

# **Fish and Wildlife Board Meeting Minutes**

## **Wednesday, April 10, 2024**

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board held an in-person meeting at 5:00 pm on Wednesday, April 10, 2024, at the Vermont Policy Academy, 317 Academy Road, Pittsford, VT 05763. A recording of the meeting is available on the department's YouTube channel.

### **Agenda**

1. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (February 21, 2024)
2. Public Comments (Limited to 2-minutes per speaker)
3. Petition Regarding Commercial Fishing, Pan Fish, and Crappie
4. Petition Regarding Duck Blinds and Various Hunting Regulations
5. Department Recommendation on Petition Regarding Youth Hunt of a Lifetime for Moose
6. 2024 Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons – Final Vote
7. 2024 Moose Hunting Season – Final Vote
8. Presentation on Wildlife Rehab in Vermont
9. Commissioner's Update

**Board Members Present:** Brian Bailey, Michael Bancroft, Nicholas Burnham, Jamie Dragon, Brad Ferland (Chair), Paul Noel, Robert Patterson, Jay Sweeny, Martin Van Buren

**Virtual:** David Deen, Allison Frazier, Michael Kolsun

**Absent:** Neal Hogan, Bryan McCarthy

**Department Staff Present:** Commissioner Christopher Herrick, General Counsel for the Agency of Natural Resources Catherine Gjessing, Wildlife Director John Austin, Game Warden Colonel Justin Stedman, Fisheries Program Manager Margaret Murphy, Game Warden Major Sean Fowler, Migratory Game Bird Project Leader Andrew Bouton, Deer and Moose Project Leader Nick Fortin, Lieutenant Game Warden Wesley Butler, Game Warden Abigail Serra, Game Warden Dustin Circe, Game Warden Justin Goodwin, Principal Assistant Abigail Connolly

**Virtual:** Fish Division Director Eric Palmer, Fish Program Manager Maureen Lynch, Fisheries Biologist Jud Kratzer, Wildlife Specialist Josh Blouin, Fisheries Scientist Shawn Good

**Members of the Public Present:** Justin Lindholm, Bill Kirby, Rod Coronado, Joey Davis, Bob Galvin, Jason Stevens

**Virtual:** Dennis Thomson, Eric Bachofner, Karen E. Rose, Brian O'Gorman, Travis George, Tyler, Jacobe, Cole Tupper, Ed

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm

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## **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

Board Member Bailey moved to approve the February 21, 2024 meeting minutes. Board Member Sweeny seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve the minutes (12-0).

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## **Public Comment Period**

Justin Lindholm, Mendon, regarding S.258  
Rod Coronado, Orange, regarding Eastern Mallards  
Brian O’Gorman, Readsboro Falls, regarding fish populations  
Dennis Thomson, Westminster, regarding S.258

[The recording of the public comments and the meeting can be viewed here.](#)

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## **Petition Regarding Commercial Fishing, Pan Fish, and Crappie**

Jason Stevens discussed the petition, which is included below. A video of Dennis Thomson was shown to explain the petition further. Board Member Sweeny asked the petitioners questions about where the data of sold VT fish came from and what NH has seen happen after regulating commercial fishing. Board Member Sweeny moved to have the department come back to the Board with a recommendation regarding the petition in May 2024. Board Member Dragon seconded the motion. Board Member Deen made a friendly amendment to include a discussion about the North American model and how it affects the sale of wild fish when the department comes back with a recommendation. Board Members Sweeny and Dragon agreed with the friendly amendment. The Board voted to approve the motion.

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## **Petition Regarding Duck Blinds and Various Hunting Regulations**

Bill Kirby presented the petition, which is included below. Board Member Dragon asked the petitioner questions about the use of duck blinds on WMAs.

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The Board recessed at 5:53 pm and returned at 6:30 pm. Board Member Deen left the meeting at 5:53 pm.

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Board Member Bancroft moved to have the department come back to the Board with a recommendation regarding the petition in May 2024. Board Member Burnham seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve the motion (11-0).

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## **Department Recommendation on Petition Regarding Youth Hunt of a Lifetime for Moose**

Commissioner Herrick presented the department's recommendation on the petition, which is included below. The Board Members asked questions about the moose rule and how often it is opened. Board Member Sweeny moved to address the petition when the moose rule is opened in 2025. Board Member Bailey seconded the motion. The Board voted to approve the motion (11-0).

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## **2024 Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons – Final Vote**

Andrew Bouton presented the changes to the initial recommendations previously presented to the Board, due to public input. The recommendations are included below. Chair Ferland asked about the Eastern Mallard bag limits. Board Member Noel moved to accept the 2024 migratory game bird hunting seasons recommendations as presented. Board Member Van Buren seconded the motion. The Board vote to accept the motion (11-0).

Board Member Frazier left the meeting at 6:50 pm.

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## **2024 Moose Hunting Season – Final Vote**

Nick Fortin reported that no changes were made to the 2024 moose hunting season after the public comment period. The recommendation can be seen below. Chair Ferland asked the effect of winter ticks on harvest numbers. Board Member Bailey moved to accept the 2024 moose hunting season recommendations as presented. Board Member Van Buren seconded the motion. The Board moved to approve the motion (10-0).

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## **Presentation on Wildlife Rehab in Vermont**

Dustin Circe introduced the wildlife rehabbers presenting, Karen Rose and Medora Plimpton, and Josh Blouin, the department's representative on the Wildlife Rehab Governance Board. The presentation is included below. The Board Members asked questions about how citizens get animals to rehabbers, how many animals can be rehabbed at a time, the specifics of how wildlife is rehabbed, when wildlife is released, vets who work with wild animals, and how the public is educated.

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## **Commissioner's Update**

Commissioner Herrick gave an update on legislative activities affecting the department, including Salisbury Fish Hatchery, funding for an additional warden position, and S.258. Commissioner Herrick announced that Catherine Gjessing is now the General Counsel for the Agency of Natural Resources and he is working on hiring a new General Counsel for the department. Commissioner Herrick thanked Catherine Gjessing for the hard work done with the department, the Board, and rulemaking.

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## **Motion To Adjourn:**

The Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:23 pm.

To Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board and staff:

We Ask that the above look at and consider this petition to end commercial fishing and to put limits on pan fish as well as take crappie off of the pan fish list and put on the game fish list,

As I am sure most of you know many of us are against commercial fishing because we have seen what damage its done to public fisheries, lowering the quality and in many cases quantity of fish which can directly effect other species of fish and wildlife , fish have been found to be sold from waters that are from no keep fish zones because of poisons like PCBs and other chemicals ,wouldn't you think people eating these fish would want to know this ? ny game wardens have caught guys doing so with intent to sell these fish , there also is no record of where these commercial fisherman catch the fish they sell so there is no biological data to help monitor this , they charge a fee to run a fishing derby or tournament and require the tournament directors to report the fish that were taken so they can use it as biological data , this does not make a lot of sense to us. to not require the same from commercial fishing where it has been found that annual average of 394,772 pounds of fish are sold to buyers in Vermont, the commercial fisherman don't have to claim this on there taxes even though some make up to 300 a day catching fish , and it is not very well regulated and we are sure the numbers above are not very accurate because some buyers fudge the numbers so they can make more money with out paying as much tax, There is also many who sell privatley that are not recorded because there not lisensed fish buyers, in the vermont laws it states that . A person selling fish must provide info about their fish selling, this is not being done at all

Biologically it has stunted many populations of fish in many waters, and because of this its been found that commercial fisherman have now expanded there range to places like the Connecticut river and NH and NY waters breaking the law and taking buckets and buckets over the legal limits , some have been caught and prosecuted but many get away with it , if we didn't have buyers it would eliminate much of this. This is public knowledge that many game wardens can tell you from all 3 states.

NH saw this was not good in 2005 ,here is the data we got from NH fish and wildlife-

#### PART Fis 403 LIMITS FOR PARTICULAR SPECIES

Yellow Perch (*Perca flavescens*)

Sunfish (*Lepomis auritus*, *Lepomis gibbosus*, *Lepomis macrochirus*)

Horned Pout (*Ictalurus nebulosus*, *Ictalurus natalis*)

Proposed Administrative Rule:

- (a) The daily bag limit for yellow perch shall be 50.
- (b) The daily bag limit for sunfish shall be 50 fish.
- (c) The daily bag limit for horned pout shall be 50 fish.
- (d) There shall be no length or weight limits for yellow perch, sunfish and horned pout.

Justification for Administrative Rule Change: These freshwater species of fish have commercial value and therefore are targeted, or have the potential, for harvest from New Hampshire waters for the purpose of being sold to fish processors in other states, which is a violation of RSA 207:2. Setting a daily bag limit for these species is intended to reduce commercial harvest interests.

Administrative Rule Proposal Submitted by: Inland Fisheries Division

These limits have changed since then and are now White and Yellow Perch, Black Crappie, Sunfish, Horned Pout -25 fish each species daily limit; no more than 50 fish total combined; no length or weight limits.

In Vermont there is no limit on blue gill or sun fish and here is the current limits in vt =crappie 25 must be 8 inches  
yellow perch 50  
horn pout, blue gill, sun fish and pumpkin seeds no limits or regulations.

By getting rid of commercial fishing in the inland waters as well as any part of the connecticut river it would make the game wardens job much easier .

Bellow are some links on data found in many states showing how taking to many Bluegills can stunt populations especially the big males which bring in more money per pound for commercial fishing.

We need to set better limits on these fish much like NH. and it would be very good to do like many states have done and take crappie off of the pan fish list and place them in the game fish list where they belong, why are we allowing this activity to rape our public waters for profit, we don't allow it with our wildlife , and we feel it goes against the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, and like we said above we have no inspections of fish that are sold for human consumption but we have usda to check our beef pork and poultry , this make no sense to us . we need to protect our waters so our future fisherman can enjoy what we have for years to come , I urge you all to make theses changes soon.

<https://www.themeateater.com/fish/freshwater/cash-for-crappie-the-complex-world-of-recreational-fish-sales>

[https://www.reformer.com/opinion/letters/letter-vermont-should-limit-commercial-fishing/article\\_44840f2a-bdba-11ed-a078-2b7c107dc60f.html](https://www.reformer.com/opinion/letters/letter-vermont-should-limit-commercial-fishing/article_44840f2a-bdba-11ed-a078-2b7c107dc60f.html)

[https://www.bassresource.com/fish\\_biology/bluegill.html?fbclid=IwAR3VpvviWe5rceqKeQpABwopWACFoWtqtnaefsBKKq5s7cwadjMn9Of6WjE](https://www.bassresource.com/fish_biology/bluegill.html?fbclid=IwAR3VpvviWe5rceqKeQpABwopWACFoWtqtnaefsBKKq5s7cwadjMn9Of6WjE)

Thanks for considering and looking into this and thanks for the good job you all do

Jason J Stevens

signatures who support this petition :

Name	City	State	Postal Code	Country	Signed On
Jason Stevens	poultney	VT		US	2/8/2024
James Knox	Rutland	VT	5701	US	2/8/2024
kaineen anderson		Rutland	VT 5701	US	2/8/2024
dennis thomson		Bellows Falls	VT 5101	US	2/8/2024
Duane Perkins	Bellows falls	VT	5301	US	2/8/2024
Dana Morey	Bellows Falls	VT	5101	US	2/8/2024
Annette Stone	Bellows Falls	VT	5101	US	2/8/2024
Robert Pratt	Rutland	VT	5701	US	2/8/2024
Matt Spirowski	Queensbury	NY	12804	US	2/8/2024

Staci Bickford	Wells	VT	5774	US	2/8/2024	
Rick Grant	Waterbury Center			VT	5677	US 2/8/2024
Wally Kangas	Chester	VT	5143	US	2/8/2024	
Kyan Mcphee	Rutland	VT	5701	US	2/8/2024	
Michael Jasensky	Torrington			CT	6790	US 2/8/2024
Jacobe Maynard	Rutland	VT	5701	US	2/8/2024	
Kati Mcphee				US	2/8/2024	
Justin Kelley	Schuylerville			NY	12871	US 2/8/2024
John Stevens	Rutland	VT	1501	US	2/8/2024	
Dan bushey	Vergennes			VT	5491	US 2/8/2024
Kelton Brooks	West Rutland			VT	5777	US 2/8/2024
Zachary Patch	Rutland	VT	5701	US	2/8/2024	
Josh Stevens	West Hartford			CT	6119	US 2/8/2024
William Rice	New York			NY	10039	US 2/8/2024
Tyler Wood	New York			VT	5701	US 2/8/2024
Myles Roberts	Granville			NY	12832	US 2/8/2024
Trinity corlew	Granville			NY	12832	US 2/8/2024
Michael Kuster	Plymouth			NC	27962	US 2/8/2024
Zachary Bickford	Wells			VT	5774	US 2/8/2024
Nancy Holcomb	Pawlet			VT	5761	US 2/8/2024
Amaris Lapierre	Granville			NY	12832	US 2/8/2024
Ryan Johnson	Lake George			NY	12845	US 2/8/2024
Robert Booth	Barre			VT	5641	US 2/8/2024
Vicky Mattison	Glens Falls			NY	12801	US 2/8/2024
Edward Willis	Rutland	VT	5701	US	2/8/2024	
jill angelichio	charlotte				28204	US 2/8/2024
Joe Greco	Queensbury			NY	12804	US 2/8/2024
Lucas Livingston	Bristol			VT	5443	US 2/8/2024
Jay Carleton	Rutland	VT	5701	US	2/8/2024	
Thatcher Trudeau	Salisbury			VT	5769	US 2/8/2024
Michaela Rathbun	Granville			NY	12832	US 2/8/2024
Cullen Hathaway	Salisbury			VT	5753	US 2/8/2024
Dawn Mulcahy	Granville			NY	12832	US 2/8/2024
Travis Manning	Essex Junction			VT	5452	US 2/8/2024
Tyler Ask	Waitsfield			VT	5673	US 2/9/2024
William Forbes	West Hartford			CT	6119	US 2/9/2024
Kevin Frederick	Hampton			NY	12837	US 2/9/2024
David Livingston	Bristol			VT	5443	US 2/9/2024
Christopher Bergeron	Bristol			VT	5443	US 2/9/2024
Derek Holmes	Granville			NY	12832	US 2/9/2024
Skyler Bickford	Rutland	VT	5701	US	2/9/2024	
Cheyenne Rockford	Wells			VT	5774	US 2/9/2024
Evan Lethbridge	Barre			VT	5641	US 2/9/2024
Kilby Merriam	Rutland	VT	5701	US	2/9/2024	
maddie barott	Minneapolis				55413	US 2/9/2024
Zachary Colvin	Fort Edward			NY	12828	US 2/9/2024
Cole Tupper	New York			NY	10118	US 2/9/2024
Diane Colvin	Queensbury			NY	12804	US 2/9/2024

Brian Manney	Queensbury	NY	12804	US	2/9/2024
Morgan Lynk	Bristol	VT	5443	US	2/9/2024
GENA JOHNSON	Belton		64012	US	2/9/2024
Olivia Kicas	Hanover		17331	US	2/9/2024
Clinton Pecor	Charlestown	NH	3603	US	2/9/2024
Renee Paddock	Queensbury	NY	12804	US	2/9/2024
Cobi Badger	Shelburne	VT	5482	US	2/9/2024
Cyrus Devine	Bristol	VT	5443	US	2/9/2024
David Sesselman	Schuylerville	NY	12871	US	2/9/2024
andy williams	Granville	NY	12832	US	2/9/2024
Alexis Anderson	Rock Island		61201	US	2/9/2024
David Yerke	Latham	NY	12110	US	2/9/2024
Crystal Thomson	Lyme	NH	3768	US	2/9/2024
Jamie Thomson	South Royalton	VT	5068	US	2/9/2024
Nathan Egan	Hadley	NY	12835	US	2/9/2024
John Viaris	Plymouth	NH	3264	US	2/9/2024
John Jones	Rutland	VT	5701	US	2/9/2024
Tyrell Stroman	Fort Ann	NY	12827	US	2/9/2024
Kevin Shepard	Londonderry	VT	5148	US	2/9/2024
Karl Wentworth	New York	NY	10039	US	2/9/2024
Luke Martin	Putney	VT	5346	US	2/9/2024
Julie Kenyon	Chester	VT	5143	US	2/9/2024
Tim Thomas	Ontario	NY	14519	US	2/9/2024
Nicole Gonzalez			34771	US	2/9/2024
Tyler Bartholomew	Schuylerville		12871	US	2/9/2024
Adam Kaluba	Burleson	TX	76028	US	2/9/2024
Laurie Ellis	Port Charlotte	FL	33952	US	2/9/2024
Virginia Stevens	Rutland	VT	5701	US	2/9/2024
David Morey	Bellows Falls	VT	5101	US	2/10/2024
Bret Williams	Goshen	VT	5733	US	2/10/2024
Stephanie Bussino	Rutland	VT	5701	US	2/10/2024
james vladyka	benison	VT	5743	US	2/10/2024
jason leclerc	Perkinsville	VT	5151	US	2/10/2024
Ron Wagner	Nescopeck Pass	PA	18635	US	2/10/2024
Gary Gage	Putney	VT	5346	US	2/10/2024
David Dusseault	Taunton	MA	2780	US	2/10/2024
Dylan Welch	New York	NY	10118	US	2/10/2024
Walter fitzgerald	Cohoes		12047	US	2/10/2024
Bruce Wakefield	Bellows falls	VT	5101	US	2/10/2024
Elizabeth Kasiski	Manahawkin	NJ	8050	US	2/10/2024
Michele Lanfair	Claremont	NH	3743	US	2/10/2024
George Mentiply	Hoosick Falls	NY	12090	US	2/10/2024
Brandon Parker	Vermont	VT	5777	US	2/10/2024
Jesse Hults	Benson	VT	5743	US	2/10/2024
Sean Therrien	Whitehall	NY	12887	US	2/10/2024
Gary Lionel Roy	Alachua	FL	32615	US	2/10/2024
Shannon Babbie	Orwell	VT	5760	US	2/10/2024
Gentry Dugan	"Willis,Tx"	TX	77024	US	2/10/2024



