



# **MassWildlife News**

*Commonwealth of Massachusetts – Division of Fisheries and Wildlife*  
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## **2013 SPRING TROUT STOCKING HAS BEGUN**

Spring trout stocking has begun across the state. Bay State anglers with their 2013 freshwater fishing license in hand can look forward to casting for over 510,000 feisty brook, brown, rainbow and tiger trout. These are sizeable fish; more than 74% of the fish are in the 12 inches or longer category with more than 32% of the fish in the 14 inches or larger category. Stocking got under way in the second week of March in southeastern Massachusetts and as weather, water chemistry, and access conditions improved, other MassWildlife District offices were stocking trout by the last week of March. "We're putting out 295,400 rainbow trout, 84,700 brook trout and 129,400 brown trout," said Ken Simmons, MassWildlife Hatchery Chief. "In addition, over 3,000 tiger trout weighing more than a pound and measuring over 14 inches will be distributed equally throughout the five districts." Tiger trout are a cross between a female brown trout and a male brook trout, have become popular with folks lucky enough to hook and land one. Large water bodies will receive the bigger fish while the smaller brooks and streams will receive the majority of the smaller-sized fish. Finally, in addition to the trout, approximately 350 broodstock salmon from the Palmer Hatchery ranging from 2 to 3 pounds will be stocked across the state. [Trout stocking schedules](#) will be updated every Friday between March and Memorial Day in May. Freshwater anglers are reminded that the use of lead sinkers and lead jigs weighing less than one ounce, regardless of whether they are painted, coated with rubber, covered by attached "skirts" or some other material, is prohibited.

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## **PLEASE DON'T FEED THE BEARS!**

If you feed birds and live in northern Middlesex County, Worcester County, or western Massachusetts or other areas where bears have been spotted, it's time to put take down bird feeders. Black bears are emerging from their winter dens and seeking food. In many cases, bears will ignore natural foods such as skunk cabbage and instead head to the nearest birdfeeder for a good meal. To avoid this problem, the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) is asking that property owners be proactive by removing bird feeders and other potential bear foods promptly and taking other preventative measures. "If food such as bird seed, pet food, unsecured trash or dumpsters are easy for bears to find, conflicts can occur that pose hazards to both bears and people." says Laura Conlee, DFW Wildlife Biologist.

Removing bird feeders will not create a problem for birds as feeding stations are a supplement to available natural foods. For more tips on preventing bear conflicts check the Living With Wildlife bear fact sheet at: [www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/wildlife/living/living\\_with\\_bears.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/wildlife/living/living_with_bears.htm).

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### ***SPRING EAGLE SURVEY REMINDER***

Eagle and other wildlife enthusiasts are reminded that a new spring nesting eagle survey will be held on April 5, 2013. If inclement weather prevents the survey on April 5, the backup date is April 12, 2013. This effort will include a concentrated survey of the major rivers, lakes, and reservoirs across the Commonwealth. Organized by the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) the survey will be conducted by agency staff and volunteers. Teams will be checking known eagle territories and exploring other areas with potential eagle habitat to try to locate new eagle nests. "There are some areas that still need coverage and we would appreciate any help from 'eagle-eyed' citizens," said Andrew Vitz, State Ornithologist. "Some of those areas include the Deerfield River south of Shelburne Falls, water bodies near October Mountain and in southwestern Berkshire County, the Connecticut River in the Gill/Northfield north to Vermont and the Westfield and Quaboag Rivers." Reports of any eagles during this time year, particularly if birds are seen carrying sticks, are welcome and helpful. The Division encourages anyone to submit eagle sightings throughout the year using one of the following options: by mobile phone or home computer utilizing the Vernal Pool & Rare Species Information System (VPRS) ([www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhosp/species\\_info/vprs\\_home.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhosp/species_info/vprs_home.htm)), by email to [natural.heritage@state.ma.us](mailto:natural.heritage@state.ma.us), or by postal service to "Eagle Survey", MassWildlife, Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, 100 Hartwell Street, Suite 230, West Boylston, MA 01583. For more information, contact Andrew Vitz at (508) 389-6394.

