reported.

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| Big Game Reporting Stations | Processing Your Deer Video |
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BIOLOGICAL INFORMATION

Deer hunters can contribute valuable information for the management of Vermont's deer herd by 1) completing the annual rifle season hunter effort surveys should they receive one in the mail, and 2) reporting their deer at select biological reporting stations during the youth and rifle season weekend. This will enable biologists to record key information such as age, antler characteristics, and health of the harvested deer.

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| Tooth Collection Project |
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TRANSPORTING DEER

A tagged deer may be transported only during the open season and for 20 days thereafter.

Deer may be legally transported only under these following conditions:

- By the person who shot the deer.
- When accompanied by the person who shot the deer (including moving the deer from kill-site to camp or motor vehicle).
- By a person who holds a mentored hunting license, unaccompanied by the fully licensed adult hunter.
- When transported by common carrier (for example, a shipping company) and tagged with the name of the cosigner and consignee, name of station shipped from and its destination.

The appropriate deer tag must be securely attached to the deer in these circumstances.

When transporting parts of a deer, the parts or package must be marked with name and address of the person who killed the deer.

Deer do not need to be visible when transported.

BAITING DEER AND DEER LURES

It is illegal to hunt or take any wild animal by using bait during any deer hunting season, except that trappers may use bait in taking furbearers. Bait is defined as any animal, vegetable, fruit, or mineral matter placed with the intention of attracting wildlife. Artificial scents and lures are legal, provided they are not designed to be consumed by eating or licking. Deer lures containing any cervid urine, blood, gland oil, feces, or other bodily fluids, are illegal to use in Vermont.



It is illegal to take deer by using bait with the following exceptions:

- Incidental feeding of wildlife within active livestock operations;
- Standing crops planted and left standing as food plots for wildlife;
- Grain or other feed scattered or distributed solely as a result of normal agricultural, gardening, or soil stabilization, and logging practices; and
- Vegetation or food/seed naturally deposited.

FEEDING DEER

It is illegal to feed wild deer at any time except:

- Under a license or permit issued by Fish & Wildlife for scientific research, mitigation of wildlife damage or nuisance problems, or wildlife population reduction programs;
- By planting, cultivating or harvesting of crops directly associated with agricultural practices, including planted wildlife food plots.

SWIMMING DEER

It is illegal to take a deer that is swimming in any lake, pond, river, or other body of water.

SPIKE YEARLINGS PROTECTED

Deer with spike antlers may not be taken except during Youth Deer Hunting Weekend and only if allowed annually by the Fish & Wildlife Board.

MACHINE GUNS, AUTOLOADING RIFLES AND SUPPRESSORS

It is illegal while hunting in Vermont to use, carry, or have in your possession a machine gun of any kind or description or an autoloading rifle with a magazine capacity of over 6 cartridges, except a .22 caliber rifle using rimfire cartridges, or a gun suppressor.

“Gun suppressor” means any device for silencing, muffling, or diminishing the report of a portable firearm, including any combination of parts, designed or redesigned, and intended for use in assembling or fabricating a gun suppressor, and any part intended only for use in such assembly or fabrication.

HANDGUNS

Wherever a rifle may be used in hunting, a handgun is permitted.

MUZZLELOADERS

Muzzleloading rifles, shotguns, and pistols may be used for hunting whenever modern firearms may be used. See muzzleloader deer season for more information.

LIGHTS/LASER SIGHTS

It is illegal to intentionally throw or cast the rays of a spotlight, jack, or other artificial light on any highway, or any field, woodland, or forest, in order to spot, locate, take, or attempt to spot, locate, or take any wild animal.

Laser sights are illegal for hunting.

[White-tailed Deer FAQs](#)

MOTOR VEHICLES, ATVs, SNOWMOBILES, AND ROAD HUNTING

STATE LANDS: Snowmobiles may only be operated on designated trails in state wildlife

management areas, state parks or state forests. ATV use is prohibited on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs).

PRIVATE LANDS: It is illegal to operate an ATV or snowmobile on any privately-owned land or body of private water unless the operator has written permission of the owner or is a member of a club which has landowner permission. It is illegal to obstruct private driveways, barways, or gateways with a motor vehicle. It is illegal to park or drive a motor vehicle of any kind on private land without permission.