Stephen Beayon	Putney VT	5346	US	2/10/2024
Mike Falco	Ankeny IA	50023	US	2/10/2024
Peter Porter	Hurdle Mills NC	27541	US	2/10/2024
Heidi Polk			US	2/10/2024
Mike Blatt	Lebanon NH	3766	US	2/10/2024
Tina Mattison	Whitehall NY	12887	US	2/10/2024
Andrew Floyd			US	2/10/2024
Gordon McPhee	North Troy VT	5859	US	2/11/2024
Matthew Retaleato	Rutland VT	5701	US	2/11/2024
Ashley Norton	Meriden CT	6451	US	2/11/2024
Tiffany Foster	Washington DC	20011	US	2/11/2024
Fred Powers	Nashua NH	3060	US	2/11/2024
Jen Parker	Rutland VT	5701	US	2/11/2024
Ashlee Robbins	New Britain CT	6053	US	2/11/2024
Erin Reed	Rutland VT	5701	US	2/11/2024
Kayleigh Manning	Millbrook AL	36054	US	2/11/2024
Jennifer Mulligan	Modena NY	12548	US	2/11/2024
Lydia Kirk			US	2/11/2024
Isaiah Wakefield	Providence VT	5156	US	2/11/2024
GameCircle	GameCircle		US	2/12/2024
Paul Bemis	Walpole NH	3608	US	2/12/2024
Max Moynihan	Glens Falls NY	12801	US	2/12/2024
lube Bubmanski	New Port Richey FL	34655	US	2/12/2024
Michael Dame	Brandon VT	5778	US	2/12/2024
Mike Bessette	South Burlington VT	5403	US	2/12/2024
Olivia Loupe	Hollister CA	95023	US	2/12/2024
Bradley Shaver	Glens falls NY	12801	US	2/12/2024
Alana Preziosi	Swedesboro NJ	8085	US	2/12/2024
Shaday Berrios	Brownwood TX	76801	US	2/13/2024
Chris McEwen	Fairfax VT	5454	US	2/13/2024
June MacArthur	Port Orchard WA	98366	US	2/13/2024
Mikelyn Stewart	Poultney VT	5764	US	2/13/2024
Monica Zavala-Arias	Riverside CA	92507	US	2/13/2024
Thomas Baldwin	Rockingham VT	5101	US	2/13/2024
Erin Hunter	Springfield VT	5156	US	2/13/2024
Gary Andreoff	Phoenix AZ	85026	US	2/13/2024
Jason Stone	Plattsburgh NY	12901	US	2/13/2024
marlowe lang	Evanston IL	60201	US	2/13/2024
Musttafa De los santos	The Bronx NY	10467	US	2/13/2024
Dev Alwine	Chicago IL	60014	US	2/13/2024
Zach Merriam	Rutland VT	5701	US	2/13/2024
Kyle Roberts	Rutland VT	5701	US	2/13/2024
Chad Morris	Rutland VT	5701	US	2/13/2024
Dan Brock	Auburn NY	13021	US	2/13/2024
Rodney Elmer	Southington CT	6489	US	2/14/2024
Meghan Johnson	Brandon VT	5733	US	2/14/2024
Eric Greene	New York NY	10065	US	2/14/2024
Wyatt Lufkin	Fort Edward NY	12828	US	2/14/2024

Linus Sante	Queensbury	NY	12804	US	2/14/2024
Jacob Boule	Thetford Center	VT	5075	US	2/15/2024
Rob Parker	Castleton	VT	5735	US	2/15/2024
Franklin Warren	Hartland	VT	5048	US	2/15/2024
Nico Calderon	Danby	NY	5739	US	2/15/2024
Anthony Livolsi	Walpole	NH	3608	US	2/15/2024
Dana Fournier	Chestnut Hill	MA	2467	US	2/15/2024
Anna Kremer	Burlington	VT	5401	US	2/15/2024
Shawn Bagley	West Rutland	VT	5777	US	2/15/2024
Eric Halperin	Morrisville	VT	5661	US	2/15/2024
Johnny Butler	Quincy	MA	2169	US	2/15/2024
Joe Benoit	Lebanon	NH	3766	US	2/15/2024
Justin Harley	Colchester	VT	5446	US	2/15/2024
Brandon Frank	South burlington	VT	5403	US	2/15/2024
Chris Roberts				US	2/15/2024
Andrew Ianni	Randolph Center	VT	5061	US	2/15/2024
Christian Poupart	Georgia	VT	5478	US	2/15/2024
jim A langlois	Whitehall	NY	12887	US	2/15/2024
Daniel Bennett	North ferrisburgh	VT	5473	US	2/15/2024
Meagan Keith	Ludlow	VT	5149	US	2/15/2024
Scott Mackner	Minneapolis	MN	55429	US	2/15/2024
Corey Bechtold	Big Lake	MN	55309	US	2/15/2024
Marcus Garrow	Plattsburgh	NY	12901	US	2/15/2024
Kerry Bechtold	Richmond	MN	56368	US	2/15/2024
Jennifer Bacik	Buffalo	MN	55313	US	2/15/2024
Edmond Francis	South Burlington	VT	5403	US	2/15/2024
Chris Cook	Bennington	VT	5201	US	2/15/2024
Colby Sprenkel	Selinsgrove	PA	17870	19145	US 2/15/2024
Andrew Walker	Maple Plain	MN	55359	US	2/15/2024
Heath Butler	Starksboro	VT	5487	US	2/15/2024
Logan Bathalon	Syracuse	NY	13204	US	2/16/2024
Greg Bodle	Big Lake	MN	55309	US	2/16/2024
Ryan Zdenek	Minong	WI	54859	US	2/16/2024
Nathan Pallutto	Rutland	VT	5701	US	2/16/2024
Brandon Wallace	Ray	OH	45672	US	2/16/2024
Parker Skajewski	Sartell	MN	56377	US	2/16/2024
Barbara Lynch	Putney	VT	05346-8796	US	2/16/2024
Alisa Szydowski	Brandon	VT	5733	US	2/17/2024
Jordan Bresette	Boston	MA	2119	US	2/17/2024
Sean Benware	Bellows Falls	VT	5101	US	2/17/2024
Paul Snide	Anderson	SC	29621	US	2/17/2024
Paula Sargent-Vanasse	Fuquay-Varina	NC	27526	US	2/17/2024
Clement Coburn	Brattleboro	VT	5301	US	2/17/2024
Danielle Sheldrick	973A Route 144	Benson	VT	5743	US 2/17/2024
Sean Hesse	Rutland	VT	5701	US	2/17/2024
David Washburn	Bellows Falls	VT	5101	US	2/17/2024
Christopher Thomas	Putney	VT	5346	US	2/17/2024
Joshua Williams	Bellows falls	VT	5101	US	2/17/2024

Bruce Merriam	Springfield	VT	5156	US	2/17/2024	
Don Washburn	Bentley Creek	PA	16925	US	2/17/2024	
Brad Lockwood	Pembroke	ME	4666	US	2/17/2024	
Frances Wheeler	Springfield	VT	5156	US	2/17/2024	
Gigi Hadid	Pawtucket	RI	2860	US	2/17/2024	
Jeffrey Leonard	Rutland	VT	5701	US	2/17/2024	
Travis Farrar	Brattleboro	VT	5301	US	2/17/2024	
Mark Green	Claremont	NH	3743	US	2/18/2024	
Dakota Brennen	Northumberland	PA	17857	US	2/18/2024	
Tyler Kimball	Springfield	VT	5150	US	2/18/2024	
Kalynn Damian	Claremont	NH	3743	US	2/18/2024	
Fred Greenwood	Claremont	NH	3743	US	2/18/2024	
Terry Lynch	Springfield	VT	5156	US	2/18/2024	
Justen Brooks	Shelburne falls	MA	1370	US	2/18/2024	
Lucas Thomson	Bellows Falls	VT	5101	US	2/18/2024	
Ali Morrow	Crown Point	IN	46307	US	2/18/2024	
Kurt Twombly	Claremont	NH	3743	US	2/18/2024	
James Charles Pallutto jr.	Murrells Inlet	SC	29576	US	2/18/2024	2/18/2024
Theresa Elmer	Northfield	VT	5663	US	2/18/2024	
Tony Lentini	Snellville	GA	30039	US	2/18/2024	
Matthew Smith	Marlow	NH	3456	US	2/18/2024	
Eddie Cutler	Winchester	NH	3470	US	2/18/2024	
Tabatha Cornell	Newport	VT	5855	US	2/19/2024	
Terry Hodgdon	Putney	VT	5346	US	2/19/2024	
Andrew Rogers	Lyme	NH	3768	US	2/19/2024	
Michael Butler	Canaan	VT	5903	US	2/19/2024	
Lee Stoodley	Westminster	VT	5158	US	2/19/2024	
Annette Turner	Rutland	VT	5701	US	2/19/2024	
Joe Gethins	Stillwater	NY	12170	US	2/19/2024	
Darlene Vick	Fort Morgan	CO	80701	US	2/19/2024	
Alisa Buffum	Bellows Falls	VT	5101	US	2/20/2024	
Daniel Houg	Baltic	SD	57003	US	2/21/2024	
Bob Potter	Sharon	VT	5065	US	2/22/2024	
Chris Luce	Montpelier	VT	5602	US	2/22/2024	
Maxwell Flynn	Bristol	VT	5443	US	2/22/2024	
Raymond Occaso	Lyndonville	VT	5851	US	2/22/2024	
Zachary Mcnaughton	Claremont	NH	3743	US	2/22/2024	
Josh Phillips				US	2/22/2024	
John Dick	Mexico	MO	65265	US	2/23/2024	
william Langston	Salisbury	NC	28146	US	2/23/2024	
Jason Britton	Philadelphia	PA	19143	US	2/24/2024	
Christopher Koledo	Springfield	VT	5156	US	2/25/2024	

the last 5 years 2018-2022 commercial pan fish that were bought that is recorded by registered fish buyers

yellow perch-701,001 pounds an average of 140,200 pounds a yr

white perch- 74,929 pounds an average of 14,985 pounds a yr

bluegill sunfish -466,734 pounds an average of 93,346 pounds per yr

crappie- 62,555 pounds an average of 12,511 pounds per year

there were 11 to 17 registered buyers in the state in this time frame and they bought a total of 1,305,219 yellow and white perch, crappie, and blue gill and sun fish , if you figure at \$1.50 a pound average paid for these fish that equates to \$1,957,828 paid out to sellers of untaxed revenue, these are under the table cash transactions that have put a lot of money in peoples pockets at the expense of recreational angling opportunities, some of this tax money possibly could of helped with fish management like keeping hatcherys open .

the only other fish or wildlife that is like this is trapping for profit but they must have a trapping license , take a course and be certified, they have quotas, the animals are inspected and mandatory reporting and tagging, it is highly regulated unlike commercial fishing .

Any time you put a monetary value on something like this it usually leads to bad behaviors and activities and greed with people taking limitless amounts of many of these fish species for money in an unregulated fashion which leads to situations where the publics enjoyment of quality fishing opportunities is diminished and negatively impacted.

Ponds have been altered in quality and size structure from over harvests at the commercial level, but no attention has been paid to it in terms of monitoring these populations so it is difficult to show any data on it , but many of us who fish a lot and know vermont waters have watched what happens and if you all would ask the public and listen to them i am sure you will here many negative stories of how commercial fishing has negatively impacted the fishery, and wuality of anjoyment by anglers.

it has been proven all over the country time and time again that removing to many larger species of pan fish can and does stunt population and they most time will never recover unless poisoned or killed and basically start from scratch.

the way commercial fishing is so loosley controled in vermont with very bad book keeping or biological data like how many of any species it taken out of each water body is hurting waters , we need good data to biologically know what this does to fisherys and manage them accordingly .

commercial fishing over the years has caused other neggative things such as people fighting over spots, illegal limits, fishing in nh where it is illegal and causes wardens to have more work .

then there is the public health issues , it is known that illegal selling from waters in ny labels no take zones because of pcbs and other poisons are being sold for human consumption , and there is no usda to test fish like there is with poultry and livestock .

we also need to look at making better limits on our pan fish, and possibly putting crappie on the game fish list or all pan fish for that matter, they have become as popular to sportsman as most any

other game fish since dave gentz started the pan fish revolution , it was a great thing because it took a lot of pressure off of the larger species that take a lot longer to grow and rebound from fishing, heres what nh vs vermonts limits are , we should do something more like nh and other states do , there is only 7 states that have no limits on gills and we are one of them .

nh laws which is connecticut river and all set backs pretty much except for retreat- White and Yellow Perch, Black Crappie, Sunfish, Horned Pout -25 fish each species daily limit; no more than 50 fish total combined; no length or weight limits

vt laws on pan fish crappie 25 must be 8 inches

yellow perch 50

horn pout, blue gill, sun fish and punkin seeds no limits or regulations

many other states knew commercial fishing was bad like our neighbor NH, Here is what NH did because of Vermont's commercial fishing , knowing before 2005 it was a bad thing, it forced them to change there limits to make it less attractive to do over there , but it doesn't stop these guys , every year they catch guys with buckets full over the limits who go to VT and sell them . here is the rule change in NH .....PART Fis 403 LIMITS FOR PARTICULAR SPECIES

Yellow Perch (*Perca flavescens*)

Sunfish (*Lepomis auritus*, *Lepomis gibbosus*, *Lepomis macrochirus*)

Horned Pout (*Ictalurus nebulosus*, *Ictalurus natalis*)

Proposed Administrative Rule:

- (a) The daily bag limit for yellow perch shall be 50.
- (b) The daily bag limit for sunfish shall be 50 fish.
- (c) The daily bag limit for horned pout shall be 50 fish.
- (d) There shall be no length or weight limits for yellow perch, sunfish and horned pout.

since then these limits changed as i had said above

Justification for Administrative Rule Change: These freshwater species of fish have commercial value and therefore are targeted, or have the potential, for harvest from New Hampshire waters for the purpose of being sold to fish processors in other states, which is a violation of RSA 207:2. Setting a daily bag limit for these species is intended to reduce commercial harvest interests.

Fish Habitat Biologist  
Inland Fisheries Division  
NH Fish and Game

Dennis Thomson sr

Can you please include my recommendations to the game board at the next meeting.

**No seasonal duck blinds on WMA unless they are built and maintained by VTFW:**

Many times hunters build blinds in the prime locations, use them for only a handful of days and sit empty. Other hunters are afraid to hunt in or around the blinds to avoid conflict. As in "This is my spot, beat it!" Many of these blinds are never removed at the end of the season.

**The placing of any stake on or in any public water or lands to claim use of a location is prohibited and will be construed as littering on a public land or water way:**

There are numerous stakes stuck all over state waters claiming to be blinds and most of the duck hunters I spoke to avoid the area to avoid conflict





**Have a pop up window that must be agreed to before you can finish your hunting or fishing license purchase. It should state: "I understand and agree that all public land and waters are open to all. I understand that the placing of a blind or sign on public land or waters does not constitute a claim to the special use of any area and in good sportsmanship I agree to first come first use of any area."**

**Change the Muzzleloader antlerless deer permit system for the Units: B, F1, F2, J1, J2, K, N & O and be combined into one single doe permit, maybe even over the counter.**



The reason for this is that it gives hunters more opportunity to harvest a deer and does not hold them to one assigned area for antlerless hunting. With so many extra permits in these units left over every year it's clear that being able to travel to a better hunting area or hunt with friends will not significantly change the harvest outcome. It gives a lot more freedom to hunt.

**Change the ruffed grouse and squirrel season to end on February 15**

New York has a similar season with similar environments as Vermont. I'm not sure why it ends on Dec 31 but my guess is that it's a historical tradition. Extending the season will not have any significant impact on either of these species and it will give hunters more opportunity to spend more time in the field.

Bill Kirby

Milton VT

# **Recommendation Related to a Petition to: Alter Hunt of a Lifetime Moose Season Firearm Use in Archery Season**

to the

Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board



Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department  
Agency of Natural Resources  
1 National Life Drive, Davis 2  
Montpelier, VT 05620-3208  
802-828-1000

April 3, 2024

Petition to alter the hunt of a lifetime moose season firearm use in the archery season  
portion for Special Opportunity Permit holders

**Recommendation**

Summary of Issues for Consideration:

February 21, 2024, Vermont Fish and Wildlife Conservation Group Petitioned for the Department to:

- (1) Proposed to the Board a change in the timing and rules around the Special Opportunity Permits (SOP) for moose to allow the hunters to use a firearm during the moose rut that coincides with the archery season for moose
- (2) Authorize use of firearms for SOP hunters during the moose archery season under 10 App. V.S.A. 33

Department Recommendation:

The Department recommends that the Board allow the Department to include this subject in a comprehensive review of potential regulation changes. The Department in 2025 will be bringing forth potential changes to moose hunting and transport regulations.

The Department supports the intent of Special Opportunity Permits, as authorized under 10 V.S.A. § 4255(j), to provide a unique opportunity to individuals with a life-threatening disease or illness.

Department Response to Proposal:

Comment/Question: “We are writing to propose a change to the current timing and rules around the youth hunt of a lifetime for moose. We would like the board to consider allowing these youth hunters, many of whom have mobility challenges, to hunt with a rifle during the moose rut, which usually coincides with the moose archery season. The statute that establishes the Special Opportunity Permits (10 V.S.A. § 4255(j)) requires that these permit holders comply with statutes and Board rules. To our knowledge, there are no statutes relating to moose hunting regulations, so changes fall within the purview of the Fish and Wildlife Board. SOP permit holders can already choose which season they’d like to hunt, but current Board rules (10 App. V.S.A. § 33) very specifically state that no one hunting during archery season can take a moose by firearm. That would need to be changed to allow moose to be called in as part of the experience for these young hunters who typically hunt with a firearm. We are happy to leave the details and specific changes required to the board and Department staff, but think that this experience will be greatly improved for these young hunters if their season dates were altered.”

Response:

- 1) The Department supports the intent of the petition and wishes to include this subject as a potential change within the comprehensive review of moose hunting and transport regulations.
- 2) We do not support changing the time of the moose archery season.

Other Information to Consider:

- Crossbows may already be used during the archery season.

The Department's concerns include:

- The Department prioritizes moose harvest during the regular season because important biological data can only be collected during that season (e.g., ovulation rates from ovaries), or is most valuable during that season because of the need to compare to data from past years (e.g., body weight). Shifting additional harvest to the archery season could, in some years, necessitate reducing the number of archery permits available to ensure adequate sample size during the regular season.
- May create an enforcement issue related to archers

Potential positives in the Department’s view:

- Hunting during the archery season may result in a better hunting experience and somewhat higher success rate for SOP hunters.



**VERMONT  
FISH & WILDLIFE  
CONSERVATION GROUP**

[www.vtfcwg.org](http://www.vtfcwg.org)

February 12, 2024

Re: Hunt of a Lifetime Moose Season

Commissioner Herrick and VT Fish & Wildlife Board,

We are writing to propose a change to the current timing and rules around the youth hunt of a lifetime for moose. We would like the board to consider allowing these youth hunters, many of whom have mobility challenges, to hunt with a rifle during the moose rut, which usually coincides with the moose archery season.

The statute that establishes the Special Opportunity Permits (10 V.S.A. § 4255(j)) requires that these permit holders comply with statutes and Board rules. To our knowledge, there are no statutes relating to moose hunting regulations, so changes fall within the purview of the Fish and Wildlife Board. SOP permit holders can already choose which season they'd like to hunt, but current Board rules (10 App. V.S.A. § 33) very specifically state that no one hunting during archery season can take a moose by firearm. That would need to be changed to allow moose to be called in as part of the experience for these young hunters who typically hunt with a firearm.

We are happy to leave the details and specific changes required to the board and Department staff, but think that this experience will be greatly improved for these young hunters if their season dates were altered.