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### ***TURKEY HUNTING REMINDERS & SAFETY TIPS***

The spring turkey hunting season opens in Massachusetts on April 29, 2013. Do you have your turkey permits? Are you familiar with safe turkey hunting methods? If successful, do you know the online procedure to check your turkey? MassWildlife offers the following information for turkey hunters regarding new game checking procedures, new youth hunt information, new shot sizes, and safe turkey hunting methods to follow when hunting.

**Turkey Permit Reminder** – In order to legally hunt turkeys, licensed hunters must obtain a turkey permit. With the new electronic *MassFishHunt* system ([www.mass.gov/massfishhunt](http://www.mass.gov/massfishhunt)), there is no longer a deadline to apply for a turkey permit. Hunters may simply purchase a permit via home computer or by visiting a license vendor or DFW office to get their permit. A hunting license is required in order to purchase the permit.

**Bearded Birds Only in Spring** – MassWildlife reminds turkey hunters that the bag limit is: (a) 2 bearded birds in spring season (1 per day) with NO fall bird allowed, or (b) 1 bearded bird in spring season and 1 bird of either sex in fall season. No hunter may take 2 birds in the fall season. The printed version of the 2013 MA Guide to Hunting, Fishing and Trapping omitted information regarding the bearded bird requirement in the spring turkey season. The bag limit information has been corrected in the online version of the 2013 Guide to Hunting, Fishing and Trapping at [www.eregulations.com/massachusetts/huntingandfishing/wild-turkey/](http://www.eregulations.com/massachusetts/huntingandfishing/wild-turkey/).

**Online Game Check Available – NEW THIS YEAR** – Turkey hunters can check their turkey harvest online this spring season. Here are some important reminders regarding turkey tagging and online game checking:

- As in the past, you must tag your bird with your permit immediately after harvesting it.
- Within 48 hours of harvest and before the bird is processed for food or for taxidermy, you must check your bird on the *MassFishHunt* site.
- After submitting your report, turkey hunters must write the *MassFishHunt* assigned confirmation number on the turkey tag that is on the bird. (The confirmation number is the official seal.)

- The tag with confirmation number must remain on the bird until it is processed for food or for taxidermy. More information about checking game online can be found in the 2013 Guide to Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping on Pages 8-11 or at [www.eregulations.com/massachusetts/huntingandfishing/online-game-checking/](http://www.eregulations.com/massachusetts/huntingandfishing/online-game-checking/). Turkey hunters still have the option of bringing their bird within 48 hours of harvest to a traditional game check station. A list of game check stations is posted at [www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/recreation/hunting/check\\_station\\_locations.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/recreation/hunting/check_station_locations.htm).

**Shot Size Change for Turkey Hunters – NEW THIS YEAR** – Turkey hunters are reminded that the regulations on shot size for turkey hunting have changed. The legal shot sizes for turkey hunting are now is # 4 - #7 shot.

**Information for Youth Turkey Hunters** – Youths 12-17 years of age who successfully completed the Youth Turkey Hunt Program are eligible to participate on the special Youth Hunt date of April 27, 2013. The daily bag limit for this hunt is 1 bird/day. All other turkey hunting regulations apply to young turkey hunters.

**NEW THIS YEAR:** 1) Youth Turkey Hunt Permits will NOT be mailed to youth hunters. All youths participating in the Youth Turkey Hunt must obtain the Youth Turkey Hunt permit through the *MassFishHunt* website ([www.mass.gov/massfishhunt](http://www.mass.gov/massfishhunt)). 2) All youths who harvest a turkey on the Youth Turkey Hunt date of April 27, 2013 must check their turkey either online on *MassFishHunt* or at a traditional game check station within 48 hours of harvest.