HUNTING FROM MOTOR VEHICLE: It is illegal to take any wild animal by shooting with firearm or bow and arrow from any motor vehicle. Motor vehicles include cars, trucks, snowmobiles, ATVs, motorboats, airplanes, and any conveyance or trailer towed by these.

PERMANENTLY DISABLED HUNTERS: A permanently disabled hunter with a proper permit may hunt from a stationary boat, or a motor vehicle that is at least 10 feet from the traveled portion of the road and when he or she has the landowner's permission to park. Shooting across the road is prohibited. Contact Fish & Wildlife at 802-828-1000.

TRANSPORTING FIREARMS & CROSSBOWS IN MOTOR VEHICLES: A person shall not carry or possess while in or on a vehicle propelled by mechanical power or drawn by a vehicle propelled by mechanical power within the right-of-way of a public highway a rifle or shotgun containing a loaded cartridge or shell in the chamber, mechanism, or in a magazine or clip within a rifle or shotgun, or a muzzleloading rifle or muzzleloading shotgun that has been charged with powder and projectile and the ignition system of which has been enabled by having an affixed or attached percussion cap, primer, battery, or priming powder. Unless it is uncocked, a person shall not possess or transport a crossbow in or on a motor vehicle, motorboat, airplane, snowmobile, ATV, or other motor-propelled craft of any vehicle drawn by a motor-propelled vehicle.

ROAD HUNTING: A person shall not take or attempt to take any wild animal by shooting a firearm, muzzleloader, bow and arrow, or crossbow

while on or within 25 feet of the traveled portion of a public highway, except a public highway designated Class 4 on a town highway map. A person while on or within the traveled portion of a Class 4 public highway shall not take or attempt to take any wild animal by shooting a firearm, muzzleloader, bow and arrow, or crossbow. It is illegal to shoot a firearm, muzzleloader, bow and arrow, or crossbow over or across the traveled portion of a public highway. Violators are subject to a fine of up to \$1,000.

AERIAL HUNTING PROHIBITIONS: It is unlawful for any person to take or attempt to take wild animals while a person is flying in an aircraft. Aircraft includes, but is not limited to, planes and helicopters.

It is unlawful for any person to take or attempt to take wild animals by use of an unmanned aerial vehicle or drone. Unmanned aerial vehicle includes but is not limited to drones. "Drone" means any device capable of flying in the air which is remotely, automatically or otherwise piloted without an occupant.

It is unlawful for any person to use an aerial vehicle, drone or unmanned aircraft to:

- Attempt to locate, surveil, or aid or assist in attempting to locate or surveil any wild animal for the purpose of taking or attempting to take a wild animal; or
- Communicate the location of any wild animal to any person on the ground for the purpose of taking or attempting to take a wild animal; or
- Drive, harass, or otherwise assist or aid in the taking or attempting to take a wild animal.

[Rule Regarding Use of Drones](#)

DOGS

DEER AND MOOSE: Dogs may not be used in taking deer or moose. Dog owners are responsible for keeping their dogs restricted so they cannot take or harass deer or moose at any time of year. Dogs may be shot by wardens and certain other law officers when the dogs are caught harassing deer or moose, and the dog owner may be fined and have their licenses revoked.

LEASHED TRACKING DOG TO RECOVER DEER: A hunter who believes he or she has legally killed or wounded a deer during hunting season may engage a person who has a “Leashed Tracking Dog Certificate” issued by the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department to track and recover the animal during the season or within 24 hours after the season ends.

[Application for a Permit to Track Wounded Wildlife with a Leashed-Tracking Dog](#)

TREE STANDS AND GROUND BLINDS

PRIVATE LAND: A person must have the landowner’s permission to build, erect, maintain, use or occupy a permanent or portable tree stand or ground blind for any purpose on any private land in Vermont. Anyone who builds, erects, or maintains a tree stand or ground blind shall permanently mark the stand or blind with the owner’s name and address. Marking must be legible and placed so it can be read conveniently and easily. This does not apply to a landowner who builds, erects, or maintains a tree stand or ground blind on his or her own land. It is illegal to use someone else’s tree stand or ground blind without landowner permission.

STATE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS (WMAs): Permanent tree stands and ground blinds are prohibited on state WMAs. Temporary tree stands and ground blinds are allowed without written permission from the department from the third Sunday in August through the third Saturday in December, May 1-31 (dates inclusive), or during any Youth Hunting Day or Youth Hunting Weekend. Blinds used during any other time (for wildlife viewing or photography) may be erected and used with prior written permission from the District Manager of the WMA.