Submitted by the Board of the VT Fish and Wildlife Conservation Group, on behalf of our members,  
VTFWCG  
PO Box 207, East Charleston, VT 05833

## Proposed 2024 Migratory Game Bird Hunting Seasons

Wednesday April 3, 2024

After soliciting public feedback since February 21, 2024, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department presents the following migratory game bird season recommendations to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board. The following is a list of the proposals. Full recommendations are attached.

- Hold the liberal season allowed under the USFWS federal framework related to season lengths and daily bag limits.
- 2024 duck season opening.
  - Interior Zone: Saturday, Oct. 12 – Nov. 10 and Nov. 23 – Dec. 22
  - Lake Champlain Zone: Oct. 12 – Nov. 3 and Nov. 23 - Dec. 29
- Resident Canada goose seasons:
  - Sept. 1 – Sept. 25
  - Dec. 1, 2024 – Jan. 21, 2025
- 2024 migratory goose seasons opening:
  - Migratory Canada goose: Oct. 12 – Nov. 10
  - Migratory Snow goose: Oct. 1 – Dec. 31, 2024 and Feb. 24 – Mar. 10, 2025
- Hold brant season: October 12 – November 10
- Hold youth hunting weekend – Sept. 28 - 29
- Falconry season – No changes from previous year
- Hold woodcock/snipe season: September 28 - November 11.
- Within the Lake Champlain and Interior Zones, hold a hybrid season for scaup that allows for a 20-day segment with a two-bird daily bag limit and a 40-day segment that allows for a one bird daily bag limit.
  - 40/1 for first 40 days of the season
  - 20/2 for last 20 days of the season

## 2024 Migratory Game Bird Hunting Season Recommendations

*Recommendation 1 - 2024 Lake Champlain Zone Duck, Merganser and Coot Seasons:* That the 2024-2025 duck, mergansers, and coot seasons of the Lake Champlain zone run from October 12 to November 3 and November 23 to December 29, 2024. Within the chosen dates, we recommend the 60-day season with a daily bag limit of no more than 6 ducks (with species restrictions) and 15 coots.

*Recommendation 2 – 2024 Interior Vermont Zone Duck, Merganser and Coot Seasons:* That the 2024-2025 duck, mergansers, and coot seasons of the Interior Vermont zone run from October 12 to November 10 and November 23 to December 22, 2024. Within the chosen dates, we recommend the 60-day season with a daily bag limit of no more than 6 -ducks (with species restrictions) and 15 coots.

*Recommendation 3 – 2024 September Resident Canada Goose Season:* That the September resident Canada goose season run from September 1-25, 2024, with a daily bag limit of 8 birds per day and a possession limit of 24 birds within the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont zones. New Hampshire plans to offer the same dates within the Connecticut River zone, but with a daily bag limit of 5 birds per day and a possession limit of 15 birds.

*Recommendation 4 – 2024 Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont Zones Migrant Canada Goose Season:* That the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont zones be set for the migrant Canada goose season to run from October 12 to November 10, 2024, with a daily bag limit of 3 bird per day and a possession limit of 9 birds.

*Recommendation 5 – 2024 Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont Zones Snow Goose Season:* That the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont zones be set for the snow goose season to run from October 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31, 2024 and February 24 to March 10, 2024, with a daily bag limit of 25 birds per day and no possession limit.

*Recommendation 6 – 2024 Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont Zones Brant Season:* That the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont zones be set for the brant season to run from October 12 to November 10, 2024, with a daily bag limit of 1 bird per day and a possession limit of 3 birds.

*Recommendation 7 - 2024 Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days:* That the youth waterfowl hunting weekend occur on Saturday and Sunday, September 28 & 29, 2024, within all Vermont zones.

*Recommendation 8- 2024 Falconry Season:* A person possessing a valid falconry permit may take migratory game birds only during open seasons and within designated shooting times. The daily bag limit shall be a maximum of three legal migratory game birds, singly or in the aggregate, not to exceed restrictive daily bag limits for certain species as listed herein. Possession limit shall be equal to three times the daily limit.

*Recommendation 9 – 2024 Woodcock Season:* That the woodcock season run from September 28 to November 11, 2024, with a daily bag limit of 3 birds per day and a possession limit of 9 birds, statewide.

*Recommendation 10 – 2024 Snipe Season:* That the snipe season run from September 28 to November 11, 2024, with a daily bag limit of 8 birds per day and a possession limit of 24 birds, statewide.

*Recommendation 11 – Hybrid Scaup Season:* Provide a hybrid season on scaup that allows for a 20-day segment with a two-bird daily bag limit and a 40-day segment that allows for a one bird daily bag limit. The 20-day and two bird daily limit should be placed on the last twenty days within the Lake Champlain and Interior Zone seasons of Vermont. All remaining days of the seasons will be a one bird daily limit.

*Recommendation 12 – December Resident Canada Goose Season:* That the December resident Canada goose season run from December 1, 2024 to January 21, 2025, with a daily bag limit of 5 birds per day and a possession limit of 15 birds, statewide.



# **2024-2025 WATERFOWL SEASONS RECOMMENDATIONS**

**APRIL 3, 2024**



**Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department  
Agency of Natural Resources  
1 National Life Drive, Davis 2  
Montpelier, VT 05620-3905**

## **Executive Summary**

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department proposes the same recommendations the Board approved by straw vote on February 21, 2024, with changes to recommendations one, two, four, eleven, and twelve. The Department makes these recommendations based on the following:

A consensus for change was found during the public meetings, (NY- 5 citizens and VT- 21 citizens attended) and within comments received through emails (17 emails received) to warrant a change in Department recommendations. The two common comments were the public wished the Lake Champlain Zone and Interior zones opened on October 12<sup>th</sup> which would reduce pressure on the New York side and would open with goose seasons, and that the scaup hybrid season be reversed. We received a few comments asking for additional days in October and we received multiple comments asking for a split in the Interior zone. We also received a comment that pointed out that we may have used the wrong Canada Goose recommendation, which upon further investigation was correct, therefore the dates for the migratory and late resident seasons have been adjusted.

## **Justifications for Recommendations Discussed through Public Input Sources**

*Recommendation 1 - 2024 Lake Champlain Zone Duck, Merganser and Coot Seasons:* That the 2024-2025 duck, merganser, and coot seasons of the Lake Champlain zone run from October 12 to November 3 and November 23 to December 29, 2024.

- We tried to capture season days that provide opportunity for a variety of hunted duck species during their greatest relative abundance within the LCZ.
- Even with a 60-day season we cannot meet all requests including; allowing hunting until the end of the calendar year, hunting during peak migration for early and late migrants, and hunting in late October/early November during peak migration of scaup.
- We have tried to provide hunting days during unfrozen conditions for both marsh and big lake hunters, realizing we cannot predict weather conditions.
- We tried to maximize the number of weekends and holiday days to provide opportunity to all hunters.

*Recommendation 2 – 2024 Interior Vermont Zone Duck, Merganser and Coot Seasons:* That the 2024-2025 duck, merganser, and coot seasons of the Interior Vermont zone run from October 12 to November 10, and November 23 to December 22, 2024. Within the chosen dates, we recommend the 60-day season with a daily bag limit of no more than 6 -ducks (with species restrictions) and 15 coots.

- Recommended dates are targeted to allow the most hunting days before small water bodies freeze.
- Even with a 60-day season we cannot meet all requests including; allowing hunting until the end of the calendar year, hunting during peak migration for early and late migrants, and hunting in November during peak migration of scaup.
- We have tried to provide hunting days during unfrozen conditions for both marsh and big lake hunters, realizing we cannot predict weather conditions.
- We tried to maximize the number of weekends and holiday days to provide opportunity to all hunters.

*Recommendation 4 – 2024 Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont Zones Migrant Canada Goose Season:* That the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont zones be set for the migrant Canada goose season to run from October 12 to November 10, 2024, with a daily bag limit of 3 birds per day and a possession limit of 9 birds.

- The initial recommendation referenced the incorrect federal framework and was adjusted to be 30 days instead of 45

*Recommendation 11 – Hybrid Scaup Season:* Provide a hybrid season on scaup that allows for a 20-day segment with a two-bird daily bag limit and a 40-day segment that allows for a one bird daily bag limit. The 20-day and two bird daily limit should be placed on the last twenty days within the Lake Champlain and Interior Zone seasons of Vermont. All remaining days of the seasons will be a one bird daily limit.

- Hunters expressed interest in targeting scaup when they are in full breeding plumage later in the year when it is easier to pick out drakes.

*Recommendation 12 – December Resident Canada Goose Season:* That the December resident Canada goose season run from December 1, 2024 to January 21, 2025, with a daily bag limit of 5 birds per day and a possession limit of 15 birds, statewide.

- By taking 15 days off of the migratory season we can add 15 days to the late resident season

In review, these are the actions the Department requests that the Board takes tonight for the 2024-2025 migratory game bird seasons: Setting the 2024 duck, goose, merganser, coot, brant, woodcock and snipe season dates and daily bag limits, setting the 2024 youth waterfowl hunting weekend dates, and setting the 2024 falconry regulations.

**Recommendations (Note: the recommendations that have changed since the presentation to the Board on Feb. 21. Are highlighted)**

*Recommendation 1 - 2024 Lake Champlain Zone Duck, Merganser and Coot Seasons:* That the 2024-2025 duck, mergansers, and coot seasons of the Lake Champlain zone run from October 12 to November 3 and November 23 to December 29, 2024. Within the chosen dates, we recommend the 60-day season with a daily bag limit of no more than 6 ducks (with species restrictions) and 15 coots.

*Recommendation 2 – 2024 Interior Vermont Zone Duck, Merganser and Coot Seasons:* That the 2024-2025 duck, mergansers, and coot seasons of the Interior Vermont zone run from October 12 to November 10 and November 23 to December 22, 2024. Within the chosen dates, we recommend the 60-day season with a daily bag limit of no more than 6 -ducks (with species restrictions) and 15 coots.

*Recommendation 3 – 2024 September Resident Canada Goose Season:* That the September resident Canada goose season run from September 1-25, 2024, with a daily bag limit of 8 birds per day and a possession limit of 24 birds within the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont

zones. New Hampshire plans to offer the same dates within the Connecticut River zone, but with a daily bag limit of 5 birds per day and a possession limit of 15 birds.

*Recommendation 4 – 2024 Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont Zones Migrant Canada Goose Season:* That the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont zones be set for the migrant Canada goose season to run from October 12 to November 10, 2024, with a daily bag limit of 3 bird per day and a possession limit of 9 birds.

*Recommendation 5 – 2024 Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont Zones Snow Goose Season:* That the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont zones be set for the snow goose season to run from October 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31, 2024 and February 24 to March 10, 2024, with a daily bag limit of 25 birds per day and no possession limit.

*Recommendation 6 – 2024 Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont Zones Brant Season:* That the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont zones be set for the brant season to run from October 12 to November 10, 2024, with a daily bag limit of 1 bird per day and a possession limit of 3 birds.

*Recommendation 7 - 2024 Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days:* That the youth waterfowl hunting weekend occur on Saturday and Sunday, September 28 & 29, 2024, within all Vermont zones.

*Recommendation 8- 2024 Falconry Season:* A person possessing a valid falconry permit may take migratory game birds only during open seasons and within designated shooting times. The daily bag limit shall be a maximum of three legal migratory game birds, singly or in the aggregate, not to exceed restrictive daily bag limits for certain species as listed herein. Possession limit shall be equal to three times the daily limit.

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*Recommendation 12 – December Resident Canada Goose Season:* That the December resident Canada goose season run from December 1, 2024 to January 21, 2025, with a daily bag limit of 5 birds per day and a possession limit of 15 birds, statewide.

## **Background**

Vermont currently has three waterfowl hunting zones (Figure 1):

- Lake Champlain Zone that we share with New York. Vermont sets the dates for this zone.
- Interior Zone that is entirely within Vermont.
- Connecticut River Zone that we share with New Hampshire. New Hampshire sets the dates for this zone as an extension of their Inland Zone.

Under Vermont's three zones, Vermont can split any zone once to create two hunting segments. Vermont currently has sixty days to divide between the two duck hunting segments to accommodate the diverse desires of the variety of Vermont waterfowl hunters. Migrant Canada goose season currently has 30-days to utilize. The zones were also set up to take into consideration the differences in the physiographic regions of the state and the climatic differences each has.

*2024 Duck Season:* The Board has traditionally held the youth waterfowl weekend the last weekend in September. The Department has withheld any fishing tournament permits for that weekend to reduce conflicts between anglers and youth waterfowlers.

*2024 Goose, Brant, Mergansers, and Coots Seasons:* Resident Canada geese have a 25-day season option and may run from September 1<sup>st</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup>. The migrant Canada goose season may not open prior to October 10<sup>th</sup>. Migrant Canada geese have a 30-day season option with a three-bird daily bag limit. Atlantic brant have a 30-day season option with a one-bird daily bag limit. The Board traditionally has run the merganser and coot seasons concurrently with the duck season. December resident Canada geese have 52 days allowed for the 2024-2025 season to use between December 1<sup>st</sup> and February 15<sup>th</sup>.

*2024 Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days:* The Department may select two days per duck-hunting zone, designated as "Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days," in addition to the regular duck seasons. The days must be held outside any regular duck season on a weekend, holiday, or other non-school days when youth hunters would have the maximum opportunity to participate. The days may be held up to 14 days before or after any regular duck-season frameworks or within any split of a regular duck season, or within any other open season on migratory birds. The daily bag limits may include ducks, geese, mergansers, and coots, and would be the same as those allowed in the regular season.

The age of youth hunter eligibility was changed in 2016 at the federal level. That same year the Board changed the youth waterfowl hunter age to 17 years of age or younger. In addition, an adult at least 18 years of age must accompany the youth hunter into the field. This adult may not duck hunt but may participate in other seasons that are open on the special youth day. Youth hunters 16 years of age and older must possess a Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (also known as Federal Duck Stamp). Vermont also requires all hunters 16 years of age and older to have a state duck stamp. All hunters regardless of age are required to have a HIP number. Within the Connecticut River Zone, youth must be 15 years of age or younger to participate during the youth weekend.

*Special Falconry Regulations:* Falconry is a permitted means of taking migratory game birds in any State meeting Federal falconry standards in 50 CFR 21.29. These States may select an extended season for taking migratory game birds in accordance with the following:

**Extended Seasons:** For all hunting methods combined, the combined length of the extended season, regular season, and any special or experimental seasons must not exceed 107 days for any species or group of species in a geographical area. Each extended season may be divided into a maximum of 3 segments.

**Daily Bag Limits:** Falconry daily bag limits for all permitted migratory game birds must not exceed 3 birds, singly or in the aggregate, during extended falconry seasons, any special or experimental seasons, and regular hunting seasons in all States, including those that do not select an extended falconry season.

**Regular Seasons:** General hunting regulations, including seasons and hunting hours, apply to falconry in each State listed in 50 CFR 21.29. Regular season bag limits do not apply to falconry. The falconry bag limit is not in addition to gun limits.

Vermont has traditionally run the falconry season during any open migratory game bird season. Last year falconers had the opportunity to begin on September 1<sup>st</sup> with the resident Canada goose season and ended their season on January 6<sup>th</sup> when the late resident Canada goose season closed. The falconry season reopened on February 26, 2024. A three-bird daily bag limit was in effect.

*Public Input and Outreach:* The Department, in conjunction with the Board, held two public meetings in 2024. Meetings occurred on the evenings of March 12 and 14 and began at 6:30 pm. Comments received at the public meetings and the number of attendees is provided within the accompanying document.

After the Board approves final season dates and bag limits, the Department will submit season selections to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by April 30<sup>th</sup> and the information will be sent to a printer for production of the 2024 syllabus of state and federal hunting regulations. The early decision deadlines will allow the Department to have the syllabus available to the public in print version by August a full month prior to any migratory bird hunting season. The seasons will be placed on the Department's website within days of approval.

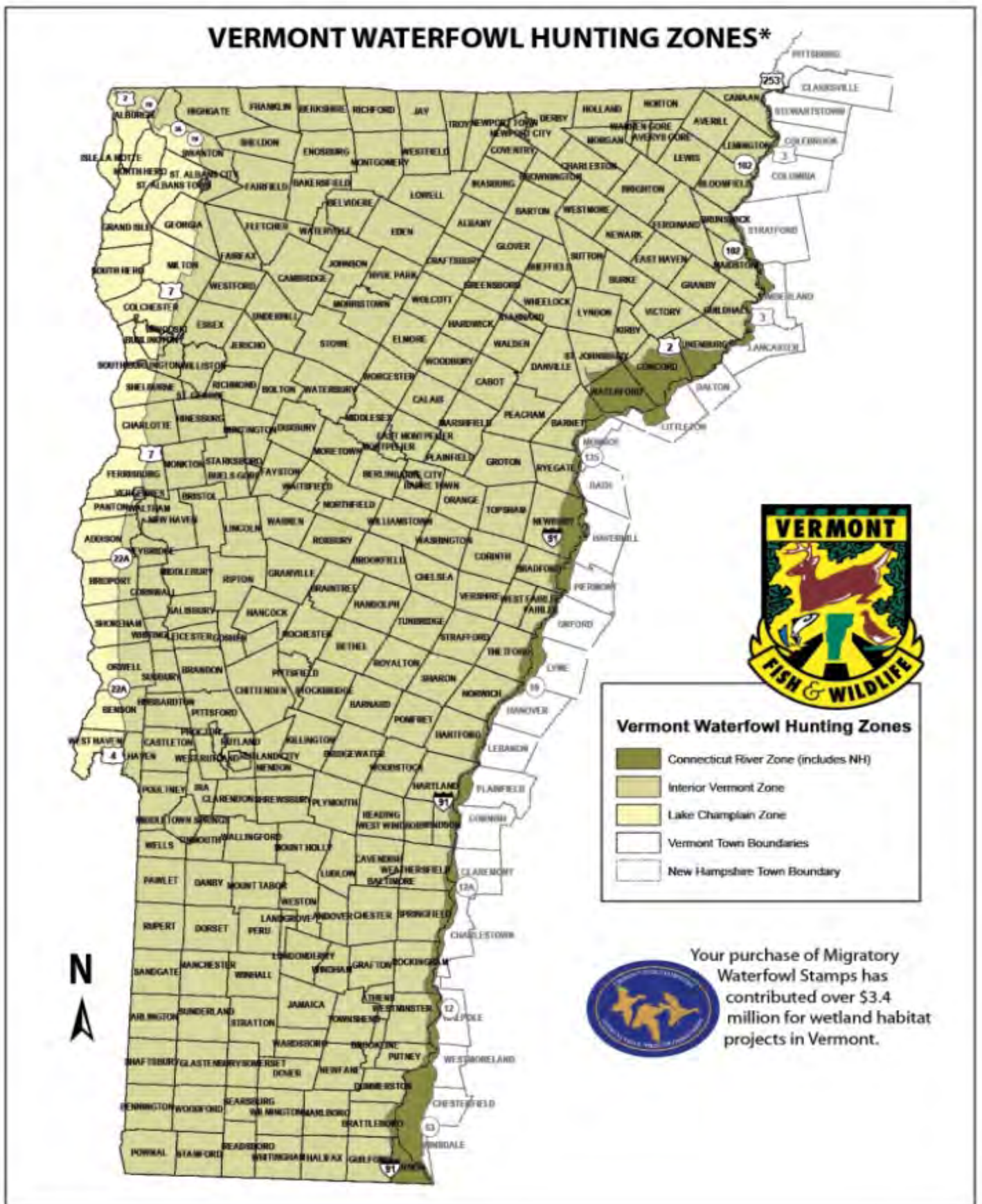
### **Tally of Public Comments**

The Department received a total of 17 emails containing comments on the proposed migratory game bird seasons. Twenty-six citizens attended the two public meetings hosted by the Board and Department. Comments made during the meetings are captured on the attached documents. Below are the main comments received from all sources with the number of individuals that commented.