Youths 15-17 years old are reminded that in order to hunt turkeys on the Youth Hunt date, a hunting/sporting license, and a turkey permit with the Youth Turkey Completion Certificate listed are required. 15 - 17 year-old hunters are reminded that they cannot purchase their license by home computer, they can only purchase a hunting/sporting license at a walk-in license vendor.

Youths 12-14 years of age who successfully completed the Youth Turkey Hunt Program and plan to hunt on April 27, must obtain a Youth Turkey Hunt permit with the listed Youth Turkey Completion Certificate through the *MassFishHunt* system. The Youth Turkey Permit tags issued to 12-14 year olds are valid only for the Youth Turkey hunt date and the regular spring turkey hunting season. The Youth Permit and tags issued to 12-14 year olds are not valid for fall turkey hunting.

Finally, young turkey hunters 12-17 years-old who successfully completed the Youth Turkey Hunt Program in a previous year and plan to hunt on April 27, 2013 must first apply to MassWildlife by completing the Past Participant Application found at [www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/education/yath/pdf/yath\\_past\\_participant\\_form.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/education/yath/pdf/yath_past_participant_form.pdf). The application must be received or postmarked by April 15, 2013. Applications may be mailed or dropped off at: Youth Turkey Permit, MassWildlife FHQ, 100 Hartwell Street, West Boylston, MA, 01583. For further information on the Youth Turkey Hunt, contact Astrid Huseby at 508 389-6305 or email her at [astrid.huseby@state.ma.us](mailto:astrid.huseby@state.ma.us).

**Turkey Hunting Safety Tips** – Most importantly, all turkey hunters are urged to hunt safely. Being completely sure of your target and what is beyond it before you shoot will reduce the chance of hunting accidents and the number of hens mistakenly killed during the spring season. Putting these following safe turkey hunting practices to use will help to ensure that turkey hunting will remain a safe, enjoyable outdoor experience.

- Don't stalk birds; sit or stand and call the turkeys to you.
- Don't wear red, white, blue or black anywhere as these are colors seen on wild turkeys.
- Don't hide in a place where your view is obstructed.

Further tips on turkey hunting safety from MassWildlife and the National Wild Turkey Federation can be found at [http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/recreation/hunting/turkey/turkey\\_safety\\_tips.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/recreation/hunting/turkey/turkey_safety_tips.htm).

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## ***HELP MASSWILDLIFE STOCK SALMON FRY***

Volunteers from high schools, sporting clubs, civic groups, colleges, and other people with a passion for rivers, fish, or fishing are needed to assist the MassWildlife personnel in stocking over 800,000 salmon fry (juvenile fish). According to Dr. Caleb Slater, DFW's Anadromous Fish Project Leader, fry stocking begins the week of April 8 and continues through the end of the month. Salmon fry will be released into dozens of Connecticut River tributaries. The fry will come from MassWildlife's Roger Reed Hatchery in Palmer and will be trucked to meeting sites where volunteers gather and car pool to release sites. The tiny fish will then be moved from truck to water by bucket using volunteer man- and womanpower. A schedule and details on meeting locations is posted on line at [www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/fisheries/anadromous/salmon\\_fry\\_stocking.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/fisheries/anadromous/salmon_fry_stocking.htm).

Dr. Slater offers some tips for potential volunteers: "You may get wet! A change of clothes is a good idea. You will be walking in slippery stream and river beds, so waders or other waterproof footgear is useful. There are a few waders to loan, but please bring your own if you have them." Volunteers should be in good physical condition as they will be climbing up and down steep stream banks and hauling 5-gallon buckets with water. For more information, click on the above link or contact Dr. Slater at (508) 389-6331.

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## ***REMEMBER ENDANGERED SPECIES ON YOUR STATE TAX FORM***

Help protect Box Turtles, Peregrine Falcons and other endangered wildlife by supporting the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Fund when you file your state income tax this year. Since 1983, Massachusetts tax filers of Form 1 have had the option of donating to this effort through the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Fund when filing their state income tax (Line 32a: "Endangered Wildlife Conservation"), and tens of thousands of people have done so over the years.