Temporary blinds on state WMAs must be constructed according to the following requirements. No damage may be done to any living tree in erecting, maintaining, using or accessing the stand or blind except that:

- Dead limbs, trees, or shrubs may be removed as needed to erect and use the stand or blind.
- No live limbs, trees or shrubs may be cut for any purpose except those one inch or less in diameter at either ground level or from the main stem or branch of the tree where the stand or blind is located as appropriate (for guidance, a United States quarter is .9 inch in diameter).
- No nails, bolts, screws (including access steps), wire, chain, or other material that penetrates through a living tree’s bark into the wood below shall be used in erecting, attaching, maintaining or using any stand or blind.
- All tree stands or ground blinds used on wildlife management areas must be clearly, permanently, and legibly marked with the owner’s name and address. The marking must be placed in a manner that enables it to be read conveniently and easily.

Tree stands and ground blinds that do not conform to this regulation are prohibited and may be confiscated and/or destroyed by the department. Building, erecting, maintaining, using, or occupying a non-conforming tree stand or ground blind is prohibited. Construction of any tree stand or ground blind does not confer exclusive use of its location not the person who built it. Any person may use that location for purposes consistent with this rule.

[Wildlife Management Areas](#)

TREE STAND SAFETY TIPS: Hunters are using tree stands much more today than they did historically. Tree stands can be helpful in some hunting situations, but they also can be dangerous. Here are some tips to get the most out of your tree stand hunting experience:

- **Choose a live, straight tree.**
- **Buy smart.** Only use stands certified by the Treestand Manufacturer’s Association (TMA).
- **Inspect your tree stand each time you use it.**

☛ **Know the rules.** On state lands, it is illegal to place nails or other hardware into trees or build permanent structures. On private lands, you must have landowner permission to erect a tree stand, cut or remove trees or other plants, or to cut limbs. All stands, including ground blinds, must be marked with the owner's name and address.



☛ **Always wear a full-body safety harness, even for climbing.** Most falls occur going up and down the tree and getting in and out of the stand.

☛ **Don't go too high.** The higher you go, the smaller the vital zone on a deer becomes, while the likelihood of a serious injury increases.

☛ **Never carry firearms or bows up and down trees.** Always use a haul line to raise and lower all gear. Make sure your firearm is *unloaded*, crossbow cocked but *unloaded*, and be sure broadheads are transported in a hard case.

☛ **Familiarize yourself with your gear before you go.** The morning of opening day is poor time to put your safety belt on for the first time.

☛ **Be careful with long-term placement.** Exposure can damage straps, ropes, and attachment cords. Also, the stand's stability can be compromised over time, as the tree grows.

☛ **Hunt smart. Hunt safe. Wear Orange.**

FLUORESCENT ORANGE

Hunter orange is not required by law in Vermont, but wearing it might save your life. Almost half of Vermont's hunting-related shootings might be prevented if hunters wear hunter orange.

A New York study found that 94% of hunters involved in mistaken-for-game accidents were not wearing hunter orange. This is even more startling when you consider that 81% of New York hunters do wear hunter orange.

Most states and Canadian provinces require it for hunting upland and big game animals.

Wearing at least a florescent orange hat and vest will help other hunters see you. It's also your responsibility to follow the four basic rules of safe hunting:

1. Treat every gun as if it is loaded.
2. Point your gun in a safe direction.
3. Keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot.
4. Be sure of your target and beyond.

WHERE CAN I HUNT IN VERMONT?

Vermont has more than 800,000 acres of federal and state public land open to hunting: **National Wildlife Refuges**, the **Green Mountain National Forest**, and all **state forests**. **State Parks** are open to hunting outside the operating season.

Perhaps the crown jewel of hunting in Vermont is the state's system of 91 **Wildlife Management Areas**, or **WMAs**. All WMAs are open to hunting, trapping, fishing and other wildlife related outdoor activities.

Information about shooting ranges is available on our [website](#).

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| Wildlife Management Areas | Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge |
| Green Mountain National Forest | Vermont Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation |
| Hammond Cove Public Shooting Range | Shooting Range Directory |

HUNTER ACCESS VERMONT – Tips for Hunters – Being a Good Land User

Landowner permission is **not** required for hunting on private land in Vermont, except on land legally posted with signs prohibiting hunting, and also on all private land during the *Youth Hunting Weekends* for deer. A hunter shall show their license and must

leave the land immediately on demand if requested by a landowner, whether the land is posted or not.