1. End bass fishing tournaments during duck season (1)
2. Waterfowl stamps and licenses should be good for entire season including January (1)

3. Early duck season for 1-2 days when early goose season opens (1)
4. Change Lake Champlain Zone to be just Lake Champlain (2)
5. Prefer no October dates, and would prefer the season to start in November and continue into January (1)
6. Prefer interior zone to open a little later and go further into December. (7)
7. Wants higher scaup bag limits (2)
8. Would like the Interior Zone to be split (11)
9. Move Missisquoi back into LCZ (5)
10. Happy with recommendations, keep as is (1)
11. Would like season to open Oct. 12 (17)
12. Allow hunting at Mud Creek on Sunday after opening day (1)
13. Shorten split between the 2 segments of LCZ (6)
14. Move up Start of second part of Snow Goose Season (1)
15. Does not support changing boundary of LCZ/IVZ (1)
16. Create Military/Veteran hunt during youth weekend (1)
17. Prefer 5 day first split to add days to 2<sup>nd</sup> split (1)
18. Happy with LCZ (1)
19. Prefers a longer first segment/more days in October (3)
20. Change LCZ to just north of Champlain Bridge (1)
21. Cut limit of Goldeneyes (1)
22. Reduce Limit on Mallards (3)
23. Late 2 for 20 on Scaup (13)
24. Want Wednesday Opener (5)
25. Move Woodcock season back a little bit to cover migrating birds (1)

Figure 1.





**Table 1.**

**2024 WATERFOWL SEASON RECOMMENDATION**

**LAKE CHAMPLAIN ZONE**

	<u>SEASON TYPE</u>	<u>SEASON LENGTH</u>	<u>INCLUSIVE DATES</u>	<u>DAILY LIMIT</u>	<u>POSSESSION LIMIT</u>
DUCKS *	Split	60 Days	<u>Oct. 12 – Nov. 3</u> & <u>Nov. 23 – Dec. 29</u>	6	18
MERGANSERS *	Split	60 Days	<u>Oct. 12 – Nov. 3</u> & <u>Nov. 23 – Dec. 29</u>	5	15
Scaup*	Split	40 Days	<u>Oct. 12 – Nov. 3 &amp; Nov. 23 – Dec. 9</u>	1	3
	Hybrid	20 Days	<u>Dec. 10 – Dec. 29</u>	2	6
COOTS	Split	60 Days	<u>Oct. 12 – Nov. 3</u> & <u>Nov. 23 – Dec. 29</u>	15	45
GEESE					
Canada Geese	Straight	25 Days	<u>Sept. 1 – Sept. 25</u>	8	24
	Straight	30 Days	<u>Oct. 12 – Nov. 10</u>	3	9
	Straight	52 Days	<u>Dec. 1, 2024 – Jan. 21, 2025</u>	5	15
Snow Geese **	Split	107 Days	<u>Oct. 1 – Dec.31, 2024</u>	25	NONE
			<u>Feb. 24 – Mar. 10, 2025</u>	25	NONE
			<b>(CO)</b> <u>Mar. 11 – Apr. 20, 2025</u>	15	NONE
Brant	Straight	30 Days	<u>Oct. 12 – Nov. 10</u>	1	3

SHOOTING HOURS - All Waterfowl - All Days - ½ hour before sunrise to sunset

\* Federal species restrictions apply.

\*\* Includes blue geese also.

**(CO)** Conservation Order

Table 2.

**2024 WATERFOWL SEASON RECOMMENDATION**

**VERMONT INTERIOR ZONE**

	<u>SEASON TYPE</u>	<u>SEASON LENGTH</u>	<u>INCLUSIVE DATES</u>	<u>DAILY LIMIT</u>	<u>POSSESSION LIMIT</u>
DUCKS *	Straight	60 Days	<u>Oct. 12 – Nov., 10</u> <u>&amp; Nov. 23 – Dec. 22</u>	6	18
MERGANSERS *	Straight	60 Days	<u>Oct. 12 – Nov. 10</u> <u>&amp; Nov. 23 – Dec. 22</u>	5	15
SCAUP*	Split Hybrid	40 Days	<u>Oct. 12 – Nov. 10</u> <u>&amp; Nov. 23 – Dec. 2</u>	1	3
		20 Days	<u>Dec. 3 – Dec. 22</u>	2	6
COOTS	Split	60 Days	<u>Oct. 12 – Nov. 10</u> <u>&amp; Nov. 23 – Dec. 22</u>	15	45
GEESE					
Canada Geese	Straight	25 Days	<u>Sept. 1 – Sept. 25</u>	8	24
	Straight	30 Days	<u>Oct. 12 – Nov. 10</u>	3	9
	Straight	52 Days	<u>Dec. 1, 2024 – Jan. 21, 2025</u>	5	15
Snow Geese **	Straight	107 Days	<u>Oct. 1 – Dec.31, 2024</u>	25	NONE
			<u>Feb. 24 – Mar. 10, 2025</u>	25	NONE
			<b>(CO)</b> <u>Mar. 11 – Apr. 20, 2025</u>	15	NONE
Brant	Straight	30 Days	<u>Oct. 12 – Nov. 10</u>	1	3

SHOOTING HOURS - All Waterfowl - All Days - ½ hour before sunrise to sunset

- CO** Conservation Order
- \* Federal species restrictions apply.
- \*\* Includes blue geese also.

## Appendix A 2024 FALL CALENDAR Lake Champlain Zone

	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	29	30					
<b>OCTOBER</b>			1	2	3	4	5
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	27	28	29	30	31		
<b>NOVEMBER</b>						1	2
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DECEMBER</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	29	30	31				

 Proposed Lake Champlain Zone season

## 2024 FALL CALENDAR Interior Vermont Zone

	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	29	30					
<b>OCTOBER</b>			1	2	3	4	5
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	27	28	29	30	31		
<b>NOVEMBER</b>						1	2
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>DECEMBER</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	29	30	31				

 Proposed Interior Vermont Zone season

### **1. Gary Murdock 2/23/2024**

Good morning Mr. Bouton, if I were to ask for one consideration for waterfowl season, it would be an end to bass tournaments during our season, at least during the early season. I hunt in Shoreham, where space is limited. I can not in good conscience raise my shotgun while looking at bass boats bobbing around down range. I got so frustrated by it in the past that I stopped hunting for a few years and am at the point I may stop again for good. Nothing prevents these people from fishing anytime they want, they don't need the contest aspect to enjoy a day fishing. But by removing the contest, their attitudes change, and they are not as driven to fish around waterfowl hunters. Seems like a simple solution, just stop issuing permits for a couple weekends. If NY wants tournaments, then the anglers can stay on the NY side.

Sincerely,  
Gary Murdock  
Orwell / Shoreham VT.

### **2. Jacob Holmberg 2/23/2024**

Good Morning, I read over the water fowl schedule for the next season and had a few questions.

1.) if your season for waterfowl is 2024/25, we should make it that our tags we buy (hunting and the vermont stamp) in 2024 are still valid for the last little part of goose thats in January without having to buy a new hunting license and Vermont stamp come January 1st 2025.

I believe this is a gray area for hunters along with law enforcement because if the season starts in 2024 and ends in 2025 my stuff should be valid till that season ends.

2.) why don't we have an early duck season opening 1-2 days when goose season starts? I saw more ducks during the first weekend than I did during regular duck season. Would there be a huge impact is we allowed ducks (September 1-2) for the with a bag limit of 3?

3.) why don't we have the lake champlain zone on Lake Champlain and not have rt 7 the line between that and interior. That boundary change would be simple..if you're hunting on the lake at all thats the zone.

### **3. Paul Trono 2/23/2024**

Good morning, Please explain to me why setting dates/limits for Vermont are holding one of two meetings in NY? There may be a good explanation but the optics don't look good.

Thanks,

Paul Trono



**4. Jim Bellinghri 2/23/2024**

I prefer no October dates. Start later in November, continuing into January.

Thanks for all you do

**5. William Denno 2/23/2024**

I know I don't have much say in anything for the seasons and dates you guys pick but I'm a active interior hunter and I'd like to see the interior season open a little later the the first Saturday and also go later into December Sent from my iPhone

**6. Jeff Burger 2/24/2024**

Hi Andrew, just one question I have on the new 2024 duck seasons. Just curious why the scaup bag limits are so low. I'm not a scaup hunter, but this past year on the lake Champlain I have been watching huge rafts of these birds. They have been here late fall thru ice up around the sandbar area. I would have to estimate at times close to 1000 birds on the lake in front of my house (1 mile south of the ferry, south hero).

Thanks  
Jeff

**7. Jim Sackett 2/24/2024**

Hi Andrew:

I'd like to propose splitting the duck hunting season in the Interior Zone to be the same as the Lake Champlain Zone. My reasoning is this:

Since the Missisquoi region was moved from the Lake Champlain Zone to the Interior Zone in 2011, the quality of the hunting there has noticeably declined. A major factor for this, I believe, is the absence of a split season. The delta never gets a break and the resulting pressure drives the birds to other areas to seek safety. Prior to 2011, the season in the Missisquoi was split (with some exceptions), which gave the marsh a chance to rest and provided hunters with some excellent shooting when the season reopened.

The argument against this that I've heard is that the interior marshes, lakes and ponds freeze early and hunters would therefore be deprived of the opportunity to hunt those locations if the season were to end later. While this may be true to an extent, my sense is the number of hunters who would be negatively impacted would be relatively small when compared to the number of hunters who are negatively impacted by the lack of a split season in the Missisquoi.

Table 5 in the Season Proposal document clearly shows that the number of ducks taken per hunter has declined since 2011. While there may be other factors involved in this decline, the one thing that we know for certain is there have been no split seasons in Missisquoi since then.

Ultimately, I think it would make sense to move the Missisquoi back into the Lake Champlain Zone, but I realize that this can't be done until 2031. In the meantime, it would seem reasonable to split the season in the Interior Zone, even if it was done on a trial basis for a few years, in order to maximize overall hunter opportunities.

Thanks for your consideration

Jim Sackett  
Shelburne VT

**8. George Spear 2/28/2024**

I've been a waterfowl hunter in Vermont since 1949. I believe that the recommendations of the F&W Department for the 2024 season are excellent and respectfully request that the F&W Board adopt these recommendations in their entirety.

Sincerely,  
George E. Spear, II Esq.

Mailed copies: Matthew Spear, David Vanslette, Michael Vanslette

**9. Ed Barber 2/28/2024**

Will the waterfowl meetings be available on Zoom?

Thanks

Ed Barber

Newport Daily Express

**10. Sid Harmon 2/29/2024**

Andrew -

I'd like to propose starting waterfowl hunting the second saturday in October due to higher temps in early October. Over the 11 years prior to 2021 the average temp in October was 56.80 degrees. After 2020 the average October temps have been 60.80 which is significant. In the six days leading up to Oct 7th last year the temps ranged from 72 to 85 .

It has been rare for the season to start before Oct 10th and has only happened 7 times in the last 20 years. It is more physically demanding to hunt under the hotter conditions. I think the board should consider this issue. I wonder how other states are handling this issue.

I would also like to propose that hunting at Mud Creek be allowed on the Sunday following opening day.. With the season opening on Saturday's only there is a 3 day wait before being able to hunt on a Tuesday. This delay leads to the loss of a prime hunting opportunity and a decline in interest. I

think harvest rates at Mud Creek have declined. There were only 3-4 parties hunting on opening day this year.

Thanks for your consideration

Sid Harmon

#### **11. Paul Healy 3/6/2024**

I would like to see the opener for ducks pushed back at LEAST a week, ESPECIALLY if youth weekend is the last weekend in September. I think more of a buffer between the 2 is better, and Oct 5 is just too early. I would also like to see the 1<sup>st</sup> split be a little longer and the period between the 2 splits be shorter. As it stands, there's just TOO much time between the 2 splits. I live in Grand Isle and have been hunting the same bay in North Hero for over FIFTY years. There have been years where I have been frozen out by Thanksgiving, and with the way the seasons have been scheduled lately, I've had years where I actually only had 15-20 days of lake zone hunting. On top of that, due to a medical condition and the accompanying meds, I just can't hunt in cold weather anymore. Thank you.

From the desk of *Paul Healy*

#### **12. Kameron Brooks 3/12/2024**

I have several suggestions for the upcoming season and future seasons:

- Can the Feb. 24<sup>th</sup> – Mar 10<sup>th</sup> snow goose season be moved to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> season so it would run from Oct 1<sup>st</sup> to Jan 16<sup>th</sup>?
- I know it has been mentioned at previous years meeting about moving the LCZ/IVZ border to the shores of Lake Champlain. I **DO NOT** support this, please don't make any changes next year.
- It would be nice to create a military/veteran weekend, similar to NY. This could be included during the youth weekend or at another time.
- I would rather see a 5 day first split duck season in the LCZ rather than the proposed 9 day season. This would allow more days for the second split(starting earlier or ending later or both).

Thanks,  
Kameron Brooks  
Middlebury, VT

#### **13. Michael Gardner 3/12/2024**

Dear F+W board members,

Once again I write with disappointment on the proposed dates for the Interior Zone duck season. Frankly this is bordering on ridiculous, we've changed the Lake Champlain split season to accommodate the realization that our climate is changing, but we fail to address that same reality for the Interior season. Last season's changes to the Champlain split were overwhelmingly positive. NY has changed their season dates for their Western zone and extended them in to



January .New Hampshire (which has the benefit of a split that we do not), has extended their interior season to nearly Christmas. Massachusetts to our south runs until the end of December!

Hunters and conservationists are frustrated with Vermont, and I am certainly one of them. Facing the impacts of climate change and not changing our Interior Zone dates to reflect the statistically proven migration models that PROVE birds are migrating later is a fool's errand. I would strongly encourage the board to be proactive in looking at changing the Interior Zone dates. Start later than October 5th, the local birds that you are targeting will still be here with a later start date, heck many of them haven't even finished fully molting by the time you start the season in early October. The last 2 years migratory birds in the interior zone didn't show up until the last 9 days of the season and interior beaver ponds didn't even have skim ice until nearly Thanksgiving.

It's time to recognize that patterns have changed, and the season should change with it. PLEASE reconsider your Interior Zone dates. Every state surrounding us has made changes, it's time for Vermont to do the same. I'd simultaneously consider having the waterfowl meetings available on ZOOM, Neither location is even remotely accessible on a work night for anyone living in Southern Vermont, especially Southeastern Vermont.

Respectfully

Michael Gardner  
Shaftsbury, VT

#### **14. Brian Vargo 3/12/2024**

To Whom It May Concern:

I am very fortunate to have grown up in Vermont and somehow have managed to stay in Vermont my whole life. I am even more fortunate to spend much of this time pursuing all forms of outdoor recreation in the state, including hunting migratory birds.

I live next to large sections of public river in the Interior zone and also some ponds and sloughs adjacent to this river that I commonly hunt with my Boykin spaniels. As you might imagine, I also run my dogs on a daily basis on this land and can say without a doubt that there are far more migratory birds significantly after the season has closed than there used to be in our area. Duck season in the Interior zone, where we are, has pretty much turned into shooting birds that I can watch all summer, primarily wood ducks and black ducks with almost no migratory waterfowl, unless we happen to get a "Nor'easter". My friends, almost all of which I have mentored into hunters, as they did not have the same access that I had growing up, have all moved to adjacent states. While many of them are still very new to hunting, they have the ability to hunt when there are more ducks to be hunted, whereas I will commonly call them to not come hunting because there is no good reason to waste time, money and effort on a day where you might see 3 birds flying total. Ironically, I can go scout the same spots where I saw 3 ducks per day during the season in January and see quite literally hundreds of new ducks. Frankly, it is sad to see where we are given the very well documented changes in our climate but yet very little change regarding the seasons when those animals come and go. While I am not a biologist, I could not name one duck hunter that would agree we have a duck season during pretty much any of the migration.

Please reconsider the Interior zone dates as I fear such terrible hunting will inevitably lead to fewer hunters, fewer conservation efforts and ultimately more hunters traveling out of state to chase migratory birds during the migration, including myself. Please also reconsider where you host the 2 Migratory Game Bird Hearings as Ticonderoga is the wrong state and zone and Essex is completely unattainable from most of Vermont other than Chittenden county on a Thursday night.

Respectfully,  
Brian Vargo

**15. Lawrence Pyne 3/15/2024**

To the VT F&W Board:

I was unable to attend either in-person hearing on the proposed 2024 waterfowl rules and would like to provide my input now:

Please move opening day of duck season in the Interior and Lake Champlain zones back by one week to Oct. 12.

Doing so would:

- Make opening day in Vermont align with the duck season opener(s) in adjoining zones in New York, which would help alleviate hunting pressure on Lake Champlain.
- Extend the closing date of the Interior Zone season by one week. It is my belief that a Dec. 3 closing of the Interior Zone season (as proposed) is far too early, especially in light of climate change. A Dec. 10 closing date would give Interior Zone hunters a better chance of encountering late migrants, especially mallards and black ducks.
- Increase the likelihood of more favorable hunting weather (the first week of October is often very warm and buggy, as it was in 2023).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Pyne  
Weybridge, VT

**16. Lane Perry 3/18/2024**

Hello,

First - thank you for taking the time to hold public hearings, it's very appreciated and insightful to hear about the work the department and Andrew is doing regarding waterfowl in our state!

Regarding some of the suggestions for Vermont's 2024 Migratory bird season:

- The Lake Champlain Zone split as it is currently recommended is good. Having the opener on a Saturday is preferential for me as it allows the greatest opportunity to hunt opening day vs. a mid-week opener. I wouldn't mind a 2nd week on the opening split and one less week on the close. (Oct 5th - Oct 20th, season closes 7 days earlier in December).
- Interior Zone if requiring a straight season should start later. If possible to change it to a split, it would benefit from a later closing date near mid-December. Warmer weather seems to keep interior zone waters open later into the season.
- Early and Late Canada Goose seasons are good.

