|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| nys-brandmark_dec-black |  |

**DEC Announces Sale of 2016-17 Hunting and Trapping Licenses Beginning August 1**

**DEC Call Center Hours Extended To Provide Assistance on Evenings and Weekends**

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) today announced that sporting licenses and Deer Management Permits for the 2016-17 season will be available for purchase beginning August 1. Licenses and permits can be purchased at any one of DEC's license-issuing agents, in person, by telephone, or online. Hunting and trapping licenses are valid for one year beginning September 1, 2016.

"Hunting, trapping and fishing opportunities in New York have never been better and are an essential economic driver for communities across the state," DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos said. "Governor Cuomo's continued commitments to the NY Open for Fishing and Hunting initiative are bolstering our efforts to provide world class hunting and fishing opportunities statewide. DEC is committed to enhancing our science based management programs to provide for abundant opportunities for our sportsmen and sportswomen to go afield during the upcoming hunting and trapping seasons."

Under the 2016-17 budget, Governor Cuomo's NY Open for Fishing and Hunting Initiative provides $3 million for State land access projects and $4 million for hunting and fishing infrastructure. The 2015-16 budget also created a new capital account, leveraging federal funds to manage, protect and restore fish and wildlife habitats - an initiative that will improve and develop public access for fish and wildlife-related recreation.

Outdoor recreation and sporting activities continue to generate significant economic revenue across the state. According to the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, sportsmen and women spent $4.95 billion on hunting and fishing in New York in 2011 and support more than 56,000 jobs across the state. In addition, spending by hunters and anglers generated $623 million in state and local taxes in 2011. Revenues from the sale of all sporting licenses provide direct support to the state's efforts to protect, preserve and enhance wildlife species and the habitats they depend on.

**Deer Management Permits**

Deer Management Permits will be available at all license-issuing outlets or by phone, internet or mail through October 1, 2016. Deer Management Permits, which are used to ensure proper management of the deer herd, are issued through a random selection process at the point of sale. Customers who are selected will receive their permits immediately. The chances of obtaining a Deer Management Permits remain the same throughout the application period - hunters do not need to rush to apply for a Deer Management Permit on the first day of sale. The 2016 chances of selection for a Deer Management Permit in each Wildlife Management Unit are available online, through License Issuing Agents, or the Deer Management Permits Hotline at 1-866-472-4332. Detailed information on [Deer Management Permits](http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/6403.html) is available on DEC's website.

The new Hunting & Trapping Regulations guide, which provides an easy to read compendium of all pertinent rules and regulations, will be available in August at all license issuing outlets and on the DEC [Hunting Regulations](http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/28182.html) webpage along with a list of license-issuing agents. You can also find that list at our [online License Center](http://licensecenter.ny.gov/) or by contacting the DEC Call Center at 1-866-933-2257.

**Expanded Call Center Hours**

Starting August 1, the DEC Call Center will be accessible from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays through October 1, 2016. Regular call center weekday hours (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) will resume on October 2.

Individuals should have the following items ready when buying a license:

* Complete name and address information;
* DEC customer ID number (if applicable);
* Proof of residency (e.g., driver's license or non-driver's ID with a valid NYS address) and;
* if purchasing by phone or internet, a valid credit card.

If not already entered in DEC's automated licensing system, individuals are required to provide proof of hunter or trapper education certification or a copy of a previous license for all hunting and trapping license purchases. For additional information, visit the [General Sporting License Information](http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/95452.html) webpage on DEC's website.

**Other Programs:**

***Free Sportsmen Education Training Courses Offered***

DEC works closely with thousands of dedicated certified instructors statewide to provide sportsmen education training courses free of charge. Courses are offered for Hunter Education, Bowhunter Education, Trapper Education and Waterfowl Identification. Courses do fill quickly, so anyone interested should register soon. Education courses are added continuously throughout the year, so be sure to check the on-line system frequently to find a course near you. To locate a nearby hunter or trapper education course, visit the [Sportsman Education](http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7860.html) webpage on DEC's website or contact a local DEC office for assistance.

***New Opportunities for Junior Hunters & Trappers***

In an effort to foster the next generation of hunters in New York, the DEC has expanded opportunities for junior hunters (licensees ages 12-15) and trappers (under 12 years old) by designating special youth hunts for deer, wild turkey, pheasants, and waterfowl through the Mentored Youth Hunter and Trapper Program. These opportunities allow youth hunters and trappers to spend time in the field with experienced adults and gain the necessary knowledge and skills to become safe and responsible members of the hunting and trapping community. You can find more information about these programs and other opportunities for junior hunters and trappers here.

***Habitat Stamps and Trail Supporter Patch***

DEC encourages all outdoor enthusiasts to consider purchasing a Habitat/Access Stamp and/or a Trail Supporter Patch. These stamps and patches support the state's efforts to conserve habitat, increase public access for fishing and wildlife-related recreation, and maintain non-motorized trails. Buying a $5 stamp or patch or donating directly to the Conservation Fund is a simple way to help conserve New York's rich wildlife heritage and enhance outdoor recreation in the state.

***The Venison Donation Program***

Additionally, anyone - not just hunters and anglers - can help feed the hungry by making a monetary contribution to the Venison Donation Program at any license issuing outlet. Individuals should inform the license sales agent if they are interested in making a donation of $1 or more to support the program. Since 1999, these funds have been used by the Venison Donation Coalition for the processing of more than 330 tons of highly nutritious venison, the equivalent of 2.8 million meals served. For more information about the [Venison Donation Coalition program](http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8351.html), visit DEC's website.

***Participate in Citizen Science to Benefit Wildlife Management***

Each year, thousands of hunters, trappers and anglers help the DEC monitor wildlife populations by recording their wildlife observations while afield. Information on how to participate in the Cooperator Ruffed Grouse Hunting Log, Bowhunter Sighting Log, Winter Wild Turkey Flock Survey and other Citizen Science programs is available on the [Citizen Science: Wildlife Observation Data Collection](http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/1155.html) webpage on DEC's website.