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department encourages hunters to seek permission. The privilege of using private land is extended by generous landowners, and most landowners allow hunting when asked.

Landowners who permit you to hunt on their land are doing you a favor and placing their trust in you. Here are some recommendations to prove their trust was not misplaced, help with your relationship with the landowner, and portray a positive image of hunting:

- Respect the landowner's property – use it only when and where the landowner approves.
- Understand clearly where you can and cannot drive or park your vehicle and abide by those restrictions.
- Leave your name, address, phone number and also make, model, and license number of your vehicle with the landowner or use the [Courtesy Permission Cards](#).
- If you have permission to return, find out if there are certain times or places that you should avoid. Always attempt to let the landowner know where you will be and when.
- Know the property boundaries and do not trespass on adjacent property.
- Try to keep the size of your hunting party small and always let the landowner know exactly who else will be hunting with you.
- Don't walk through unharvested crops or hunt near livestock or buildings.
- Leave gates as you find them. Cross fences in a manner that will not break or loosen wires or posts.
- Don't litter. Carry away litter left by others.
- Think before you shoot. Know your target and what is beyond it.
- Do not build or start fires at any time, unless you have specific permission from the owner.

- It is illegal to place tree stands or build ground blinds without the landowner's permission. Do not cut, injure, or permanently mark trees with an axe, nails, or spikes.
- Observe all hunting and trapping rules and regulations.
- Respect fellow outdoorsmen, observing all safety precautions and the traditions of good sportsmanship.
- Hunt Safe! Accept full liability for your actions and persons while on the property.

AFTER THE HUNT: Remember that you are a guest on another person's property. Be sure to express your appreciation for the opportunity to hunt the land. The thoughtful hunter might also:

- Let landowners know when you have completed your hunt. Then they will know that you have left their property and will not worry about you being lost or stuck.
- Offer landowners a portion of your harvest off the land, such as a portion of venison, once your game is cleaned or butchered.
- Follow-up with a token of appreciation such as a gift certificate to a restaurant or perhaps a card with a hand-written note.

[Find a Place to Hunt](#)

VERMONT HABITAT STAMP

Monies raised from sales of Vermont Habitat Stamps go to the Species and Habitat Conservation Fund, which is used to purchase and maintain Wildlife Management Areas.

Projects Supported by the Fund Include:

- Purchase lands for Wildlife Management Areas
- Improve public access to land for fish and wildlife-based activities such as birdwatching, hunting, fishing, enjoying wildlife or simply connecting with nature
- Protect and improve wetlands
- Protect and enhance deer wintering areas

- Implement wildlife habitat enhancement for turkeys, bears, deer, songbirds, bats, moose, and all of Vermont’s native wildlife
- Use our [online donation form](#).
- **Hunting and Fishing License Purchase:** Donate when purchasing a hunting or fishing license by simply including your contribution when applying.



When you purchase a Vermont Habitat Stamp, you help improve wildlife habitat and open land for outdoor recreation.

Please note: A stamp is not required to hunt, fish or trap, nor do you have to buy a sporting license to donate for a stamp.

[Vermont Habitat Stamp Online Donation Form](#)

HUNTERS, TICKS AND LYME DISEASE

Lyme disease has started to become more prevalent in Vermont during the last 7-8 years, particularly in the southern parts of the state. Ticks that cause Lyme disease are still active in the fall in Vermont so hunters that spend time in tall grass, weed, and bushes, along with successful hunters handling a deer, should follow a few simple tick-repelling precautions.

Treat your clothing and gear with permethrin before you hunt, making sure to follow the product instructions. Tuck your pants into your socks or boots to keep ticks from crawling up your legs. After returning from the hunt, check all over your body for ticks including your hair, and shower immediately.

Successful hunters handling a deer should remain vigilant for ticks even after they’ve returned from the field. Place a pan of soapy water under a hanging deer to kill any ticks that fall off the deer.



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| Learn More About Lyme Disease | Fact Sheet on Preventing Ticks Among Hunters |
| Lyme Disease in Vermont | Northeast Wildlife Disease Cooperative Fact Sheet |



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