

Small Game Hunting

Small game includes upland and migratory game birds, small game mammals, certain furbearers, and reptiles and amphibians.

Please read general hunting regulations first on page 14.

General Regulations

- You may not use a rifle or handgun to hunt pheasant or migratory game birds. See page 48 for more information on turkeys.
- See pages 51–52 for additional information on migratory game birds.
- Air guns (see page 14) may be used to hunt squirrels, rabbits, hares, ruffed grouse, furbearers that may be hunted (e.g., raccoons and coyotes), and unprotected species (see page 15). Air guns may not be used to hunt waterfowl, pheasant, wild turkey, or big game.
- Crossbows may not be possessed afield in the Northern Zone when hunting small game (except coyotes) with the aid of a dog or when accompanied by a dog. Crossbows may be used to take any other small game or game birds during their respective open seasons except in Westchester and Suffolk counties.
- In WMU 2A, hunting is permitted by falconry only.

Reptiles and Amphibians

Frogs—“Frogs” are defined as eastern spadefoot toad, eastern American toad, Fowler’s toad, northern cricket frog, northern gray treefrog, northern spring peeper, western chorus frog, bullfrog, green frog, mink frog, wood frog,

northern leopard frog, southern leopard frog, and pickerel frog.

A fishing or hunting license is required to take frogs with a spear, club, hook, or by hand.

Reptile and Amphibian Hunting Seasons	
Frogs	
Open Season	June 15–Sept. 30
Open Area	All WMUs except that (1) leopard frogs shall not be taken in WMUs 1A, 1C, or 2A; and (2) northern cricket frogs and eastern spadefoot toads shall not be taken in any area of the state.
Size Limit	None
Daily Bag	None
Season Bag	None
Hunting Hours	Any time of the day or night, except that no person shall use a gun to take frogs when hunting at night (sunset to sunrise).
Snapping Turtles	
Open Season	July 15–Sept. 30
Open Area	Statewide
Size Limit	The upper shell (carapace) must be 12 inches or longer, measured in a straight line.
Daily Bag	5
Season Bag	30
Hunting Hours	Any time of the day or night

A hunting license is required to take frogs with a gun, bow, or crossbow.

Snakes, Lizards, and Salamanders—You may not harvest, take, or possess any native snakes, lizards, or salamanders at any time.

Turtles—The only turtle species for which there is an open hunting season is the snapping turtle. You may not harvest, take, or possess any other turtle species at any time.

You may not take or possess diamondback terrapins at any time.

Snapping turtles—A hunting license is required to take snapping turtles. The only legal implements for taking snapping turtles are a gun, bow, or crossbow.

If you choose to eat snapping turtles, you should carefully trim all fat and discard fat, liver, and eggs prior to cooking to reduce exposure to contaminants. For information on these health advisories, call 1-800-458-1158 or visit the website www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/fish/health_advisories/advice_on_eating_game.htm.

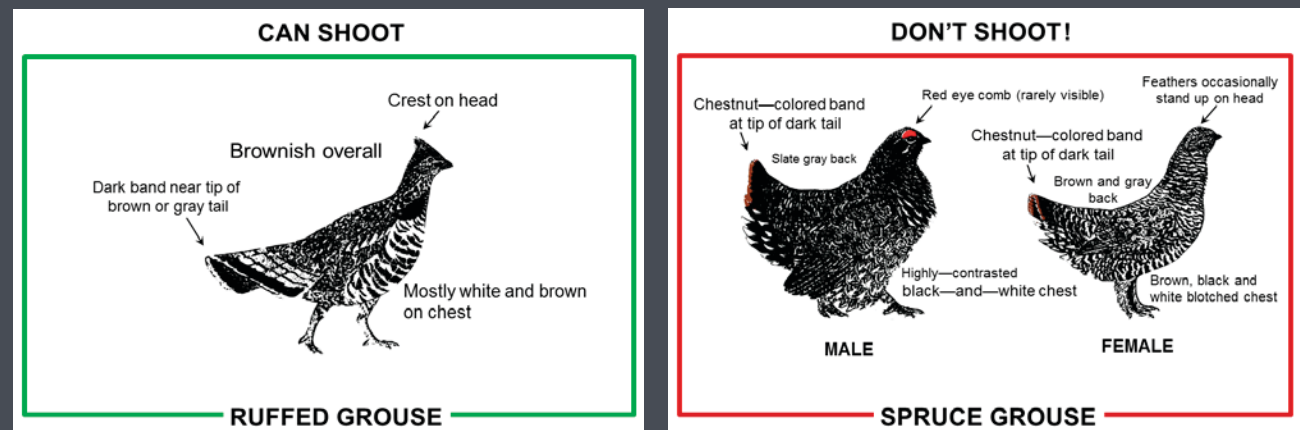
Possession and Release of Game Birds

It is illegal to possess or release migratory game birds and upland game birds without the proper license(s) from DEC. Before you take