All the best,  
Lane Perry

### **17. C. J. Frankiewicz 3/18/2024**

Vermont Fish & Wildlife Board:

My comments and recommendations on the 2024 waterfowl season proposals are as follows:

1. The first duck season in the Lake Champlain Zone is proposed to be October 5-13 and the second November 9-December 29. Opening and closing the second duck season in the LCZ on these dates effectively takes away several weeks of duck hunting on the portion of LC south of the Champlain Bridge. A portion of the four weeks between the first and second seasons is lost to those hunting southern LC—and this loss is *not regained* by ending December 29. Southern LC, being much shallower than northern LC, freezes up well before December 29, and, thus, is un-huntably after freeze-up. The opener of the second duck season should be October 26 and the close on December 15. In numbers, this proposal means four mallards are gained to the loss of one or two scaup. Additionally, an earlier opener would result in more days coinciding with the Canada goose season.
2. An alternative is to designate the LCZ to be entirely north of the Champlain Bridge and the southern part to be Interior Zone. Another more southerly border should be considered. Unfortunately, this was not brought up for discussion at the meeting in Essex Junction.
3. With warmer autumns, the opener of the first duck season should start either on Wednesday, October 9 or Saturday, October 12. Wednesday openers have been traditional two of every three years. And October 12 would coincide with the Canada Goose opener.
4. An enlarged view of the LCZ/Interior border from Swanton to LC on the map is necessary to understand it. This border is not at all as straightforward as all other borders.
5. The presentation of the graphic views of movements and migration of ducks and geese via geolocators was most impressive. They should be a great help to management of waterfowl.

Thanks for listenin'.

Please reply that you received this email.

C. J. Frankiewicz  
East Clarendon

**Jim Mirenda 3/25/2024**

I would like to see the proposed Woodcock dates changed to october 2- november 15. this slightly later time would match previous years and also increase the chance to hunt flight birds migration later in the season.

Jim Mirenda



East Dorset

**Phone Call/In person Comments**

**Anonymous**

Oct. 5 is too early to start. Should start Oct. 12 and open with Goose Season.

So many geese around, to not give duck hunters a chance at geese is a shame.

**Don Rivers**

- Concerned about Goldeneyes: cut back limit to 4
  - Not as many as we used to have
- Bluebills thousands of them
  - Increase the limit on them
- Wants Wednesday openers: less hunting pressure, bass tournaments
  - Resounding show of hands wanted Wednesdays
- Miss the October days
- St Albans bay
- Where were all the AGWT this year?
- Liked the early opener
- Mallards at 3, 4 is too high

3/14/24

2 board members  
Jay Sweeney  
Rob Patterson  
31 public

3 VT staff  
1 NY staff  
2 wardens

- Don't have it so late, closure to long.
- Southern part freezes up and 2 weeks.
- What is status of GWTeal
- Why did mallards go from 4-72-74 over a few years

## Migratory Game Bird Hearing Questions

### Questions

- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Lake Champlain Zone? *Happy w/ Champlain zone*
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Interior Vermont Zone?
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the late resident Canada goose season in December 2024 and January 2025?
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the woodcock season?  
*No comment*
- Do you have any comments/thoughts on future Waterfowl Hunting zone boundary changes?  
*No change*
- Do you have a preference on the Scaup hybrid season? (2 birds for 20 days first or last)  
*Late*

### ➤ **More public comment/ testimony?**

- Email [ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov)

1. *Happy w/ Champlain zone  
No Ice not driving birds to lake  
Love last week of Dec.  
Oct. 12 - Oct. 19    Nov. 9 - Dec. 29 or later*
2. *Split Interior for 1 week*
3. *Like ability to hunt in January  
if geese are around*

open on 10<sup>th</sup> duck + goose on same day

open on wednesday - 10<sup>th</sup>

Second season open earlier by 2 weeks - one week split

---

Interior zone open earlier for 10/12 or 10/10

---

Late RP goose season was good - one guy

---

No comments on woodcock

---

Miss - back to LCZ one person - others no objection

---

Scaup - no preferences

New John Austin

Migratory Game Bird Hearing Questions

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

**Questions**

- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Lake Champlain Zone? ~~None~~ O/B Dates
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Interior Vermont Zone? \* NONE
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the late resident Canada goose season in December 2024 and January 2025? O/B?
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the woodcock season? Don't hunt
- Do you have any comments/thoughts on future Waterfowl Hunting zone boundary changes? No
- Do you have a preference on the Scaup hybrid season? (2 birds for 20 days first or last) 2 birds and half 1st half 1 BIRD - LIKE LAST YEAR.

➤ **More public comment/ testimony?**

- Email [ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov)

Wednesday openness. Bring em back.



Migratory Game Bird Hearing Questions

wed Nov 6 Second opening DATE

**Questions**

- o What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Lake Champlain Zone?

Generally Approved

- o What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Interior Vermont Zone?

See below

- o What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the late resident Canada goose season in December 2024 and January 2025?

No issue around

- o What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the woodcock season?

NO OPINION

- o Do you have any comments/thoughts on future Waterfowl Hunting zone boundary changes?

- o Do you have a preference on the Scaup hybrid season? (2 birds for 20 days first or last)

1 early 2 end

➤ **More public comment/ testimony?**

Jeri birds early

- o Email [ANR.FWPpublicComment@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.FWPpublicComment@vermont.gov)

BRING ~~back~~ Wed openness

Missisquoi back To Lake Zone  
30000 birds during split

MAY 1 3:00  
MINOR

Migratory Game Bird Hearing Questions

**Questions**

- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Lake Champlain Zone? LIKE IT
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Interior Vermont Zone? LIKE IT
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the late resident Canada goose season in December 2024 and January 2025? N/A
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the woodcock season? N/A
- Do you have any comments/thoughts on future Waterfowl Hunting zone boundary changes? KEEP THINGS THE SAME
- Do you have a preference on the Scaup hybrid season? (2 birds for 20 days first or last) EARLY 2 LATE

➤ **More public comment/ testimony?**

- Email [ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov)

WEDNESDAY

OPENER  
IN THE FUTURE

Migratory Game Bird Hearing Questions

John  
Lesher

**Questions**

- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Lake Champlain Zone? The split on the lake is too long
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Interior Vermont Zone? There fine
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the late resident Canada goose season in December 2024 and January 2025? Fine
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the woodcock season? Fine
- Do you have any comments/thoughts on future Waterfowl Hunting zone boundary changes? Put Missisquoi back in the lake zone
- Do you have a preference on the Scaup hybrid season? (2 birds for 20 days first or last) NO

➤ **More public comment/ testimony?**

- Email [ANR.FWPpublicComment@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.FWPpublicComment@vermont.gov)

Bring Wednesday opener back  
Wed Nov 6th as second  
opener for lake season

BRADLEY CARLETON

Migratory Game Bird Hearing Questions

**Questions**

- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Lake Champlain Zone? *SHORTEN SPLIT TO BEGIN WED 10/6*
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Interior Vermont Zone? *PUT MEXXODI PAROL INTO LEZ W/ SPLIT*
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the late resident Canada goose season in December 2024 and January 2025? *FINE*
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the woodcock season? *FINE*
- Do you have any comments/thoughts on future Waterfowl Hunting zone boundary changes? *NO*
- Do you have a preference on the Scaup hybrid season? (2 birds for 20 days first or last) *RAISE LIMITS TO 2 BIRDS ON END - 1 BIRD BEGINNING*
- **More public comment/ testimony?** *PLEASE BRING BACK WED. OPENERS*
  - Email [ANR.FWPpublicComment@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.FWPpublicComment@vermont.gov)

Migratory Game Bird Hearing Questions

John Bourbon  
jibdecoys@gmail.com

**Questions**

- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Lake Champlain Zone? I PREFER IT TO OPEN THE SAME AS  
BEFORE - OCT 10 OR 12<sup>th</sup>
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Interior Vermont Zone? SAME AS ABOVE
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the late resident Canada goose season in December 2024 and January 2025?
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the woodcock season?
- Do you have any comments/thoughts on future Waterfowl Hunting zone boundary changes? CHANGE THE INTERIOR ZONE TO EXCLUDE THE AREA  
NORTH OF THE WEST SWANSON BRIDGE
- Do you have a preference on the Scaup hybrid season? (2 birds for 20 days first or last)

➤ **More public comment/ testimony?**

- Email [ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov)

Jason Kellogg

Migratory Game Bird Hearing Questions

**Questions**

- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Lake Champlain Zone? OPEN OCT 10 + OPEN GOOSE SEASON CONCURRENTLY
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Interior Vermont Zone? SAME AS LCR
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the late resident Canada goose season in December 2024 and January 2025? N/A
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the woodcock season? N/A
- Do you have any comments/thoughts on future Waterfowl Hunting zone boundary changes? KEEP AS IS
- Do you have a preference on the Scaup hybrid season? (2 birds for 20 days first or last) N/A

➤ **More public comment/ testimony?**

- Email [ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov)

## Migratory Game Bird Hearing Questions

### ***Questions***

- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Lake Champlain Zone? *Good with it*
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Interior Vermont Zone? *Late Start on Straight or Split*
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the late resident Canada goose season in December 2024 and January 2025?
- What are your comments on the <sup>*Good*</sup> proposed hunting season dates for the woodcock season?
- Do you have any comments/thoughts on future Waterfowl Hunting zone boundary changes?
- Do you have a preference on the Scaup hybrid season? (2 birds for 20 days first or last)

### ➤ ***More public comment/ testimony?***

- Email [ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov)

## Migratory Game Bird Hearing Questions

### **Questions**

- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Lake Champlain Zone? *OK as proposed*
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Interior Vermont Zone? *OK can interior zone be split 2 week close then open up last 2 weeks Dec.*
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the late resident Canada goose season in December 2024 and January 2025? *ok*
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the woodcock season?
- Do you have any comments/thoughts on future Waterfowl Hunting zone boundary changes? *Champlain zone should be Champlain only*
- Do you have a preference on the Scaup hybrid season? (2 birds for 20 days first or last) *~~yes~~ 1 early and 2 later*

### ➤ **More public comment/ testimony?**

- Email [ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov)



## Migratory Game Bird Hearing Questions

### **Questions**

- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Lake Champlain Zone? *Should follow conservative season and bag limit for mallard.*
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Interior Vermont Zone? *Again, in regards to mallards, follow a conservative season and bag limit.*
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the late resident Canada goose season in December 2024 and January 2025?  
*no comment*
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the woodcock season? *Seems like a large bag limit. Haven't read much about populations in Vermont, just don't see that many.*
- Do you have any comments/thoughts on future Waterfowl Hunting zone boundary changes? *I believe in regards to populations in decline, that there should be zone boundaries based on protecting breeding areas.*
- Do you have a preference on the Scaup hybrid season? (2 birds for 20 days first or last)  
*No preference.*

### ➤ **More public comment/ testimony?**

- Email [ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov)

## Migratory Game Bird Hearing Questions

### **Questions**

- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Lake Champlain Zone?
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Interior Vermont Zone?
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the late resident Canada goose season in December 2024 and January 2025?
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the woodcock season?
- Do you have any comments/thoughts on future Waterfowl Hunting zone boundary changes?
- Do you have a preference on the Scaup hybrid season? (2 birds for 20 days first or last)

### ➤ **More public comment/ testimony?**

- Email [ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov)

I am concerned about the ~36% decline in mallard populations from 1998-2018 in the Northeast population. I think the liberal bag limit on mallards does not reflect the significant population-level risks mallards are facing. I would appreciate a more robust discussion on the mallard bag limit from FW.

1 board Bob Patterson

1 NY Staff  
2 VT Boss & 2 Wardens  
5 Public

Title 10 ~~10000~~ 4902

\* Starlings, Pigeons, English sparrows, taking under title 10

Check on Gorse Search for AP Geese.

- check if reg packages came out

move 1st segment of LCZ to 10/12 starter.

Late 2/20 for Scaup



Handwritten signature, possibly "M. J. [unclear]".

## Migratory Game Bird Hearing Questions

### **Questions**

- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Lake Champlain Zone? *Proposed 10/12 - 10/12 ; 11/9 - 12/29*
  - What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Interior Vermont Zone? *ALL NY zones are 10/12; Lake will get too pressured if open on 10/5. No comment*
  - What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the late resident Canada goose season in December 2024 and January 2025?
  - What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the woodcock season?
  - Do you have any comments/thoughts on future Waterfowl Hunting zone boundary changes?
  - Do you have a preference on the Scaup hybrid season? (2 birds for 20 days first or last) *last 20 days for 2 birds*
- **More public comment/ testimony?**
- Email [ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov)

## Migratory Game Bird Hearing Questions

### **Questions**

- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Lake Champlain Zone? *shorten spread, start later*
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Interior Vermont Zone? *fine*
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the late resident Canada goose season in December 2024 and January 2025?  
*not that effective, froze up.*
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the woodcock season? *Do not participate.*
- Do you have any comments/thoughts on future Waterfowl Hunting zone boundary changes? *no*
- Do you have a preference on the Scaup hybrid season? (2 birds for 20 days first or last) *last*

### ➤ **More public comment/ testimony?**

- Email [ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov)

3/12/24  
Ticonderoga NY  
NY Residents

Migratory Game Bird Hearing Questions

**Questions**

- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Lake Champlain Zone? *SOUND PROPOSAL FOR SEASON. SHOULD OPEN 10/12 NOT 10/5 (SEE BELOW)*
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the Interior Vermont Zone? *NONE - DO NOT HUNT*
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the late resident Canada goose season in December 2024 and January 2025? *NONE - DO NOT HUNT*
- What are your comments on the proposed hunting season dates for the woodcock season? *NONE - DO NOT HUNT*
- Do you have any comments/thoughts on future Waterfowl Hunting zone boundary changes? *NO DISCUSSION AT MEETING*
- Do you have a preference on the Scaup hybrid season? (2 birds for 20 days first or last) *20 DAYS - END OF SEASON.*

➤ **More public comment/ testimony?**

- Email [ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov)

Thank you for holding the meetings and being receptive to hunter input.

We are trying to promote the meetings in NYS/Champlain Valley and are somewhat surprised at the lack of turnout at the Ticonderoga meeting.

I encourage Vermont Fish and Wildlife to consider moving the first split opening day to October 12, 2024. All of NYS Waterfowl Zones are opening on October 12<sup>th</sup>, (except for the Long Island Zone – which is closed on that date) and this is the first time that this has happened in our state.

I believe the hunting pressure on Lake Champlain for the opener/opening weekend (October 5<sup>th</sup>) will be unprecedented due to all NYS waterfowl hunters not having an open season in their home or travel areas. The only place for NYS hunters to hunt waterfowl during that first weekend/week will be the Lake Champlain Zone.

Without question there will be tremendous pressure on the resources and the quality of the hunting experience will be reduced due to hunter density and overall hunter numbers from NYS.

With the move to October 12<sup>th</sup> that will be significantly reduced, as we have seen in the past when NYS Northeast Zone and/or NYS Southeast Zone opener is aligned with the Lake Champlain first split opener.

Thank you,

George W. Gedney  
Queensbury NY

2024  
Moose Harvest  
Recommendation

to the  
Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board



Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department  
Agency of Natural Resources  
1 National Life Drive, Davis 2  
Montpelier, VT 05620-3208  
802-828-1000

*The Fish & Wildlife Department recommends the same moose hunting permit allocation adopted by the Board by straw vote on February 14, 2024. During the public comment period, which started immediately after the Board meeting on February 14, the Department did not receive any new or additional information to justify changes to the initial recommendation.*

*The following is the same text the Department submitted to the Board for its February meeting.*

*All public comments received are provided in the appendices.*



This recommendation aims to achieve moose population objectives established in the [2020-2030 Big Game Management Plan](#) and to improve the health of moose in WMUs E1 and E2 by reducing the impact of winter ticks. The Department recommends issuing 180 moose hunting permits between WMUs E1 and E2 to reduce the moose population and thereby reduce winter tick abundance. No permits are recommended for the other 19 WMUs, because moose densities remain below established objectives and hunting thresholds. The recommended permit allocation is the same as approved by the Board in 2023.

The current number of moose in WMU E has been sufficient to sustain winter ticks at high levels that are negatively affecting moose health and survival. Winter ticks are a host-dependent parasite with moose being the primary host responsible for major fluctuations in winter tick densities. Therefore, reduction in moose population density decreases the number of available hosts which in turn decreases the number of winter ticks on the landscape. Moose population reduction will be necessary to break the winter tick cycle and improve the health of moose in this region.

Reducing winter tick numbers directly, either by treating moose or the landscape with some form of acaricide or fungal pathogen, is not currently a viable option. Research in this area is ongoing, but the realities of treating an entire landscape or a sufficient portion of the moose population make it unlikely that this will be a practical option soon.

Failure to reduce moose population density will perpetuate the current, unhealthy state of moose in WMU E for decades and would be inconsistent with the Department's established objective of managing for a healthy moose population. Importantly, 65% of Vermont residents support maintaining a smaller moose population through hunting if it reduces the number of moose that die each year from winter ticks. Only 15% oppose this approach (*Responsive Management 2019*).

Although winter ticks can be found on moose throughout the northeast, they do not significantly impact moose populations across the more-peripheral parts of their range, including the rest of Vermont, due to lower moose population densities that limit tick abundance.

## Summary of Key Points

- The moose population remains stable in most of Vermont, including WMU E (E1 & E2).
- Moose density in WMU E remains above the objective of 1 moose per square mile established in the [2020-2030 Big Game Management Plan](#).
  - Moose densities greater than 1 moose per square mile are uncommon in North America, occurring in less than 10% of moose range.
  - In Vermont, no WMU outside the Northeast Kingdom ever had a moose density of 1/mi<sup>2</sup>.
  - Moose densities greater than 1/mi<sup>2</sup> support high numbers of winter ticks that negatively impact the health of moose.
  - Moose densities below 0.75/mi<sup>2</sup> support relatively few winter ticks that do not impact moose populations. This is the case in most of Vermont – winter ticks are present, but do not cause population level impacts.
- Results of moose research and ongoing monitoring in WMU E indicate health of moose is poor in that region.
  - Adult survival remains relatively good, but detrimental health impacts of winter ticks have caused birth rates to be very low.
  - Heavy winter tick loads can cause more than half of moose calves to die in late winter.
- The Department recommends 180 moose hunting permits (80 either sex and 100 antlerless only) be allocated in WMU E to reduce moose numbers and thereby reduce the impacts of winter ticks on the health of moose and help maintain a sustainable moose population.
  - This would result in the harvest of approximately 94 moose, or about 10% of the current estimated population in WMU E.
- No permits are recommended for the other 19 WMUs, which cover 93% of Vermont, because moose densities remain below objectives and hunting thresholds established in the [2020-2030 Big Game Management Plan](#).

## Goals

This recommendation aims to achieve moose population objectives established in the [2020-2030 Big Game Management Plan](#) and to improve the health of moose in WMUs E1 and E2 by reducing the impact of winter ticks.

