



NYS DEC
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-1016
www.dec.ny.gov

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor

Joe Martens, Commissioner

For Release: IMMEDIATE
Wednesday, June 12, 2013

Contact: Wendy Rosenbach
(518) 402-8000

DEC EXPANDS BOBCAT HUNTING AND TRAPPING OPPORTUNITIES AND EXTENDS SNOW GEESE HARVEST PERIOD

Bobcat hunting and trapping opportunities are expanded and the snow geese harvest season is extended under two sets of regulations adopted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Joe Martens announced today.

“Under Governor Cuomo’s NY Open for Hunting and Fishing initiative, New York is working to increase hunting and trapping opportunities for sportsmen and sportswomen,” Commissioner Martens said. With these changes, DEC is implementing strategies of the recently adopted Bobcat Management Plan that will provide sustainable harvest opportunities while maintaining a stable or increasing bobcat population. In addition, I encourage the hunting community to take full advantage of the newly expanded snow geese season in the years ahead.”

BOBCAT HUNTING AND TRAPPING SEASONS

After careful consideration of the public comments received, DEC adopted rules affecting bobcat hunting and trapping in New York to implement certain aspects of the state’s Five-Year Bobcat Management Plan.

The harvest of bobcats will be closely monitored by DEC biologists via activity logs maintained by hunters and trappers, a mandatory pelt sealing program, and hunter and trapper surveys. This will allow for adaptive management where regulations can be modified in the future to keep pace with the changing needs and status of New York’s bobcat populations.

The adopted changes include:

- Northern New York
 - The trapping season in Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) 5A, 5C, 5F, 5G, 5H, 5J, 6A, 6C, 6F, 6G, 6H, 6J and 6N is extended to match the hunting season dates; the season in these WMUs now closes February 15th each year.
 - The hunting season in WMU 6N is extended to February 15th each year to match the rest of northern New York.
- Southern/Western New York Harvest Expansion Area
 - The season in the Harvest Expansion Area will open annually on October 25th. The annual closing date will be the Friday before the opening of the regular Southern Zone deer season. That date changes every year since the formula for the deer season opener is the 3rd Saturday of November. In 2013, the bobcat season closes on November 15th.
 - To trap or hunt bobcat in the new “Harvest Expansion Area”, which includes WMUs 3R, 3S, 4A, 4F, 4O, 5R, 6R, 6S, 7S, 8T, 8W, 8X, 8Y, 9J, 9K, 9M, 9N, 9P, 9R, 9S, 9T, 9W, 9X and 9Y, trappers/hunters must obtain a free bobcat Harvest Expansion Area permit from a Regional Bureau of Wildlife office and maintain a trapping/hunting activity log and return it to DEC at the close of the season (the activity log will be provided by DEC when you receive your permit).

(MORE)

- Details on how to obtain a Harvest Expansion Area permit will be available on the DEC website and in the 2013-14 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Guide.

Bobcat seasons in the existing harvest area in southeastern New York (WMUs 3A, 3C, 3F, 3G, 3H, 3J, 3K, 3M, 3N, 3P, 4B, 4C, 4G, 4H, 4J, 4K, 4L, 4P, 4R, 4S, 4T, 4U, 4W, 4Y, 4Z, 5S, 5T) are unaffected by these regulatory changes and no special permit is needed to hunt or trap there.

The full text of the adopted bobcat regulations and a summary of public comments on this rulemaking is available at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/34113.html> on DEC's website. The resulting 2013 bobcat hunting (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/29475.html>) and trapping seasons (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/29045.html>) can also be found on DEC's website, including the requirements for participating in the new "Harvest Expansion Area." The Bobcat Management Plan, which formed the basis for these regulatory changes, is available at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/9360.html>.

Visit the DEC website for more information on furbearer hunting regulations (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/45559.html>) and trapping regulations (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/9209.html>), including "pelt sealing" requirements.

SPECIAL SNOW GOOSE HARVEST PROGRAM

State regulations to expand the special snow goose harvest program in New York have been amended to allow hunters to take snow geese during a special harvest program from January 16 through April 15 in all of upstate New York. This is in addition to the regular snow goose hunting season, which is expected to run October 1 through January 15 annually. DEC filed a Notice of Emergency Adoption and Proposed Rule Making with the Department of State on January 23, 2013, and the changes took effect immediately. However, the Emergency rule expired in April, so adoption of the final rule was necessary to extend the same regulation indefinitely.

The expanded special season will increase hunter opportunity to harvest snow geese throughout the winter and early spring, when they are most abundant in New York. Snow geese are an arctic breeding goose species that recently reached record high population levels in North America - from approximately 50,000 birds in the 1960s to more than one million birds in recent years.

Wildlife agencies, ecologists and environmental organizations have expressed concern about the impacts that overabundant snow geese are having on arctic ecosystems, coastal wetlands and agricultural crops. In response to those concerns, federal hunting regulations were liberalized in 2008, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) adopted a conservation order allowing states in the Atlantic Flyway to implement special snow goose harvest programs in addition to its regular hunting seasons. Based on guidance from USFWS, DEC decided to have one continuous season beginning this year.

(MORE)

For more information about hunting snow geese or other migratory game birds in New York, visit the DEC website: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/50514.html>.

Governor Cuomo's NY Open for Hunting and Fishing initiative is an effort to improve recreational activities for in-state and out-of-state sportsmen and sportswomen and to boost tourism opportunities throughout the state. This initiative includes the streamlining of hunting and fishing licensing and reducing license fees, improved access for fishing at various sites across the state, and increasing hunting opportunities in various regions.

###

13-98