Spruce Grouse vs. Ruffed Grouse

In New York State, the spruce grouse is endangered and is not legal to hunt. Spruce grouse occur in evergreen forests in the Adirondacks in Wildlife Management Units 5C, 5F, 6F, and 6J. During the fall, spruce grouse frequently make their way to roads to eat gravel and often travel into upland hardwood forests where ruffed grouse occur. Small game hunters in the Adirondack region must be able to distinguish between these species so that spruce grouse are not shot by mistake.

Spruce grouse are similar in size and color to ruffed grouse, making distinguishing between them difficult. One notable difference is that spruce grouse have an orangish-brown band at the tip of their tails, which contrasts with ruffed grouse’s black tail band. By noting the differences in the images here, small game hunters can avoid accidentally shooting a spruce grouse. The loss of a single female spruce grouse could be a significant setback for a small local population.



possession of any captive-reared or wild game birds, contact the DEC Special Licenses Unit, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4752, or call 518-402-8985, or email speciallicenses@dec.ny.gov.

Falconry Seasons

To hunt small game species with trained raptors, you must possess a Falconry License and a hunting license. Licensed falconers may take small game from October 1 through March 31 in any area of the state open to hunting these species except:

- Common crow may only be taken during the open firearms season.
- A licensed falconer may take both male and female pheasants anywhere in the state when hunting under a Falconry License.

Waterfowl may be taken via falconry during the following seasons:

- **Northeast, Southeast, and Western Waterfowl Zones:** Oct. 1–Jan. 13
- **Long Island Waterfowl Zone:** Nov. 1–Feb. 13
- **Lake Champlain Waterfowl Zone:** Only during the regular hunting season for each species (see map on page 49).

For more information on falconry, contact the DEC Special Licenses Unit, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4752, or call 518-402-8985.

Use of Hunting Dogs

Dogs may be used to hunt small game, except:

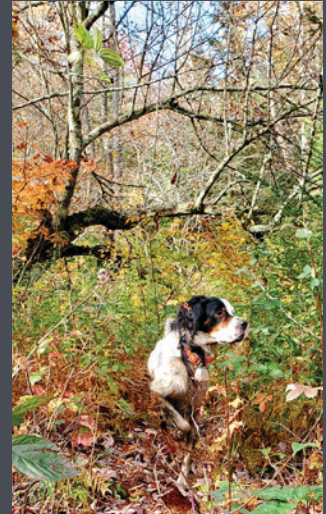
- You may not use dogs to hunt wild turkey in the spring.
- In the Northern Zone, if you are hunting with a dog, or accompanied by a dog, you may not possess a rifle larger than .22-caliber rimfire or possess a shotgun loaded with slug, ball, or buckshot unless you are coyote hunting with a dog. In the Northern Zone, crossbows may not be possessed afield when hunting small game (except coyotes) with the aid of a dog or when accompanied by a dog.

Training

You may train dogs on raccoon, fox, coyote, and bobcat from July 1 through April 15. You may train dogs on other small game only from August 15 through April 15. You may train dogs at any time on lands you own, lease, or have written permission to use, if you are not training on wild game. You may only use blank ammunition when training dogs, except during an open season.

Control

Hunting dogs should remain under control of the hunter or trainer, especially on lands inhabited by deer. Do not allow your dogs to pursue game on any posted land without the landowner's permission. Do not shoot dogs; report stray dogs to a local Environmental Conservation Officer (ECO) or your local animal control officer.



Mike S's dog Bump in action

Small Game Hunting

Protect Rabbits and Hares from RHDV2

Rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus 2 (RHDV2) is highly lethal to rabbits and hares. It is easily transmitted through direct contact between rabbits or contact with contaminated objects. RHDV2 is extremely hardy, remaining contagious on surfaces for 3 months. If it enters NY's wild rabbit and hare populations, it will be impossible to control and could result in significant population declines. To protect these species:

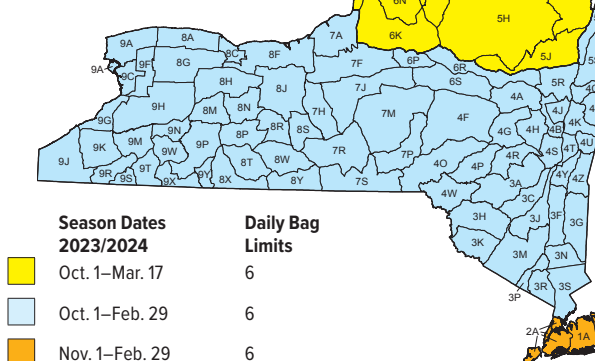
- Avoid contact with domestic rabbits.
- Wear disposable gloves when handling rabbit and hare carcasses.
- Properly dispose of rabbit carcasses in trash that's taken to a landfill or by burying deep enough to prevent scavenging.
- Disinfect all hunting gear after out-of-state travel with a 10% bleach solution (1 part household bleach, 9 parts water).
- Avoid travel to states that have confirmed RHDV2 outbreaks, and do not bring rabbit carcasses killed in other states to New York.
- Avoid transporting rabbits or hares to train hunting dogs.
- Although dogs cannot get sick from RHDV2, they can transmit the virus, so minimize contact between dogs and rabbit carcasses.
- Immediately report sick rabbits or unusual rabbit mortalities to DEC's Wildlife Health Program (518-478-2203; wildlife@dec.ny.gov).

Hunters: You Can Help Combat the Illegal Wildlife Trade

One of the biggest threats to New York's turtles is illegal collection. What to look for: people with bags poking around wetlands and streams; unmarked traps in wetlands (a trap set for legitimate purposes will be clearly labeled); sheets of metal/plywood laid out on the ground to attract reptiles; cars with collection equipment like nets, containers, pillowcases visible inside; unattended backpacks/bags left in the woods along a trail or road. If you see or hear about suspicious behavior that may be connected to poaching call DEC Law Enforcement - 1-844-DEC-ECOS. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) also has an anonymous tip line - 1-844-FWS-TIPS. For more visit: www.fws.gov/story/how-report-wildlife-crime.

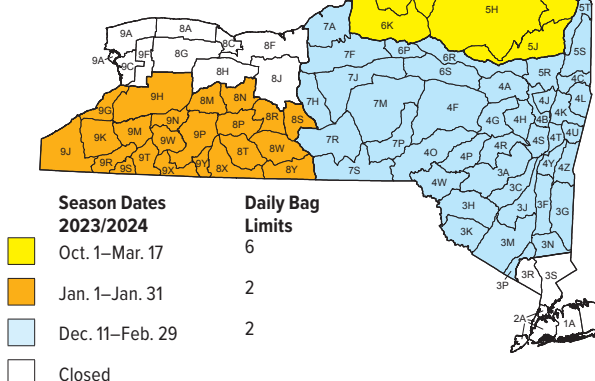
Cottontail Rabbit Hunting

Hunting Hours: Sunrise to Sunset



Varying Hare Hunting

Hunting Hours: Sunrise to Sunset

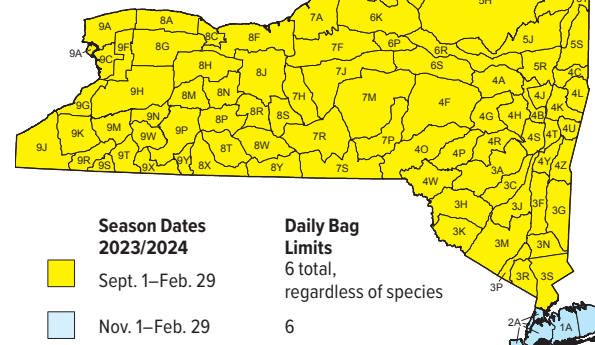


Got Hare?

DEC wants to learn more about the distribution of hare. You can report your observations online at www.dec.ny.gov/animals/30770.html or email us at wildlife@dec.ny.gov! Thanks for your help!