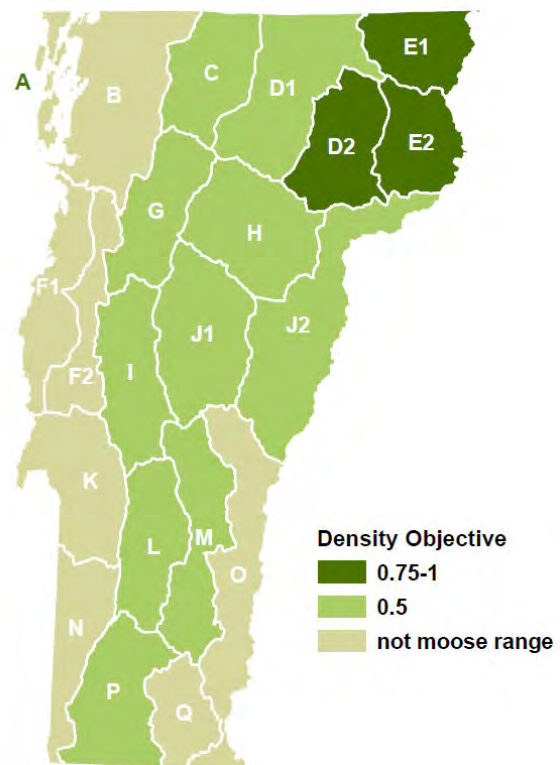
## Management Objectives

Moose population objectives for each WMU were established in Vermont's [2020-2030 Big Game Management Plan](#). These objectives aim to maintain healthy regional moose populations at levels that are socially acceptable and ecologically sustainable.

Moose density objectives throughout most of moose range in Vermont have been set at 0.5 moose/mi<sup>2</sup> (**Figure 1**). This objective is a carryover from earlier moose management plans, and reflects ecological limitations on moose densities in these regions due to limited young forest habitat, higher deer densities, and a warming climate. Moose densities in most of these WMUs have never reached 0.5 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>.

In WMUs D2, E1, and E2, density objectives reflect higher historical densities and the impact of winter ticks on the size and health of the region's moose population. Research has found reduced frequency of winter tick epizootics (where more than 50% of calves die from winter tick infestations) at moose densities near 1/mi<sup>2</sup> and no tick epizootics at densities below 0.75/mi<sup>2</sup> (Samuel 2007, Jones 2016). The Department will initially try to maintain moose densities at or below 1/mi<sup>2</sup> to reduce winter tick abundance and the frequency of epizootics and improve the health of the moose population. However, if tick impacts are not reduced, the moose density may need to be reduced to 0.75/mi<sup>2</sup>. Ultimately, the goal is to have healthy moose, with fewer calves dying each year from heavy winter tick loads and healthier cows with higher birth rates.

Hunting thresholds have also been established for each WMU at 75% of the density objective (**Table 1**). The Department will only consider hunting moose when densities exceed this threshold for two consecutive years. This ensures the other values of moose are maximized at these lower densities.



**Figure 1. Moose density objectives (moose per square mile of moose habitat) established in Vermont's [2020-2030 Big Game Management Plan](#).**

## Population Status

### Population Estimates

Regional moose densities in Vermont are estimated from moose sighting rates reported by deer hunters during the November rifle season. This approach, originally developed by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, relates sighting rates to moose densities determined by aerial surveys (Bontaites et al. 2000). Aerial surveys conducted in Vermont allowed the Department to modify this model to better fit Vermont sighting data. Sighting rates often vary from year to year due to factors other than the number of moose (e.g., weather conditions), so a 3-year rolling average is used to smooth out some of this variation.

Using this approach, the 2023 (2021–2023 rolling average) density estimates for WMUs E1 and E2 are 1.29 and 1.56 moose/mi<sup>2</sup>, respectively, which are well above the density objectives established in the *2020-2030 Big Game Management Plan*. Moose population densities in all other WMUs remain below established hunting thresholds (Table 1).

**Table 1. Moose density estimates based on sighting rates by deer hunters and density objectives and hunting thresholds established in the [2020-2030 Big Game Management Plan](#), by WMU. Density estimates are based on average sighting rates during 2021–2023.**

WMU	Habitat (mi <sup>2</sup> )	Density (moose/mi <sup>2</sup> )			Population Estimate	
		Objective	Hunting Threshold	Current Estimate	N	(80% CI)
A	35	n/a	n/a	0.02	1	(1–1)
B	420	n/a	n/a	0.05	21	(14–29)
C	351	0.5	0.38	0.36	126	(105–146)
D1	449	0.5	0.38	0.13	57	(41–72)
D2	346	0.75-1	0.56	0.46	160	(129–190)
E1	306	0.75-1	0.56	1.29	393	(343–444)
E2	326	0.75-1	0.56	1.56	508	(428–588)
F1	108	n/a	n/a	0.02	2	(2–2)
F2	158	n/a	n/a	0.03	4	(3–5)
G	363	0.5	0.38	0.06	22	(14–29)
H	466	0.5	0.38	0.19	87	(70–105)
I	407	0.5	0.38	0.11	46	(34–59)
J1	464	0.5	0.38	0.04	19	(14–23)
J2	633	0.5	0.38	0.22	137	(108–166)
K	359	n/a	n/a	0.04	15	(8–21)
L	346	0.5	0.38	0.13	44	(31–57)
M	424	0.5	0.38	0.22	93	(69–117)
N	275	n/a	n/a	0.02	6	(6–6)
O	478	n/a	n/a	0.02	12	(10–14)
P	447	0.5	0.38	0.15	68	(49–88)
Q	219	n/a	n/a	0.08	17	(10–23)
<b>STATE</b>	<b>7380</b>				<b>1837</b>	<b>(1489–2185)</b>

The Department continues to receive interest in moose hunting in areas outside WMU E, and some local areas could likely sustain a limited moose harvest. However, the uneven distribution of functional moose habitat (and therefore moose) in much of Vermont is a challenge for management. The Department will be reevaluating moose habitat mapping, taking advantage of recent research efforts (e.g., Pearman-Gilman et al. 2020, Blouin et al. 2021a) to better reflect the area of functional habitat in each WMU. This should allow for setting more appropriate and achievable population objectives and calculating more meaningful estimates of moose density in WMUs with less homogeneous moose habitat.

In WMU E, moose were overabundant in the early 2000s and the Department intentionally worked to reduce moose numbers. Since population reduction efforts ended in 2010, moose density has remained relatively stable in WMU E near 1.5 moose/mi<sup>2</sup> (Figure 2). Importantly, the density of moose over that time has been high enough to support problematic numbers of winter ticks.

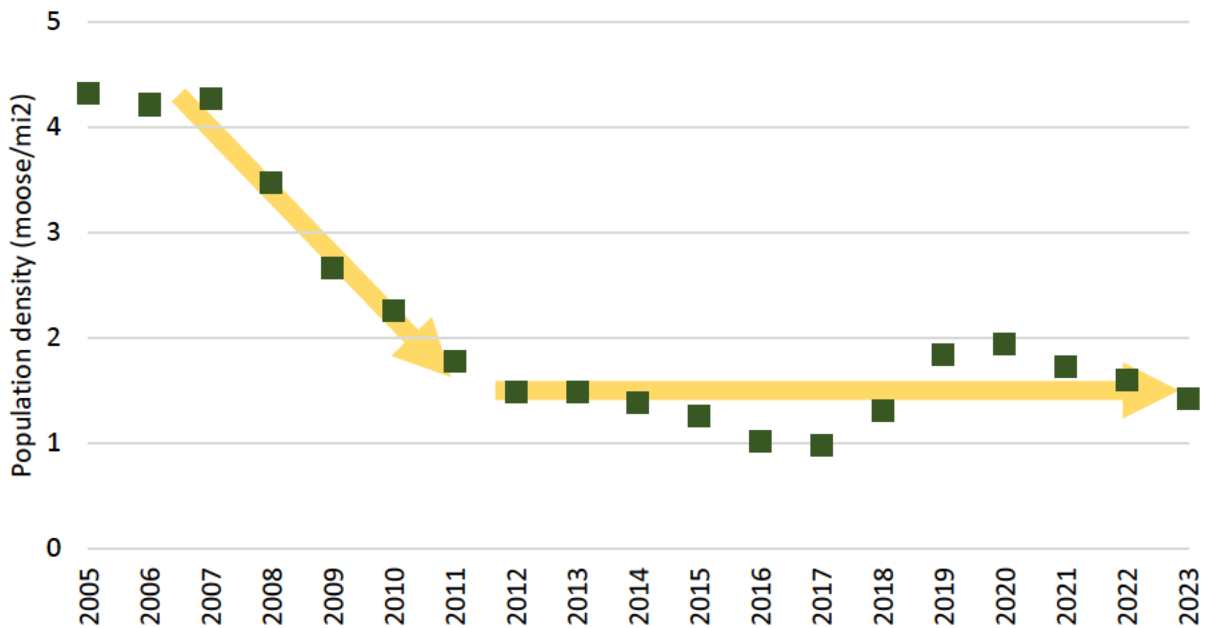


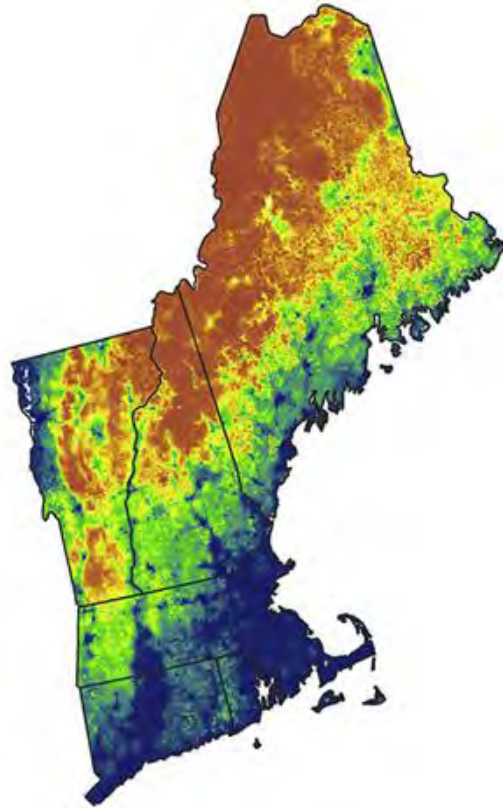
Figure 2. Moose density estimates (green squares) and major trends (yellow arrows) in WMU E during 2005–2023. Density estimates are based on moose sighting rates reported by deer hunters.

## Moose and Winter Ticks

Studies in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine have concluded that winter ticks are the primary cause of moose mortality across their core range in New England (Musante et al. 2007, 2010, Bergeron et al. 2013, Dunfey-Ball 2017, Jones et al. 2017, Ellingwood et al. 2019, Jones et al. 2019, DeBow et al. 2021), with some moose hosting an astonishingly high number of ticks (>50,000/individual; Jones et al. 2019).

Core moose range (continuous red/brown area in **Figure 3**) in New England extends from northeastern Vermont through northern New Hampshire and western and northern Maine. This part of the region has a colder climate with longer winters, low deer densities, large blocks of forest, and an abundance of young forest created by commercial timber management which allows it to sustain higher densities of moose than more peripheral parts of their range. Population-level effects of winter ticks have only been observed in the region's core moose range, where moose densities have been high enough to support large numbers of winter ticks.

Although winter ticks can be found on moose throughout the region, they are not impacting moose populations across the more-peripheral parts of their range in the northeast, including the rest of Vermont, due to lower moose densities which limit tick abundance. Moose numbers outside of the Northeast Kingdom have declined, but the main cause of that decline was not winter ticks. It was likely due to a combination of declining quantity of young forest, increased parasite loads (particularly brainworm linked to increasing deer densities), and fewer moose in core moose range to migrate out to these other regions.



**Figure 3. Estimated probability of occurrence of moose in the New England region from Pearman-Gilman et al. 2020.**

## Vermont Research

During 2017–2019, 126 moose (36 adult cows and 90 calves) were fitted with GPS radio collars in WMU E to monitor survival and birth rates. Results of this research clearly showed that chronic, high winter tick loads caused the health of moose in WMU E to be poor. Birth rates were low and overwinter calf survival was poor (49%; DeBow et al. 2021). Although adult female survival remained relatively good, it was lower than expected for a population without major predators. Survival of breeding age females has significant influence on population trends in long-lived species like moose.

### *Ongoing and Future Research*

Fieldwork associated with the survival study concluded in 2019; however, the Department continues to monitor survival and calf recruitment in the remaining collared cows. Additionally, the large amounts of data collected during this study allowed University of Vermont researchers to analyze other aspects of

moose and winter tick ecology. This related research focused on understanding 1) How winter tick impacts on moose relate to habitat use and quality (see Blouin et al. 2021a and Blouin et al. 2021b), 2) How winter ticks affect moose nutritional condition and stress levels (see Rosenblatt et al. 2021), and 3) Moose genetic diversity and connectivity (see Rosenblatt et al. 2023).

Other related research at UVM assessed the effect of various fungal pathogens on survival of winter tick larvae (see Sullivan et al. 2021 and Sullivan et al. 2022). While some of these fungi resulted in high mortality of winter tick larvae in the lab, an important next step is to determine the effectiveness and feasibility of using these pathogens to control winter ticks in the field.

The Department is currently partnering with multiple northeastern universities and state and federal agencies on regional research efforts focused on non-invasive monitoring of moose and winter ticks. A component of this involves deployment of hundreds of long-term camera monitoring stations that will hopefully allow for better monitoring of moose health and population trends, particularly in parts of the region with little or no moose harvest.

### Recent Winter Tick Impacts in WMU E

The severity of annual tick infestations is dependent not only on moose density, but also on climate, including temperature, humidity, wind, and snow. Annual variation in climate conditions results in variation in winter tick loads on moose. As long as climate conditions periodically result in reduced winter tick infestations, moose densities can remain at levels that perpetuate heavy tick loads and unhealthy moose for the foreseeable future.

Vermont has not collared moose calves since 2019. As a result, the Department relies on other sources of information to estimate winter tick impacts since that time. Summer calf recruitment of collared cow moose was better during 2020-2023 than during 2017-2019 (Figure 4). Additionally, small improvements in health measures for all age classes (see Population Health), and anecdotal evidence (e.g., reports of dead moose, bloody beds, engorged ticks in snowmobile trails) suggest that tick impacts have been lower during at least 3 of the past 4 years.

While reduced winter tick impacts are encouraging, they are likely the result of unfavorable climate conditions for winter ticks in recent years. Fluctuations in winter tick impacts are expected, and current moose densities in WMU E will allow winter tick abundance and impacts on moose to increase again when climate conditions are more favorable for ticks.

Winter tick counts on bull moose harvested in October 2023 were comparable to those observed in recent years (Figure 6). The long-term trend in this index is encouraging, but there has been no change since 2016.

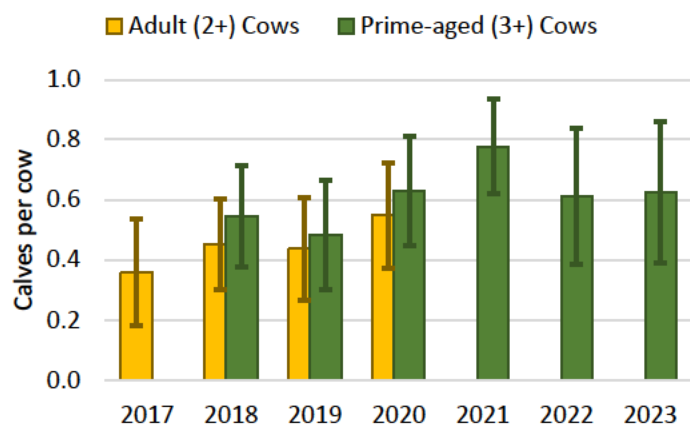
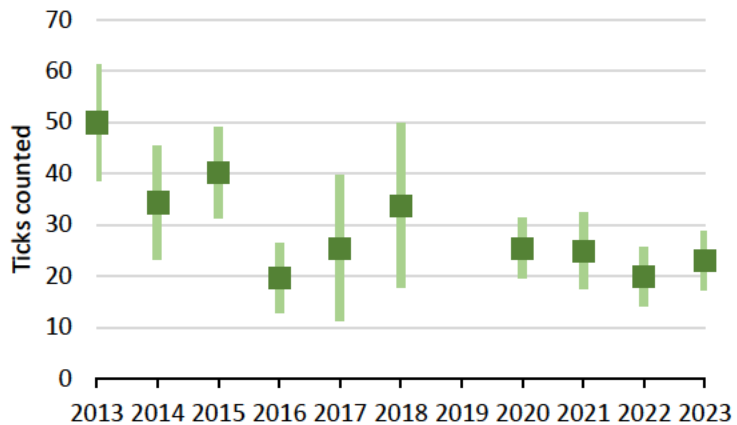


Figure 5. Summer calf recruitment of collared cow moose in Wildlife Management Unit E, 2017–2023.

This measure provides an indication of tick abundance on the landscape, but final tick loads on moose are largely determined by the length of the questing period. The questing period is typically ended by weather conditions (e.g., persistent snow or freezing conditions) that kill questing winter tick larvae. Persistent snow arrived in late October, 2023 in much of WMU E, which may result in reduced winter tick impacts again in 2024.