All contributions go directly into the Fund, an important portion of the annual operating budget of DFW's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP), which conserves and protects endangered species and their habitats in Massachusetts. Over 20,000 tax filers support the program with over \$200,000 in critically-important donations each year. Won't you join them? With your contributions to the Fund, you directly help to study, protect, and restore endangered animals and plants and their habitats. Donations help restore populations and conserve and maintain habitat for many vulnerable kinds of wildlife, from raptors to reptiles.

Contribute directly to the Fund by writing a check payable to: "Comm. of Mass-NHESP Fund" and sending it to: NHESP, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, 100 Hartwell Street, Suite 230, West Boylston, 01583.

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## ***UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS***

**April 11 -- Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Advisory Committee Meeting, West Boylston --** The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Advisory Committee will meet on Thursday, April 11, 2013 at the DFW Field HQ Office at 100 Hartwell Street, Suite 230, West Boylston from 1:30- 4:30 P.M. For directions go to [www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/facilities/westboro.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/facilities/westboro.htm) or call the Field HQ at (508) 389-6300.

**April 20 -- Fisheries & Wildlife Board Meeting and Public Hearing, Hudson --** The April meeting of the Fisheries & Wildlife Board will be held on Saturday, April 20, 2013 at 10:30 AM at the Riverside Gun Club, 16 Wilkins Street in Hudson. At 11:10 on April 20, 2013, the Fisheries & Wildlife Board will hold a **Public Hearing** to establish and amend rules and regulations relative to the [Taking of Certain Fish \(American Shad\)](#). Immediately following the Board Meeting and Public Hearing, at 11:30 A.M., the Division of Fisheries & Wildlife's **Freshwater Sport Fishing Awards Ceremony** will be held. Directions to the club: [www.riversidegc.org/directions.htm](http://www.riversidegc.org/directions.htm) Both meetings are open to the public and handicapped accessible.

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*CALENDAR OF EVENTS—Visit [www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/calendar/calendar.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/calendar/calendar.htm) for more updated listings.*

**April 13 -15—MassWildlife at the Northeast Natural History Conference, Springfield** –MassWildlife staff will be leading field trips and giving presentations at this conference organized by the Association of Northeastern Biologists. To register and for more information go to: [http://www.eaglehill.us/NENHC\\_2013/NENHC2013.shtml](http://www.eaglehill.us/NENHC_2013/NENHC2013.shtml)

**April 20—Freshwater Fishing Awards Ceremony, Hudson** – Following the Fisheries and Wildlife Board meeting, the 2012 Freshwater Sport Fishing Awards ceremony will be held at 11:30 at the Riverside Rod & Gun Club, 16 Wilkins Street, Hudson. Fisheries and Wildlife Board members and state fish and wildlife officials will honor the 2012 Angler of the Year and 2012 Gold Pin Winners in Youth and Adult categories. MassWildlife’s Freshwater Sportfishing Awards Program awards bronze pins to adult and youth anglers who catch fish of certain minimum weight requirements for 22 species of fish. Gold pins and commemorative plaques are presented to anglers who catch the largest fish in each category. Directions to the club at: [www.riversidegfc.org/directions.htm](http://www.riversidegfc.org/directions.htm).

**April 27 – MassWildlife at Bristol County Ag High School Spring Expo, Dighton** – Students and other visitors to the Bristol County Agricultural High School’s Spring Expo can visit the MassWildlife display and talk to Turtle Conservation Biologist Lori Erb. For more information and directions to the Spring Expo, go to: [www.edline.net/pages/Bristol\\_County\\_Agr\\_High/Spring\\_Expo](http://www.edline.net/pages/Bristol_County_Agr_High/Spring_Expo).

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