Gray, Black & Fox Squirrel Hunting

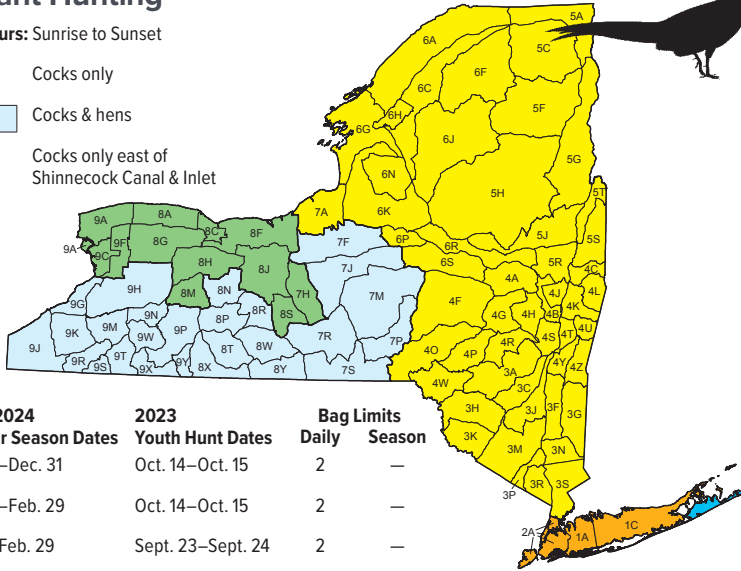
Hunting Hours: Sunrise to Sunset



Pheasant Hunting

Hunting Hours: Sunrise to Sunset

- Cocks only
- ■ ■ Cocks & hens
- Cocks only east of Shinnecock Canal & Inlet

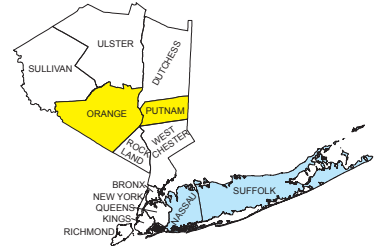


2023/2024 Regular Season Dates	2023 Youth Hunt Dates	Bag Limits	
		Daily	Season
■ Oct. 21–Dec. 31	Oct. 14–Oct. 15	2	—
■ Oct. 21–Feb. 29	Oct. 14–Oct. 15	2	—
■ Oct. 1–Feb. 29	Sept. 23–Sept. 24	2	—
■ Nov. 1–Dec. 31	Oct. 28–Oct. 29 [†]	2*/4**	30
■ Nov. 1–Dec. 31	Oct. 28–Oct. 29	2*/4**	30

* Youth Hunt
 ** Regular Season
[†] In WMU 2A no youth hunt; hunting is by falconry only

Bobwhite Quail Hunting

Hunting Hours: Sunrise to Sunset



2023/2024 Season Dates	Bag Limits	
	Daily	Season
■ Oct. 1–Feb. 29	4	10
■ Nov. 1–Dec. 31	6	40
■ Closed		

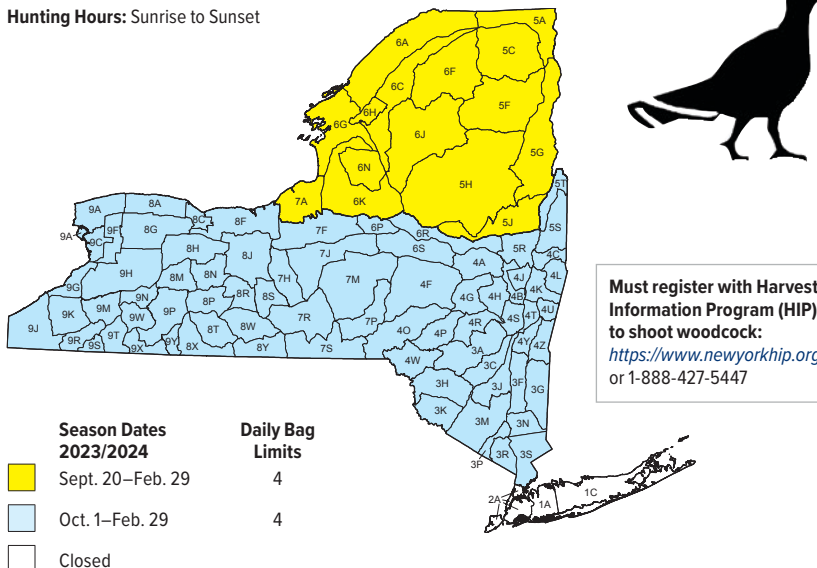


Where does DEC stock pheasants?

In 2022, DEC launched an interactive mapper that shows where pheasants are released throughout New York. Please note that many of these lands are privately owned and pheasant stocking is only permitted with the participation of landowners. Be sure to respect the land and any special rules that may be in place. To view the map, visit: www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/8363.html

Ruffed Grouse Hunting

Hunting Hours: Sunrise to Sunset



2023/2024 Season Dates	Daily Bag Limits
■ Sept. 20–Feb. 29	4
■ Oct. 1–Feb. 29	4
■ Closed	

Must register with Harvest Information Program (HIP) to shoot woodcock:
<https://www.newyorkhip.org/>
 or 1-888-427-5447

Grouse Hunters Needed!



Easy as 1-2-3!

- 1 Collect 1 central tail feather
- 2 Pluck 2-5 rump feathers
- 3 Collect outer 3 wing feathers

DEC is embarking on a study of ruffed grouse age and sex composition. You can help by sending a sample of rump, wing, and tail feathers from all NY harvested ruffed grouse.

To request more information and supplies, please call 518-402-8929 or email wildlife@dec.ny.gov.