**Figure 6. Winter tick counts on bull moose harvested in Wildlife Management Unit E, 2013–2023.**

### Population Health in WMU E

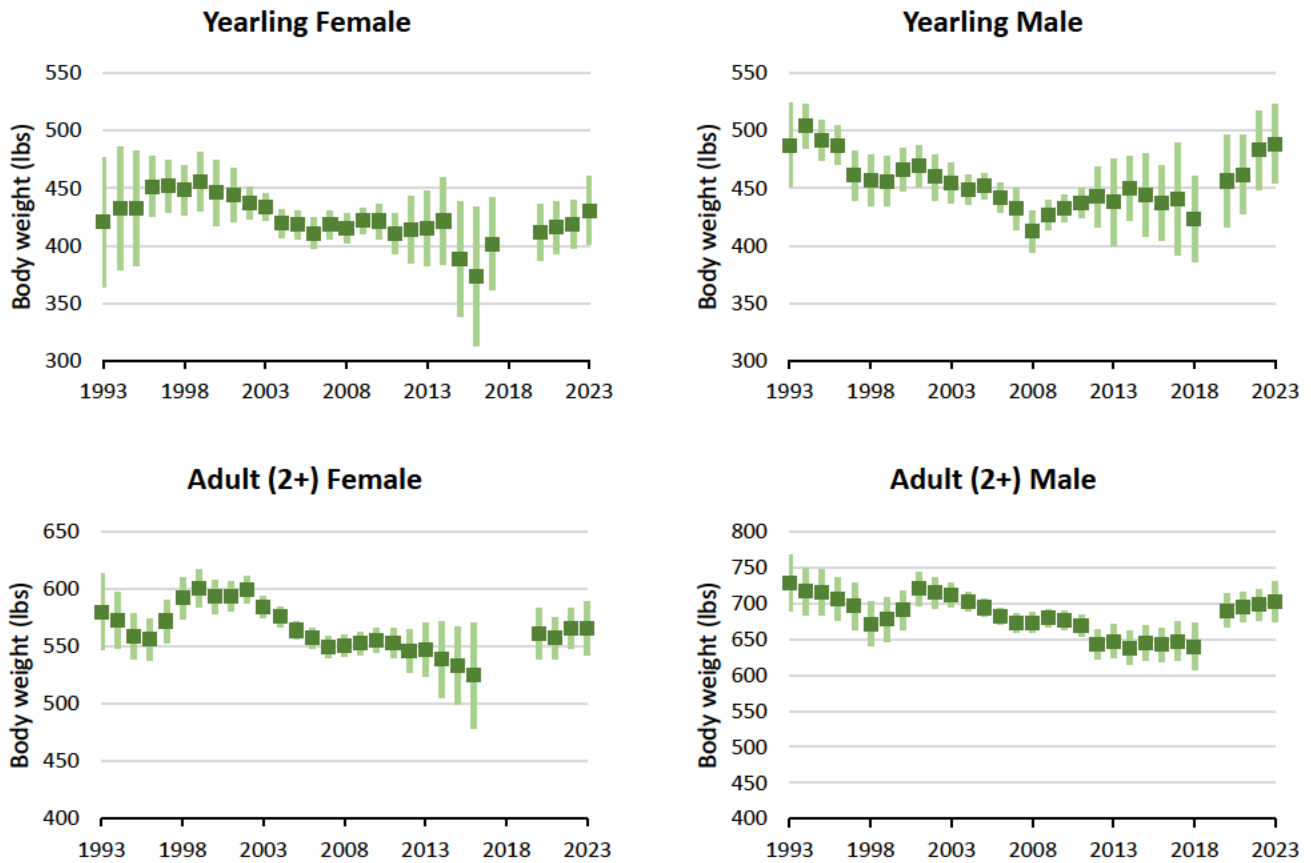
In the early 2000s, moose were overabundant in WMU E. They were causing significant damage to forest regeneration and their physical condition was declining as habitat quality declined. The Department actively reduced the moose population in this area to bring it into balance with the habitat and to improve the health of moose. By 2011, the population had been reduced to a level the habitat could support; however, health measures did not improve (Figures 7 and 8).

Moose body condition and reproductive rates have remained poor since 2011 due to the impacts of chronic high winter tick loads. Moose are not currently limited by habitat in the core part of their range, including WMU E (Dunfey-Ball 2017). However, habitat quality can influence the distribution of moose on the landscape (i.e., higher densities of moose in areas with the highest quality habitat), which can influence local winter tick abundance and impacts on moose health (Healy et al. 2019, Blouin et al. 2021a and b). Broader distribution and increased volume of timber harvests in WMU E over the past decade has resulted in a better distribution of optimal habitat. As a result, it appears moose are less concentrated around a limited number of hot spots.

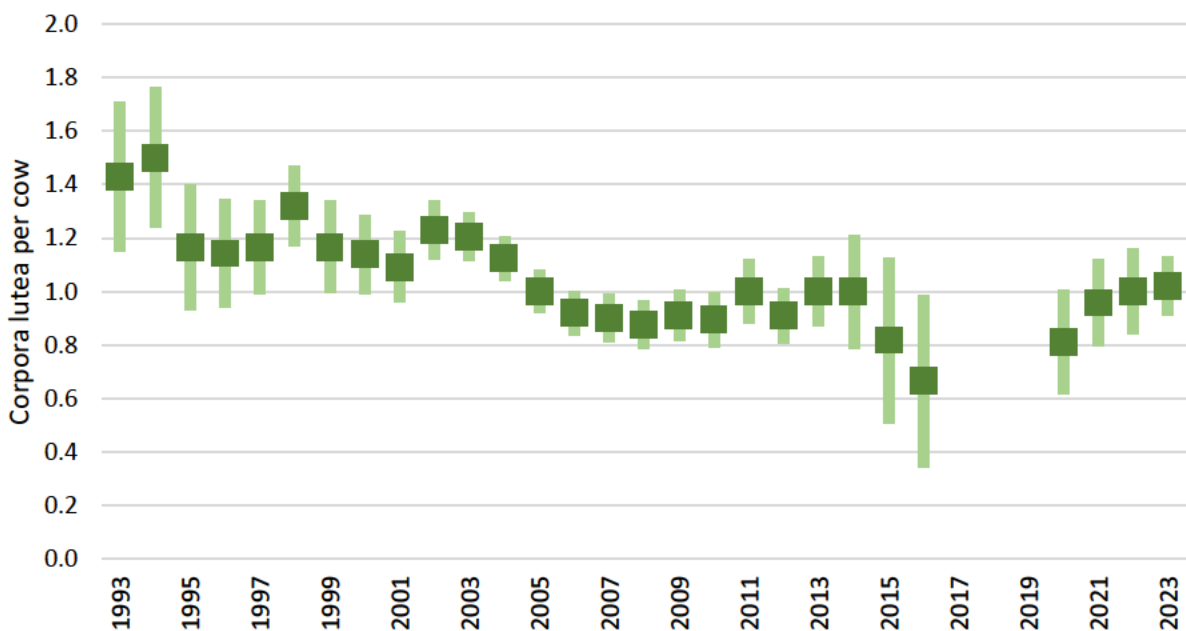
It is unlikely that recent moose harvests (prior to 2023) were sufficient to cause a population reduction that would affect winter tick abundance. However, they have at least limited or prevented population growth, which in combination with a better distribution of optimal habitat, has likely limited local concentrations of moose that benefit winter ticks. In this way, moose density, as it affects winter tick abundance, may have functionally been reduced despite little or no change in overall average density across the WMU.

Body condition and reproductive rates have shown signs of improvement in recent years. This has likely been driven by reduced winter tick impacts in recent years due primarily to unfavorable climate conditions for ticks. While this is encouraging, we still need to see additional and sustained improvement. Even with a better distribution of optimal habitat, moose population reduction will be necessary to maintain these improvements when future climate conditions become more favorable for winter ticks.





**Figure 7. Field-dressed body weights of moose harvest during the regular season in Wildlife Management Unit E, 1993–2023. Data are 3-year rolling averages with 95% confidence intervals.**



**Figure 8. Ovulation rate of prime-aged ( $\geq 3$  years old) cow moose in WMU E, 1993-2023. Data are 3-year rolling averages from counts of corpora lutea in ovaries collected from hunter-harvested moose.**

## Harvest Recommendation

The Department recommends harvesting approximately 47 adult cow moose (~10% of the cow population) in WMU E during the 2024 moose hunting seasons. The Department further recommends that this be accomplished through the issuance of 80 either-sex hunting permits and 100 antlerless-only hunting permits. Given historical success rates and sex-age composition of the harvest for each permit type, this allocation is expected to result in the harvest of approximately 94 moose with an expected breakdown of 41 bulls, 47 cows, and 6 calves.

Approximately 55% of permits are recommended to be allocated to WMU E1 due to higher moose densities in that WMU. Approximately 25% of either-sex permits are allocated to the archery season, based on the percentage of total applications that were for this season in recent years and the need to obtain sufficient biological data during the regular season. Allocations to the auction, special opportunity, and veterans are the same as prior years and are limited by statute and regulation. Permit breakdown by season, type, WMU, and special allocation is provided below in Table 2. This is the same permit allocation approved by the Fish and Wildlife Board in 2023.

**Table 2. Recommended 2024 moose hunting permit allocations and expected harvest by season, permit type, and WMU.**

	Permits			Expected Harvest
	E1	E2	Total	
<b>Archery Season</b>				
Either-sex	11	9	20	10 (7–13)
<b>Regular Season<sup>1</sup></b>				
Either-sex	29	25	54	36 (29–42)
Antlerless-only	55	45	100	44 (37–56)
<b>Auction<sup>2</sup></b>	choice		3	2 (0–3)
<b>Special Opportunity<sup>2</sup></b>	choice		3	2 (0–3)
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>180</b>	<b>94 (73–117)</b>

<sup>1</sup> Veteran permits are a priority draw for the first 5 regular season permits.

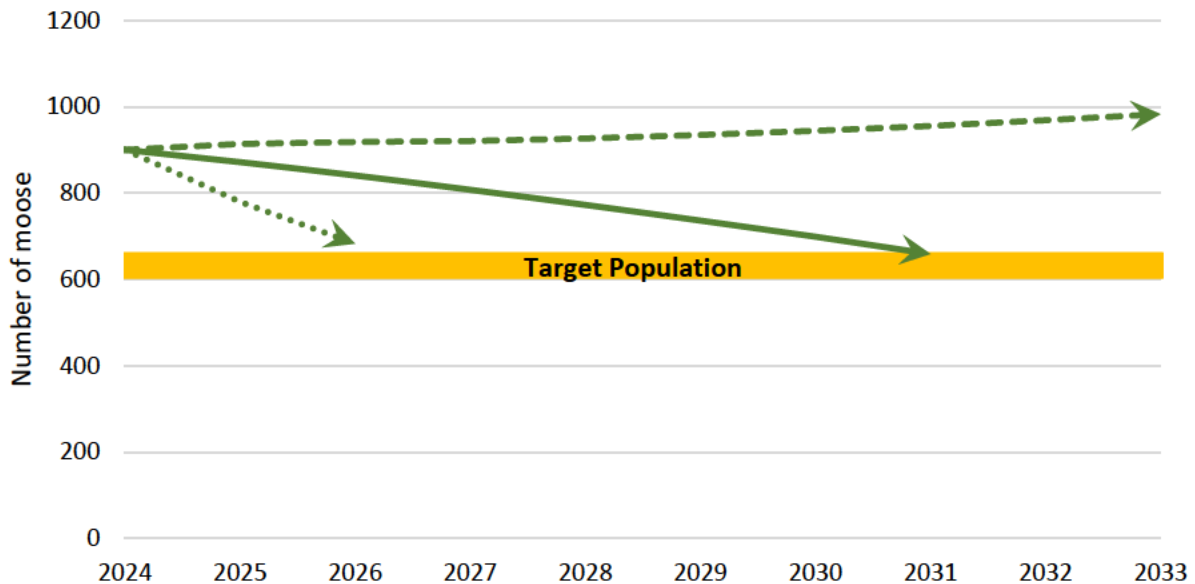
<sup>2</sup> Auction and Special Opportunity Permits are either sex and allow choice of season and WMU.

The results of the moose study and continued monitoring of moose clearly show that the current density of moose in WMU E has been sufficient to sustain winter ticks at high levels that negatively affect moose health and survival. Research has shown that winter tick abundance is directly related to moose population density. Reducing the density of moose decreases the number of available hosts which in turn decreases the number of winter ticks on the landscape. Moose population reduction will be necessary to break the winter tick cycle and improve the health of moose in this region.

The Department is committed to achieving a healthy moose population in WMU E by meeting the population objectives established in the [2020-2030 Big Game Management Plan](#). The proposed permit allocation and resulting cow harvest would reduce the population by about 4% per year and reach the objective of 1 moose/mi<sup>2</sup> (632 moose in WMU E) in 2031 (Figure 9).

In a worst-case scenario, where tick impacts are relatively severe every year, it would still take several years for the population to reach the target level. Importantly, the Department is confident that such a steep decline could be detected and that reducing the cow harvest would halt that decline. If tick impacts are reduced each year, as in the past 4 years, this harvest may not be enough to prevent population growth.

Each of these projections assumes constant harvest each year and no change in moose survival or reproductive rates. In practice, the moose population and winter tick impacts are dynamic, and management must remain adaptive. Actual permit allocations and harvest will be adjusted annually based on new information as it becomes available.



**Figure 9. Moose population projections in WMU E at the proposed cow harvest given expected (solid line), worst-case (dotted line), and improved (dashed line) winter tick impacts. Projections assume consistent harvest each year and no change in survival or birth rates.**

Maintaining a healthy, stable, and sustainable moose population requires action to improve moose health. Without management action to reduce the moose population, high tick loads will continue to impact the health of moose in WMU E for the next decade and beyond. The resulting chronic stress, low birth rates, and high calf mortality will make the population less resilient to diseases, parasites, and environmental variation, which could cause the population to destabilize. Importantly, 65% of Vermont residents support maintaining a smaller moose population through hunting if it reduces the number of moose that die each year from winter ticks. Only 15% oppose this approach (Responsive Management 2019).

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## **Appendix A: Summary of comments, questions, and department responses from 2024 moose public hearings**

*Note: comments are arranged from most common to least common. A total of 73 members of the public attended these three hearings.*

**Agree with the recommendation/Seems reasonable/Makes sense/Trust the science.**

*Similar comments were received from 22 individuals.*

**Increase the number of permits/reduce moose numbers quicker to reduce winter ticks.**

*Similar comments were received from 4 individuals.*

**How do we increase logging (to improve habitat)/Concerned about lack of quality habitat.**

*Similar comments were received from 2 individuals.*

**Would like more archery permits.**

**Extend the season.**

**Too many permits.**

**Split season again to reduce crowding.**

**Population seems healthy in D2.**

**Fewer moose than 10/20/30 years ago.**

**Like the density map.**

**Must balance moose density with habitat.**

## Appendix B: Moose Public Comment Emails

From: Nick G  
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 1:20 PM  
To: ANR - FW Information <ANR.FWInformation@vermont.gov>  
Subject: Moose Permits

Hello,

I'm writing in support of the department's proposal to issue 180 Moose permits in the Northeast Kingdom. While not a moose hunter (upland birds and small game), I understand the need to maintain healthy populations through managed harvests. A study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (Naidoo et al., 2006) emphasizes the positive impact of hunting on habitat preservation. Sustainable hunting practices encourage the conservation of natural habitats, as these areas are essential for maintaining healthy wildlife populations. Hunters, as stakeholders in these environments, have a vested interest in ensuring the sustainability of the ecosystems they depend on.

Thank you for helping to ensure the future of Vermont's moose population through scientifically proven management methods.

Best regards,  
Nick Grimley

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From: Paul Carty  
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 3:34 PM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov>  
Subject: Proposed Moose Hunt

Have been reading of the proposed Moose hunt and am offering an opinion. I am a New Hampshire resident from Coos County who lived in northern Vermont for 40 years. No longer a hunter, but have no objection to hunting. Am not an activist of any kind nor am I a tree hugger. As I have done for years, I drive the northern tier of New England. Rte 26 Colebrook to Errol. Rte 105, RTE 105....114....58....and northern RTE 100. Also 3 in N.H. and RTE 2 and RTE 15 in Vt. I drive 24 hrs a day... thousands of miles in the last ten years. Have not seen a moose in over 6 months. Last one en route to Island Pond. the proposed hunt of 180 is obviously lower than 355 for years which was overkill for a state the size of Vermont. May have taken out much of the healthy breeding stock. When the realization that the herd was decimated, five newspapers on the same day Burlington Free Press, Times Argus, Rutland Herald, Caledonia and one other published an article by a biologist claiming that ticks were responsible for the drastic reduction of moose in Vermont. Yes, ticks do take a toll on animals, that is a fact, but not the amount that was claimed by Fish and Wildlife. Whatever revenue that each animal generated might have been more of a factor that the moose population numbers.....Hunting is a heritage in Vermont, but lets not please those that want nothing larger than a golden retriever in Vermont. Claim is there are 2100 moose left. I doubt that there are more than 750 left. When they are gone so is part of the

heritage. Hunting 180 moose in Bloomfield, Ferdinand, or Guilford because of ticks just does not make sense, especially killing pregnant cows

Paul Carty  
Milan, N.H.

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From: Diane Richardson  
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 7:47 AM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPUBLICCOMMENT@vermont.gov>  
Subject: Moose permits

Your proposal is Perfect!  
Winter ticks are non disease carrying ticks that evolved along side moose to help regulate their population and humans tried to keep the populations higher than that in the interest of tourism Glad to see reality being implemented Good job Vermont!

Diane Richardson  
Springfield nh

[REDACTED]

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From: Matt Breton  
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 12:43 PM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPUBLICCOMMENT@vermont.gov>  
Subject: 2024 Moose Proposal

I am writing to express my support for the 2024 moose harvest recommendation as written.  
Thank you to the department for the work all of you do.

Matthew Breton  
Charleston, VT

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From: roger weingarten  
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2024 11:15 AM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPUBLICCOMMENT@vermont.gov>  
Subject: 2021 moose season recommendations

Vote NO on new moose kill proposal: Problem is climate change, not moose population.

Roger Weingarten

[REDACTED]

Montpelier

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From: JoshjLocke  
Sent: Saturday, February 24, 2024 1:05 PM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPUBLICCOMMENT@vermont.gov>  
Subject: Moose hunting

Why not try introducing an animal species that eat ticks ? Instead of killing off the already dwindling moose population .

Joshua J Locke  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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From: Robert Fee  
Sent: Saturday, February 24, 2024 6:06 AM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPUBLICCOMMENT@vermont.gov>  
Subject: Moose hunt, a sound idea

Good morning,

Keeping the anti hunting emotions out of this for those who oppose hunting, we in Stoddard NH have seen a once vibrant population of moose crash to almost zero due to ticks.

Moose are only "rebounding" now due to the population being decimated by these insects. The insect population has now declined due to lack of hosts and Moose are starting to breed and give birth to healthy calves.

There are other factors. Stoddard is a unique area where 68% of it is in permanent conservation easements. We have vast tracts of land that are void of homes and roads. We are also at a higher elevation and have three major Moose habitat areas that serve as the "cradle" to the rest of the county.

This brings another problem: we are filthy with bears. Bears prey on Moose calves and fawns.

What our landowners do not understand is that bears need balance. Our rebound is hampered by bears preying on calves. This also bleeds into our deer population.

Studies from other states confirm what hunters have identified. Bears are the number one predator of fawns and calves.

So in closing, please consider increasing tags and opportunities to harvest bears in these areas to allow the Moose to truly rebound.

Thank you,

Bob Fee

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From: artjud  
Sent: Sunday, February 25, 2024 10:34 AM



To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPUBLICCOMMENT@vermont.gov>  
Subject: Moose hunt

How dumb do you think we are. Killing 180 moose will do nothing to lower the population of ticks in the woods or the number of ticks on the remaining moose. First you cut back on the number of permits because of this tick problem and now you want to increase the kills because of the tick problem. I guess if we kill all of the moose in Vermont we will no longer have a moose/tick problem.

Art martin

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From: Vikas Jain  
Sent: Sunday, February 25, 2024 3:43 PM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPUBLICCOMMENT@vermont.gov>  
Subject: Moose hunt proposal 2024 stance

To the concerned by life official, I strongly and vehemently oppose The proposed hunt to reduce wildlife in relation to the winter problem that has been proposed. I believe this is completely on researched and not feasible to kill 180 animals to justify reducing the population and directly/indirectly the moose populations health.

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From: Sonnette L Murphy  
Sent: Saturday, February 24, 2024 10:31 PM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPUBLICCOMMENT@vermont.gov>  
Subject: Moose hunt for ticks

I read your article today and was wondering how killing moose will lesson your tick situation. Do you not have other ways of dealing with ticks? Seems odd to me that you would kill an animal but not the ticks! I guess here in nc we should kill off a good bit of squirrels ,cats ,dogs, coyotes, foxes ect. to rid us of our flea problems. If one has a tick problem seems the source cannot be just moose and that perhaps a treatment of the area might be wise. Seems as if killing animals is the first solution we humans go to whenever we have an issue. This is such a sad article Hopefully a wildlife environmentalist will have a more natural humane way to help with your tick over abundance issue and this hunt will be cancelled.

