**Oneida County Sportsmen’s Youth Mentor Program 6th Annual Youth Turkey Hunt**

The 6th annual Youth Turkey hunt was held on April 23rd and 24th the Federated Sportsmen Clubs of Oneida County, the Region 6 Environmental Conservation Officers, National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF), Oneida County Sherriff Dept., and NYS Outdoorsmen Hall of Fame and other interested sportsmen and women from the area teamed up to take out 19 youth from Herkimer, Oneida and Madison Counties participate in this year’s hunt.

A Safety day was held April 16th at the Cassety Hollow Rod and Gun Club in Oriskany Falls. (Oneida County) The 19 youth and their parents attended that day. A safety and regulation presentation was put on by ECO Ric Grisolini on hunting Turkey. Mr. Tim Furner from Gander Mountain and the NWTF put on a small presentation on the setup of Turkey decoys in the field along with a calling demonstration. In the afternoon each youth pattern their shotguns under the instruction of Steve Lakeman and Ric Grisolini, they are certified Firearms instructor for the Environmental Conservation Officers.

The first morning of the hunt the ECO’s and mentors took the 19 youth out for the hunt. Seven mature toms and two jakes were harvested that morning. We also had three missed shots that morning as well but that is hunting. The largest tom being taken by Aspen Grisolini, it weighed in at 25 lbs. and had an 11.5 beard. After the hunt for the day pictures were taken. Matt Morritt from Avian-X and Zinc Calls dropped by to talk to all the youth and then interviewed each successful hunter for that day. This was all captured on video tape and will be shown on a future show he puts on the Sportsmen Channel. He also brought along some gifts for all the hunters that participated this year. The youth and the mentors all had a great time and they received lunch after the hunt.

On the second morning of the youth hunt our ECO’s and mentors took out nine youth out on this day. The weather was another gorgeous morning but a little frosty. They harvested five birds that day. One mature tom and 4 jakes. The youth all had a great time and they received lunch after the hunt.

A big THANK YOU to the following groups or organizations for their donations for this year’s hunt. New York Conservation Officer Assoc., National Wild Turkey Federation, Gander Mountain of New Hartford, Avian-X and Zinc Calls. Also for Matt Morritt for interviewing our future hunters.

None of this could not be done without the assistance of the Region 6 Environmental Conservation Officers, Oneida County Sherriff’s and local sportsmen and women mentors that took the time out of their schedule to take a youth hunting.

Also, we would like to thank the cooks for the event, Brian Day and Ted Elliott, and the Cassety Hollow Members for the use of their Club for the Safety day, and to all the club members that brought food for the two days of the hunt weekend. THANK YOU!

