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# DEC Announces Opening of Spring Turkey Season on May 1st

## 13th Annual Youth Turkey Hunting Weekend Set for April 23-24

Spring turkey season opens May 1 in all of upstate New York north of the Bronx-Westchester County boundary and the Department of Environmental Conservation's 13th annual youth turkey hunting weekend is scheduled for April 23-24, DEC Acting Commissioner Basil Seggos announced today. The youth turkey hunt for junior hunters ages 12-15 is open in all of upstate New York and across Suffolk County.

"Hunting is a proud tradition in New York, and turkey hunting in particular remains a very popular activity with more than 100,000 hunters enjoying this pastime in the state each year," Acting Commissioner Seggos said. "Through Governor Cuomo's NY Open for Fishing and Hunting initiative, we are creating more opportunities, like the annual youth turkey hunt, to introduce the next generation of conservation stewards to hunting and teach them the necessary skills to become safe and responsible members of the hunting community."

Improved reproductive success in 2015 coupled with a mild winter has increased the number of turkeys on the landscape beyond the past few years, providing better prospects for New York's spring turkey hunters this season. About 8,000 junior hunters harvested an estimated 1,131 birds during the two-day event in 2015. The estimated turkey harvest for spring 2015 was 19,840 birds.

**Important Details for the Youth Turkey Hunt on April 23 and 24:**

* Hunters 12-15 years of age are eligible and must hold a hunting license and a turkey permit.
* Youth 12-13 years of age must be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian or adult over 21 years of age with written permission from their parent or legal guardian. Youth 14-15 years of age must be accompanied by a parent, legal guardian or adult over 18 years of age with written permission from their parent or legal guardian.
* The accompanying adult must have a current hunting license and turkey permit. The adult may assist the youth hunter, including calling, but may not carry a firearm, bow, or crossbow, or kill or attempt to kill a wild turkey during the youth hunt.
* Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to noon each day.
* The youth turkey hunt is open in all of upstate New York, north of the Bronx-Westchester **(MORE)**

**-2-**

* County boundary and across Suffolk County.
* The bag limit for the youth weekend is one bearded bird. This bird becomes part of the youth's regular spring season bag limit of two bearded birds. A second bird may be taken only in upstate New York, north of the Bronx-Westchester County boundary, beginning May 1.
* Crossbows may only be used by hunters age 14 or older.
* All other wild turkey hunting regulations remain in effect.

**Other Important Details for the Spring Turkey Season, May 1-31, 2016:**

* Hunting is permitted in most areas of the state, except for New York City and Long Island.
* Hunters must have a turkey hunting permit in addition to their hunting license.
* Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to noon each day.
* Hunters may take two bearded turkeys during the spring season, but only one bird per day.
* Hunters may not use rifles or handguns firing a bullet. Hunters may hunt with a shotgun or handgun loaded with shot sizes no larger than No. 2 or smaller than No. 8, or with a bow or crossbow.
* Successful hunters must fill out the tag that comes with their turkey permit and immediately attach it to any turkey harvested.
* Successful hunters must report their harvest within seven days of taking a bird. Call 1-866-426-3778 (1-866 GAMERPT) or [report harvest online](http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8316.html) at DEC's website.

For more information about turkey hunting in New York, see the 2015-16 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Guide or visit the ["Turkey Hunting"](http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8366.html) pages of DEC's website.

New York has an extremely safety-conscious generation of hunters, largely due to the annual efforts of more than 3,000 dedicated volunteer sportsman education instructors. DEC suggests hunters follow the cardinal rules of hunting safety: assume every gun is loaded, control the muzzle, keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot, be absolutely sure of your target and what may be beyond it, and don't stalk. Set up with your back against a large tree and call birds to you. To find a sportsman education class in your area, go to DEC's [Sportsman Education](http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7860.html) webpage or call 1-888-HUNT-ED2 (1-888-486-8332).

**Citizen Science Opportunities:**

DEC Seeks Turkey Hunters for Ruffed Grouse Drumming Survey - Turkey hunters in pursuit of that wary gobbler in the spring are ideally suited for monitoring ruffed grouse during the breeding season. Turkey hunters can record the number of grouse they hear drumming while afield to help DEC track the distribution and abundance of this game bird. To get a survey form, go to the [Ruffed Grouse Drumming Survey](http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/48169.html) webpage on DEC's website or call (518) 402-8886.

**-3-**

To participate in DEC's Summer Wild Turkey Sighting Survey or other wildlife surveys, visit the ["Citizen Science"](http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/1155.html) page of the DEC website.

**Send DEC your photos:**

Do you have photos from a spring turkey hunt you would like to share? DEC has created a Hunting and Trapping Photo Gallery for junior hunters ages 12-15, young trappers under age 16, and hunters who have harvested their first big or small game animal. If you are the parent or legal guardian of a junior hunter, or if you are an adult who would like to share your first successful hunt, visit the [Hunting & Trapping Photo Gallery](http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/54055.html) on the DEC website.