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From: Donna L  
Sent: Saturday, February 24, 2024 6:44 AM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPUBLICCOMMENT@vermont.gov>  
Subject: Moose hunt comment

Hello,

I'm not against hunting. I just don't think the proposed solution is sustainable.

The problem stems from the ticks, and I'm not understanding why they are not part of any proposed action.

Ticks altering moose populations means they are bad for the environment. Their existence threatens wildlife population and the health of Vermonters.

If you address the ticks, you reduce the problem in moose and likely create longevity in the herd. Killing them is an easy, temporary action, but doesn't address the root cause.

Donna Lauzon  
Pownal, VT

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From: Jeff Litz  
Sent: Saturday, February 24, 2024 12:15 PM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov>  
Subject: Moose Hunt

Something has to be done by cultivating a small percentage of moose is a step in the right direction. As it stands, there does not seem to be a way to alleviate this tick problem at present. Having seen pictures of this majestic animal completely covered in ticks is heartbreaking.  
JL

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From: Matt Renaud  
Sent: Saturday, February 24, 2024 6:13 AM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov>  
Subject: Moose Harvest Recommendation

Hi, I'm an avid lifelong hunter who hunts almost exclusively in WMU's H, D1, and D2. I was reading the article on WCAX yesterday and I read the Moose Harvest Recommendation report from there. I have an observation to offer and some questions.

My family has never really had our own land to be able to hunt, so we have always relied pretty heavily on our local WMA's and I love our WMA's - I hunt primarily at Steam Mill Brook which is in D2. Over the past few seasons, and especially the 2023 deer season, I observed several sets of fresh tracks, fresh droppings, and fresh bedding areas of at least four different moose on nearly every day I hunted there. Though I never saw a moose (or a deer for that matter), I was clearly in the "moose woods." At the same time, I was seeing almost no deer sign whatsoever.

My initial thought was that moose eat the same diet as deer and would naturally out-compete any deer in the same area. However, I also noticed more and more beaver swamps deep in the woods as I like to hunt off trail and away from other people. The beaver swamps are expanding each year - I would imagine due to lack of natural predation? The moose heavily favor the edges of the beaver swamps, which means as the ponds expand, so too does moose habitat. I started researching expansion of beaver swamps and found that wolves, specifically, are very effective at limiting the beaver's range away from the center of the pond, therefore limiting swamp expansion through limiting beaver populations.

I started wondering why coyotes might not play the same role as wolves in our region and here is my theory - a pack of wolves is also a predation threat to moose, whereas I would imagine the moose are pretty effective at keeping our coyotes scared away from their immediate areas, therefore allowing for unchecked beaver population/habitat expansion.

So, no wolves = too many beavers  
Too many beavers = prime moose habitat  
Prime moose habitat = reduced deer population

I completely understand the science and the numbers behind only offering moose permits in E1 and E2 and I also understand the logistical nightmare of allowing for moose permits on a hyper local basis. But could there be a possibility to offer moose permits exclusively in WMA's in D2 (or maybe at least Steam Mill Brook WMA specifically)? I would love an opportunity to hunt moose in this area some year, especially since I rarely see deer anymore. However, the seemingly high density moose population at Steam Mill Brook is really just a symptom of the real problem: beavers. For that issue, is there any possibility to increase trapping and/or reintroduce wolves in areas that are affected in this way?

Thank you for the work you do and for your consideration of these observations.

Sincerely,

Matt Renaud

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From: Lori Roberts  
Sent: Sunday, February 25, 2024 8:11 AM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov>  
Subject: Moose Harvest 2024

Hello,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this recommendation.

It seems counterintuitive to reduce the moose population to control a pest. If that is the case more education about how that works would help in understanding the reason for this recommendation.

Would it be better to try to control the tick population rather than the moose population? Can you drop salt or food blocks with tick repellent? That would kill the ticks, stop their reproduction, and allow the moose to live.

It looks like Unit E is mostly if not all in Essex County yet none of the meetings are in that county. It might be considerate to have one in the county most affected by this recommendation.

Thanks again for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,  
Lori Roberts  
Guildhall, Essex County, VT

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From: Susan  
Sent: Sunday, February 25, 2024 11:57 AM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov>  
Subject: 180 dead Moose 🐾 helps reduce tics? No to 180 tags to kill an already struggling species...

Interesting..  
Killing Moose 🐾 will reduce tic population..!?!?!? !!

Is there actual SCIENCE to back up this theory 😞

Tics occur naturally & will latch on to the moose are left for their next meal, including the calves..

How does this help their population or is this just a guess?  
Surely, this is not backed by Science...

Tracking, TAGGING & INOCULATION for tics of the Existing Moose population makes more sense, than to kill an already struggling species because calves don't make it thru their first winter..

I've been hearing about your GHOST Moose population for two decades, even before making VT my home..  
NO FUR, ANEMIC & SICK DUE TO TICS..

VACINATE THE 180 MOOSE YOU WOULD ISSUE KILL TAGS FOR & DO SOME ACTUAL SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON THIS POPULATION TO SEE IF THEY RECOVER & INCREASE THE MORTALITY RATE OF THE CALVES..

ISSUE KILL TAGS WHEN THERE IS A HEALTHY POPULATION EXPLOSION, NOT TO CONTROL TICS...

Logically speaking...

Just sayin..

Sincerely,  
Susan....  
Bridgewater Corners VT

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From: Debbie Farris  
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 11:58 PM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov>  
Subject:

You can't seriously believe that winter ticks only affect moose? So the ticks turn to other animals spreading disease and health related issues for both people and pets? These ticks won't go after dogs and cats, deer, rabbits, or people but only if we kill the remaining moose population in that area? You can't be that dumb or blind to see more hunting isn't doing nothing to the ticks only killing the only remaining moose in the state of Vermont. I vote no not that how we feel or think matters we only live here and pay taxes on everything!

---

From: ken w  
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 5:00 PM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov>  
Subject: Ticks and moose

I absolutely support any efforts to reduce ticks in vermont. It has become a huge problem for humans and animals.

However I would suggest a focus on the large amount of mice and moles and other small rodents which are most responsible for tick numbers. Maybe limit trapping and coyote killing?

Regardless ticks control should be a top priority for Fish and Wildlife.

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From: Amber Alexander  
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 3:32 PM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov>  
Subject: no to more moose hunting

how about trying to treat the moose we have instead of just killing more? misguided.

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From: Gina Miller  
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 6:27 PM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov>  
Subject: Moose permits

Looks like another big money maker for the state of Vermont. Maine, whose tick population is worse than Vermont's, just did a study and found their moose are virtually tick free this winter. How long before the moose population is decimated in the state? Maybe the state is getting kick backs from insurance companies to wipe out the population due to motor vehicle encounters like other states do with their deer population! Enough! 180 last year and another 180 this year? If you decimate the moose population the ticks will find simply other hosts!!! Brings in some pretty big money....Wrong on all levels!

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From: Brian Tirrell  
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 10:52 AM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov>

Subject: Moose hunt

I think this is a ridiculous idea as moose are limited in Vermont, ticks are still going to survive after you harvest the moose and move on to other animals. Vermont should stop moose hunting for 5+ years to allow them to repopulate, moose are scarce in Vermont!

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From: Ginny Callan  
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 1:02 PM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov>  
Cc: Cort Richardson [REDACTED]  
Subject: Against 180 Moose Permits

To Fish and Wildlife Staff,  
My husband and I are against the proposed issuing of 180 moose hunting permits. At a time when the Vermont moose population is down it makes no sense to kill more moose due to ticks.  
Let's give the moose a chance not kill them to control ticks.  
Sincerely,  
Ginny Callan  
Cort Richardson  
[REDACTED]  
East Montpelier, Vt

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From: carywetherbee  
Sent: Friday, February 23, 2024 6:49 PM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov>  
Subject: ??

So kill off a bunch of moose because of ticks?? Sounds like the same clowns that are running the white tail deer program are running the moose project??? Do you think killing off moose the ticks are majestically going to disappear?? Really just like the deer! Shoot off the does?? The only thing you idiots are doing is dreaming up revenue for the dept..

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From: Maggie Eaton  
Sent: Thursday, February 29, 2024 6:37 PM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov>  
Subject: 2024 Moose Harvest Recommendation

It makes no sense to me that killing moose will drop the tick population. Where is the scientific data to support that conclusion? Ticks will find and kill moose whether there are 1,000 moose or 10 because ticks are everywhere in increasing numbers. Using the same rationale, why not kill mice, small mammals, birds and more deer? They are tick hosts too. The research that I have seen indicates that controlling large animal tick host populations just cause the ticks to find other hosts and continue to multiply. See, for instance,

Elias SP, Smith RP Jr, Morris SR, Rand PW, Lubelczyk C, Lacombe EH. 2011. Density of Ixodes scapularis ticks on Monhegan Island after complete deer removal: a question of avian importation? J. Vector Ecol. Jun;36(1):11-23.

If we want to drop the tick population, fight climate change that is causing such warm winters that ticks can survive all year long. Put up tasty treat posts for moose that contain a medication (like we feed our dogs) that will kill the ticks. Or some other strategy. It is so difficult to believe that killing moose will have anything close to a significant impact on tick population that issuing moose hunting permits seems to be more to please hunters and antler collectors than "helping" moose.

Maggie Eaton  
New Haven, VT

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From: Erik Bailey  
Sent: Thursday, March 7, 2024 8:49 AM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov>  
Subject: Deer & Moose Public Comments

Hi,

My first comment is that the largest concentration of hunters are in Chittenden County & far western Franklin county. There should be a meeting close to these folks. Enosburg Falls is over an hour away from most of those hunters. Putting meetings closer to population centers reduces the combined travel miles, and therefore the carbon footprint of the meetings.

Deer:

-5 or 6 Years ago, the "5-year Plan" included a suburban antlerless archery season starting mid-September. This never came to fruition. "COVID" was the initial excuse (even though stomping about suburban woods doing field research is perfect "social distancing"), but that has gotten to be beyond stale. When will we begin following the Plan?

-I am not a fan of the 4 deer/1 buck rule. I think it should be modified to allow an archer who shot a nice buck to still be part of the Grand tradition that is VT Rifle Season. What about a 6 point minimum to use an archery tag on a buck? If you shoot one smaller, you burn your buck tag, otherwise, you can take a rifle or muzzleloader season buck. I see no reason to have a fourth tag either, unless that tag is tied to the suburban hunt, since those areas & posted farmland is where our high deer concentrations occur.

-Kudos on the active forestry happening on WMAs and F&P forests. I personally see the wildlife effects on Camels Hump Forest & Robbins Mtn WMA. Thanks.

Moose:

-I know this is a legislative thing, but I'd like to see the Veteran drawing to be archery or rifle choice (just like the auction tags).

- There are overpopulations of moose along the spine of the Greens well south of the NEK. For instance, the entire top ridges of Mt Cleveland and Mt. Roosevelt in Lincoln/Ripton are literally blanketed in moose scat. There are those of us who have the skills and gear to hunt and retrieve a moose from such territory (I'm not the only DIY Rocky Mtn backpack elk hunter in VT).

Thanks for all you do for the sports folks of VT!

Erik Bailey



Essex Junction, VT 05452

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From: Marcia Bellas

Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 8:30 AM

To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov>

Subject: Moose Hunt Proposal

Once again I am pondering why you plan to kill the very animals that you claim to be protecting. Yes, I get your rationale, but it baffles me why we can send people to the moon, develop all kinds of medications and vaccines, but can't figure out how to deal with ticks on moose besides killing moose. Ditto for the deer overpopulation--why not develop some sort of birth control rather than resort to killing (though I know some people enjoy this activity)?

I know that what I think doesn't matter. ANR will do what it wants. I've lived in Vermont for 20+ years, and my opinion of ANR has gone from neutral/slightly positive to negative over the years. From the plan for the Worcester Range, to the treatment of coyotes, who are merely trying to survive like the rest of us, to steel leg traps which cause horrific pain and suffering, to not having the courtesy to respond to email the two times that I reported an invasive species and a polluted pond from stables on the road I live on. It's black mark after black mark....

Marcia Bellas

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From: Joel Nashett

Sent: Friday, March 15, 2024 1:37 PM

To: FWPublicComment@vermont.gov

Subject: VT Proposed Moose Hunt Comments

To Whom it may concern:

I recently read the article in the NYS Outdoor News regarding VTs proposed Moose hunt. I am 100% for moose hunting if the moose population can support hunting. It would be amazing to have an opportunity to hunt moose so close to home (I live near Whiteface mtn. NY).

However killing 10% of the moose population as a primary means to control ticks in hopes that more moose are saved brings up a several questions.

- Do ticks currently kill 10% of the moose population in that region?
- What would the tick mortality rate be if 10% of moose are killed by hunters? I'm sure it isn't zero. If the mortality rate from ticks isn't less than hunting plus residual tick mortality, then I question the effectiveness hunting to reduce mortality.



I would like to know if there are alternative options out there. It is my understanding that there are tick preventatives for horses and my dog is on one now. Could such a preventative be administered to moose (darting from ground or air) or a program to tranq and treat? Sure it would be expensive and time consuming and come with additional logistics, but it seems worth exploring. It may gain support and/or funding from the non-moose hunting crowd as well. If moose populations support hunting, perhaps hunting is permitted concurrently with tick prevention for a true win-win.

Just my thoughts.

Best Regards,

Joel Nashett

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Au Sable Forks, NY 12912

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From: RONALD LADEAU  
Sent: Monday, March 18, 2024 1:49 PM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov>  
Subject: 2021 moose season recommendations

Dear sir or madame, I am writing to you of a concern of possible Moose season in the Townsend & Grafton area along with Windam Vermont . I have a camp along Stiles Brook road which has become very populated with Moose. I do feel that the Fish and Wildlife should check it out. I myself have been hunting this area for well over 50 years, even before the y put the power lines in. As far as Bear and deer go that also has grown. I myself observed bear sign just about every where. I have 60 acres in forestry management and donate every year to the Habitat stamp. I am an out of stater and live in Ma. Please consider this information that you do have a great population in the southern part of Vermont.  
Ronald K LaDeau

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From: Edward Eseppi  
Sent: Thursday, March 28, 2024 8:47 PM  
To: ANR - FW Public Comment <ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov>  
Subject: Moose Hunt Public Comment

Hello,

I am writing to reject Vermont's Fish and Wildlife Departments moose management moose hunt proposed on February 22nd.

On this department's website (here) it says: "The department wants to reduce the moose population in WMU E to reduce the abundance of winter ticks. This will reduce the impact of winter ticks on the health of moose and result in a healthier moose population. Research indicates that winter ticks rarely impact moose populations at densities less than 1 moose per square mile and have no impact at

densities less than 0.75 moose per square mile. The 2023 (2021–2023 rolling average) density estimates for WMU E1 and E2 was 1.29 and 1.56 moose per square mile, respectively.

The department is not proposing to hunt moose in other parts of Vermont. Moose numbers in those areas are below established population objectives and are not impacted by winter ticks."

With the above stated, why is a moose hunt proposed, when moose could be relocated from WMU E1 and E2 to the area's with moose densities less than 1 moose per square mile? I firmly believe other opportunities should be investigated before hunting. It seems as if hunting is a quick, revenue generating opportunity, whereas moving moose would solve the same problem and protect overall population numbers.

Respectfully,

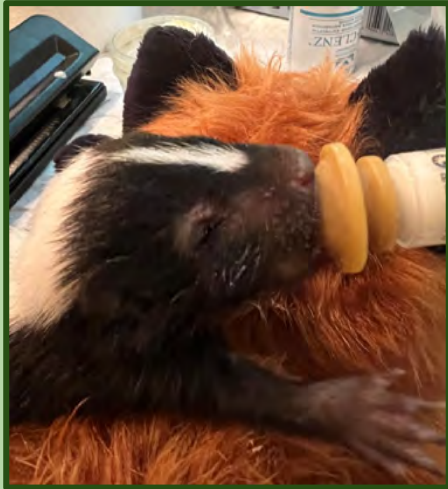
Eddie

# Wildlife Rehabilitation in Vermont



# Wildlife Rehabilitation

The **RESCUE**, **REHABILITATION** and **RELEASE** of injured and orphaned wildlife



# Vermont's Wildlife Rehabilitation Program

- The wildlife rehabilitation program in Vermont was officially started in 1991
- At that time, there were 3 rehabilitators including VINS (Vermont Institute of Natural Science)
- Currently there are 24 permitted volunteer wildlife rehabilitators representing 6 Vermont Counties.
- Most rehabilitation facilities are home based with the exception of VINS, Outreach for Earth Stewardship and Southern Vermont Natural History Museum.



## Vermont's volunteer Wildlife Rehabilitators also have careers:



- College Professor
- Doctor
- Nurse
- National Guard Medic
- Mortgage Loan Processor
- Veterinary Technician
- Massage Therapist
- Chef
- Farmer
- Police Officer
- Laboratory Technician
- Animal Control Officer
- Environmental Educator

# Why do we need Wildlife Rehabilitation?

- To give wildlife that were injured or orphaned (usually by human interference) a second chance
- Wildlife rehab keeps wildlife and the general public safe
  - The general public are compassionate and if there aren't professionals to turn to, they will take matters into their own hands



- In 2023, Vermont's Wildlife Rehabilitators took in over 700 mammals and 800 birds
- Human interference is the number one cause of orphans
  - Trapping and relocating mothers
  - Death of mother
  - Destruction of nests/dens (logging/tree trimming)
  - Kidnapping
  - Domestic animal attacks





# Intake to Release

- Initial phone call from the public, try to reunite orphan with family, ensure it is truly an orphan
- Council public on how to safely contain animal
- Meet the public with the orphan, obtain contact information
- Initially warm, rehydrate, weigh and do a physical exam, document
- Feed numerous times daily/nightly, clean cages, provide enrichment, vaccinate (RVS)
- Give the opportunity to grow and gain strength, house with con-specifics
- Release in species specific habitat typically 1 month to 2 years depending on species

# How to become a Wildlife Rehabilitator?

- Apprenticeship with a permitted Wildlife Rehabilitator
- Education
  - Online classes
  - Conferences
  - Reference Materials
  - Continuing Education
- Application Process
  - Home Inspection
  - Written Exam



# FUNDING



- Comes out of our own pockets, and from donations, some of us are non-profits
- COSTS: Formula, caging, medications, species specific food, vaccinations, vet visits, enrichment, transportation

*\*\$400 per Raccoon from rescue to release*

# Public Education

- Rehabilitators provide wildlife education to the general public
  - Phone conversations
  - Outreach at school programs, summer camps, and town functions
  - Social Media



# Questions?

